



LORD OF ALL REALMS

BOOK 04

Ni Cang Tian

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Lord of All Realms

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(绝对选项)

by

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Synopsis

In ancient times, there existed giant spirits capable of supporting the heavens. With bodies as enormous as stars, they soared across the universe. Great clan leaders with mysterious blood running through their veins shattered the void and created new worlds. Ancient Qi Warriors crossed a river of stars to enlighten numerous mortal beings. For unknown reasons, an era silently came to an end, all realms were separated, ancient giant spirits disappeared one after another. Thousands of years later, young Nie Tian managed to travel back into ancient times with the help of a drop of blood...

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Chapter 301: New Siege!

At this moment, Li Langfeng, the poison master, was also running through the hilly area at full speed. Occasionally, he would sail through the air like a shooting star.

“Hua Tian!” With a grim expression on his face, he chewed on Nie Tian’s name, flames of anger burning in his eyes.

During his fruitless search in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, he had accidentally heard that the Fang and other Hunter organizations were looking for a young man in the hilly area and wasteland between the Void Illusion Mountain Range and Shatter City.

The young man’s name was Hua Tian!

In Li Langfeng’s eyes, since Nie Tian was capable of concentrating the poisonous spiritual Qi of heaven and earth, he was none other than a precious gift from god!

The special incantation he practiced used a particular type of toxin within the poisonous spiritual Qi as a power resource. Therefore, if Nie Tian could cooperate, his battle prowess and cultivation base would improve at a much faster rate.

He was aware that the poison incantation he practiced had caused great damage to his body, which was probably beyond cure.

However, as long as he could raise his cultivation base and battle prowess to the point where he could kill the man he had been wanting to kill his entire life, he would be satisfied.

He was willing to give up everything he had, including his own life, to achieve that goal.

However, Nie Tian was the key person who could help him achieve that goal at a much earlier date.

Therefore, the moment he learned that Nie Tian had left the Void

Illusion Mountain Range and embarked upon his journey back to Shatter City, he left the mountain range headed directly towards Nie Tian, just like what the Fang and Song Li had done.

“The Fang,” Li Langfeng said to himself with a cold expression, wreathed in an extremely intense killing intent. “You’d better keep Hua Tian alive for me. If not, you’ll be meeting him in the netherworld soon!”

In the boundless wasteland...

Xiao Lin’s eyes were closed as he was resting his mind. Meanwhile, he was holding a snake-shaped jade pendant in his left hand.

Every time he stroked it, the small, green jade snake seemed to respond by wiggling slightly.

Standing next to him, Song Li looked rather exhausted. “It’s been ten days already, and there’s still no word.” It seemed as if her torrential rage had somewhat calmed after searching for such a long time.

At this moment, Nie Tian was no longer just a man who she wanted to retaliate against.

To her, Nie Tian had already become a tough challenge in her life. If she couldn’t find Nie Tian and torture him to the death, he would become her internal demon, which would prevent her from concentrating on her cultivation and moving on to the next level.

Nie Tian was like a grindstone which she need to use to temper herself and make her sharper as a blade.

She had sworn to herself that she would cross this barrier, no matter how tough it was.

Han Mu slightly bowed as he attempted to comfort her. “You don’t need to worry too much, Miss. According to what we’ve learned, Hua Tian hasn’t entered the wasteland yet. Mr. Xiao is probably right. He must have sustained serious injuries after using

that powerful magic of his to escape our blockade. He must be licking his wounds somewhere in the hilly area. When he's recovered, he'll definitely have to pass through this wasteland to return to Shatter City.

“Once he sets foot in the wasteland, as resourceful as Mr. Xiao is, he'll surely sense his presence and track him down.

“At that time, we won't give him another chance to slip through our fingers. We'll capture him and let you have your revenge.”

At that moment, Xiao Lin, who was stroking the snake-shaped jade pendant in his hand, said, “I promise you that as long as Hua Tian dares to enter the wasteland, I'll have him captured before he gets back to Shatter City.”

“Yeah, that's the hope,” Song Li said with an indifferent tone.

For some reason, as time passed and she failed over and over, she didn't seem as confident as she was before.

Ever since she had made her moves on Shen Wei and the others on his team, Nie Tian had repeatedly beaten her and had his way.

Later, when she had commanded all the Fang members to search for him, she had failed to find him again.

Nie Tian, however, had been moving like a shadow. Not only had he ruined her hunting plans, but he had even had many female members killed, including her maidservant, Lu Yan.

After that, when she had mobilized numerous Hunter organizations, she had figured that they would definitely capture Nie Tian.

However, once again, she had failed.

Eventually, when she had persuaded Xiao Lin to join her cause, she had possessed total confidence that Nie Tian wouldn't have any chance to escape this time.

The result, however, turned out to be the same. The consecutive

failures made Song Li feel extremely frustrated. She even began to doubt herself, thinking she might not be the omnipotent person she thought she was, and that she might not be so good at manipulating people after all.

She had a feeling that if she let Nie Tian return to Shatter City, Nie Tian would become her lifetime nightmare.

With these thoughts, she gritted her teeth as she once again fumed with rage.

“I won’t leave the Realm of Split Void before Hua Tian is dead!” She swore in her heart, eyes emanating a bone-piercing, cold light.

CHING!

At that very moment, Han Mu received a message via his Sound Stone.

He listened with rapt attention. Several seconds later, his expression changed as he turned to Song Li and said in a soft voice, “Bad news.”

Both Song Li and Xiao Lin turned to look at him.

With a bitter expression on his face, Han Mu said, “Cai Yuan and Shi Qing have gathered a group of Blood Skull members and launched another cleansing operation against Hunter organizations outside of Shatter City. But actually, it seems that the real purpose of their operation is to rescue Hua Tian!”

“The Blood Skull!” Both Song Li and Xiao Lin’s expressions flickered, brows knitted.

Xiao Lin took a deep breath and said, “Things have just become complicated. I didn’t know Cai Yuan valued that kid so much that he would actually organize a new round of cleansing against us just to save him. We need to find him as soon as possible. Otherwise, it’ll be much more difficult if the Blood Skull people are here.”

“I’ll have a way to kill him as long as you can locate him for me!”

Song Li said through gritted teeth.

“If he dares to set foot in the wasteland, I’ll definitely be able to locate him. You can be assured of that!” Xiao Lin replied.

“Time is of the essence,” Song Li said. “We can’t afford to wait much longer!”

“That would depend on when Hua Tian would come to the wasteland.” Xiao Li also sensed the intractability of the matter.

Half a day passed as the three of them sat there and waited...

During this period of time, Han Mu took out his Sound Stone from time to time and listened to his subordinates’ reports regarding the Blood Skull’s newest actions.

Many Hunter organizations began to have second thoughts after receiving the news that the Blood Skull were conducting a new round of cleansing against them while their actual purpose was to save Hua Tian.

They gradually began to grovel to the Fang’s face, while secretly cringing away from the parts where the Blood Skull headed.

Their cowardly actions made Song Li stomp with fury. She claimed that she would wipe out each and every organization that dared to disobey her after this operation was over.

While Song Li was fuming with rage, the small, green snake within the jade pendant in Xiao Lin’s hand suddenly began to wiggle violently.

“He’s finally here!”

...

At sundown, Nie Tian ran like a shuttle in the boundless wasteland.

All of a sudden, the light shield around him, created by his jade bracelet, started to fluctuate slightly.

Alarmed, he immediately came to a stop and scanned his surroundings with his Heaven Eyes.

Several seconds later, he didn't discover anything worth noting, so he shook his head and moved on.

A long time after Nie Tian left, a thin bone rose out of the ground where he had stopped, on top of which was a gruesome, white banner.

On the banner was the pattern of a small, life-like, green snake, which seemed to be gently wiggling its body as the banner fluttered against the wind. It seemed rather interesting.

However, it only remained for a little while before it shrank back into the ground.

After running for several dozen more kilometers in the vast wasteland, Nie Tian's protective light shield once again fluctuated abnormally.

As he had done before, he stopped to scan the vicinity using his Heaven Eyes. Yet still, nothing was found.

He shook his head and moved on.

After that, the same thing happened a few more times where he had to stop and check, but just like before, he failed to find anything.

Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes could only detect the fluctuations of life auras and souls. Other subtle changes weren't in its detecting capability.

That was why he usually used them to determine if there were living creatures in his surroundings.

However, the multiple anomalies made him raise his guard, since he could feel that something bad was happening in the dark.

"Something is wrong. I haven't seen any Hunter organizations after entering the wasteland. Women like Song Li don't quit so

easily. She must have cooked up some other plans.”

“That Xiao Lin person can hide his true cultivation base. He’s also a tough figure. Now that he has made me his target, it doesn’t seem likely that he would just give up.”

“Could the abnormal fluctuations of my light shield have something to do with those two?”

With these thoughts, Nie Tian’s expression grew grim, as he seemed to have sensed the danger. Without any hesitation, he expanded the coverage of his Heaven Eyes to their limit, doing his best to detect any danger around him.

A few days passed...

He finally discovered the first team of Hunters after marching into the wasteland via his Heaven Eyes. He immediately changed directions to avoid them.

However, after marching about a thousand meters after the turn, he discovered another team of Hunters.

Therefore, he changed directions again.

Just like that, soon after every time he made a turn, he would run into new Hunter teams.

Nie Tian came to a realization. “From the look of it, I’m surrounded again.”

Chapter 302: Trapped in Multiple Blockades

With great caution, Nie Tian circled around the area, and soon realized that he was indeed under siege from every direction.

The blockade Song Li had set for him this time was even larger than last time. Therefore, even if he decided to use the long-range Starshift again, he might not be able to escape from it.

After a brief assessment, he was convinced that he might need to launch the long-range Starshift three times in a row to get out of the blockade.

However, by doing that, not only would he basically drain all of his star power, but he would also sustain severe damage to himself.

As tough and resilient as his body was, he doubted that he would be able to withstand the damage from three long-range Starshifts.

Even if he could escape from the siege, it would be very likely that he wouldn't even be able to walk at that point.

At that time, the Hunters in the vicinity would still be able to chase him down and catch him alive.

“This is a bit tricky.” Nie Tian frowned as he pondered the situation. Moments later, he decided not to use the long-range Starshift, but rather to find a weak point in the Hunters' blockade and break through from there.

Even if he wanted to use long-range Starshift, he would have to approach the Hunter groups that made up the blockade and cast the spell from there. Only by doing that would he be able to arrive far enough out of the blockade.

“Perhaps I won't need to use long-range Starshift at all. When I'm close enough to the blockade, I might have a chance at escaping just by using the short-range Starshift.”

With these thoughts in mind, Nie Tian soon targeted a group of

Hunters in the blockade via his Heaven Eyes.

It was a group of nine Hunters, with three late Heaven stage experts as their most powerful members.

Considering their battle prowess, they didn't have what it took to injure or capture Nie Tian, but they might be able to stall him for a short while.

Nie Tian rushed towards them without any hesitation.

One of the late Heaven stage Hunters addressed his team members, "Keep your eyes open, everyone! We've finally trapped that Hua Tian person again. This is a moment of success or failure!"

"We're not the strongest team. According to what we've learned from the Fang, that kid has a special tool that can detect life auras.

"He might be able to determine our battle prowess with it as well, so it's very likely that he'll choose to break through at our part of the blockade!

"The Fang even brought Xiao Lin here to deal with Hua Tian, which shows their great determination. Furthermore, the Blood Skull is coming at us. We need to capture Hua Tian as soon as possible so that we can withdraw from the wasteland and find cover in the hilly land before they get here.

"Ready yourselves. Strike him with your most powerful magics the moment he appears!"

While he was yapping nonstop, his pupils suddenly shrank as he screamed, "He's here!"

Three spiritual energy balls that looked like three clusters of misty gray energy suddenly appeared in his sight, and were flying towards him at an extremely fast speed.

"Watch out for those spiritual energy balls! Spread out, now!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Just as the man was shouting at his team members, the three spiritual energy balls, which contained all kinds of filth and impurities, exploded before reaching the group of Hunters, since the energy within them was too violent and unstable.

As multicolored lights sputtered everywhere, all nine Hunters jumped away in different directions, hoping to prevent the impurities from making contact with their spiritual power shields.

The man who had been talking took out his Sound Stone at the first possible moment and shouted into it, “Hua Tian is here with us!”

SHEW!

As he did, Nie Tian appeared in his sight.

Meanwhile, one of Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes rapidly floated towards a location behind the Hunters. Immediately afterwards, Nie Tian cast the Starshift spell, relying on the mysterious connection between him and that Heaven Eye.

In the location behind the nine Hunters, a small area became blurry and, in the next moment, Nie Tian appeared out of thin air.

Nie Tian didn’t even spare the Hunters a single glance. As soon as he appeared behind them, he began running at full speed.

PHEW!

All of a sudden, a thin, white bone rose out of the dark-brown ground in front of him.

On top of the bone was a white banner. On the banner was the pattern of a small, life-like, green snake, which squirmed as the banner fluttered against the wind.

Moments later, the banner began to a unleash faint light. At the same time, Xiao Lin’s voice rang out from within the small snake, “Hua Tian! I can’t wait to see how you’re going to escape this time!”

Suddenly, faint light spread out from the banner like ripples on water, creating a vertical spiritual power ward in front of Nie Tian.

BANG!!!

Nie Tian's dashing body rammed right into the strange ward. As he did, the originally misty and dim light ward suddenly began to shine with clear, bright light.

At this moment, the spiritual power ward seemed like a transparent water curtain, blocking Nie Tian's path.

Numerous complicated spell formations could be seen operating within the ward, which seemed to be strengthening its intensity and resilience.

The strong impact made Nie Tian's protective shield, which was created by his jade bracelet, twist and flicker out of shape.

He immediately realized that not only did the spiritual power ward stop him, but it even destroyed his jade bracelet.

With a cold harrumph, he rapidly put away his jade bracelet and created a chaotic magnetic field around him.

Without even thinking, he once again charged towards the spiritual power ward.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The moment his chaotic magnetic field, which was formed by various types of power, made contact with the spiritual power ward, the complicated spell formations within it began to fall apart as if they were being sliced by numerous invisible blades.

Moments later, the part of the ward in contact with Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field shattered and vanished.

SHEW!

Like a bolt of lightning, Nie Tian whizzed through the broken ward and kept running madly.

“I knew the ward wouldn’t stop you.” Xiao Lin’s voice once again echoed out from within the fluttering white flag. “But all I want it to do is to stall you for a bit and allow me to obtain your location.”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered upon hearing Xiao Lin’s voice echo out for a second time.

The reason was that this time he also heard another voice echo the same words from a further location, which made Nie Tian realize that Xiao Lin was rapidly approaching him!

He immediately sent one of his Heaven Eyes to inspect the source of Xiao Lin’s real voice.

Soon, that Heaven Eye of his discovered that Xiao Lin was gliding down from midair like a bird diving towards its prey.

Seconds later, as he approached the ground, the tip of his foot tapped on the ground, propelling him to shoot into the heavens again. Just like that, he repeated the ritual.

With every repetition, he could cover close to a thousand meters.

“Hua Tian! Don’t you imagine you’ll return to Shatter City alive!” At that moment, Song Li’s sharp voice rang out from another direction, where she and Han Mu were also dashing towards Nie Tian.

All of a sudden, clamors broke out from each and every direction. “Capture him alive!”

“He humiliated us good, and he got many of our brothers killed! If we let him live, how will we have the face to call ourselves Hunters and prey on explorers in the Void Illusion Mountain Range and here?!”

“If he somehow returns to Shatter City alive and improves his cultivation base, he’ll surely retaliate against us.”

“We can’t give him time to grow!”

It seemed that a large number of Hunters had received the

directions given by Xiao Lin and were converging upon Nie Tian at their fastest possible speed.

A handful of Greater Heaven stage organization leaders were wreathed in thrumming spiritual auras as they charged towards Nie Tian like slithering lightning bolts. Apparently, they were going all-out.

Nie Tian immediately realized that he was trapped inside multiple blockades.

The Hunters seemed much more cautious this time. Not only did they go all-out to lay their siege, but they had even planned it much better than the last time.

Nie Tian quickly found that all those who were charging towards him were Greater Heaven stage experts.

Meanwhile, more Heaven stage Hunters were waiting in further locations. From the way they were deployed, they had obviously formed two blockades around Nie Tian.

Nie Tian was now facing the Greater Heaven stage experts in the smaller blockade. Once he launched Starshift and jumped out of the smaller blockade, he would still end up inside the bigger blockade.

This two layered siege was the new tactic they had designed for Nie Tian's long-range Starshift, which he had used to escape last time.

“I'm in serious trouble this time.”

Chapter 303: Rip and Tear

“Hua Tian! You’re a dead man!” Dressed in short garments that highlighted her curves, Song Li came to a stop in a location several hundred meters away from Nie Tian, where she issued orders to other Hunters.

This was the first time she had stood in front of the numerous Hunter organization heads.

Although all of them had learned during the past two years that the leader of the Fang was a woman, none of them had ever seen her in person.

Song Li spent most of her time in the Void Illusion Mountain Range instead of the hilly area and wasteland, where the other Hunter organizations roamed about. Every time she had communicated with the other Hunter organizations, she had done it via Han Mu.

Therefore, all the major Hunter organizations had been rather curious about her appearance.

Many Hunters’ eyes lit up upon seeing her curvaceous body and the charm she unleashed through her gestures and expressions.

However, none of them dared to reveal their feelings to her face.

They all rapidly withdrew their gazes from Song Li and formed blockades around Nie Tian according to her instructions.

As Xiao Lin approached Nie Tian, he gradually lowered his speed, his eyes filled with gruesome coldness.

He wasn’t in a hurry at all, unlike the other Greater Heaven stage Hunters, who were eager to split Nie Tian in half. It seemed as if he had other plans.

Nie Tian suddenly came to a stop.

Standing in the icy, silent wasteland, he forced himself to calm

down. Then, he made a thorough assessment of the situation he was in using his seven Heaven Eyes and his own sight.

About ten Greater Heaven stage experts were now charging towards him, and they were all leaders of major Hunter organizations.

He wouldn't stand a chance fighting any one of them, much less facing their joint attack.

Aside from the ten of them, more less powerful Hunters were scattered in further locations, where they formed another blockade.

Most of them were at the middle or late Heaven stage, with only a handful of them being in the early Heaven stage like him.

Those Hunters didn't rush in on Nie Tian. Instead, they followed Song Li's orders and were slowly backing away from him.

From what Song Li could tell, now that Nie Tian was facing a joint attack from ten Greater Heaven stage experts, he would be forced to cast the long-range Starshift again.

Once he did, he would immediately disappear and reappear hundreds of meters, or even further, out of the small blockade.

Therefore, Song Li arranged for the Heaven stage Hunters to stretch their blockade to at least a 2 kilometer range, where they would be waiting for Nie Tian.

Furthermore, they were in the wasteland, not the hilly area, where there were many ups and downs in the terrain.

There was nothing to block people's sight here, so even if Nie Tian used his escape magic and escaped from their bigger blockade, those Hunters would be able to locate him immediately relying solely on their eyesight, and then converge on him.

At that time, if Nie Tian couldn't cast the long-range Starshift again, he would soon be surrounded again.

After taking a detailed mental picture of the entire battlefield, Nie Tian took a few seconds to calm himself before a fierce look appeared in his eyes as he made a new decision.

Like a long spear, he stood straight in place and waited with a poised expression as the Greater Heaven stage experts rapidly approached him.

Seeing that Nie Tian was standing still, the leader of the Blood Hand no longer felt urgency, and thus slowed down so that he could sneer at and taunt Nie Tian. “What, boy? Why are you not running this time? You’ve killed many of my Blood Hand brothers. I can’t wait to see if you can kill anymore of us today!”

Strong killing intent filled the Scorpion’s leader’s eyes as he said, “Many of our Scorpion brothers also died by your hands! If you’re really as powerful as you say you are, I dare you not to hide anymore, and fight us openly and fairly! I also want to see if you can kill another brother of mine!”

Each and every Greater Heaven stage expert had a sinister smile on their face as they closed in on Nie Tian, looking high-spirited.

“You killed my subordinates as well. It’s time for you to pay for their deaths!”

“Hahaha, now that you’ve been trapped by us, we won’t let you die so easily. How can we mete out justice for our dead brothers if we don’t make you suffer from the most horrible torture in the world?!”

“All of the Hunter organizations will witness your death today. And we’ll hear your miserable shrieks before you die!”

During the past few weeks, all the major Hunter organizations had begun to hate Nie Tian’s guts.

Not only had Nie Tian repeatedly stricken their search teams and killed their members, but he had even left them insulting messages written in blood to shock and awe them.

Their counterparts, the Hunter organizations that roamed near the Land of the Abandoned and Ash City, ridiculed their incompetence after hearing about it.

An early Heaven stage young man had single-handedly killed so many Hunters. Yet, none of the Hunter organizations that roamed near Shatter City had been able to do a thing to stop him, making them a big joke to the whole realm.

Whenever they thought about the humiliation they had received from Nie Tian recently, they felt so ashamed.

Today, they had finally trapped Nie Tian. Assuming that Nie Tian wouldn't be able to escape this time unless he grew wings and flew, they were all very eager to vent their hatred on him.

Seeing that they were almost upon him, Nie Tian laughed wildly and said, "Great! I'll let you see if I can kill more of your brothers!"

Just as the leader of the Blood Hand was about to enter his chaotic magnetic field, he launched a short-range Starshift.

SHEW!

In a flash, he vanished from the small blockade formed by Greater Heaven stage experts, and reappeared in a location more than 300 meters away.

Nie Tian unleashed intense killing intent as he approached the few Blood Hand members in the bigger blockade, who were the closest to him, his eyes emanating cold light.

SHEW!

He cast the short-range Starshift again and put a sizable distance between the screaming Greater Heaven stage experts behind him and himself.

"Go get him!"

"I can't believe this brat has such a miraculous movement technique!"

“Don’t let him get away!”

The Greater Heaven stage experts chased madly after Nie Tian.

Nie Tian, however, soon arrived in front of the part of the bigger blockade formed by seven Blood Hand members.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Two spiritual energy balls, which Nie Tian had created as he approached them, suddenly shot out from within his chaotic magnetic field and exploded where the seven Hunters were standing.

While multicolored light sputtered everywhere, Nie Tian let out a cold harrumph as he cast the short-range Starshift again. In the next moment, he appeared among his seven enemies.

Two of them accidentally tumbled into Nie Tian’s chaotic magnetic field while attempting to avoid the sputtering toxic lights.

They almost immediately lost control of their spiritual power and experienced a twisting pain in their heads. Their bodies felt as if they were being pulled by some kind of force, causing them to stagger.

One of them was at the early Heaven stage, and the other was at the middle Heaven stage. That being their level of strength, they were doomed to die when they were enveloped by Nie Tian’s chaotic magnetic field in a place so close to Nie Tian.

Nie Tian launched an attack at lightning speed; his burning fists rammed vigorously into their chests.

BANG!!! BANG!!!

Their bodies were thrown out of the chaotic magnetic field. Both of them were dead before even touching the ground.

Without sparing their corpses a single glance, Nie Tian leapt forward and dashed through their defensive line.

After sprinting a few hundred meters into the wasteland, Nie Tian ran into another group of Hunters. Seeing that Nie Tian was coming towards them like an enraged monster, they all hastily drew their spiritual tools that shone with gorgeous, multicolored light, and threw them towards Nie Tian.

Without uttering a word, Nie Tian cast another short-range Starshift, which allowed him to blink past the incoming spiritual tools and appear among the group of Hunters.

They had seen Nie Tian kill two members of the previous group of Hunters that had come to stop him, so they were prepared for such a move. They madly summoned their spiritual power and cast attacks towards Nie Tian. “Kill him!”

As soon as the multi-attributed spiritual power attacks entered Nie Tian’s magnetic field, their might was greatly weakened.

However, two lightning balls and one ice blade still somehow found Nie Tian.

He let out a muffled groan. Bearing the stabbing pain, he struck and killed one middle Heaven stage Hunter who was enveloped by his chaotic magnetic field.

After that, he charged forward without the slightest delay.

The few Hunters who were attacking Nie Tian with their delicate spiritual magics soon came to realize that the strange magnetic field around Nie Tian could greatly reduce the might of their attacks.

“Watch out for the magnetic field around him!”

“This brat has some weird magics!”

Meanwhile, Xiao Lin, who had been observing Nie Tian the entire time via his bone banners, didn’t join the Greater Heaven stage Hunters in chasing after Nie Tian.

At this moment, seeing that Nie Tian was about to break free

again, he chuckled in a strange way.

SHEW!

A white banner rose out of the ground, right in the middle of Nie Tian's escaping path.

As light shot out of the banner, a spiritual power ward was formed in front of Nie Tian, within which lay numerous complicated, beautiful spell formations.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Wreathed in his chaotic magnetic field, Nie Tian rammed into the ward. To his surprise, he didn't make it through.

The twisting force of the chaotic magnetic field became entangled with the spiritual power ward.

As the ward was gradually being torn open, Nie Tian's escape was also being delayed.

After hearing Song Li's loud command, more Hunter teams in the vicinity rapidly moved about and formed a new blockade in front of him.

BANG!

Xiao Lin's spiritual power ward finally burst, and Nie Tian charged through it, finding himself surrounded once again.

However, there weren't any Greater Heaven stage experts in the blockade. Thus, he cast another short-range Starshift, hoping to break through the blockade with the same method.

Chapter 304: A Turn of Events

Nie Tian continued to run madly through the boundless wasteland and use short-range Starshifts to break through the Hunters' blockages.

However, every time he was about to lose the tailing hunters, a banner would rise from the ground and form a spiritual power ward.

Every time, he would have to tear it open with his chaotic magnetic field, which would cost him some precious time.

During that time, the Hunters would follow Song Li's commands and form a new blockade around him.

With the help of his chaotic magnetic field and short-range Starshift, he had killed roughly a dozen Heaven stage Hunters as he repeatedly broke through the blockades.

However, he had also sustained injuries during his brief battles with the Hunters.

His different types of power were all quickly running low at the same time.

He soon realized that Song Li and Xiao Lin were probably waiting for him somewhere in this area, and their plan was working very well.

A large number of banners were scattered in the entire area.

Every time he encountered a banner, he was able to sense familiar energy fluctuations. Therefore, he could tell that those banners that hid underground were the reason why his whereabouts were being exposed.

When he had first entered the wasteland, he had to travel for a long time before he sensed a wave of abnormal energy fluctuations.

This meant that back then, the banners had been rather scattered, and not centered on him.

However, he was now running into those banners much more often than before, which meant that Xiao Lin had made arrangements ahead of him.

Although his Starshift magic allowed him to shift from one location to another within a split second, it was different from teleporting.

The spiritual power wards could cut off the invisible path between him and his destination, therefore forcing him to spend time grinding down the wards using his chaotic magnetic field.

After breaking through the blockades a few times in a row, Nie Tian was already covered in wounds and had consumed a significant amount of his spiritual power.

BANG!!!

Nie Tian formed a ball of flames using the Flame Spirit Incantation and killed a middle Heaven stage Hunter, who had entered his chaotic magnetic field, with it.

Before the man died, he flung a dagger from his hand, which pierced into Nie Tian's abdomen.

The dagger went three inches into his abdomen before it finally stopped. Despite the excruciating pain, Nie Tian pulled it out, cast it aside, and once again charged out of the blockade.

In a location about a hundred meters ahead of him, another white banner rose from the ground and, within seconds, a new spiritual power ward was formed.

Meanwhile, Hunter teams were staring at him fiercely like tigers, and rapidly converging on him from both flanks.

He had no other choice but to use his chaotic magnetic field to shred Xiao Lin's spiritual power ward.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The moment his chaotic magnetic field made contact with the spiritual power ward, the ward distorted out of shape.

The five mysterious, complicated spell formations within the ward seemed to be sliced by sharp blades; the fine spiritual power threads forming the patterns were severed.

It wasn't long before the five spell formations were broken into pieces, and that was when the ward lost its effectiveness.

Nie Tian passed through it and dashed toward Shatter City at the fastest speed possible.

However, even after such a short delay, he found that a large number of Hunters had formed a new blockade where he was heading.

Nie Tian could only pick a weaker team of Hunters and use the same method to break through their part of the blockade.

If someone could look down from midair, they would see numerous Hunters forming a large, dense net in front of Nie Tian.

Nie Tian, however, was like a trapped beast. Even though he could burst through the net every time, he would be distracted by other tricks, and a new net would rapidly form around him again.

Somewhat frustrated, his expression become sinister as he struck down more and more Heaven stage Hunters.

Just like that, he continued to consume his strength and sustain injuries. Exhaustion gradually appeared in his eyes.

In a distant location, Song Li came to a stop next to Xiao Lin, so did Han Mu.

Seeing the two, Xiao Lin quickly hid his smile and said with serious expression, "This brat is quite tough to catch. I think we need to raise the reward for my service. I've used far too many precious materials on him. I've lost twelve banners which I spent a

long time to forge. They alone cost more than what you're offering me."

"But we had a deal, Mr. Xiao!" Han Mu said loudly.

Xiao Lin snorted coldly and said, "If you don't agree, I won't do anything anymore. Without me to stall him, I doubt that you'll be able to form another blockade around him by yourselves."

"Alright." Song Li said with an indifferent expression. "As long as you can help me catch Hua Tian, everything is negotiable. He made both of us look like fools. I bet you hate him every bit as much as I do."

With these words, she halted and snuck a glance at Xiao Lin. Then, she pursed her lips into a smile and said with a charming voice, "Mr. Xiao, we've come so far. I believe you and me both don't want to let Hua Tian walk away, right?"

Xiao Lin's eyes flickered, but he didn't say a word.

"You should have seen Hua Tian's unique talent already. Our previous encounters aside, he has killed more than a dozen early and middle Heaven stage Hunters so far in this operation alone.

"From the look of it, more Hunters will die by his hands.

"You and I both know that his cultivation base is only at the early Heaven stage.

"However, he can kill cultivators at his level without breaking a sweat. Even killing middle Heaven stage cultivators doesn't take him much time.

"Do you think a man like him would let it go after being cornered so closely by us, if he somehow escapes our siege?"

"If he survives this time, and enters the Greater Heaven stage someday, even when he's only at the early Greater Heaven stage, I'm afraid no one who participated in this operation will be able to survive his vengeance.

“That includes you, Mr. Xiao!”

Song Li talked on and on in a way that was as if she wasn't even worried that Xiao Lin would change his mind at all. She was convinced that Xiao Lin only wanted more return for his contribution, and he had never truly wanted to let Nie Tian go.

After hearing Song Li's opinions, Xiao Lin looked into the distance, not saying a word.

He was looking at Nie Tian, who was charging into another group of Heaven stage Hunters. He could see nothing but fear in the Hunters' eyes when they realized that Nie Tian had targeted them, as if they knew they faced certain death.

At this moment, even the Greater Heaven stage experts who had been chasing after Nie Tian and giving him great pressure the entire time had fallen silent.

Those leaders of the Blood Hand, the Scorpion, and the other Hunter organizations had been arrogant and rampant at first.

However, at this moment, none of them were laughing or dared to taunt Nie Tian again, as if they were afraid that, if they did that, Nie Tian would break through the part of the blockade formed by their members.

Even though those leaders had deep hatred towards Nie Tian and wanted to kill him every bit as much as Song Li and Xiao Lin did, deep down, they were also nervous and fearful when facing Nie Tian.

It was very rare for a man to be so powerful at such a young age. If he could enter higher cultivation levels in the future, he could definitely become the most eye-catching figure in the entire Realm of Split Void.

They even had a feeling that ruthless men like Li Langfeng, who were known throughout the Realm of Split Void and who none of the Blood Skull, Wild Fire, and Dark Moon dared to mess with,

weren't as deadly as the Nie Tian in front of them.

Xiao Lin took a deep breath and said, "I've got to admit that you're right about that. Even if it weren't for you, I would have gone all-out to kill him. He's a guest elder of the Blood Skull. You know how much I hate the Blood Skull. If we let him live, he'll probably grow into a powerful weapon in the Blood Skull's pocket, and become an even bigger threat than Pei Qiqi.

"I won't give a man like him the time to grow."

Song Li chuckled softly and said, "Rest assured. I know you've thrown in a lot of valuable resources to catch him. I'll double what you've lost after the whole thing is over. I just want you to know that we're in this together, and we don't need to hide anything from each other."

Xiao Lin nodded "Yeah, that kid has consumed a substantial amount of his strength, and he's suffering from more and more injuries." Then, he said confidently, "As long as there are no mishaps, he'll run out of power in an hour, and won't be able to cast that short-range movement magic again. At that time, his death will be imminent."

Song Li turned to Han Mu and said, "Han Mu, send word to those organization leaders; tell them to make a final push. When this whole thing is over, the Fang will withdraw from here and garrison in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. They will have the hilly area and the wasteland between Shatter City and the Void Illusion Mountain Range to themselves for a year. They can hunt all they want."

"Understood!" Han Mu immediately passed on the message via his Sound Stone.

BANG!

After bursting through another spiritual power ward, Nie Tian seemed somewhat hesitant, looking at the new blockade that had

already formed in front of him.

He didn't charge into it instantly.

He briefly examined himself and found that his spiritual power was only at thirty percent of its peak state now.

There was less than twenty percent of the flame power left in his vortex of flame power, and less than thirty percent of the star power left in his vortex of star power.

Even a significant part of his wood power had been consumed to contain his injuries.

As for his physical body, he was now covered in bloody wounds; not a single piece of skin was undamaged.

Fortunately, the wood essence had been flowing out of his vortex of wood power and nurturing his fleshy wounds. Therefore, even though the wounds seemed very serious, they were still bearable, and he had no problem moving about.

It was just that every time he was about to lose the pursuing Hunters, Xiao Lin would create obstacles for him and waste his time, thus giving the Hunters an opportunity to form a new blockade around him.

If he continued doing what he had been doing, he would soon drain every last bit of his power and be captured by the Hunters.

It would be a slow death.

He had been monitoring the consumption of his star power closely, and had been very careful when spending it.

The star power he had left was still enough for him to launch a long-range Starshift, but by doing that, he would use up his star power completely, preventing him from launching another Starshift, long-range or short range.

Furthermore, his body would have to suffer from a strong backlash. It would still be a question as to whether he would be

able to run.

At this moment, Nie Tian was facing the tough decision between dying a slow but certain death or risking a quicker death by launching a long-range Starshift and blinking to a location two kilometers away.

“What the hell, let’s do this!” After a moment of pondering, he finally decided to make the desperate move.

However, at that very moment, the miserable cries of Hunters rang out from a distant location.

The Hunters in that area soon realized what was happening and started screaming. “Li Langfeng!!”

Standing very far from that area, Nie Tian saw Li Langfeng, whose face was as pale as paper, coughing nonstop, via his Heaven Eyes. At this moment, he was striking down every Hunter he ran into.

“How come he’s here too?”

Chapter 305: A Sudden Change in the Situation

Li Langfeng was shaking his bell as he walked among a group of Hunters, as if he was strolling idly in his courtyard.

CHING!

The crisp sound of the bell echoed out. However, in the ears of the few Heaven stage Hunters around him, the sound was like a summons directly from hell.

As soon as the bell rang, their spiritual power shields exploded. As they hastily jumped away from him, their faces became distorted, and blood spurted out of their mouths.

Li Langfeng coughed a few more times. His face was so ghastly that it seemed as if he could die any moment.

All the Hunters in the area looked as if they had run into a ghost in broad daylight when they caught sight of him.

“Li Langfeng!” With a swift movement, Xiao Lin turned to look at Song Li and asked with a grim expression on his face, “What’s he doing here?”

Unlike Song Li, Xiao Lin was a loner, and not very well-informed.

He hadn’t been to the Void Illusion Mountain Range lately, so it was natural that he didn’t know that Li Langfeng had also been looking for Hua Tian.

Song Li’s charming face was icy cold as she said, “He has a feud with Hua Tian as well. I don’t know what Hua Tian did to offend him in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, but I know that he has been looking for Hua Tian. It’s just that I didn’t expect him to leave the Void Illusion Mountain Range and seek Hua Tian out here.”

Xiao Lin frowned. “I don’t understand. If Hua Tian is his enemy

too, shouldn't he be our ally? Why would he start killing Fang members and members of other Hunter organizations the moment he appeared?"

Song Li shook her head. "I'm not quite sure either. Will you keep a close watch on Hua Tian, Mr. Xiao?" With these words, she headed directly towards Li Langfeng with Han Mu by her side.

Moments later, she and Han Mu stopped in front of Li Langfeng, along with four other Greater Heaven stage Fang members.

Li Langfeng, who had been slaughtering his way towards Nie Tian's location, came to a stop and glanced at Song Li curiously.

Since he had roamed about in the Void Illusion Mountain Range for years, he had heard of the Fang as a new Hunter organization, along with the fact that their leader was a mysterious woman.

However, he had never truly interacted with the Fang. Of the few times Fang members had encountered him in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, they had voluntarily given way for him every time.

In his eyes, even though the Fang was more powerful than the other Hunter organizations, it was still only a Hunter organization.

He, on the other hand, was one of the few Dark Moon's most revered guest elders. The Dark Moon had treated him with great care, like he was a real elder.

There were only a handful of figures in the entire Realm of Split Void that he revered, and Song Li wasn't one of them.

"Mr. Li." Song Li said respectfully with a bow. She didn't seem enraged by the deaths of the several Fang members. "I heard that you're also looking for Hua Tian. It seems that we share the same goal, and our interests coincide. Since we both want him dead, it doesn't really matter who gets to kill him. As a matter of fact..."

Before she could finish, Li Langfeng waved his hand and stopped her. "I think you're mistaken. I do have a feud with Hua Tian, but

you and I don't share the same goal. I don't want to kill him. On the contrary, not only do I need him alive, but I need him to stay alive for a long time.”

“Why?” Song Li was surprised.

Li Langfeng didn't give her face at all, and said indifferently, “I don't need to explain myself to you. I'll take Hua Tian away with me. Simple as that. You...”

He scanned around and raised his voice. “And the other Hunter organizations better not stand in my way. Otherwise, you'll share the same fate as the ones I just killed!”

Upon hearing these words, Song Li immediately grew angry and said in a loud, womanly voice, “Mr. Li! I can agree to let you torture Hua Tian, but you'll have to give him back to me so that I can kill him!”

Li Langfeng shook his head. “I'm afraid you didn't understand what I meant. Hua Tian is only useful to me alive, and I intend to keep him alive for a long time. I won't allow you to kill him!”

“Are you serious?” Song Li asked with a cold face.

“Yes, I am,” Li Langfeng answered with no facial expression. “From now on, Hua Tian is mine. Anyone who attempts to kill him will be my enemy!”

With these words, he turned and shot towards Nie Tian's location like a bolt of lightning.

“Miss?” Han Mu asked in a soft voice.

Staring at the dashing-away Li Langfeng, Song Li said, “He is powerful, but he's still just one person.”

Han Mu forced a smile and said, “If we do engage in battle with this poison expert, we can't be sure that we'll win. Even if we do win, we'll suffer devastating casualties. The men and resources we brought here are very limited, and we don't have Worldly realm

experts to secretly watch over us. You picked the Realm of Split Void as the place to temper yourself. Do you really want to jeopardize your real goal for a man like Hua Tian?”

Li Langfeng’s meddling made him grow anxious and start to have second thoughts.

Song Li took a deep breath and said with a surprisingly calm tone, “You’re wrong about that. Hua Tian is no longer just an enemy to me. In my eyes, he’s a brand-new challenge for me! If I can’t capture and kill him, I’ll live in frustration for a long time, which will prevent my cultivation from transcending to the peak!

“Only after I settle my feud with him will I be able to focus on facing the upcoming challenges and carrying out my plan.”

Han Mu didn’t try to persuade her anymore.

After mulling over her words for a short while, he nodded briefly and said, “Since you’ve made up your mind, let’s do it then.”

Without any delay, he passed on Song Li’s will to all the Hunters via his Sound Stone, telling them that their operation to capture Nie Tian remained unchanged, and if Li Langfeng stood in their way, they should view him as an enemy.

All the Fang members gave their response as soon as they received the message.

However, the other Hunter organizations didn’t plan to carry out Song Li’s intentions so blindly. Each and every one of them was shocked the moment they heard that Song Li wanted them to go to war against Li Langfeng in order to capture Hua Tian.

Many of them were hesitant, and went to some lengths to persuade Han Mu not to go to war with Li Langfeng via their Sound Stones.

Li Langfeng was a notorious name in the entire Realm of Split Void. He was a man that even the Dark Moon, Wild Fire, and Blood Skull didn’t want to mess with.

They were only Hunter organizations who made their living in areas where the three major forces didn't have the energy to govern, so none of them dared to offend Li Langfeng.

The Fang was hard to deal with, but so was Li Langfeng. Therefore, in their eyes, they couldn't afford to offend either of them.

CLANK!

Another sweet-sounding toll echoed out as a Fang member who stood in Li Langfeng's way was sent flying backwards by an invisible force.

BOOM!

When the Fang member landed, he had blood oozing out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and died a horrible death.

"I'll kill whoever dares to stand in my way." Li Langfeng said indifferently. "It won't matter if you're a member of the Fang or any other Hunter organization."

Like a bolt of lightning, he charged towards Nie Tian.

Li Langfeng's words evoked Han Mu's fighting spirit. Without waiting for Song Li to give the order, he shouted into his Sound Stone, "Kill him! Anyone who opposes us is our enemy! Annihilate him! You should all understand who you are and why you are here! I can't believe a man like him actually dares to hamper our lady's plan! The bastard needs to be taught a lesson!"

"Understood!"

"Copy that!"

Almost all of the Fang members' confidence was reaffirmed after hearing Han Mu's words. They all ditched Nie Tian and swarmed toward Li Langfeng.

Then, Han Mu messaged Xiao Lin and the other Hunter organizations, saying, "We don't insist on you fighting Li

Langfeng, but we want you to focus all of your energy on capturing Hua Tian!”

With these words, he turned to look at Song Li and said, “Miss, perhaps we’d better make a slight change to your plan, and not insist on capturing Hua Tian alive. Since that bastard Li Langfeng wants him alive, we might as well kill him directly. What do you say?”

Song Li nodded. “Alright!”

The sudden change in the situation confused Nie Tian. “What? How come all the Fang members are fighting Li Langfeng?”

Originally, he had been at a dead end, and was prepared to make the desperate move.

He had never expected that Li Langfeng would suddenly appear and start killing Fang members without giving face to anyone.

The fact that the Fang and Li Langfeng hadn’t reached a mutual understanding delighted and surprised Nie Tian at the same time.

Now that all the Fang members that had been in his way had run off to form a siege around Li Langfeng, the blockade around Nie Tian was no longer intact.

He immediately saw a silver lining.

Being surrounded by numerous Fang members, Li Langfeng saw that the other Hunter organizations intended to kill Nie Tian, so he thundered, “Whichever of you insects dare to kill Hua Tian will be my worst enemy. I swear I’ll find them, crush their bones and flay them alive!

“However, if any of you can catch Hua Tian and hand him to me alive, I’ll be deep in your debt. Whatever you want, we can talk!”

After hearing these words, all the Hunters who were going to launch joint attacks against Nie Tian began to have second thoughts again.

Now, they were facing two choices. Either they make enemies with Li Langfeng, or they enrage Song Li from the Fang.

All of the organization leaders had headaches over the tough situation, and didn't know what to do.

However, Nie Tian seized the opportunity and sped away.

“Chase after him! No matter what, we can't let him escape!”

Chapter 306: Meeting

A metal war chariot was charging across the open wasteland, on which a large black banner was fluttering against the wind.

On the black banner was the pattern of a giant skull, which unleashed eye-catching scarlet light in the sharp, cold wind, giving it a terrifying appearance.

Sticking out of both sides of the war chariot were incomparably sharp, long spears, which emanated icy-cold light.

A handful of people, including Liu Kang, Shi Qing, Cai Yuan, and Li Ye, were standing on the war chariot.

Like Hua Mu's Lightning Shuttle, this war chariot was also a transportation spiritual tool.

These kinds of spiritual tools were usually powered by enormous amounts of spirit stones; some could sail through the heavens and others could travel thousands of miles on the ground.

In the nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars, only powerful Qi warrior sects with deep-rooted foundations, and a few independent cultivators with high cultivation bases, possessed these kinds of spiritual tools.

The war chariot was a low-grade transportation spiritual tool, since it couldn't soar through the sky.

Even though the Blood Skull was one of the three most powerful forces in the Realm of Split Void, compared to the powerful Qi warrior sects in the other nine realms, which had thousands of years of history, their strength and deposits were still rather shallow.

Therefore, they only possessed these low-grade transportation spiritual tools.

However, throughout the entire Realm of Split Void, only the

Blood Skull, Wild Fire, and Dark Moon possessed these kinds of transportation spiritual tools.

None of the Hunter organizations or tough rogue cultivators had enough wealth and connections to purchase one of them.

“Strange,” Shi Qing said with a frown. “It’s been days since we left Shatter City, but we still haven’t come across a single Hunter organization. Even if they’ve learned about our operation, they shouldn’t have cleared out of this region so quickly.”

They had left Shatter City and had been traveling at a high speed for a few days already. They had encountered quite a few explorers on their way, but they hadn’t come across a single Hunter in all this time.

This obviously didn’t make sense to them.

After all, they didn’t know that all the Hunter organizations in this region had been summoned by Song Li, and joined the Fang’s operation to capture Nie Tian in the border area where the wasteland met the hilly land.

Since that area was rather far from Shatter City, it was natural that they hadn’t encountered any Hunters so far.

Li Ye opened his flask, threw his head back and gulped down a few mouthfuls of liquor. Seeming somewhat tipsy, he said, “I wonder how Hua Tian is doing. Those despicable rats! What the hell did Hua Tian do that made them so mad that they needed to chase after him together?”

Surprise could be seen in Liu Kang’s eyes as he said, “We just learned from our scouts that Hua Tian is still alive. Considering his cultivation base, it’s very impressive that he made it so far. I hope he can hang on till we get there.”

As a late Greater Heaven stage expert, Liu Kang had lead a few cleansing operations against the Hunter organizations outside Shatter City.

Although this operation had been arranged in a bit of hurry, as a seasoned raid-leader, he was confident that they would be able to dominate the situation and bring Nie Tian back to Shatter City as long as he was still alive.

His only worry was that Nie Tian might be killed or captured by the Fang or other Hunter organizations before they could get to his location.

As a matter of fact, after learning of Nie Tian's deeds from Shi Qing and Cai Yuan, Liu Kang had been looking forward to meeting him.

Not only was Nie Tian a guest elder of the Blood Skull, and nephew of a close friend of Li Ye's master, but he had also saved Cai Yuan's life in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Therefore, for both organizational and personal reasons, Cai Yuan couldn't just sit back and watch when Nie Tian was trapped in a dangerous situation.

Cai Yuan, who had remained silent so far, said, "Uncle Liu, Uncle Shi, let's push the speed of this war chariot to the limit. I think we should try to get there as soon as possible instead of limiting our speed just to keep pace with the others. Considering the strength of the several of us, we should be able to handle those Hunters for some time. We can't afford to lose the best timing by insisting on arriving at the same time."

The reason why they hadn't been traveling at full speed was to keep pace with the other Blood Skull members.

Finding no trace of Nie Tian or his pursuers after traveling for a few days, Cai Yuan had a bad feeling about Nie Tian's situation, and thus made a decision.

Without turning his head, Li Ye looked at Cai Yuan out of the corner of his eyes and said, "I didn't know that you were actually a conscientious person."

In Li Ye's eyes, Cai Yuan had been lusting after his senior martial sister, Pei Qiqi, so he had never been fond of him.

He had only decided to come with him because Nie Tian was in danger, Pei Qiqi was in the middle of secluded cultivation, and their master hadn't returned yet.

Now, he realized that Cai Yuan was indeed going all-out to rescue Nie Tian, and he wasn't just putting on a show.

Also because of this, his attitude towards Cai Yuan began to change.

With a composed expression, Cai Yuan glanced at Shi Qing and said, "Not only is Hua Tian the Blood Skull's guest elder, but he also saved my life once. Technically speaking, my sister and Uncle Shi only survived because Li Langfeng made Hua Tian his primary target. I'm not an ingrate. Now that he's in danger, it's only right I step up and exert all my power to rescue him."

Li Ye nodded and didn't say another word, quite content with Cai Yuan's attitude.

After hearing Cai Yuan's words, Liu Kang hesitated for a moment before saying with a nod, "Okay! Since Hua Tian has helped the Blood Skull significantly, I know what to do!"

With these words, he took out a large number of spirit stones and spread them over the bottom of the war chariot, pushing its speed to the limit.

...

BOOM!

A spiritual energy ball that was filled with all kinds of toxins exploded, sending multicolored lights flying in every direction.

An early Heaven stage Hunter was standing right where the spiritual energy ball exploded. Almost simultaneously, his protective light shield shattered.

The extremely strong blast from the explosion turned him into a bloody mess. By the time he was enveloped by corrosive toxins, he was already at his last gasp.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Two thin golden swords suddenly flew into Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field, aimed right at Nie Tian's chest.

Nie Tian snorted coldly as he shot clusters of flames out of his punching fist toward the thin golden swords.

BANG! BANG!

Upon contact, the thin golden swords bounced straight out of Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field.

However, a few fragmented golden sparks sputtered and found Nie Tian's shoulder.

Nie Tian's skin was immediately ripped open as a bunch of fine wounds appeared on his shoulder.

Not very far behind Nie Tian, the leader of the Blood Hand was pursuing him. His right arm had expanded to be twice as thick as his left arm, and wisps of a bloody aura were swirling within his palm. With strong killing intent, he shouted, "Stop running already!"

Nie Tian let out a cold harrumph. "If I don't die here today, I'll come back and slaughter every last Blood Hand member, including you!"

As the man came closer, Nie Tian summoned his star power and cast another short-range Starshift.

In the blink of an eye, he appeared in a location more than three hundred meters away, putting a sizable distance between the Blood Hand's leader and himself.

A few members of the Scorpion happened to be in this area, and thus rapidly converged on Nie Tian. "Hey, brat! Don't you imagine

that you can get away from us!”

Meanwhile, another white banner rose from the ground. The green snake pattern on the banner unleashed a misty light into its surroundings and formed another spiritual power ward in front of Nie Tian.

With a single look at the banner, Nie Tian decisively dashed off in another direction.

Even though many Hunters were still chasing after him and attempting to flank him, since their main force, all of the Fang members, had run off to attack Li Langfeng, their blockade was no longer watertight. Therefore, Nie Tian could find loopholes in the blockade and break through from there, saving him the trouble of dealing with Xiao Lin’s spiritual power wards.

Since the Hunters’ blockade was no longer impenetrable, Nie Tian also gave up the idea of escaping by casting a long-range Starshift.

On the other hand, his current stock of star power also wouldn’t allow him to do that.

Li Langfeng’s appearance had created an opportunity for him to break through the leaky blockade using only the short-range Starshifts.

As he did, he struck a few times and killed a few more Heaven stage Hunters.

Running through the open wasteland at full speed, Nie Tian gradually saw a hope of escape.

Since, according to his estimation, his reserve of star power was only barely enough for him to cast three more short-range Starshifts, he would only use it when he ran into Greater Heaven stage experts.

Whenever he faced Heaven stage Hunters, he would always break through using other skills, even though there were late Heaven

stage experts among them, and it would mean more wounds added to his body.

As time went by, his fleshy wounds worsened, and his various types of power were also on the verge of running out.

Face covered in blood, he panted heavily. Even his pupils had become as red as blood.

In his view, this entire heaven and earth was cloaked by a shade of redness, giving everything a bloody look.

All of a sudden, Nie Tian heard a loud sound. In the next moment, he saw via one of his Heaven Eyes that a giant war chariot made of only metal was charging through the wasteland like a rampaging, frenzied bull.

His blood-red pupils immediately shone with the light of excitement as an ecstatic expression appeared on his face. “The Blood Skull!”

Chapter 307: Stunning Battle Gains

SHEW!

After seeing the Blood Skull's metal war chariot, as well as the familiar faces on it, Nie Tian cast the short-range Starshift again.

In a flash, he broke through the Hunters' blockade and shot towards the metal war chariot like a bolt of lightning.

None of the Hunters who were pursuing Nie Tian had their own Heaven Eyes, and thus they weren't aware of the appearance of the war chariot yet.

After having chased after Nie Tian for a long time, all the Hunter organization leaders could sense Nie Tian's weariness.

"He's only hanging by a thread! Come on everyone! Let's get him, dead or alive, so that at least we can please one of Li Langfeng or the Fang!"

"Let's go!"

The few Greater Heaven stage experts were able to perceive the spiritual power fluctuations Nie Tian emanated, and thus knew that when he launched the last few strikes, the speed at which his spiritual power circulated had become noticeably slower.

This meant that Nie Tian was on the verge of burning out his spiritual power.

Both Li Langfeng and Song Li didn't want Nie Tian to flee back to Shatter City. They shared the same view on this matter.

These Hunter organization leaders had been searching for Nie Tian for weeks, and had lost many of their subordinates, so they also wanted to mete out justice for themselves.

Dead or alive, they were determined to get Nie Tian!

Therefore, they pursued him madly.

“Hua Tian!” Standing in the war chariot, Shi Qing’s pupils contracted as he caught sight of Nie Tian, who was running towards them at full speed.

Upon hearing his shout, Liu Kang, Cai Yuan, and Li Ye also looked forward with rapt attention.

A dashing figure covered in blood appeared on the distant horizon of the open wasteland.

As he came closer, Li Ye got a clear view of Nie Tian. His expression immediately flickered as he exclaimed loudly, “He’s sustained serious injuries!”

At this moment, Nie Tian’s pupils were as red as blood, and he was covered in close to a hundred fine wounds; some of the cuts were so deep that they reached his bones! Bathed in blood, he looked like a god of slaughter.

Even still, endless fighting spirit could still be seen hovering within his scarlet pupils.

He unleashed an invisible killing intent into his surroundings, making him seem extremely ferocious and bloodthirsty.

Liu Kang, who wasn’t familiar with Nie Tian, took a deep look at Nie Tian before he said with a astonished tone, “Such a strong killing aura! How many men did he kill to give him such a strong killing aura?!”

Shi Qing and Cai Yuan remained silent as the war chariot under their feet kept charging forwards at full speed.

SHEW!

When they were close enough to Nie Tian, Shi Qing and Liu Kang jumped out of the war chariot almost simultaneously.

As soon as they leapt into the air, the metal war chariot slowed down and came to a stop about ten meters in front of Nie Tian.

Shi Qing and Liu Kang landed right beside Nie Tian, one to his

left and one to his right.

“How are you doing, Hua Tian?” Shi Qing asked, seeming rather concerned.

Nie Tian finally loosened up as he smiled embarrassedly and said with a nod, “Relax, I’m not going to die.”

“That’s good,” Liu Kang said. He subconsciously looked at the sizable leather pouch hanging on Nie Tian’s waist and asked, “What’s this?”

He heard clanking sounds and sensed subtle fluctuations of spatial energy coming from the leather pouch.

“Bracelets of holding.” As Nie Tian answered, Cai Yuan and Li Ye also jumped out of the war chariot. They rapidly approached him and attempted to support him with their hands.

Nie Tian shook his head. “I’m fine.” As he took the large leather pouch from his waist, the wounds on his arm were torn open, causing blood to drip down his arm. “Here. Would you please convert them into spirit stones and accumulate my contribution points when we get back?”

The moment Cai Yuan grabbed the leather pouch, his expression flickered, since he immediately felt how heavy it was.

Under Shi Qing, Liu Kang, and Li Ye’s gazes, Cai Yuan opened the pouch and looked into it. Immediately afterward, a flabbergasted look appeared on his face.

Curious about what was in there, Shi Qing, Liu Kang, and Li Ye also looked into the pouch, and then were also taken aback.

“There are so many of them!” Li Ye exclaimed. “Hua Tian, you looted all these bracelets of holding from your enemies? God! How many people have you killed?!”

Only after hearing Li Ye’s exclamation did Shi Qing and Liu Kang snap back to reality.

Shi Qing rubbed his forehead as he turned to Liu Kang and said, “There are at least 50 bracelets of holding in here. From what I can tell, most of these bracelets of holding belonged to early and middle Heaven stage cultivators. However, some of them seem to have belonged to late Heaven stage cultivators.”

Liu Kang stared at Nie Tian like he was looking at a monster. Only after a short while did he nod towards Shi Qing, agreeing with his opinion.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

At that moment, the leaders of the Blood Hand, the Scorpion, and the other pursuing Hunter organizations arrived.

Their expression flickered as soon as they saw the metal war chariot, and Shi Qing and Liu Kang who were standing in front of them. “It’s the Blood Skull!”

They exchanged a glance with each other. Without saying a word, they turned and fled in different directions, giving up their pursuit of Nie Tian.

“Who else is after you?” Liu Kang asked Nie Tian with a soft tone.

Shi Qing was also curious. “How come we don’t see members from the Fang?”

“The Fang got into a fight with Li Langfeng,” Nie Tian answered, “so they probably won’t show up here any time soon. Aside from these leaders of the major Hunter organizations, their Heaven stage subordinates are probably also in this area.”

Shi Qing’s expression flickered. “Li Langfeng is after you too?”

After a moment of hesitation, Nie Tian explained why the Fang were fighting Li Langfeng to them in detail.

After hearing Nie Tian’s explanation, Shi Qing turned to Liu Kang and said, his eyes filled with a strange look, “Our men should

be here at any moment now. From the look of it, the battle between Li Langfeng and the Fang will go on for some time. That being the case, you and I can take advantage of this period of time and hunt some Hunters.”

Liu Kang nodded and said, “Let’s do it.”

With these words, the two Greater Heaven stage experts moved out to pursue the fleeing Hunter organization leaders.

Cai Yuan had his arm around Nie Tian’s shoulders and said to Li Ye, “Let’s help Nie Tian into the war chariot.”

“Alright.” The two of them supported Nie Tian’s two shoulders and helped him onto the war chariot without his consent.

Standing in the war chariot, Nie Tian discovered that another Greater Heaven stage expert was silently sitting up straight in a corner of the war chariot.

The man seemed to be at the late Greater Heaven stage, the same as Liu Kang. Seeing Nie Tian step closer, a bright light shone across his narrowed eyes as he nodded towards Nie Tian.

At that time, Nie Tian discovered that he wasn’t wearing garments that had the Blood Skull’s sigils on them.

“This is Uncle Xue Long. Just like you, he’s also one of our guest elders.” Cai Yuan introduced him to Nie Tian.

Nie Tian felt deep veneration upon hearing these words.

He was well-aware that anyone who was given the honor of becoming the Blood Skull’s guest elder must not be an ordinary person.

Only the truly powerful ones would have the privilege to be invited and become a guest elder of the Blood Skull.

The incomparably fierce Li Langfeng was the Dark Moon’s guest elder, and his battle prowess even surpassed Ma Jiu, the Dark Moon’s highest commander in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Even though Li Langfeng and Ma Jiu were both at the late Greater Heaven stage, as far as Nie Tian saw it, Li Langfeng could probably beat three Ma Jius in a battle.

Since Xue Long was a guest elder of the Blood Skull, it was very likely that he was an expert as strong as Li Langfeng.

He bowed respectfully. "Greetings, Uncle Xue Long."

Xue Long waved his hand. "No need to stand on ceremony." Then, he looked Nie Tian up and down with his narrowed eyes before saying, "You're better than me when I was at your stage. When I was at the early Heaven stage, I could hardly kill one middle Heaven stage enemy. You, however, single-handedly killed a large number of Heaven stage enemies. Aside from that, you even killed a handful of late Heaven stage enemies. I couldn't compete with that."

With these words, Xue Long fell silent and slowly closed his eyes, as if he was cultivating some secret magic.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, didn't intend to explain how he had done it either. He just felt relieved after learning that Xue Long was also a guest elder of the Blood Skull.

At that moment, he came to understand why Shi Qing and Liu Kang had left the noble Cai Yuan and the lofty Li Ye, and chased after the Hunter organization leaders without the slightest hesitation.

Xue Long must be the reason.

"Sit down, and take these medicinal pills." Li Ye forced Nie Tian to sit down by pressing against his shoulder. Before Nie Tian had a chance to say anything, he took out a handful of multicolored medicinal pills and stuffed them into his mouth.

Nie Tian knew that Li Ye wouldn't harm him, so he cooperated and swallowed all the medicinal pills.

"Hua Tian, how many Hunters did you kill along the way?"

Curiosity was stretched across Cai Yuan's face.

“You saw the bracelets of holding in that leather pouch. Aside from those, there are probably another twenty-something Hunters that died by my hands.” Nie Tian sighed and added with a regretful tone, “It's a pity that I was in a hurry to break through their blockade, so I didn't have the time to collect those Hunters' bracelets of holding.”

“There are twenty more!?” A bitter expression appeared at the corner of Cai Yuan's mouth. He shook his head and whispered to himself, “Is this guy some kind of monster, or what?”

Even Xue Long, who was cultivating with his eyes closed, had a slight change in his facial expression as he said in his heart, “Monstrous battle prowess indeed.”

Chapter 308: Turn Back

Nie Tian sat silently in the metal war chariot, activating the medicinal efficacy of the pills Li Ye had given him with rapt attention while Cai Yuan and Li Ye indulged in smalltalk.

Eyes closed, Xue Long also sat in silence.

Before long, Nie Tian sensed numerous wisps of energy flowing out of the pills. There were two kinds of energy. One was flesh power, which flowed to his wounds and stabilized his injuries alongside the wood power that had flowed out of his spiritual sea.

The other was pure, rich spiritual power, which rapidly flowed towards and filled his spiritual sea.

Since the medicinal efficacy of Li Ye's pills was very strong, the spiritual power Nie Tian had consumed earlier on was quickly being replenished.

However, his vortexes of flame power, wood power, and star power didn't undergo any noticeable changes.

Two hours later...

Cai Yuan held his Sound Stone to his ear and received a message, before he turned to Li Ye and said, "Our men are almost here."

The tipsy Li Ye let out a snort and said, "Those damn Hunters only have the balls to snipe individuals who come to the Void Illusion Mountain Range. The moment they saw you, they scattered and ran for their lives. Rats like them should have been extinguished long ago. I can't believe they actually dared to join together and hunt down Hua Tian. Stupid morons."

"Actually, the Fang summoned them," Cai Yuan said with a frown.

"The Fang?!" Li Ye went blank for a moment before asking, "What do you know about them? Have you ever seen their female

leader in person?”

Cai Yuan shook his head. “No, actually I haven’t. This Fang is very different from the other Hunter organizations. We’ve been investigating their origin. I think we’ll learn the truth soon.”

With a surprised expression on his face, Li Ye asked, “They’re not from here?”

“Em.” Cai Yuan nodded. “They’re definitely not from the Realm of Split Void. None of their members are familiar to us. I just don’t know which realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars they came from, and who is backing them.”

Moments later...

Numerous Blood Skull members appeared from the direction where Cai Yuan and the others had come from. Under the leadership of a Greater Heaven stage expert, they rapidly arrived by the war chariot.

As soon as they did, Cai Yuan rose in high spirits, leapt out of the metal war chariot, and went to talk with the Greater Heaven stage expert.

At that moment, Nie Tian slowly opened his eyes, smiled towards Li Ye, who was sitting next to him, and said, “The efficacy of the medicinal pills you gave me is quite amazing.”

After such a short time, his injuries had been stabilized, and he had restored thirty percent of his spiritual power.

At this very moment, those pills were still providing him with rich flesh power, which joined the wood power from his vortex of wood power in gradually healing the trauma to his flesh and bones.

Even though he hadn’t restored any flame power or star power, at least he was capable of handling another battle now.

Li Ye rolled his eyes at Nie Tian and said, as if he was aching over his valuable medicinal pills, “Of course! Those pills are of premium

quality. Don't you compare them to the medicinal pills you looted from the Hunters you killed. You've gained quite a fortune during this trip of yours. Remember to pay me back after we return to Shatter City."

Nie Tian laughed heartily and said, "No problem. Also, when we return, I would like you to forge a spiritual tool that suits me."

"Sure, forging spiritual tools is what I do." Li Ye raised his chin slightly. "However, as the saying goes, money matters should be settled even among brothers. You should know that my rate is famously high. If you want me to forge a spiritual tool for you, I won't settle for less just because it's you."

Nie Tian nodded. "Of course! That's only fair."

"Alright then. I'll forge you a spiritual tool that agrees with your cultivation after we return to Shatter City." Li Ye rubbed his chin and muttered, "You freak... You're already so powerful when you don't even have a suitable spiritual tool. God knows how powerful you'll become when you have a customized spiritual tool I made for you."

At that moment, Xue Long, who had been cultivating the whole time, suddenly opened his mouth. "It won't be easy to forge a spiritual tool that suits him."

He briefly scanned Nie Tian using his deep, profound eyes, as if he was seeing through him.

Li Ye let out a snort and said, "When it comes to equipment forging, I'm only second to my master throughout the entire Shatter City! If I can't forge a suitable spiritual tool for him, then I don't know who has the ability to do it, considering my master hasn't returned yet."

Xue Long didn't make any comments to Li Ye's words. His eyes were still fixed on Nie Tian as he said with a calm tone, "It's not wise to bite off more than you can chew. Cultivating multiple-

attribute spiritual incantations at the same time could very likely result in a lack of energy and effort you put into each of them. Because of that, you'll have to spend more time to make advancements in your cultivation base. I just hope you can live long enough to achieve those advancements.”

“Thank you for your advice,” Nie Tian said respectfully.

“Multiple attributes...” Li Ye seemed absorbed in his thoughts.

Xue Long nodded. He rose to his feet and looked into the distance, saying, “Let's go and see how the Fang and Li Langfeng are doing.”

As soon as he said those words, Nie Tian sensed that the aura he was wreathed in suddenly changed.

It was as if Xue Long had turned into a sharp sword, and the fierce aura it unleashed into its surroundings could even be used to cut the air.

Standing next to him, Li Ye and Nie Tian both had a feeling that their skin was being stabbed by the fierce aura he emanated.

The late Heaven stage Li Ye felt very uncomfortable, and subconsciously stepped backwards to put a sizable distance between Xue Long and himself.

However, Nie Tian, who hadn't fully recovered from his injuries, stood unwavering like a mountain. He even closed his eyes and used his psychic awareness to examine the fierce aura Xue Long had unleashed.

After closing his eyes, he could see with great clarity that countless wisps of aura, as fine as hairs, had reached out of Xue Long's pores all over his body, and were fluttering nonstop.

He looked like a human-shaped hedgehog. Every wisp of aura that stuck out of his pores looked like a tiny, yet sharp sword.

WHOOSH!

Cai Yuan jumped back into the war chariot. Without uttering a word, he took out a substantial amount of spirit stones and laid them at the bottom of the war chariot, driving it forward.

The war chariot once again whizzed through the boundless wasteland.

Some of the Blood Skull members followed the war chariot, while the others spread out and went after Shi Qing and Liu Kang. They communicated via their Sound Stones and cooperated to trap and kill the Hunter organization leaders.

As the war chariot traveled at a high speed, they came across badly mangled corpses from time to time.

Some of the corpses seemed to have been heavily corroded by the toxic spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth. Their flesh had already melted away, and bones were all that were left.

Some other corpses remained intact, but they were wreathed in green or black smoke. Their faces were dark-green, making it obvious that they had died from poisoning.

After seeing the numerous corpses that seemed to have died unnatural deaths, Xue Long frowned as he turned to Nie Tian and asked, “You killed all these people?”

Nie Tian explained, “Yeah, but they only look like this because they were later corroded by the toxic spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth.”

Xue Long’s eyes glittered as he said, “I don’t know what exactly happened, but from the way these corpses look, I’m certain that just the toxic spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth alone couldn’t have done this to them in such a short period of time. According to my observation, you don’t practice the art of poison, so you must have a secret magic that allows you to refine and concentrate the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth.”

After a moment of hesitation, Nie Tian nodded softly.

Xue Long advised, “Now I have a pretty good idea why Li Langfeng has attached such great importance to you. However, you’ve got to remember: don’t follow Li Langfeng’s footsteps! He’s only adopted such an extreme cultivation method because he has special reasons. Even though he’s very strong right now, and he might actually remain powerful for a long time, the price he pays for his strength will go beyond your imagination.”

“Yeah, I understand,” Nie Tian said.

He had long since realized that Li Langfeng had absorbed far too much filth and toxins by cultivating his special incantation, and he was suffering from a backlash already.

Via his Heaven Eyes, he had learned that the aura of flesh and blood inside Li Langfeng was actually very unstable. Who knew when he would lose control of it and die.

Pei Qiqi had long since told him that Li Langfeng had a sworn enemy. In order to kill him with his own hands, he was willing to improve his battle prowess so relentlessly and at the cost of achieving greatness. It was possible that he would plunge to his death when he was shining most brightly.

Along their way, the four people on the war chariot didn’t encounter another living Hunter.

The leaders of the Hunter organizations had secretly informed their members the moment they had seen the Blood Skull’s banner. Therefore, all the Hunters that had chased after Nie Tian earlier had long since vacated the area.

Considering they didn’t even bury their dead members properly, they were clearly frightened by the Blood Skull.

After traveling at full speed for some time, the war chariot finally closed in on the area where Li Langfeng and the Fang were still fighting.

From a very distant location, everyone could see precious light

forming a crisscross network in the area ahead of them. Numerous spiritual tools were flashing across the sky, while lightning flashed and fires burned. The scene was spectacular.

Li Langfeng was shaking his magical bell, and the sounds of it ringing were as powerful as drumbeats and created terrifyingly strong impacts on the chests of the Fang members around him.

“They’re not finished yet?” Xue Long raised his hand into the air and signaled for Cai Yuan to stop the war chariot.

After they came to a stop, he narrowed his eyes and looked into the distance with rapt attention.

“Is the woman in short, rose-red garments the leader of the Fang?” He asked.

Since they were in a location very far from the battlefield, neither Li Ye nor Cai Yuan had a clear view of the situation, much less how Song Li was dressed.

Nie Tian, however, nodded and said, “Yeah, that’s her. Her name is Song Li.”

Xue Long shook his head, saying, “Song Li.” Multiple expressions flashed across his face.

Moments later, he said, “You stay here. I’ll go meet Li Langfeng.”

With these words, he swiftly jumped off the war chariot. After a few shifts, his figure rapidly disappeared from Cai Yuan and Li Ye’s view.

Soon after he left, the other Blood Skull members arrived and gathered around the war chariot, as if they were protecting Cai Yuan.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian used one of his Heaven Eyes to observe the battle between Li Langfeng and the Fang members. He could see the corpses of nine Fang members scattered by Li Langfeng’s feet.

Song Li, Han Mu, four other Greater Heaven stage experts, and a

dozen Heaven stage Fang members had formed a circle around Li Langfeng, and were attacking him together.

Under the multiple powerful experts' joint attack, Li Langfeng was already covered in bloody wounds.

However, he was still as fierce as ever, shaking his bell and coughing nonstop.

WHOOSH!

Xue Long whizzed through the battlefield and arrived in front of everyone in a flash.

As soon as Song Li saw him, a shocked expression appeared on her coquettish face. She exclaimed, "It's you!"

Chapter 309: Fake Identity

“It’s you?!” A strange look filled the eyes of Han Mu and the two other Greater Heaven stage Fang members the moment they saw Xue Long.

It seemed as if they all knew Xue Long.

However, Xue Long didn’t say anything to them. Instead, he started attacking Li Langfeng without the slightest hesitation.

A long, silver sword whizzed out of Xue Long’s sleeve like a sea dragon charging out of the abyss. It unleashed a strong aura into its surroundings, along with dazzling bright light. In the blink of an eye, it approached Li Langfeng’s chest.

Li Langfeng, who was already covered in wounds, had a grim expression on his face the moment he saw Xue Long.

A cluster of dark-green light rapidly came to form in front of his chest, within which numerous bright, green spots were sparkling, emanating shockingly strong energy fluctuations.

BOOM!

Upon contact with Xue Long’s long sword, the cluster of green light instantly exploded.

The fragmented green sparks that carried fatal toxins shot into every direction like the countless stars in the sky.

Upon seeing the explosion, all the Fang members around Li Langfeng, including Song Li, jumped backwards to avoid contact with the sparks, panic filling their eyes.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Numerous sword blasts shot out of Xue Long’s body and chopped the sputtering green sparks into shreds.

Rage appeared on Li Langfeng’s ghastly face. However, almost simultaneously, he seemed to restrain himself from erupting. He

turned to Song Li and said, "I'll remember you!"

With those words, he immediately turned around and shot towards the hilly land where he had come from, like a wisp of green smoke.

The moment Xue Long appeared, he realized that the Blood Skull had arrived.

Immediately afterwards, he noticed the metal war chariot that was parked in a far-off location, along with the numerous Blood Skull members gathered around it.

Knowing that now that the Blood Skull had arrived, he had a very slim chance of capturing Nie Tian, he made the decision to leave.

Seeing him leave, Xue Long shot after him like a beam of silver sword-light.

All of the Fang members, who had been fighting him for a long time, remained in their original places, as if they didn't understand the sudden change in the situation and still needed some time to come back to their senses.

After a long while, Han Mu turned to Song Li and said with a frown, "Miss, he recognized us."

Song Li nodded briefly and said, "I never thought he would be here in the Realm of Split Void, much less as a guest elder of the Blood Skull. Fortunately for us, he didn't attack us for old times' sake, and only targeted Li Langfeng."

Han Mu snorted coldly. "How would he dare attack us, since he's aware of who you are?"

"That's not necessarily the situation. After all, this is the Realm of Split Void. He probably doesn't want to reveal his real identity, and is living by another name." After pondering for a while, Song Li gritted her teeth and said loudly, "It's Hua Tian's lucky day today! Now that the Blood Skull is here, we won't be able to get to

Hua Tian anyways. That being the case, let's get out of here."

Her appealing physique trembled slightly as she uttered these words.

Han Mu took note that she was clenching her fists so tightly that her long fingernails almost pierced into her palms.

He let out a sigh. "It's hard to believe an early Heaven stage kid is so hard to deal with. Also, we roamed about outside Shatter City for such a long time, but we never heard of such a man in Shatter City. He must not be a famous person."

Song Li's expression flickered as she blurted, "Can it be that Hua Tian also came from another realm, just like us? And he's been using a fake name since he came to the Realm of Split Void? A person as unique as he is should attract a lot of attention even if he was in the Realm of Mystic Heaven, let alone a remote corner like the Realm of Split Void."

After hearing her words, Han Mu nodded, feeling suddenly enlightened. Then, with a speculative expression on his face, he said, "Hua Tian is close to Pei Qiqi, and we all know what kind of figure Pei Qiqi's master is. From the look of it, it's very likely that Hua Tian is from another realm, and came here to either temper himself or take refuge."

Another Greater Heaven stage member of the Fang jumped in and advised, "Let's get out of here first. Since the Blood Skull is here, there's no need for us to stick around. After all, we didn't come to the Realm of Split Void to fight the Blood Skull. Cai Lan isn't easy to deal with."

Han Mu also advised, "We'll have plenty time to find and kill that bastard in the future, Miss."

"Yeah, I understand." Song Li forced herself to calm down. After casting a glance at the distant war chariot, she said, "Let's go."

After hearing these words, all the Fang members immediately

spread out and vacated the area.

In the war chariot...

Nie Tian had captured every detail of Song Li and Han Mu's facial expressions via his Heaven Eyes since Xue Long had gone over.

He immediately realized that Xue Long must know Song Li and Han Mu.

Perhaps that was the reason why Xue Long hadn't attack them and the other Fang members, but went after Li Langfeng.

Nie Tian had also heard the conversation between Song Li and Han Mu after Xue Long left.

A grim expression gradually appeared in his eyes. "Is this woman going to investigate my true identity? If she somehow learns that I come from the Realm of Flame Heaven, and who I really am, then..."

He suddenly became worried and regretted his rash actions, thinking he shouldn't have created such a big stir in the Realm of Split Void.

His real name, Nie Tian, had already become a household name in the other nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars. Powerful Qi warrior sects, with the Heaven Palace Sect as their leader, were probably searching for him everywhere.

Once he exposed his real identity and let people know he was here, then considering the Heaven Palace Sect's far-reaching power and influence, they would definitely descend upon the Realm of Split Void.

No matter if it was the Dark Moon, the Wild Fire, or the Blood Skull, compared to Qi warrior sects that had such deep-rooted strength as the Heaven Palace Sect did, they would all prove inferior.

Therefore, if the Heaven Palace Sect actually sought him out

here, he would no longer be able to hide in the Realm of Split Void. Perhaps he would be forced to leave.

“I’ve got to refine the fragmentary star marks as soon as possible. I’m only halfway through the first mark,” he thought to himself. “I’ve mastered Starstrike and Starshift, but I still need to spend some time studying Starfall.” He frowned deeply as a sense of urgency rose in his heart.

He still remembered Hua Mu’s words. Once he refined the fragmentary star marks on his chest, then even if his true identity was exposed to the Heaven Palace Sect, he wouldn’t need to worry, since by that time, the fragmentary star marks would have merged with him, and even the Heaven Palace Sect wouldn’t be able to strip them from him.

Not only that, but they would also spare no cost to draw him to their side and make him an asset of the Heaven Palace Sect.

“You guys wait here,” said Cai Yuan. “I’ll go have a few words with them, and then we’ll head back to Shatter City.” After realizing that Xue Long had chased after Li Langfeng and the Fang had retreated, he jumped off the war chariot and went to talk to the Greater Heaven stage experts among the crowd of Blood Skull members.

“Xue Long knows Song Li,” Nie Tian said in a soft voice.

Li Ye went blank for a moment before asking, “How do you know?”

“You don’t need to know about that,” Nie Tian said with a frown. “Both ‘Xue Long’ and ‘Song Li’ should be fake names. They are probably from another realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars, and they are old acquaintances. The reason why Xue Long only agreed to become a guest elder of the Blood Skull, instead of an official member, might be just because his former identity doesn’t allow him to do that.”

“It doesn’t matter.” Li Ye didn’t seem to attach any importance to the matter. “Many people who come to the Realm of Split Void have histories and stories behind them. For various reasons, they have to hide their identities. Perhaps they’ll only resume their true names after leaving the Realm of Split Void. As for Xue Long, I think the Blood Skull might know who he is in the first place, and there’s no need to talk to Cai Yuan about it.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Yeah, I understand.”

Li Ye took a deep look at him and said, “I didn’t know that you were actually quite a piece of work. Before, I just thought that you were quite strong physically, but I didn’t expect your battle prowess to be also so incredible. For all I know, you might have also changed your name after coming here, just like Xue Long and Song Li.”

Nie Tian’s eyes flickered, and he didn’t respond.

“If you don’t want to expose your own identity, I suggest you keep a low profile,” Li Ye said sincerely.

Nie Tian put on a wry smile and said, “I did act a bit rashly this time.”

Li Ye didn’t say more, after knowing that Nie Tian understood what he meant. “Since Mr. Hua put you in our hands, we won’t harm you. Alright, that’s all I’ll say about it. It’s good as long as you are aware of the situation. You’d better quit attracting others’ attention, and stay low after we return to Shatter City.

Nie Tian nodded. “Sure, I will.”

Li Ye pondered in silence for a short while before saying, “By the way, sorry for putting you in danger, Hua Tian. Senior martial sister told me after returning to Shatter City that Hu Han turned on you eventually. I thought I had her under control. I was being naive, and almost got you killed.”

Nie Tian smiled. “No worries. It’s all good.”

At that moment, Cai Yuan jumped back into the war chariot and said, “Okay, let’s go back to Shatter City.”

He turned the metal war chariot around and marched towards Shatter City with a blustering momentum.

Chapter 310: Changes in the Outside World

At the back of Cloudsoaring Mountain in the Cloudsoaring Sect, in the Realm of Flame Heaven...

Li Jing, the sectmaster of the Blood Sect, once again flew along riding her Blood Lotus.

It was already the third time she had visited this place.

It was early in the morning. Mist and clouds wreathed the mountaintop. Half-asleep and half-awake, Wu Ji seemed to be drifting in his mind.

Only when Li Jing landed in front of him did he slowly open his eyes. He took a glance at her and asked with an expressionless face, “Why are you here again?”

Li Jing’s face looked grim. “Where is Nie Tian anyway?”

“I’ve told you already. I know nothing of his whereabouts.” Wu Ji’s tone was cold.

After pondering in silence for a short while, Li Jing sighed deeply and said, “The Demon Qi that leaks out of the spatial rift close to the Hell Sect is getting thicker and thicker. And the speed at which it is spreading also far exceeds our expectations. If it goes on like this, the Hell Sect will be forced to move in two years tops.”

“It has nothing to do with me.” Wu Ji sounded impatient.

Li Jing’s beautiful eyebrows knit together. “Perhaps the well-being of the Hell Sect doesn’t concern you, but what about the Realm of Flame Heaven? Considering the speed at which the Demon Qi is spreading, perhaps it won’t even take ten years. In seven to eight years, the entire Realm of Flame Heaven will be covered in dense Demon Qi. If it comes to that, even if the outsiders don’t launch another massive invasion, every Qi warrior and mortal in the Realm of Flame Heaven will have no choice but to leave their homes.”

Wu Ji frowned slightly, but remained silent.

“The same goes for the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.” Li Jing seemed very concerned. “When those two realms are also submerged in dense Demon Qi, every Qi warrior and mortal in those two realms will also be forced to leave their homes.

“However, the other seven realms will make room for them. After all, the sects in those two realms are powerful and influential enough. The other realms will have to give them face.

“It won’t be the same for us.

“If the day comes where we’re really forced out of our homeland, it’s hard to say if we’ll be able to find a realm that is willing to accept us. Even if we found shelter somewhere, it would probably be a place where the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth is the faintest.

“It won’t feel good to live under someone else’s roof. I bet you also don’t want to see every man and woman in the Realm of Flame Heaven live relying on others’ charity, right?”

Anger could be seen on Wu Ji’s face as he said, “I’ve said it already, I don’t know where Nie Tian is!”

Li Jing’s bright eyes rolled about as she said softly, “I know exactly what you are worrying about. I heard that the three fragmentary star marks can only be studied and refined in the right order. Even though that Ning Yang person from the Heaven Palace Sect obtained a fragmentary star mark, he can’t study or receive enlightenment from it.”

Wu Ji’s expression flickered subtly.

Li Jing noticed the change in his expression, and thus rapidly continued, “This means that as long as Nie Tian masters and refines one fragmentary star mark, he won’t need to worry that the Heaven Palace Sect will strip it from him anymore. The

mysterious forces from the three fragmentary star marks need to be brought together to seal the three spatial rifts in the Realm of Mystic Heaven, the Realm of Flame Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

“Hence, once Nie Tian masters one fragmentary star mark, he will already become the most important piece of the whole puzzle.

“No matter whether it’s the Heaven Palace Sect, or the powerful sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, without exception, they will need Nie Tian alive to finish the task.”

Wu Ji still remained silent. However, the light of speculation could be seen in his eyes.

A hearty expression spread out across Li Jing’s face as she said, “If you can get in contact with Nie Tian, please tell him to come back to the Realm of Flame Heaven as soon as he refines the first fragmentary star mark. These three realms need him and his powers. The way I see it, he’ll run into more great fortune if he returns after refining one fragmentary star mark.”

Wu Ji finally opened his mouth and asked, “What great fortune?”

“Well,” Li Jing said with a serious expression, “since Ning Yang can’t refine the third fragmentary star mark without the first two, when the Heaven Palace Sect learns that Nie Tian has refined one of his fragmentary star marks, they’ll probably strip the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang and give it to Nie Tian. Only by uniting all three marks will we be able to seal the spatial rifts. If Ning Yang can’t refine his, the Heaven Palace Sect can only put all their hope on Nie Tian.”

Wu Ji’s eyes suddenly lit up.

“I came here especially to tell you this. I hope you can get it through to Nie Tian, and tell him to speed up his refinement of the first fragmentary star mark. After that, he can just come back

openly.” After explaining the true intention behind her visit, Li Jing left.

Wu Ji sat there and pondered for a long time before muttering, “I just know that Hua Mu took him, but I really don’t know where he is at this moment...”

In another corner of the Realm of Flame Heaven...

A petite female figure flew to the top of a mountain peak. It was Su Lin from the Heaven Palace Sect, and the mountain was where Ning Yang had been living recently.

“Little martial uncle, where are you?” Su Lin called softly.

Then, she unleashed her psychic awareness to scan the vicinity, but she couldn’t detect Ning Yang’s aura. She couldn’t help but frown as a worried expression appeared on her face.

All of a sudden, as her psychic awareness spread out, a line of words appeared on a giant rock that stood on the mountaintop: “I swear not to return to the Heaven Palace Sect before I find Nie Tian! — Ning Yang.”

SHEW!

Everything became blurry on the mountaintop and, in the next moment, an old man appeared out of nowhere.

Staring at the line of words Ning Yang had left, he said with a grim expression, “Did Ning Yang receive word that I was coming?”

“I don’t know,” Su Lin replied respectfully.

She knew perfectly well that this elder was here to strip Ning Yang of his fragmentary star mark.

The Heaven Palace Sect was aware that the three fragmentary star marks could only be refined in the right sequence.

The fragmentary star mark Ning Yang had obtained was the last one. That meant he would only be able to receive enlightenment from it after obtaining and learning the first two fragmentary star

marks from Nie Tian.

However, Nie Tian had disappeared for quite some time now. If there were no mishaps, he should have already begun studying the first two fragmentary star stars.

The speed at which the Demon Qi leaked out of the spatial rift in the Realm of Mystic Heaven was even faster than the one in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Seeing that the Demon Qi was spreading closer and closer towards their sect every day, a stir occurred within the Heaven Palace Sect. Now, their hearts were burning with anxiety.

Ning Yang, Su Lin, and many other members of the Heaven Palace Sect had failed to locate Nie Tian.

Now that the third fragmentary star mark was useless in Ning Yang's hands, the Heaven Palace Sect had decided to consider the bigger picture, and take it from him.

Once they did, they would send messages to the nine realms, and have all the Qi warrior sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars spread the word that the Heaven Palace Sect was offering membership to Nie Tian, and the third fragmentary star mark would be given to him as a token of good faith.

From the Heaven Palace Sect's perspective, Nie Tian had disappeared for a long time. If he was still alive, he must have studied and refined part of the fragmentary star marks.

This meant if they didn't wish to move out of the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and didn't want the Realm of Mystic Heaven, the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, and the Realm of Flame Heaven to suffer from the poisonous Demon Qi, they would have to place their hopes on Nie Tian.

However, just as the Heaven Palace Sect's senior members had reached the decision to take away Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark, he mysteriously disappeared.

“Ning Yang has always been smarter than others since he was boy. Perhaps he sensed the strange atmosphere in our sect, and thus left in advance.” The elder’s face grew sullen. “For such a smart young man, he doesn’t understand the greater good! He actually hides himself when the sect needs him to give up the fragmentary star mark. I’m so disappointed in him!”

Su Lin smiled bitterly and said, “Elder Huang, with all due respect, if you were in Ning Yang’s shoes, and it was you who had obtained the legacy of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, would you be willing to give it to others, even if you couldn’t study it for the time being?”

With a complicated expression on his face, the elder pondered in silence for a while, and then let out a sigh.

He asked himself that very question, and he thought to himself that he also wouldn’t simply give away such great fortune.

A few days passed...

Nie Tian, Cai Yuan, and Li Ye rode the metal war chariot across the boundless wasteland, and eventually returned to Shatter City.

Ever since the Blood Skull had started their operation, peace had been restored to the wasteland. All the Hunter organizations in the region had fled in panic, and none had dared to stay and hunt.

Therefore, many explorers from Shatter City took advantage of the opportunity and went on exploration trips to the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

None of them encountered any obstacles or saw any Hunters on their way back to the city.

Some of them saw the Blood Skull’s metal war chariot while exiting or entering Shatter City. Either way, they would usually stop to observe the war chariot.

Many of them recognized Cai Yuan and Li Ye. Only Nie Tian’s face looked strange to them.

As he was associated with the recent incident that had provoked widespread discussion, they soon guessed that he was none other than the Hua Tian who was wanted by all the Hunters.

They all secretly memorized Nie Tian's appearance, and were in awe of him.

After returning to Shatter City, Nie Tian and Li Ye bid farewell to Cai Yuan.

Cai Yuan went back to the Blood Skull's headquarters with Nie Tian's large pouch of bracelets of holding, where he would convert the items within them into spirit stones and tally up Nie Tian's contribution points.

After recuperating for a few days straight, Nie Tian's dried spiritual sea was refilled to the brim.

However, his vortexes of flame power, wood power, and star power were still the same as before, since he hadn't had the time to recover with spiritual materials that contained power of the relevant attribute.

As soon as he had gone back to his residence, he had begun gobbling down spirit beast meat. Therefore, at this moment, his physical injuries were already healed.

On this day, Li Ye came to Nie Tian's room. "Follow me!" he said. Without waiting for Nie Tian to answer, he walked away, high-spirited and vigorous. Soon, the two of them arrived in front of his personal equipment forging lab.

Inside the room, a variety of strange-looking materials could be seen everywhere. There were stones that could be used to test the attributes of a person's spiritual power, tools that could be used to examine the speed at which a person's spiritual power circulated, and even special tools that could be used to detect the strength of a person's life aura.

As soon as Nie Tian entered the room, Li Ye asked him a few

questions first, and then used a number of strange-looking tools and instruments to measure the strength of his spiritual sea, his physical body, and his psychic power.

“Such monstrous strength! This is unbelievable! You’re such a freak!

“You don’t have an innate cultivation attribute, so you picked fire power and wood power out of the Five Elements to practice. Other than those, you’re also practicing star power, which is very rare among cultivators.

“Furthermore, the intensity of your physical strength is even comparable to the mutated spirit beasts in the Void Illusion Mountain Range! Whatever non-lethal wound you sustain, you are able to recover within a short period of time. I even doubt that a low-grade spiritual tool can pierce through your skin!

“Superb healing ability, amazing explosive power, and spiritual power with three attributes...”

After running a series of thorough tests on Nie Tian, Li Ye managed to uncover almost every secret Nie Tian had.

He couldn’t help but sigh nonstop in amazement at Nie Tian’s uniqueness.

Nie Tian, however, had an uncomfortable feeling, as if he was completely exposed to another person; various expressions flashed across his face.

Sweeping through the strange tools and appliances in this equipment forging lab with an examining gaze, Nie Tian felt very impressed.

Seeing Li Ye use them to unveil so many of his secrets and gain such a thorough understanding of him by simply running them around him, Nie Tian felt both surprised and uneasy.

As of now, aside from the green bloodline aura in his heart and the seven fragmentary stars in his soul, Nie Tian no longer had any

other secrets hidden from Li Ye.

Li Ye had even managed to determine that he was practicing star power by using a ball-shaped sensing instrument

Fortunately, it wasn't the rarest thing to practice star power in the other nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars, so Li Ye didn't connect the fact that he had a vortex of star power in his spiritual sea with the Fragmentary Star Incantation.

After a very long time, his eyes fixed on a tool that was glittering with a strange light, Li Ye said to Nie Tian, "Alright! Your part is over. I'll spend some time to forge a spiritual tool that matches your cultivation features according to the data I just collected!

"However, I must tell you bluntly that your situation is very special and complicated. It will take a lot of precious materials to forge a suitable spiritual tool for you.

"I'll contact Cai Yuan as soon as possible, and tell him not to convert all of your battle gains into spirit stones, since I suspect that, in order to forge that spiritual tool for you, I might have to use all of the spiritual materials you looted from your battles. You should be prepared."

"No problem, just do it." Nie Tian said.

"Straightforward. I like it!" Li Ye laughed loudly. "Three months. Give me three months, and I'll present to you an extraordinary spiritual tool. I guarantee that you'll like it."

Notes:

Chinese New Year:

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival (simplified Chinese: 春节; traditional Chinese: 春節; pinyin: Chūn Jié) in modern China, often called the Lunar New Year in Asia, is an important Chinese festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. Celebrations traditionally run from the

evening preceding the first day, to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first calendar month. The year of the Dog starts on Friday, 16 February 2018.

It is one of the world's most prominent and celebrated festivals, with the largest annual mass human migration in the world. It is a major holiday in China and has had strong influence on the lunar new year celebrations of its geographic neighbours, including Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mauritius, Australia, and the Philippines.

The New Year festival is centuries old and associated with several myths and customs. Traditionally, the festival was a time to honor deities as well as ancestors. Within China, regional customs and traditions concerning the celebration of the Lunar New Year vary widely. Often, the evening preceding Lunar New Year's Day is an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the annual reunion dinner. It is also traditional for every family to thoroughly clean the house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for incoming good luck. Windows and doors are decorated with red color paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness", "wealth", and "longevity". Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red paper envelopes. In about one third of the Mainland population, or 500 million Northerners, dumplings feature prominently in the meals celebrating the festival.

[Here's video about the Spring Festival.](#)

Mythology:

Hand-written Chinese New Year's poetry pasted on the sides of doors leading to people's homes, Lijiang, Yunnan

According to tales and legends, the beginning of the Chinese New Year started with a mythical beast called the Nian. Nian would eat villagers, especially children. One year, all the villagers decided to go hide from the beast. An old man appeared before the villagers

went into hiding and said that he's going to stay the night, and decided to get revenge on the Nian. All the villagers thought he was insane. The old man put red papers up and set off firecrackers. The day after, the villagers came back to their town to see that nothing was destroyed. They assumed that the old man was a deity who came to save them. The villagers then understood that the Nian was afraid of the color red and loud noises. When the New Year was about to come, the villagers would wear red clothes, hang red lanterns, and red spring scrolls on windows and doors. People also used firecrackers to frighten away the Nian. From then on, Nian never came to the village again. The Nian was eventually captured by Hongjun Laozu, an ancient Taoist monk. The Nian became Hongjun Laozu's mount.

[Here's an interesting video of the legends regarding the Spring Festival.](#)

Chapter 311: Stern Criticism

During the following days, Nie Tian cultivated day and night in his own room.

With the help of the stones that contained rich star power, he took his time condensing stardew, and gradually filled the lake of stardew at the bottom of his vortex of star power.

Afterwards, he recovered the flame power and wood power he had consumed by using spiritual materials that contained copious amounts of wood power and flame power.

Time flew by. Fifteen days passed without him noticing it.

After a half-month of devoted cultivation, his vortex of star power had already expanded and been refined to the fullest.

His vortexes of flame power and wood power were also developed to the point where no more advancement could be made.

Only his spiritual sea was still yet to be expanded, and the spiritual power within it still needed more refinement.

Therefore, he thought about the Blood Skull's cultivation rooms.

This day, he had just stepped out of his room, and was about to go to the Blood Skull's headquarters, when he suddenly felt violent spatial energy fluctuations coming from within Pei Qiqi's stone pavilion.

“What?!” A surprised expression spread out across his face as he stared at Pei Qiqi's stone pavilion, his eyes glittering with a strange light.

Li Ye also sensed the anomaly, and came out of his equipment forging room, shock filling his face and body reeking of alcohol.

A few Qi warriors who worked for Pei Qiqi and Li Ye also walked out of their rooms to see what was happening.

After a short while, Li Ye exclaimed, delight appearing at the

corners of his mouth, “Senior martial sister just entered the Greater Heaven stage!”

Nie Tian nodded gently as he sensed with rapt attention.

He discovered that the intense spatial energy fluctuations coming from within Pei Qiqi’s pavilion were gradually calming down.

Li Ye and Pei Qiqi’s few assistants were whispering something to each other, as they were also happy that Pei Qiqi had made another breakthrough in her cultivation base.

However, they would also occasionally shoot glances at Nie Tian with complicated looks in their eyes.

During the past few days, while Nie Tian had been cultivating wholeheartedly in his room, rumors about him spread to every corner of Shatter City.

Shi Qing, Liu Kang, and the other Blood Skull members who had gone after the Hunters also returned during that time.

They had chased down and killed a number of Hunters. A few weak Hunter organizations had even unraveled after their leaders’ deaths.

According to the returning Blood Skull members, Nie Tian had single-handedly killed several dozen Hunters in the hilly area and wasteland.

While Nie Tian was only at the early Heaven stage, there were many middle and late Heaven stage experts among the Hunters he had slaughtered.

The rumors made Hua Tian a famous name throughout the entirety of Shatter City.

As of now, not only had the members of the Blood Skull acknowledged Nie Tian’s abilities, their guest elder with the lowest cultivation base, but every Qi warrior in Shatter City was shocked by his accomplishments.

Naturally, the people who worked for Pei Qiqi and Li Ye had also heard rumors about him. Therefore, each and every one of them focused their amazed and curious gazes on Nie Tian the moment they saw him.

They seemed to be more shocked by Nie Tian's accomplishments than Pei Qiqi's breakthrough into the Greater Heaven stage.

After all, they had expected that Pei Qiqi would enter the Greater Heaven stage after this period of secluded cultivation.

SHEW!

The figure of a girl suddenly appeared in front of everyone.

A few beads of sweat could be seen on Pei Qiqi's smooth forehead, and her gorgeous eyes were glittering with bright light.

After appearing in the middle of the courtyard, she focused her gaze on Nie Tian and asked, "When did you come back?"

Ever since she had started her secluded cultivation, she had been completely cut off from the outside world, and didn't have the slightest idea of what Nie Tian had done, or the fact that the Fang and many other Hunter organizations had pursued him madly.

"About ten days ago," Nie Tian said, smiling.

Pei Qiqi nodded gently at him. "It's good that you came back alive."

Li Ye hastily stepped forward and said, "Senior martial sister, you probably don't know this yet. Not only did this guy survive the joint pursuit of the Fang and many other Hunter organizations, but he even somehow killed a few dozen of their Heaven stage members! He's like a big deal in Shatter City now. Even people from Ash City and the Land of the Abandoned have heard about him and are asking around about him."

A startled expression appeared on Pei Qiqi's face.

She had thought that, just like most returning explorers, Nie

Tian had run into a few groups of Hunters on his way back, escaped their blockade, and returned to Shatter City.

She had never expected that Nie Tian would make such a major stir, and cause so many Hunter organizations to join forces to hunt him down.

Furthermore, she had heard of the Fang, and the fact that it was an emerging Hunter organization whose strength was by no means insignificant.

The fact that Nie Tian had made it back alive after making enemies with the Fang went beyond her expectations.

“Not only that, Li Langfeng was also after him.” With a cunning smile on his face, Li Ye went on to tell her about all the rumors regarding Nie Tian, which had been discussed everywhere in Shatter City recently.

Pei Qiqi listened with devoted attention. As she did, the grimness in her bright eyes grew increasingly intense.

When Li Ye was finished, she pondered for a few seconds before pointing at Nie Tian and saying, “You, come with me.” With these words, she turned around and walked back into her pavilion.

“You’re such a tattletale!” Nie Tian cast a harsh look at Li Ye before following Pei Qiqi into her pavilion, looking somewhat helpless.

It was an empty, spacious stone room, with only a prayer mat in the middle.

Pei Qiqi’s charming eyebrows furrowed as she waited for Nie Tian to enter the room before saying with a plain tone, “I know that you’re not an ordinary person, and there are stories behind you coming to the Realm of Split Void. However, now that Mr. Hua has put you in our hands, I assume he doesn’t want you to attract too much attention, since it won’t do you any good.”

Nie Tian smiled bitterly and said, “I understand.”

Pei Qiqi rolled her eyes at him. “Then, why did you make yourself so widely known?”

“I didn’t expect that the woman with the Fang would actually hate me so much...” After realizing he didn’t have a better choice, Nie Tian explained how he had started a feud with Song Li to Pei Qiqi in detail.

Then, he said, “By the time I realized I had gone a bit too far, the woman suddenly went mad and tried every possible way to kill me.”

“If I didn’t strike back, I would have been killed by her and her men.”

“All I did was fight back. I didn’t expect things would escalate into something so big...”

Pei Qiqi waited patiently for him to finish and then said, “Forget about it. You need to be more considerate and careful from now on. From what I can tell, that Song Li woman is way beyond ordinary. She’s probably from another realm, and only came to the Realm of Split Void to temper herself. As we know, the Fang rose to prominence in a very short time, but the Blood Skull didn’t try to wipe them out. This alone makes it clear that the Fang is beyond ordinary.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Yeah, that’s my guess too.”

Ever since he had overheard the conversation between Song Li and Han Mu, and realized that they knew Xue Long, he suspected that the Fang and Song Li were very different from the other Hunters.

The way the Fang had acted and their high-grade spiritual tools also testified to his theory.

“Ma Jiu is still alive. Li Langfeng wants you. Now you have the Fang after you as well...” Pei Qiqi pondered for a moment and said, “You’d better keep a low profile for a while, and don’t go to the

Void Illusion Mountain Range again! Also, even though you're in Shatter City, there may be members of the Fang around you. Keep your guard up at all times.”

Shock could be heard in Nie Tian's voice as he asked, “Members of the Fang can enter Shatter City?”

“The guards at the city gate don't check the identities of people who enter or exit the city,” Pei Qiqi explained. “As long as they have enough spirit stones, anyone can get a medallion and live in the city. If Song Li or Li Langfeng want to enter Shatter City, all they need to do is to mask their faces and dress differently from how they normally do.

“As you know, battles and brawls are banned in Shatter City. Whoever breaks the rules will be punished harshly.

“However, that doesn't mean everyone will just live by the rules. Considering Li Langfeng and that woman's temperament, it's totally possible that they'll act of their own accord and not give face to the Blood Skull.

“So if they really want to kill you, they might make a move on you even if you're in Shatter City!”

Only after hearing her words did Nie Tian start to give his safety some serious thought.

Originally, he had thought he wouldn't need to worry about threats from Song Li and Li Langfeng anymore once he returned to Shatter City.

However, Pei Qiqi made him realize that, as strong and resourceful as Li Langfeng and Song Li were, they could very well change, take on another identity, and make a move on him inside the city walls, despite the rules set by the Blood Skull.

“I plan to rent a cultivation room from the Blood Skull and spend some time there,” Nie Tian said.

“That's a wise decision.” Pei Qiqi's grim face turned a bit

warmer. “There are many experts at the Blood Skull’s headquarters. It’s probably the safest place for you right now.”

“Congratulations on your breakthrough,” Nie Tian said sincerely.

“Yeah,” Pei Qiqi replied with an expressionless face.

“I’m off to the Blood Skull’s headquarters.”

“Sure.”

With these words, Nie Tian left Pei Qiqi’s pavilion, notified Li Ye of his intentions, and then headed out towards the Blood Skull’s headquarters.

Chapter 312: Arrival of An Old Acquaintance

In the hilly area...

In a cave on a small hill, Song Li and Han Mu were standing in front of a small-scale teleportation portal with grim expressions on their faces.

Moments later, the teleportation portal began to shine with dazzlingly bright light.

The figure of a man suddenly appeared in the middle of the portal.

“Big brother! How come it’s you!?” After seeing the man, Song Li was startled at first, and then her grim face instantly turned warm.

The man laughed loudly and said, “Yeah. I heard that you’ve run into some trouble in the Realm of Split Void. As your big brother, it’s my responsibility to come and check on you. Since I screwed up my mission in the Heaven Gate and don’t have much to do, I figured I might as well come to the Realm of Split Void and take my mind off of it.”

If Nie Tian were present, he would have recognized this person instantly. He was none other than the winner of the Heaven stage area, Dong Baijie!

Dong Baijie had obtained a fragmentary star mark once in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace after wiping out numerous enemies in the Heaven stage area.

However, he had sustained severe injuries in order to get that fragmentary star mark. Later, when he was bombarded by Nie Tian’s spiritual energy balls, he couldn’t hang on, and thus gave up his fragmentary star mark to avoid being killed.

Han Mu, who was standing next to them, bowed towards Dong

Baijie to show his respect. “Greetings, Young Lord!”

Upon seeing Dong Baijie, Song Li, whose real name was Dong Li, smiled so heartily that even the corner of her eyes seemed happy. It seemed that, as brother and sister, they were truly close.

Sounding a bit frustrated, Dong Li said, “It seems we’ve both had bad luck lately, you and me. We both failed at the jobs our clan gave us. However, when you fail, you fail. The way I see it, my journey to the Heaven Gate was by nature a trial for me.” Dong Baijie didn’t collapse after a single setback. On the contrary, he looked rather spirited. “Without the bloody battles I went through during the Heaven Gate trial, I wouldn’t have broken through my bottleneck and entered the Greater Heaven stage so quickly.”

“Congratulations, Big Brother.”

“Congratulations, Young Lord.”

Dong Baijie waved his hand and said quietly, “I heard that you suffered great losses from an early Heaven stage young man. That shouldn’t be the case, is it? I know what you’re capable of. With Han Mu here to assist you, even if you were facing an early Greater Heaven stage cultivator, you shouldn’t have suffered such crushing defeats, much less from a man who was only at the Heaven stage.”

“Don’t bring him up.” A frustrated expression could be seen on Dong Li’s face. “That young man was full of tricks, and he had a special tool that could be used to learn about my deployments every time we made a move.”

“Sorry, Young Lord. We failed our miss.” Han Mu expressed his apologies.

“What does he look like?” Dong Baijie asked casually.

Without any delay, Han Mu took out a portrait of Nie Tian and handed it to him, saying, “This is him.”

With a single glance at the portrait, Dong Baijie shuddered while a flabbergasted expression appeared on his face.

“Big brother?” Dong Li noticed Dong Baijie’s strange reaction, so she asked softly, “Do you know this person?”

Dong Baijie didn’t answer immediately. Rather, he grabbed the scroll that carried a vivid portrait of Nie Tian’s face. After staring at it for a long time, he turned to Han Mu and said, “Leave us.”

Han Mu turned around and left without uttering a word.

When the brother and sister were the only ones in the cave, Dong Li asked eagerly, “Who is he, Big Brother? Even though I haven’t known him for a long time, I know he’s definitely not a nobody as he let on. Not only does he possess outstanding battle prowess, but he was also a master of various spiritual incantations and escape magics!”

Dong Baijie sighed. “I never anticipated that you and me would have suffered losses from the same person. Interesting.”

Dong Li was taken aback. “What?! He’s the ‘Nie Tian’ you talked about?!”

Dong Baijie took a deep breath and said, “Exactly. You probably know that he has become famous throughout the nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars, and people from the Heaven Palace Sect are looking for him everywhere. He was the one who took my fragmentary star mark from me while we were in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Even Ning Yang seems to have gone against the Heaven Palace Sect’s will and hidden away after failing to find him.”

Dong Li immediately understood. “Hua Tian is Nie Tian!”

With a bitter expression on his face, Dong Baijie said, “It’s not shameful for you to suffer defeats from him. Now that I think about it, he must have learned and refined part of his fragmentary star marks. I once owned a fragmentary star mark for a while in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and I vaguely sensed the immensity and profundity of it.

“The magics recorded in the Fragmentary star marks were incomparably deep and mysterious. I bet Nie Tian’s strange movement magics you said he used to escape came from one of his fragmentary star marks.”

Now that Dong Li realized that Hua Tian was Nie Tian, her frustration was relieved to a great extent.

She knew very well that all those who had acquired the eligibility to participate in the Heaven Gate trial had been the most talented young men and women from the strongest Qi warrior sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

The fact that Nie Tian had emerged and obtained two fragmentary star marks under such extraordinary circumstances was enough evidence that Nie Tian was one of the best.

Moreover, such a talented person had recently added a few magics from the Fragmentary Star Incantation to his skillset. Losing to him didn’t seem so unacceptable to her now.

A light flashed across Dong Li’s eyes as she said, “Big brother! Since we’re probably the only ones who know Nie Tian and Hua Tian are the same person, perhaps we can make something of it!”

Dong Baijie grinned as he nodded at her and said, “Where is he now?”

“In Shatter City,” Dong Li said.

Dong Baijie immediately made a decision. “I’ll pay him a visit in Shatter City and learn more about his situation.”

After learning about Nie Tian’s true identity, Dong Li grew increasingly interested. Voice filled with hatred, she said, “I’ll go with you! Whoever he is, I’ll make him suffer for what he did!”

Dong Baijie didn’t intend to discourage her at all. “If you want to do that, you’ll need to make some alterations to your appearance.”

Dong Li pursed her lips into a smile. “Can that be any easier? You

know that is exactly where my strength lies.”

“You can go to Shatter City with me, but you’ve got to remember: never act rashly.” After a moment of hesitation, Dong Baijie continued, “I’ll need to determine how much of the fragmentary star mark Nie Tian has learned. That man is not only very important to the Heaven Palace Sect, but also to the other Qi warrior sects in the nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars.”

“Alright, I’ll do as you say,” Dong Li said.

“You go ahead and prepare for our trip to Shatter City,” Dong Baijie said. “We need to pay Nie Tian a visit as soon as possible.”

“Alright.”

In the Blood Skull’s headquarters...

The moment Nie Tian stepped into the Blood Skull’s headquarters, many Blood Skull members recognized him and greeted him, their faces full of smiles, “Hua Tian!”

Upon hearing his name, an uproar immediately rose among the numerous Qi warriors in the street who had come to the Blood Skull’s headquarters to sell spiritual materials or purchase spiritual tools.

“What?! Hua Tian?”

“The same Hua Tian who people have been talking about?”

“The man who not only escaped the pursuit of numerous Hunters, but also killed a few dozen of them as he did.”

“He’s here?”

Meanwhile, many people rushed to the doors of the stone pavilions alongside the street, where they discussed amongst themselves while looking at Nie Tian with curious gazes.

The balconies of the stone pavilions, which sold spiritual tools, medicinal pills, and spiritual materials, were also filled with

curious people. Without exception, they all had their eyes fixed on Nie Tian.

Running into such a spectacle the moment he entered the Blood Skull's headquarters, Nie Tian felt very confounded.

At that moment, he felt an increasingly intense sense of urgency.

Considering his current fame and eye-catching features, he was afraid that it wouldn't be very long before people learned who he really was.

At that time, if he hadn't refined at least one of his fragmentary star marks, once he was found by the Heaven Palace Sect, he might lose everything.

Under the people's gazes and discussions, he rushed down the long stone street and arrived at the establishment where the Blood Skull's cultivation rooms were located.

Upon seeing him, Shi Qing, who had returned the day before, immediately smiled and said in a loud voice, "Wow, you're here to use a cultivation room? I didn't expect you to come so soon."

Nie Tian took the right amount of spirit stones from his bracelet of holding and placed them in front of Shi Qing. "Ten days in a Heaven stage cultivation room."

"Alright, I'll make the arrangements for you now," Shi Qing said with a pleasant tone.

Even though Li Ye didn't come with Nie Tian this time, Shi Qing's attitude toward him was even better than the last time.

After all, the two of them had fought Li Langfeng side by side in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. Nie Tian's decisiveness and fierceness at the crucial moment had left a very deep impression on him.

Days ago, when he was chasing down the fleeing Hunter organizations, he had learned from them that Nie Tian hadn't

exaggerated the number of Hunters he had killed. Actually, the number he had given was rather conservative.

Many of the Hunters had only chased after Nie Tian because of the pressure they had received from Li Langfeng and Dong Li. Deep down, many of them were actually very fearful towards Nie Tian.

The fact that Nie Tian was feared by so many vicious Hunters while he was only at the early Heaven stage made Shi Qing attach more and more importance to this young man.

Soon, Shi Qing gave a cultivation room that was originally meant for another person to Nie Tian.

As Nie Tian was about to walk into the room, Shi Qing stood at the door and said, smiling, “You’re about to make a breakthrough in your cultivation base, right?”

Nie Tian shrugged. “I guess so.”

“Amazing kid indeed.” Face filled with smiles, Shi Qing continued, “As far as I recall, there hasn’t been a person who could create such a sensation while he was only at the Heaven stage like you are. Even our head asked me about you recently.”

Nie Tian had a headache over the situation.

“The fact that he wanted to know about you proves your excellence.” Shi Qing patted Nie Tian’s shoulder as he suddenly changed the subject. With a serious face, he asked, “What do you think of Little Yue?”

A shocked expression stretched across Nie Tian’s face. “What?!”

“Nothing, hahaha. Never mind.” Shi Qing laughed and walked downstairs with a meaningful smile on his face.

Chapter 313: Conflict

In one of the Heaven stage cultivation rooms, Nie Tian condensed spiritual energy balls with the special technique he had learned from the mysterious land, and used them to speed up his cultivation.

Unlike the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this cultivation room was incomparably rich and pure. Not a shred of impurities could be found within it.

Nie Tian's efficiency at condensing spiritual energy balls had improved significantly since he had entered the Heaven stage.

Therefore, it wasn't very long before the consumption of the spiritual Qi went beyond the room's capacity.

A special spell formation that served the purpose of adjusting the spiritual Qi in the cultivation rooms was triggered.

Just like the Lesser Heaven stage cultivation rooms on the first floor, there were also two Heaven stage cultivation rooms on the second floor.

When the spiritual Qi in Nie Tian's room grew so faint that it couldn't support his cultivation, the special spell formation would channel spiritual Qi from the other cultivation room into Nie Tian's to balance the density of spiritual Qi in both rooms.

In the other cultivation room, a late Heaven stage cultivator, who was on the verge of making a breakthrough, instantly sensed the anomaly.

After sensing for a while longer, he was convinced that the spiritual Qi in his room was indeed on the decline, so he couldn't help but walk out of his room and go downstairs.

He strode up to Shi Qing and asked with an angry face, "What the hell are you doing? Why is the spiritual Qi in my cultivation room becoming fainter and fainter? I'm at a crucial phase. The drop in

the spiritual Qi will make a huge impact on my imminent breakthrough!”

“Sorry, I’ll ask my men about what’s going on,” Shi Qing replied with a pleasant attitude.

He knew that the late Heaven stage young man in front of him was also a guest elder of the Blood Skull. Although his personal strength wasn’t very impressive, he was a relative of another powerful guest elder of the Blood Skull.

Shi Qing summoned the person who was in charge of filling the grand spell formation with spirit stones and monitoring its operation from the basement.

The man scooted up to Shi Qing, smiled embarrassedly, and said, “My lord, it’s the same situation as when Hua Tian was here last time.”

Shi Qing’s eyes flickered as he asked, “He caused this again?”

The man nodded. “The consumption of the spiritual Qi in Hua Tian’s room is so fast that our spell formation automatically channeled the spiritual Qi from the other room into his.”

Shi Nan, the late Heaven stage young man, frowned and said with an discontented expression, “Hua Tian? I know he is your youngest guest elder, and everyone in the city has been talking about him lately. But I’m also the Blood Skull’s guest elder. Plus, I became a guest elder of the Blood Skull long before he did.

“Don’t tell me that, just because he’s close to your young lord, he can steal spiritual Qi from my cultivation room! He’s being too domineering, isn’t he?!”

“Also, don’t you always advocate the Blood Skull’s fairness?”

The late Heaven stage Shi Nan had an uncle named Shi Hui, who was a late Greater Heaven stage expert, and one of the most powerful guest elders of the Blood Skull.

Like Li Langfeng, Shi Hui was also famous for his toughness and difficulty to deal with. Just like how the Dark Moon treated Li Langfeng, the Blood Skull also treated Shi Hui with great care and respect.

Although Shi Nan was at the late Heaven stage, he wasn't any stronger than other cultivators with the same cultivation base as him.

The only reason the Blood Skull had made him a guest elder was solely because they had to give face to Shi Hui.

Shi Nan had always been bossy in front of the other guest elders of the Blood Skull. He even got into conflicts with formal Blood Skull members from time to time.

However, most Blood Skull members tried not to offend him because Shi Hui was his uncle.

“How about this,” Shi Qing said with a smile. “I'll give you a discount on the charges for that cultivation room. Normally, we charge fifty spirit stones for two hours in that cultivation room. Now, I'll settle for half of that. What do you say?”

“What?!” Not only was Shi Nan not pleased, but he was further angered by Shi Qing's offer. “Do you think I care about those spirit stones? I want to make my breakthrough as soon as possible. What I need is a cultivation room filled with rich spiritual Qi! I don't need spirit stones; I need to break through the Heaven stage!”

Shi Qing frowned slightly.

According to his understanding of Shi Nan's situation, he would still need to cultivate for a long time before he could break through with his current cultivation base.

Furthermore, Shi Nan actually wasn't as rich as he let on. He had followed his uncle, Shi Hui, to the Void Illusion Mountain Range a few times, but he hadn't gained much during those trips. Most of the spirit stones he had were given to him by Shi Hui.

In Shi Qing's eyes, even though Shi Nan's cultivation base was currently higher than Nie Tian's, his potential was far inferior to Nie Tian's.

Even though Nie Tian was only at the early Heaven stage, he had slaughtered quite a few late Heaven stage Dark Moon experts in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

In the hilly area and wasteland, he had killed an even larger number of Hunters, many of whom were also at the late Heaven stage, the same as Shi Nan.

As for Shi Nan, he was only slightly stronger than his peers with the same cultivation base as him.

If it weren't for his uncle, Shi Nan would never have been made a guest elder of the Blood Skull.

After a moment of hesitation, Shi Qing said, "There's something wrong with the Heaven stage cultivation rooms. However, one of the Greater Heaven stage cultivation rooms is still available. We normally charge 300 spirit stones for a Greater Heaven stage cultivation room for two hours. I'm willing to let you use it at a rate of 150 spirit stones for two hours. That's half the normal price. What do you say?"

The rate for a Lesser Heaven stage cultivation room was 10 spirit stones for two hours. The rate for a Heaven stage cultivation room was 50 spirit stones for two hours. The rate for a Greater Heaven stage cultivation room was 300 spirit stones for two hours.

These were the prices the Blood Skull had set according to the levels of purity and density of the spiritual Qi in the cultivation rooms, and were actually quite fair.

Shi Qing knew that Nie Tian was part of the reason he had survived Li Langfeng in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. Furthermore, he had seen Nie Tian's limitless potential, and didn't want to interrupt his cultivation. Therefore, he was willing to use

his authority to lower the rate in order to calm Shi Nan, even if it meant that he would have to make up for the difference himself.

“The purity and density of the spiritual Qi in a Greater Heaven stage cultivation room is several times higher than that of a Heaven stage room. I won’t be able to consume that much. It will be a waste of my spirit stones!” Shi Nan’s face flushed as he continued, “I’m at the Heaven stage, so the cultivation room I rented suits me the best!”

As seasoned and foxy as Shi Qing was, he immediately understood that Shi Nan must not have enough spirit stones to pay for the price he had just offered for a Greater Heaven stage cultivation room.

After realizing that Shi Nan was actually strapped for spirit stones, yet he still talked big and sought trouble, Shi Qing’s expression grew somewhat displeased, “So what do you want?”

Shi Nan let out a cold harrumph. “You go and tell that Hua Tian punk to stop his cultivation! He’s delayed my breakthrough. For that, he’ll come out here and apologize to me, and he won’t be allowed to use that cultivation room until I break through into the Greater Heaven stage.

Shi Qing frowned. “What?!”

At that moment, a few others who had been waiting to register and rent the cultivation rooms witnessed the conversation between Shi Qing and Shi Nan.

One of them hastily left the establishment.

Before long, the man appeared in a secluded courtyard in the Blood Skull’s headquarters, which was designated for their guest elders.

Among the decorative rocks and pagodas, Shi Hui and a few other guest elders were discussing matters, and Nie Tian was the center of their discussion.

The news of Nie Tian coming to rent a cultivation room had already spread out in the Blood Skull's headquarters.

“The Blood Skull's first early Heaven stage guest elder,” A man said with a sarcastic laugh. “The Blood Skull must be going backwards. I can't believe they actually took in an early Heaven stage young man as guest elder. We, as a whole, are brought down by such disgraceful demeanor.”

“I heard that guy killed a lot of enemies with cultivation bases higher than his own. I'm afraid it won't be long before this capable kid rides roughshod over us.”

“Who knows if that's true. Perhaps the Blood Skull was only making a boast of his battle prowess. Cai Yuan might have granted him the guest elder's identity only because he's close to Pei Qiqi. Everybody knows Cai Yuan's affection for Pei Qiqi. I'd say he's capable of doing anything to please that woman.”

“Yeah, that's a possibility. They only bragged about the kid's strength to not give people a cause for gossip. I may believe that, as an early Heaven stage cultivator, he killed middle Heaven stage cultivators. However, I'll never believe that he killed more than one late Heaven stage cultivator!”

“The Blood Skull even launched a cleansing operation against the Hunters just to rescue him.”

“We're also the Blood Skull's guest elders, but we never received such special treatment. This kid must be good at cultivating relationships. Considering his relationship with Pei Qiqi, I'm afraid it won't be long before the day comes when he bosses us around.”

The group of guest elders discussed and made fun of Nie Tian.

At that moment, the man arrived from the establishment of cultivation rooms. As soon as he rushed in, he bowed respectfully to a square-faced, bearded man and said, “Lord Shi, Shi Nan is

having a conflict with Hua Tian over the use of cultivation rooms.”

Shi Hui’s expression immediately sank. “The same Hua Tian who just returned with the Blood Skull?”

“Yeah, that’s him!”

“What’s happened?”

“Hua Tian consumed the spiritual Qi in his cultivation room so fast that the spell formation at the bottom of the cultivation rooms was triggered, which channeled the spiritual Qi from Shi Nan’s room into Hua Tian’s.”

Shi Hui sprang to his feet. “This little punk is too impudent!”

The group of guest elders followed Shi Hui out of the courtyard and toward the Blood Skull’s cultivation rooms.

Moments later, they arrived. Shi Qing was still trying to calm Shi Nan, telling him that when Nie Tian’s time ran out and he walked out of his room, he would have him apologize to Shi Nan.

“I heard something unpleasant has happened here.” Shi Hui strode into the establishment.

“Brother Shi.” Upon seeing Shi Hui, Shi Qing’s expression flickered slightly. Shi Qing walked up to him and said, smiling, “How come you are bothered by small things like this?”

With these words, he shot a fierce look at the informer before continuing, “You can rest assured. I’ll handle the matter properly. There’s no need to jeopardize the harmonious atmosphere over such trivial things, right? After all, you’re all guest elders of the Blood Skull.”

Shi Hui let out a cold harrumph. “Someone is riding roughshod over my nephew. How do you expect me not to be angry?! Little Nan is every bit as much a guest elder of the Blood Skull as Hua Tian is. What right does Hua Tian have to steal his spiritual Qi? Didn’t Little Nan pay enough spirit stones for that cultivation

room?”

“Misunderstanding. It’s merely a misunderstanding.” Shi Qing did his utmost to reconcile.

He was well-aware that not only was Shi Hui very renowned among all of the Blood Skull’s guest elders, but he was also good at forming cliques.

Some of the guest elders even took orders from Shi Hui. If he couldn’t handle this incident properly, the unity of all the Blood Skull’s guest elders might be jeopardized.

“Tell Hua Tian to come out,” Shi Hui said impatiently.

After a moment of hesitation, Shi Qing nodded and said, “Alright, I’ll tell him to give you an explanation.”

Chapter 314: The Tree May Desire Tranquility, But the Wind Will Not Stop

After being summoned out of his room, Nie Tian felt very confused while looking at Shi Hui, Shi Nan, and the other few guest elders. “What’s wrong, Uncle Shi? Is my time up?”

He was certain that he had only used that cultivation room for no more than 20 hours.

During that time, he had been forming spiritual energy balls and channeling the concentrated, pure spiritual energy within them to gradually expand his spiritual sea.

He was very displeased at being interrupted while he was cultivating wholeheartedly.

Shi Qing put on a wry smile and said embarrassedly, “No, your time is far from running out. However, there’s a small problem. The consumption of the spiritual Qi in your cultivation room was so fast that it affected another’s cultivation.”

With these words, Shi Qing shot a glance at Shi Nan, who was glaring at them from the side.

With his previous experience, Nie Tian immediately understood what had happened. Therefore, he nodded and said, “I see. I’m happy to compensate this brother for his loss. How many spirit stones do you think will be a proper compensation, Uncle Shi?”

Before Shi Qing had a chance to answer, he came to realize that things like this might happen again, and thus added, “How about this: Uncle Shi, from now on, I’ll rent both rooms at the same time. This way, I won’t affect others. What do you say?”

A bitter smile filled Shi Qing face.

“You’ve got spirit stones, so what? Who do you think you are?!” Shi Nan shouted angrily.

Unlike Nie Tian, he didn't have many spirit stones lying around. Therefore, upon seeing the filthy-rich Nie Tian intending to rent both cultivation rooms simultaneously, he flew into a shameful rage.

The establishment was crowded by not only Shi Hui and other guest elders, but also by people who had come to enjoy the dramatic scene.

Many onlookers had excited expressions on their faces after seeing Nie Tian walk out of his cultivation room and offer to rent Shi Nan's room, completely unaware of Shi Nan's identity.

They were all very eager to see how the Blood Skull would handle this incident.

“Okay, tell me what do you want?” Nie Tian said.

Shi Nan let out a snort and said, “I don't need your spirit stones. I was at a critical phase in breaking through from my current cultivation base. You disturbed me. First of all, you'll apologize to me. Then, you'll compensate me for my loss. Furthermore, you won't be allowed to use that cultivation room until I enter the Greater Heaven stage.”

Nie Tian's eyebrows furrowed as his face grew cold.

Meanwhile, he secretly formed a Heaven Eye and used it to conduct a thorough examination of Shi Nan. Then, he said with a wry smile, “It appears that it will be quite some time before you can enter the Greater Heaven stage. During this time, no one but you is allowed to use the cultivation rooms on this floor?”

“Other people can. You can't!” Having his situation perceived and brought into the open by Nie Tian, Shi Nan grew increasingly enraged. “Other people won't affect me! Only you will!”

Nie Tian's expression grew increasingly grim.

He didn't say another word to Shi Nan. Instead, he turned to Shi Qing and asked, “How do you propose we settle this, Uncle Shi?”

“How about this,” Shi Qing mediated, “Hua Tian will compensate for your loss and promise that he won’t affect you again during your future cultivation.”

Shi Hui, who was standing beside them, shook his head and said with a stern tone, “No. I don’t think this is an accident. Things like this will probably happen again. Little Nan’s breakthrough is a matter of great importance. I won’t allow anything or anyone to jeopardize it. Little Nan is right. Hua Tian should stop using that cultivation room temporarily.

“As for an appropriate compensation. I think we can let this pass if Hua Tian pays Little Nan 2,000 spirit stones.”

Shi Qing’s expression changed dramatically. “2,000 spirit stones?! The charge for using that cultivation room for 20 hours is only 500 spirit stones! Since the influence just occurred, 2,000 spirit stones is a bit too many, don’t you think?”

With a indifferent expression, Shi Hui said, “He hampered Little Nan’s breakthrough in his cultivation base. This is not something that can be forgiven by paying a few spirit stones!”

Shi Qing looked deeply at Shi Hui, and gradually realized that he was merely using this incident as an excuse to give Nie Tian a hard time.

The few guest elders who were standing next to Shi Hui looked at Nie Tian, their eyes filled with contempt and malice.

All these signs made it clear that since Nie Tian had become famous in Shatter City and was considered highly by the Blood Skull, these people, who were also guest elders of the Blood Skull, were growing increasingly repulsive in their actions towards him.

They were only using this dispute between Shi Nan and Nie Tian as an opportunity to show Nie Tian who was boss.

After hearing these words, Shi Qing seemed indecisive.

“What if I don’t agree to that?” Nie Tian asked.

Shi Hui grinned and said, “There’s another solution.”

“What is it?” Nie Tian asked coldly.

With a meaningful expression on his face, Shi Hui said, “I heard that your real strength goes far beyond your cultivation base, and that you’ve killed more than one late Heaven stage cultivator in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the hilly area, and the wasteland. Many disputes in Shatter City are settled in the Blood Fighting Pit. Since you’re so amazing, how about you defeat Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit?”

“If you win, you won’t need to apologize or compensate us for Little Nan’s loss. Not only that, I’ll have him give up using his cultivation room. You’ll be allowed to rent those two cultivation rooms however you like, and I won’t say another word!”

With these words, Shi Hui paused for a moment before continuing with a chuckle, “However, if you lose, you’ll pay the 2,000 spirit stones compensation, stop using your cultivation room, and apologize to Little Nan in front of everyone. What do you say?”

“The Blood Fighting Pit!” Shi Qing’s expression flickered dramatically. “Are you serious, Brother Shi?”

“Don’t worry. I won’t have them fight to the death. The fight will stop as soon as a winner emerges.” With an arrogant tone, Shi Hui turned to his nephew, Shi Nan, and said, “If Hua Tian agrees to fight you in the Blood Fighting Pit, you’ll have to remember: don’t take his life. But of course, it’s impossible to come out of the Blood Fighting Pit without sustaining any injuries, right?”

“Okay, I see.” Shi Nan realized what his uncle meant, and raised his voice as he said to Nie Tian, “I’ve heard many stories about your incredible battle prowess, kid.

“They say that not only did you kill dozens of Heaven stage Dark Moon members and Hunters, but you even killed some late Heaven

stage cultivators. That being the case, you should have nothing to fear, right? Come on! Let's take it to the Blood Fighting Pit. If you can beat me there, I'll give up that cultivation room voluntarily, and I won't say a word!"

"Alright!" Finally angered by Shi Nan, Nie Tian swiftly went downstairs and strode towards the Blood Fighting Pit.

"Straightforward. Good!" Shi Hui blurted, his eyes glittering with an icy light.

Upon seeing that Nie Tian had agreed to fight Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit, the crowd of onlookers seemed to have had their enthusiasm further sparked.

They rapidly followed Nie Tian downstairs and towards the direction of the Blood Fighting Pit. As they did, they spread the word to others they saw in the street.

Shi Qing saw that he couldn't stop this, so he turned to Shi Hui and said, "I need to report to the head and ask for his opinion on this! Hua Tian and Shi Nan are both guest elders of the Blood Skull. I'll have to inform the head about their battle in the Blood Fighting Pit!"

Shi Hui waved his hand and said, "Okay, tell him that this was my idea."

After following the crowd of people to the Blood Fighting Pit, Shi Qing said to the Blood Skull official who ran the Blood Fighting Pit, "The battle shall not start before I return!"

The man nodded in assent.

Then, Shi Qing rushed away as if his butt was on fire.

On the spacious balcony on top of the highest stone pavilion in the Blood Skull's headquarters, the robust, mountain-like Cai Lan was talking to two high-ranking Blood Skull officials when Shi Qing arrived.

The moment Shi Qing rushed in, he bowed in respect and relayed word of the incident to Cai Lan.

After listening to the whole story, Cai Lan asked with a calm expression, “Shi Qing, are you sure that Hua Tian killed so many opponents with cultivation bases higher than his relying solely on his own power?”

“I believe that’s the truth,” Shi Qing answered.

Cai Lan nodded gently and waved his hand, saying, “Let them fight in the Blood Fighting Pit then.”

“As you wish.” With these words, Shi Qing backed out of the balcony.

“Shi Hui is getting more and more impudent,” One of the high-ranking officials said with a disgusted expression. “He forms his own cliques amongst the guest elders and even considers those guest elders to be his own subordinates.”

“Shi Hui is about to enter the Worldly realm,” The other high official said. “Once he does, his prestige among the guest elders will become even higher.”

“Actually, I’d like to have a look at this battle,” Cai Lan said with a smile.

With a wave of his hand, a giant ice prism suddenly flew over from a corner of the balcony and landed in the middle of the three of them.

Through the ice prism, they could see everything that was going on in the Blood Fighting Pit with great clarity and detail.

“I’m intrigued too.”

“Yeah, rumors are rumors. You’ve got to see it firsthand to know whether that Hua Tian person is indeed as extraordinary as Shi Qing, Gu Yu, and others say he is.”

Then, Cai Lan nodded and said, “I’ve met a few talented

youngsters who were able to kill a late Heaven stage opponent while only at the early Heaven stage. But I've never met someone who could kill multiple opponents with higher cultivation bases, like they say Hua Tian can."

Chapter 315: The Blood Fighting Pit

Numerous people crowded together and pushed back and forth in front of the Blood Fighting Pit.

Many Qi warriors who had come to the Blood Skull's headquarters to purchase spiritual materials and spiritual tools, as well as the other guest elders in the city, all came to this place upon hearing about the upcoming battle between Nie Tian and Shi Nan.

Recently, Nie Tian had become a sensation in Shatter City. Almost everyone was curious about him.

Shi Nan, on the other hand, was Shi Hui's nephew and, as a guest elder of the Blood Skull, he also enjoyed a certain amount of popularity in Shatter City.

Therefore, the moment people heard about their upcoming battle in the Blood Fighting Pit, they put their business on hold and came to watch the fight.

The disguised Dong Baijie and Dong Li were among the crowd of people.

After assuming completely different appearances, the brother and sister pair looked no different from the other onlookers, and blended in perfectly.

Standing in the crowd, they observed Nie Tian, who was standing at the gate of the Blood Fighting Pit, from afar.

Smiling, Dong Baijie said to Dong Li, who was standing right next to him, "I didn't expect that we would be able to catch such a good show so soon after arriving in Shatter City. Nie Tian is a newcomer who's being regarded so highly by the Blood Skull. It's only natural that the other guest elders are not happy about it. Nie Tian is at the early Heaven stage, and Shi Nan is at the late Heaven stage. Who do you think will win?"

"Although I hate Nie Tian's guts, I would still give the odds to

him. I think he'll beat that Shi Nan person rather easily." With a frown, Dong Li looked at the swaggering Shi Nan and said with a disdainful tone, "I've heard about Shi Nan before. He only became a guest elder of the Blood Skull because he's Shi Hui's nephew. His actual battle prowess is about the same as any other Blood Skull member who is at the late Heaven stage. Nie Tian has killed a number of men like him already."

Face grim, Dong Baijie asked, "Did you see him kill them?"

Nie Tian being able to take his fragmentary star mark from him in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had a great deal to do with the fact that he had been badly wounded at that time.

If he hadn't gone through many fierce battles, he didn't believe Nie Tian would have had the ability to snatch the fragmentary star mark from him.

Therefore, when he first came to the Realm of Split Void and heard of Nie Tian's battle results from Dong Li and Han Mu, he had been rather skeptical, assuming that there might have been some exaggeration in Nie Tian's accomplishment of killing several dozen Heaven stage opponents in a row, some of them even being at the late Heaven stage.

"Of course I did." A bitter expression could be seen on Dong Li's face. "Not only that, but I had a brief personal encounter with him in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. You know me. I wouldn't even break a sweat if I needed to kill a man like Shi Nan, even though we are both at the late Heaven stage.

"The same goes for others who are at the same stage as me, with the only exceptions being the truly talented ones from the powerful Qi warrior sects.

"But Nie Tian..." Dong Li sighed. "Even though he's only at the early Heaven stage, every time we engaged in battle, he had the upper hand."

Dong Baijie's expression flickered as he nodded and said, "If that's the case, let's place a bet on him. We both suffered major defeats from this kid. Let's win some money through him to at least make up for our losses."

Song Li's eyes lit up. "Good point."

In the midst of their quiet discussion, Shi Qing returned.

"Well...?" Shi Hui asked in a loud voice.

Shi Qing nodded and said, "The battle is authorized."

Shi Hui grinned. "Good! Everyone, now you may go and place your bets!"

Immediately afterwards, the Blood Skull member who was in charge of the gambling center at the gate of the Blood Fighting Pit started crying out for gamblers.

"Let's open the gate," Shi Qing said.

After hearing his words, another Blood Skull member opened the gate to the Blood Fighting Pit and let Nie Tian and Shi Nan in.

One after another, the crowd of idlers gathered at the gate to place their bets with spirit stones.

The majority of the crowd placed their bets on Nie Tian, with only Shi Hui, the guest elders with him, and a handful of others placing their bets on Shi Nan.

After all, many of them knew that Shi Nan had only become the Blood Skull's guest elder because of his relation with Shi Hui, and that his battle prowess was not very outstanding.

However, Nie Tian had created such a huge sensation lately.

Even if his accomplishments were exaggerated to some extent, the fact that he had successfully escaped the pursuit of the Fang and other Hunters and returned to Shatter City alive was proof enough of his toughness.

As a result, nearly eighty percent of the people bet in favor of Nie Tian.

After hearing the crowd of idlers who relished drama shouting by the gate while placing their bets on Nie Tian, Shi Nan looked very grim.

Shi Hui and the guest elders with him also had grim expressions on their faces, as if none of them had ever expected that Nie Tian would have such high popularity.

They didn't know that many among the crowd of spectators had safely returned to Shatter City from their exploration trips precisely because Nie Tian had attracted the attention of practically all the Hunter organizations in the area.

Some of them had even learned about the Fang's schemes from the messages Nie Tian had left for them, and thus had withdrawn safely from the dense forest in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

They all felt indebted to Nie Tian, so they naturally placed their bets on him.

“Come on, people! 50 spirit stones and you can watch the battle in the Blood Fighting Pit!” A Blood Skull member cried loudly at the gate.

Everyone, including Shi Hui, Dong Baijie, and Dong Li, paid their entrance fees and walked into the Blood Fighting Pit.

Nie Tian and Shi Nan were standing at the center of the enormous fighting pit, with numerous paying spectators around them.

It was the first time Nie Tian had been inside the Blood Fighting Pit, so he glanced around curiously.

In the middle of the spacious fighting pit was a round stone stage that was 100 meters in diameter. A spiritual power ward had been established at the perimeter of the the round stage, preventing spiritual power attacks from shooting out of the stage.

Outside the edge of the round stage stood a circle of bleachers, which were gradually being filled with spectators.

After a rough count, Nie Tian found that there were already about a hundred people sitting on the bleachers.

All of them were making remarks about Nie Tian and Shi Nan with red faces, seeming even more thrilled than the fighters.

Shi Qing and the Blood Skull official who was in charge of the fighting pit beckoned for Nie Tian and Shi Nan to wait for the spectators to finish placing their bets and getting to their seats before announcing the start of the battle.

When it was about time, Shi Qing warned them loudly, “Hua Tian, Shi Nan, you’re both guest elders of the Blood Skull. I want you to know that this is not a battle of life and death! Keep your agreement in mind, and stop when a winner emerges.”

With an aloof expression, Nie Tian turned his head to stretch his neck, although he cursed Shi Nan in his heart.

He remembered that both Pei Qiqi and Li Ye had warned him not to attract too much attention a few days ago.

Furthermore, he was aware that if he caught too much attention in Shatter City, it would only be a matter of time before his true identity was exposed. At that time, the Heaven Palace Sect would surely come for him.

However, the thing people want the least always turns out to be the actual result. Shi Nan and Shi Hui were obviously using this incident as an opportunity to cause him trouble.

Now that they had sought him out to mess with him, he definitely couldn’t tolerate it, and thus agreed to this battle.

Seeing the bleachers being filled with more and more spectators, Nie Tian secretly cursed Shi Nan for causing so much attention. All he wanted was to finish the battle as soon as possible.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Wisps of green-blue lightning jumped out of Shi Nan's fingers as he summoned his lightning power. Simultaneously, Shi Nan, who cultivated the lightning incantation, took out a blue-green hammer from within his bracelet of holding.

With a slight wave of the hammer, rumbles of thunder echoed out from it.

In the next moment, even more fine, green lightning bolts flew out of Shi Nan's fingers, and were infused into the thunder hammer in his hand.

Shi Nan shot a glance at Shi Qing, who was observing from afar, and said, "Relax, I won't kill him! But since he dares to fight me in the Blood Fighting Pit, I can't let him walk out of here so easily!"

BOOM!

A loud and crisp roll of thunder echoed out from within his thunder hammer, as if the hammer had turned into a giant ball of lightning and crashed towards Nie Tian.

Within the Blood Fighting Pit, accompanied by rolls of thunder, numerous dazzling lightning bolts flashed across in the air.

Nie Tian looked up and felt a stabbing pain in his eyes, realizing that the lightning contained formidable power.

"Fancy, but not practical!" He let out a cold harrumph as he secretly formed a two-meter radius chaotic magnetic field around him.

At the same time, since he wished to end the battle as quickly as possible, he rapidly summoned his star power and prepared to cast a short-range Starshift.

SHEW!

In the blink of an eye, he appeared right in front of Shi Nan, as if he had teleported.

As Shi Nan was enveloped by the magnetic field, his spiritual power immediately fell into a state of chaos, and he experienced an agonizing pain in his mind.

Without any hesitation, Nie Tian summoned the different types of power within him and launched a Rage Punch towards Shi Nan's chest.

BANG!!!

Shi Nan was sent flying backwards like a cannonball. After crashing heavily into the spiritual power ward at the perimeter, he collapsed to the floor.

Chapter 316: Clean Victory

BOOM!

After ramming heavily into the spiritual power ward, Shi Nan fell onto the ground, and was unable to stand back up.

Blood ceaselessly poured out of the corner of his mouth as he attempted to get back on his feet. However, he failed after a few attempts, and thus eventually gave up. Sitting on the floor, he glared at Nie Tian.

After throwing the Rage Punch, Nie Tian didn't even spare Shi Nan another glance, and walked straight out of the central stage.

The spiritual power ward at the perimeter of the stage split open and created a opening for Nie Tian.

Only at that moment did the spectators on the stands come to realize that the battle was over.

A huge uproar rose inside the Blood Fighting Pit.

“Am I seeing right? Shi Nan actually couldn't withstand a single strike, and now he can't even get up?!”

“What just happened? It happened so fast that I didn't see it clearly. I just saw Hua Tian suddenly appear in front of Shi Nan and strike him with his fist. And then, Shi Nan flew backwards!”

“Was it really a battle between an early Heaven stage fighter and a late Heaven stage fighter? If we are determining their strength by their cultivation bases, shouldn't Shi Nan be the one to have defeated Hua Tian in a flash? How come it was the other way around?”

“Dear lord! I'm afraid the rumors are real! Hua Tian actually did kill dozens of Dark Moon experts and Hunters in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the hilly area, and the wasteland!”

“It seems that a cultivator's cultivation base is indeed not the

only standard to determine a man's true strength!"

All the spectators who had paid spirit stones to enter the Blood Fighting Pit were caught up in intense discussions with each other.

"Shi Nan is such a dumbass!" Dong Li said, gritting her teeth, not excited in the least even after winning numerous spirit stones since she had placed her bet on Nie Tian.

For some reason, upon seeing Shi Nan lose so completely and Nie Tian win so effortlessly, she was actually very angry.

"Shi Nan knew absolutely nothing about Nie Tian. He had no idea that Nie Tian has mastered strange movement magics, and that he is always wreathed in a mysterious magnetic field!" Since she had dealt with Nie Tian before, and through her endless pursuit of him, she had gained a clear understanding of the different types of mysterious magics he used.

She believed that if she were to fight Nie Tian, she definitely wouldn't fail so utterly and quickly as Shi Nan did.

The reason why Shi Nan had suffered such a complete loss was because he didn't know anything about Nie Tian, yet was blindly confident in himself and didn't keep his guard up.

Dong Baijie took a deep breath and said with a grim look in his eyes, "He's even more powerful now. Aside from the magnetic field and the movement magic he just used, he knows another secret magic that allows him to condense the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth into energy balls. If it weren't for the fact that there isn't any spiritual Qi here, and if the battle took place in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Shi Nan would have suffered an even more thorough loss."

Upon hearing his words, Dong Li instantly thought of the Hunters who had been bombarded by Nie Tian's spiritual energy balls, which contained toxic spiritual Qi, and died horrible deaths.

A chill ran through her body as she cursed, "That man is such a

freak!”

“Big Brother Shi...”

The handful of guest elders of the Blood Skull who were standing beside Shi Hui wished to speak, but stopped on second thought, their faces filled with mixed emotions.

Shi Hui’s face was very grim as he looked back and forth between Shi Nan, who struggled a few times, but still couldn’t get back on his feet, and Nie Tian, who didn’t even spare Shi Nan a glance after throwing the punch and walked right out of the fighting stage.

“I’ll go back to my cultivation room, Uncle Shi.” With these words, Nie Tian walked through the gate of the Blood Fighting Pit.

Beside Shi Qing, a few Blood Skull experts who managed the Blood Fighting Pit stood aghast as they looked Nie Tian up and down, as if they were looking at a monster.

Shi Qing snapped out of his daze and hastily replied, “Good, good.”

With these words, he looked up at Shi Hui, who was standing on the bleachers, and asked under everyone’s gazes, “Brother Shi, about your agreement?”

Cold words came out through Shi Hui’s gnashed teeth. “Every word I said counts.”

Shi Qing smiled as he nodded. Then, he turned to Nie Tian and said warmly, “It’s done. From now on, Shi Nan’s cultivation room will remain vacant. You’ll be able to use both Heaven stage cultivation rooms however you like, and cultivate wholeheartedly. You won’t need to worry about any further disruptions.”

“If that’s the case, many thanks.” Nie Tian clasped his hands to pay his respects and then walked away from the Blood Fighting Pit.

The Qi warriors who had limited spirit stones and thus had been waiting for the result outside the Blood Fighting Pit, saw Nie Tian

walk out and immediately learned the result.

Under the crowd's shocked and revering gazes, Nie Tian rapidly left and went straight back to his cultivation room, where he resumed his devoted cultivation.

On the balcony of the highest stone pavilion in the Blood Skull's headquarters...

Cai Lan, the head of the Blood Skull, waved his hand, and the the gigantic, crystal-like prism grew dim and flew back into a corner of the balcony.

Cai Lan rubbed his chin as light flashed across in his eyes, as if he was deep in thought.

The other two Worldly realm Blood Skull officials also narrowed their eyes as they recalled the scene where Nie Tian had defeated Shi Nan in the blink of an eye over and over again.

All three of them remained silent.

Only after a long time did Cai Lan stop pondering and ask with a plain tone, "What do you think?"

One of them said with a impressed smile, "This kid is far beyond ordinary. The way I see it, even the so-called 'chosen ones' from the Heaven Palace Sect, Ice Pavilion sect, and other top Qi warrior sects in the other nine realms probably wouldn't be able to defeat him. Also, I think 'Hua Tian' is probably a fake name."

"Your Honor, this young man is probably here to either take refuge or temper himself," the other high-ranking official said, "Whichever it is, he probably won't stay in the Realm of Split Void in the long-term. It won't be easy if we want to make him one of us. Special means will be required."

Cai Lan nodded and said, "I've broadened my horizons today."

As a matter of fact, back when Shi Qing had confirmed Nie Tian's accomplishment of slaughtering multiple Dark Moon experts in

the Void Illusion Mountain Range to him, he had been convinced that Nie Tian would come out victorious.

That was why he had authorized their battle in the Blood Fighting Pit.

However, he had never expected that the battle would end so quickly.

The way Nie Tian had defeated Shi Nan was so neat and quick that Shi Nan had already collapsed on the ground before Cai Lan could have a chance to observe Nie Tian's secrets.

He even secretly blamed Shi Nan for not being able to withstand a single blow.

After all, Shi Nan was also a guest elder that had won the Blood Skull's recognition. Those who had the privilege of becoming guest elders of the Blood Skull were usually stronger than common cultivators with the same cultivation base.

The trio felt the Blood Skull had lost face because of Shi Nan's unbearably poor performance. Others might even begin to suspect that all of the Blood Skull's guest elders might be just as incompetent as Shi Nan.

Cai Lan pondered for a few seconds before adding, "From now on, we need to raise the bar and adopt a more prudent screening process when we take in new guest elders. And no more face-giving! Pass on my order: remove Shi Nan's title as a guest elder of the Blood Skull. He has brought shame to our entire organization. A man like him doesn't deserve to be our guest elder."

"Your Honor, such a decision might arouse Shi Hui's discontent," one of the officials said.

"Ignore him."

"I see."

That night...

Shi Hui took the severely injured Shi Nan back to his courtyard in the Blood Skull's headquarters, where he examined his condition. After discovering that three of Shi Nan's ribs were broken and certain damage had been inflicted to his heart, Shi Hui looked increasingly sullen.

“How come you lost so easily and completely?” Shi Hui said, enraged.

He didn't care that he had lost some spirit stones. What he cared about was that Shi Nan had brought shame to him and lost his face.

There had been a large audience at the Blood Fighting Pit earlier today, all of whom knew that Shi Nan was his nephew. Shi Nan's disastrous defeat had been like a vigorous slap to Shi Hui's face.

The few guest elders who were close to him also had grim expressions on their faces, and seemed every bit as embarrassed and ashamed as he was.

Actually, those guest elders were well-aware that, considering Shi Nan's true strength, he wouldn't have qualified to become a guest elder of the Blood Skull.

However, no matter how unimpressive Shi Nan was, he was still at the late Heaven stage, and he shouldn't have lost to Nie Tian, whose cultivation base was two levels lower than his. However, the result was that not only did he lose, but he also lost completely. This was very hard for them to accept.

“That kid practically teleported to my face and avoided all of my lightning attacks.” Shi Nan's face was pale, and he could feel a mild pain in his heart every time he spoke. “As soon as he appeared in front of me, my spiritual power fell into a state of chaos, and I felt a splitting pain in my head.

“I simply couldn't summon my spiritual power to defend against his incoming strike.

“Also, his fist strike was more explosive than any attacking skill I’ve ever seen. I-I...”

Shi Nan ran out of words.

He was also very upset that he had lost to an early Heaven stage young man. He had never imagined Nie Tian to have so many strange skills.

He attributed his failure to his lack of knowledge of Nie Tian.

However, he did lose. No matter how well he might explain it, he wouldn’t be able to change the result.

Just as they were drowning in depression, a Blood Skull member arrived and delivered a message from Cai Lan: “Shi Nan is too weak to be a guest elder of the Blood Skull, and thus his title will be removed, effective immediately!”

After delivering Cai Lan’s order, the man turned around and left without looking at Shi Hui’s outrageous facial expression.

A heated discussion went on between the few guest elders, as they were all outraged by the Blood Skull’s decision.

“Cai Lan has gone too far! Sure, Shi Nan lost the battle, but he’s still your nephew! Cai Lan obviously just doesn’t want to give you face anymore!”

“Big Brother Shi, Cai Lan’s decision is a bit too excessive, don’t you think?”

Shi Hui, however, didn’t say a word as he listened to their discussion. Like an ice-cold rock, he sat still.

After a long while, Shi Hui grew impatient. He waved his hand to beckon them to get out, saying, “You may go now. I know what to do!”

Immediately afterwards, the guest elders sealed their lips and left the room.

After they left, and Shi Hui and Shi Nan were the only ones in the

room, Shi Hui let out a cold harrumph and said, “Cai Lan, since you treat me with injustice, don’t blame me for betraying you! Even if leave the Blood Skull, the Dark Moon and the Wild Fire will offer me even better terms! Now that you don’t want to give me face, I’m no longer obligated to work for you!”

Shi Nan’s expression flickered slightly after hearing his words. Yet, he didn’t dare to say anything.

Chapter 317: The Spirit Condor

Over the following ten days, Nie Tian's fame rose higher and higher in Shatter City.

His deed of defeating Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit was soon spread to every corner of the city, and became known to every citizen.

Not only that, but even people in Ash City and the Land of the Abandoned heard about him, the newest guest elder of the Blood Skull.

However, during this period of time, Nie Tian never stepped out of the cultivation room he had rented in the Blood Skull's headquarters once.

Since his battle with Shi Nan, he had realized that he wouldn't be able to conceal his true identity for long, and thus felt an increasingly strong sense of urgency.

In the cultivation room, he used the rich spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth to gradually expand his spiritual sea and refine his spiritual power round after round. In the meantime, he consumed large amounts of spirit beast meat and learned the last profound magic recorded in the first fragmentary star mark, Starfall.

During this time, Dong Baijie and Dong Li remained in the Blood Skull's headquarters and wandered around in the vicinity, waiting for Nie Tian to come out of the establishment.

Now that Dong Baijie had confirmed Nie Tian's identity, ideas emerged in his mind. If it was possible, he planned to exert all effort to snatch the two fragmentary star marks from Nie Tian.

If not, he would try his best to persuade Dong Li to put aside her personal grudge towards Nie Tian and make friends with him.

Of course, he hadn't shared his plans with Dong Li yet.

Soon, a month passed...

Nie Tian, who had spent the entire time cultivating wholeheartedly in the Blood Skull's cultivation room, had successfully expanded his spiritual sea to the limit and finished a few rounds of refinement of his spiritual power.

During this period of time, he had even received major enlightenment regarding the profound Starfall magic.

On this day, he finally walked out of his cultivation room.

At the front door of the establishment, he settled his account with Shi Qing and paid the total due amount of spirit stones. Then, he headed out towards his residence in Shatter City.

However, the moment he stepped through the front door, a small middle-aged man with a goatee suddenly appeared in front of him. Face full of smiles, he moved very close to Nie Tian and said, "Long time no see, young man. I noticed your uniqueness last time we met, but I never expected that you would become a guest elder of the Blood Skull!"

Nie Tian looked at him out of the corner of his eyes, asking, "Who are you?"

Actually, this was the same man he had encountered the last time Li Ye had brought him here to use the cultivation room.

The man made a living by selling information, and it was through this man that Nie Tian had learned about the situation in the Realm of Flame Heaven and that his kin were safe. Only after gaining such information had he finally set his mind at rest and focused on his cultivation.

With a low chuckle and a slick roll of his eyes, the man said, "It's me. I didn't have a chance to introduce myself the last time we met. I'll make up for it now. My name is Hu Rong."

Nie Tian nodded. "Okay."

While Nie Tian and Hu Rong talked, some passing-by Qi warriors recognized Nie Tian and started chattering with their company.

“That’s Hua Tian!”

“He’s the Hua Tian everyone has been talking about!”

Hu Rong frowned slightly and said, “Hua Tian, if you don’t mind, can we find another place to talk? I’ve got a lot of new information regarding the Realm of Flame Heaven.”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered slightly as he said, “Alright.”

“Come with me.” Without any hesitation, Hu Rong walked towards the gate of the Blood Skull’s headquarters.

At that moment, Shi Qing, who had been sitting by the door, overheard their conversation.

“Wait a moment!” Shi Qing called out gently.

Hu Rong and Nie Tian both stopped.

Shi Qing took a long, deep look at Hu Rong before saying, “Hua Tian is our guest elder. Now that he wants to buy information from you, I hope you won’t deceive him.”

“How would I dare?” A wronged expression appeared on Hu Rong’s smiling face.

Shi Qing snorted as he said with a stern expression on his face, “Come on. Do me a favor and tell him only the truth, will you?”

For some reason, Shi Qing, who usually never showed any emotion when dealing with people, seemed very concerned and sincere when he talked to Hu Rong.

After hearing Shi Qing’s words, Hu Rong assumed a serious face as he nodded gently and said, “Rest assured. I won’t give him any false information.”

Only then did Shi Qing set his mind at rest and say to Nie Tian, “Brother Hu is a very well-informed man. Even we, the Blood

Skull, sometimes get our information from him when we want to learn about the newest things happening elsewhere.”

Nie Tian felt deep veneration upon hearing these words.

Originally, he had attached very little importance to Hu Rong. Due to the man's wretched appearance, he had even slightly doubted the authenticity of his information.

He had never expected that Shi Qing would actually speak so highly of the man.

“Let's go.” Hu Rong led the way.

Soon, the two of them walked out of the Blood Skull's headquarters.

Meanwhile, Dong Baijie and Dong Li hid around a corner of the street, and observed quietly as Nie Tian and Hu Rong walked further and further away.

After a moment of pondering, Dong Baijie asked, “Did you notice the ring on that man's finger?”

With a suspicious expression on her face, Dong Li said, “Yeah, I saw the pattern on the ring's surface. That Hu Rong person is probably with the Spirit Condor. He is probably in charge of the Spirit Condor's branch in Shatter City. Normally speaking, people from the Spirit Condor won't do business with men with low cultivation bases, like Nie Tian. They normally only deal with powerful and influential men or organizations. What is he doing with Nie Tian?”

“Beats me.” Dong Baijie shook his head. “As far as we know, the Spirit Condor is not a Qi warrior sect, but rather a mysterious, ancient organization. Their influence reaches every corner of the Domain of the Falling Stars. Even the most powerful Qi warrior sects like the Heaven Palace Sect aren't as well-informed as the Spirit Condor.

“Now that the Spirit Condor has approached Nie Tian, could it be

that they've learned about his true identity?"

Dong Li's expression flickered slightly as she said, "It's very likely! If any organization has the ability to dig Nie Tian out, it must be the Spirit Condor!"

"Damn!" Dong Baijie secretly felt regretful. "If the Spirit Condor has indeed learned about Nie Tian's true identity, it won't be very long before the Heaven Palace Sect gets the word. Once they do, they'll immediately send people to Shatter City."

"So what should we do then?" Dong Li asked.

Dong Baijie sighed. "Let's observe for a while first."

In a remote corner of Shatter City...

It was a run-down block. Rusting, small stone pavilions sat on both sides of the narrow street. A disgusting and nauseous smell filled the air.

This place was the slum of Shatter City, where only the most down-and-out Qi warriors gathered.

Every single courtyard and stone pavilion in Shatter City had been built by the Blood Skull. Wherever you lived, you would have to pay rent to the Blood Skull in spirit stones.

The more spacious and noble the residence was, the higher the rent would be. This block, however, was the place where people could find residences with the lowest rents in Shatter City.

Hu Rong lived in one of the numerous humble stone rooms on this block.

Nie Tian followed Hu Rong into the stone room, and found that there was nothing but a bed and a stone table inside the room.

While Nie Tian was still frowning from the foul smell in the street, Hu Rong laughed embarrassedly and said with an apologetic tone, "Sorry for the poor environment here."

With these words, Hu Rong slowly closed the door, along with

the only window of the room.

Afterwards, an ocean-blue light screen suddenly spread out across the inner walls of the humble stone room, isolating the room from the outside world.

Nie Tian's eyes instantly glittered with a strange light.

“Alright, no one will be able to hear us now.” Hu Rong grinned and showed his mouthful of yellow teeth. He went ahead and poured himself a cup of strong tea. Despite the fact that the tea seemed burning hot, he took a sip of it, and with a enjoyable expression on his face, he asked, “How much of the first fragmentary star mark have you learned and refined?”

Nie Tian's expression flickered dramatically.

Almost simultaneously, he formed a chaotic magnetic field around himself and unleashed one Heaven Eye.

As soon as his chaotic magnetic field was formed, the layer of ocean-blue light sealing the small stone room began to fluctuate violently.

Even the stone room began to give out cracking sounds, as if it couldn't bear the strong impact and was going to collapse.

Keh! Keh!

Hu Rong choked on a mouthful of strong tea and coughed loudly as he hastily waved his hand towards Nie Tian. “Wait! Don't be so nervous! I mean no harm!”

“Who are you?!” Nie Tian blurted loudly.

He had never expected that this wretched-looking man would be the first to reveal his true identity.

After discovering via his Heaven Eye that Hu Rong was only at the late Heaven stage, a strong killing intent was born in Nie Tian's heart.

Since he hadn't fully mastered Starfall, it meant that he hadn't

even refined the first fragmentary star mark yet.

With the first sentence that came out of his mouth, Hu Rong had disclosed Nie Tian's true identity. This made Nie Tian feel an imminent threat.

Therefore, he secretly prepared to kill and silence him forever.

"I'm with the Spirit Condor." Hu Rong chuckled. "You've caused such a huge stir in Shatter City recently, so it was fairly easy for me to learn about your true identity."

"The Spirit Condor? I've never heard of it." Strong killing intent continued to hover within Nie Tian's wide eyes.

Chapter 318: Crisis Lurking in Dark Corners

No battles or brawls were allowed in Shatter City. This was the rule set by Cai Lan, the head of the Blood Skull. Anyone who dared to break this rule would be punished severely.

The Blood Skull had set up special spell formations to cover every inch of Shatter City, so that they could detect any clash between spiritual power and determine the location of a fight the moment it took place.

Once they discovered a battle anywhere in Shatter City, the Blood Skull would immediately send people to deal with it.

Nie Tian had learned about it soon after he had become a guest elder of the Blood Skull. Even so, he was prepared to use everything within his power to kill the man in front of him!

After all, Hu Rong being alive was such a huge threat to him.

Considering his current relationship with the Blood Skull, if he killed Hu Rong, he would probably still be punished by the Blood Skull, but after weighing the punishment against the peace he would gain by killing Hu Rong, he felt that it would be worth it to receive a punishment from the Blood Skull.

As soon as the thought of killing Hu Rong appeared in his mind, Nie Tian unleashed a murderous aura so palpable that he could almost cut it with a knife.

Hu Rong, whose cultivation base was two levels higher than Nie Tian's, saw the soundproof, ocean-blue light screen being distorted by Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field to the point where it was on the verge of falling apart, and that the murderous aura Nie Tian unleashed was growing more and more intense and suffocating. He said hastily, "Mr. Hua is also a member of the Spirit Condor."

"Which Mr. Hua?" The strong killing intent in Nie Tian's eyes didn't weaken a bit.

“Hua Mu, of course!” A bitter smile spread out across Hu Rong’s face. “Actually, our first encounter wasn’t an accident at all. Do you really think us members of the Spirit Condor would simply wander in the street and sell information? If Mr. Hua hadn’t asked me to deliver that information to you, I would never have taken the initiative to approach you!”

Upon hearing Hua Mu’s name, the strong killing intent around Nie Tian immediately disappeared.

“How come he’s a member of the Spirit Condor?” Nie Tian sounded very surprised.

“Not only is Mr. Hua a member of the Spirit Condor, but he’s also a high-ranking official in the Spirit Condor.” Hu Rong also seemed to feel deep veneration when he talked about Hua Mu. “Let me put it this way: considering my status in the Spirit Condor, if Mr. Hua didn’t want to give me a mission, I wouldn’t even be allowed to meet him in person.”

Nie Tian’s chaotic magnetic field gradually weakened, and eventually dissipated into the air. Then, he asked, “Why have you sought me out this time?”

“You need to answer my question first. How much of the first fragmentary star mark have you learned and refined?” Hu Rong said with all seriousness.

“The first fragmentary star mark carries three profound magics. So far, I’ve learned and refined the first two. It won’t be long before I fully master the third magic. I just need some time to practice it.” Nie Tian didn’t hide anything. Instead, he told Hu Rong the truth.

Hu Rong nodded briefly as he said, “Good. The circumstances have changed. Originally, Mr. Hua wanted you to stay in the Realm of Split Void and refine both of the fragmentary star marks. However, according to the newest information we’ve received, Mr. Hua believes that as long as you can learn and refine the first

fragmentary star mark, you won't need to worry about your real identity being exposed anymore."

"Why?" Nie Tian was surprised and curious.

Hu Rong smiled as he said, "Even Mr. Hua himself didn't know that the three fragmentary star marks need to be learned and refined in the right order. The third fragmentary star mark was obtained by Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect. However, up till now, he still hasn't been able to receive any enlightenment from it.

"According to Ning Yang, he won't be able to learn the third fragmentary star mark unless he obtains the first two fragmentary star marks and starts from there."

Upon hearing these words, Nie Tian's eyes instantly lit up. "Does that mean that the third fragmentary star mark has been completely useless to Ning Yang?"

"Exactly!" Hu Rong nodded, smiling.

"That was why he ignored orders from the Heaven Palace Sect and hid away. Now even the Heaven Palace Sect is asking us to help them search for him."

Confused, Nie Tian asked, "Why did they do that?"

Hu Rong took another sip of his hot, strong tea as he organized his thoughts. Then, he went on and explained, "The Heaven Palace Sect believes that since you've disappeared for quite some time, you've probably already learned and refined the first fragmentary star mark. Once you've done that, the fragmentary star mark will become a part of your body and soul. By that time, even the Heaven Palace Sect won't have the ability to separate and strip it from you.

"Thus, you've become the key to this.

"Even though Ning Yang is the 'chosen one' of the Heaven Palace Sect, since he couldn't learn anything from the third fragmentary

star mark, he will be forced to give it up so that you'll be able to master all three fragmentary star marks and seal the three huge spatial rifts, which connects the outsider demons' world with ours, as soon as possible.

“For that reason, the Heaven Palace Sect intended to strip Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark from him and offer it to you when you showed up.

“Ning Yang learned about their decision through his connections in the sect, so he claimed that he was going on a trip to search for you and disappeared.”

Hu Rong took his time as he explained the ever-changing situation to Nie Tian in great detail.

Nie Tian pondered in silence for a while. After obtaining a thorough understanding of the current situation, he asked, “Is this all you wanted to tell me?”

“For one thing, I hope you can refine that first fragmentary star mark as quickly as possible. For another, I've come to tell you that you don't need to be overcautious any more. Even if you expose your true identity here, it probably won't be a big deal.” With these words, Hu Rong suddenly assumed a serious expression. “Another thing that I need to inform you of is that Ning Yang is also in the Realm of Split Void right now.”

“What?! He's also in the Realm of Split Void? Where exactly? Is he here because of me?” Nie Tian asked a series of questions without pause.

Ning Yang was at the late Greater Heaven stage. Back when they were in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, he had risen up, slain numerous powerful Greater Heaven stage experts, and eventually gained a fragmentary star mark.

Even the valiant Tang Yang from the Flame God Sect suffered a disastrous defeat from him.

Back then, Nie Tian had witnessed Ning Yang's formidable power, even though they had been separated by a seven-colored river of light.

As the "chosen one" of the Heaven Palace Sect, Ning Yang's battle prowess far exceeded that of the other late Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors.

Now, as he thought about it, Ning Yang probably would be as fierce and deadly as Li Langfeng, if not more.

However, Ning Yang was much younger than Li Langfeng, which meant he had much more potential than Li Langfeng.

The news of Ning Yang appearing in the Realm of Split Void came as a great threat that weighed on Nie Tian's mind. He believed that once his identity was exposed, Ning Yang would seek him out in no time.

"From the information we've acquired, Ning Yang is in the Realm of Split Void now. After all, only such a special place would be out of the reach of the Heaven Palace Sect. Even we would have to go through great trouble to find a person here." Hu Rong frowned as he added, "As for his current location, we don't know for sure, and we can't tell if he's here for you, or to escape from the Heaven Palace Sect's network."

After a moment of pondering, Nie Tian said, "I have a feeling that I won't be able to hide my true identity for long."

"You won't need to," Hu Rong said with a smile. "You'll only need to hide your true identity until you finish refining the first fragmentary star mark. When you do that, even if your true identity hasn't been exposed, we, the Spirit Condor, will spread the word that you're Nie Tian."

"What?! Why would you do that?" Nie Tian asked with a puzzled expression.

"So that Ning Yang will show up and come for you," Hu Rong

said with a serious face. “In the Realm of Split Void, as long as Ning Yang changes his appearance, adopts another identity, and keeps a low profile, even we will have great difficulty finding him. If he doesn’t show up, we won’t be able to have the third fragmentary star mark transferred from him to you.

“Only you will be able to tempt him to stop hiding and take the initiative by attacking you.

“Of course, you won’t need to worry about your safety. We’ll make arrangements to make sure you’re safe. When you’ve refined the first fragmentary star mark, you can come and find me here. I’ll find you strong allies so that you’ll be able to deal with Ning Yang together.”

“I see,” Nie Tian said, glassy-eyed.

“Alright, try not to concern yourself with other matters, and focus solely on refining the first fragmentary star mark.” With these words, Hu Rong called off the ocean-blue light screen, opened the door, and signaled to Nie Tian that he could leave.

Then, Nie Tian walked out of the room with a complicated expression on his face.

It was already the middle of the night.

Walking down the chilly, desolate street that was filled with a foul smell, Nie Tian frowned as he continued to mull over the overwhelming information he had just learned from Hu Rong.

Just as he was about to walk out of the block, he took note that a man was sitting at a corner of the street. In the darkness, the man’s glittering eyes never left him.

As he stepped closer, the man waved at him, and beckoned for Nie Tian to come closer.

Nie Tian first came to a stop, and then examined the man with a Heaven Eye.

“Early Greater Heaven stage!” After learning the man’s cultivation base, Nie Tian’s expression flickered slightly as he secretly raised his guard.

After all, he didn’t have the confidence to beat a Greater Heaven stage expert yet, so the man was a threat to him.

On second thought, he was now in Shatter City, where the Blood Skull kept a close watch on everything happening in every corner. Once a battle broke out, Blood Skull members would immediately detect the violent clash of spiritual power, and arrive at the scene shortly afterwards.

With a thought, Nie Tian quietly formed a chaotic magnetic field around him and walked slowly towards the man.

The man grinned as he said, “Long time no see.”

Nie Tian suddenly went blank as he looked the man up and down with rapt attention. Then, he asked, “Have we ever met?”

The man glanced around. When he was convinced that no one was around, he took off his mask and showed his real face. Flabbergasted, Nie Tian called out, “Dong Baijie!”

At that very moment, the man put the mask back on with lightning speed and hastily explained, “Wait! Calm down! I’m not here to get things back from you or seek revenge.”

As he said these words, he rapidly put a bracelet of holding on the ground, and stepped backwards with a smile on his face. “Consider what’s inside to be a gift from me. I wish we can be friends from now on.”

By standing at least 50 meters away from Nie Tian, Dong Baijie seemed to be showing Nie Tian that he didn’t have any ill intentions, so that Nie Tian could put his mind at ease.

With great caution, Nie Tian walked to where Dong Baijie stood earlier and picked up the bracelet of holding from the ground. Then, he sent a wisp of psychic awareness into it.

There was a mask and approximately 300 stones that contained star power within the bracelet of holding.

“There will be occasions where that mask will come in handy. As a matter of fact, you should have been wearing a mask like this since the day you came to the Realm of Split Void.” Dong Baijie gave a low laugh as he continued, “As for the Star Stones, consider them a token of my good intentions. I know you’re in need of them, so please take them.”

Before Nie Tian could say anything, Dong Baijie added, “I’ve come to make friends with you, and that’s all. You can rest assured. I’m a discrete man. Your secret is safe with me.”

With these words, Dong Baijie turned around and flashed into the next block. Within seconds, he disappeared from Nie Tian’s sight.

Chapter 319: Star Stones

Deep into the night, Nie Tian returned to the courtyard where he, Li Ye, and Pei Qiqi lived.

He went back to his stone room and transferred all the Star Stones from the bracelet of holding Dong Baijie had given him into his own bracelet of holding.

It was through Dong Baijie that he learned that these strange-looking stones, which contained rich star power, were called Star Stones.

Since Dong Baijie knew who he was, he naturally knew that Nie Tian was learning and practicing the Fragmentary Star Incantation. Considering that the entirety of Shatter City was enveloped by a enormous protective ward, he couldn't channel star power from the heavens, so Star Stones were indeed something Nie Tian needed desperately.

After putting away the Star Stones, Nie Tian took out the exquisite mask and put it on gently.

Wreathed in a misty, white light, the ice-cold mask stuck perfectly to Nie Tian's face, completely covering up his original appearance.

He took out a bronze mirror and looked into it. In the next moment, he saw a plain-looking face that didn't have a single special feature in the mirror.

Even still, it was very different from Nie Tian's face.

Only at that moment did he realize how important such a mask could be to a person like him, who wished to conceal his own identity. "If I wore one of these when I first came to the Realm of Split Void, I probably wouldn't have had to worry so much about having my true identity exposed.

"What does Dong Baijie want? He already recognized me, but not

only does he not intend to expose my true identity, but he even gave me a mask and numerous Star Stones as a gift. The man is from the Realm of a Hundred Battles. He gained the qualifications to participate in the Heaven Gate trial, during which he gained a fragmentary star mark after wiping out all of his enemies in the Heaven stage area. This was enough to prove his extraordinary strength.

“Now, not only has he come to the Realm of Split Void, but he also sought me out. What could he possibly want?”

Nie Tian frowned as he racked his brain for an explanation.

Moments later, Nie Tian put away the mask and looked up at the chilly crescent moon in the sky. He unleashed a wisp of his psychic power to examine the spiritual sea in his dantian, and discovered that every vortex within it was rotating at a high speed.

He knew that, after the numerous deadly battles he had gone through in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the hilly area, and the wasteland, his state of mind had reached the point where he was ready to break through into the middle Heaven stage.

In recent days, he had cultivated day and night in the Blood Skull’s cultivation room, and finished several rounds of refinement of his spiritual sea.

Both his mind and body had sent him messages that he was ready to step into the next cultivation stage.

However, there just seemed to be a layer of invisible mist standing in his way.

He wouldn’t be able to finish the last step and make the breakthrough unless he found a way to burst through the mist.

“What is it?” With these thoughts in mind, he took out several pieces of spirit beast meat and started munching.

At the same time, a wisp of his psychic power flew into his heart and observed closely.

Soon, countless strands of rich flesh power rose from within Nie Tian's stomach, before they were rapidly drawn to and savagely devoured by the green aura in Nie Tian's heart.

Only after devouring every last bit of flesh power that the spirit beast meat had provided did the green aura settle down again.

“Every upgrade and transcendence of my bloodline requires such astronomical amounts of flesh power!” Mixed emotions rose in Nie Tian's heart.

Earlier, when he had cultivated wholeheartedly in the Blood Skull's cultivation room, he would consume spirit beast meat whenever he took a break. Soon, more than half of the fourth grade spirit beast meat he had reaped from the Void Illusion Mountain Range had been washed down his throat, and the rich essence of flesh and blood had been completely absorbed by the green aura.

Yet, up until now, he still hadn't had the slightest feeling of the green aura, which carried the profound truths of life, becoming satisfied. He could still sense its endless greed and yearning.

“Starfall...” As soon as the thought appeared in Nie Tian's mind, he slowly calmed himself, sent a wisp of psychic awareness into the first fragmentary star mark, and tried to draw more enlightenment from it.

The practice of Starfall was different from Starstrike and Starshift. It wasn't a simple process of casting spells by channeling his star power.

The truly amazing part of Starfall was that it was a magic that allowed the caster to summon falling stars from the void. The caster could use the strong mysterious spell to change the movements of the falling stars and command them to plummet towards and bombard his enemies to death.

Since he had already spent plenty of time studying the profound

mysteries of this magic, his understanding of it had reached a rather high level.

He believed that he had mastered the essence of it, and he only needed to practice the magic in a place where falling stars could be found relatively regularly.

“I’ve got to leave Shatter City. The Realm of Split Void is such a vast place. There must be areas where falling stars flash across the sky more often. As long as I can find such an area as soon as possible, I’ll probably be able to practice Starfall and master this last profound magic within a short time.”

While contemplating these matters, the wisp of Nie Tian’s psychic awareness continued to soar amongst the ancient symbols that recorded the mysteries of Starfall.

Early in the morning...

Pei Qiqi learned that he had returned, and thus came to knock on his door first thing in the morning.

Nie Tian awoke from his contemplation, opened the door, and let Pei Qiqi in.

Pei Qiqi was wearing a light-blue battle garment. Her crystal-clear eyes were devoid of the slightest impurity. Immediately after entering the room, she glanced at Nie Tian out of the corner of her eyes and said, “You’re back, huh?”

Nie Tian nodded.

Pei Qiqi let out a soft, angry snort. “What did I tell you before you went to the Blood Skull’s headquarters? Didn’t I tell you to keep a low profile and stay away from trouble? You just won’t listen! Not only did you get in trouble, but you even went to fight Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit!

“This is great. After that fight, almost everyone in Shatter City now knows your face.

“If Mr. Hua were here, he would definitely also tell you to lay low and avoid things like that. Even though you didn’t say it, I know you’ve come to the Realm of Split Void to hide from certain people. If you don’t want trouble, you’ll have to act like it!

“If you continue to do things like that, I’m afraid you won’t be able to hide here much longer!”

Scolded by Pei Qiqi, Nie Tian forced a dry smile and didn’t say anything, looking shamefaced.

After their experience together in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Nie Tian knew that she would only talk this much to people she cared about.

To those who she didn’t care about, she wouldn’t say a word more than what was necessary, no matter who it was.

“It’s my bad. I tried, but I couldn’t bear his provocation.” Nie Tian admitted to his mistake honestly.

Pei Qiqi shot another cold glance at him. Seeing that he was truly sorry for his rash behavior, she didn’t know what else to say.

“Oh, right, Cai Yuan came over a couple of days ago.” She stopped berating Nie Tian and changed the subject. “He talked to Li Ye. Apparently, he converted the valuables you previously looted from the Dark Moon members and Hunters into spirit stones, and used some of them to purchase a number of spiritual materials Li Ye would need.

“It seems that the customized spiritual tool Li Ye is forging for you will require even more spiritual materials than he expected. Even though your last trip turned out rather lucrative, everything you gained from it probably won’t be enough for Li Ye to forge that spiritual tool.”

Nie Tian was taken aback. “Does it really require that many spiritual materials to forge that spiritual tool?”

Pei Qiqi nodded gently at him, saying, “It’s mainly because you’re

far too special. The spiritual tool Li Ye is forging for you will allow you to infuse it with fire power, wood power, and star power. My master and Li Ye are the only ones in the Realm of Split Void who have the ability to forge this kind of spiritual tool.”

Nie Tian was increasingly astounded.

“Another reason is that it requires a substantial amount of Star Iron. Star Iron is extracted and refined from Star Stones. Star Stones are very hard to find in the Realm of Split Void. There’s only one region in the whole realm where Star Stones can be found.” After a brief pause, Pei Qiqi continued with a frown, “But that region is even more special and dangerous than the Void Illusion Mountain Range. It’s extremely hard for people to obtain Star Stones from there.”

“Star Iron...” Nie Tian’s expression flickered. Then, he took out two hundred Star Stones from within his bracelet of holding, laid them in front of Pei Qiqi, and asked, “Will these be enough?”

Pei Qiqi’s eyes widened. “Where did you get so many Star Stones?”

Nie Tian chuckled. “From the Hunters I killed.”

Pei Qiqi shook her head. “It still seems a bit short.”

Nie Tian took another fifty Star Stones from within his bracelet of holding, leaving only fifty for himself. “How about now?”

After a glance at the Star Stones, Pei Qiqi stared at Nie Tian with a surprised look in her eyes. “Now it seems about enough.”

Keh! Keh!

Nie Tian cleared his throat with a smile on his face before he killed the silence by asking, “Where exactly is this region you talked about? Also, why do you say it’s even more dangerous than the Void Illusion Mountain Range?”

Pei Qiqi went on and explained, “In that region, meteors fall from

the sky all the time. These Star Stones actually come from the meteors that plummet to the earth.”

Nie Tian’s eyes immediately shone with the light of excitement.

At present, the most crucial part to his study of Starfall was none other than finding a place where he could see and interact with falling stars.

He had been scratching his head over where to find such a place.

Pei Qiqi’s words came as great news for him, and allowed him to see the hope of mastering Starfall in the recent future.

“Do you have a map of that region?” Nie Tian asked hastily.

“You don’t need a map. It’s vast region to the east of Ash City, and it’s also infested by Hunters...” Only then did Pei Qiqi come to realize what Nie Tian’s intentions were, and asked, “No, don’t tell me that you want to go there... Are you crazy!?”

“I need Star Stones! A lot of them!” Nie Tian said.

Chapter 320: Traveling Together Again

Pei Qiqi looked at Nie Tian and pondered in silence for a while before asking, “Do you have some sworn enemy that you’re bound to kill, like Li Langfeng does?”

“Why do you ask?” Nie Tian sounded very surprised.

Sympathy could be seen in Pei Qiqi’s eyes as she said, “I have a feeling that you have been intentionally putting yourself in dangerous situations lately. Back when we were in the Blood Skull’s secret stronghold under the creek, I saw you eat those pieces of spirit beast meat. Those pieces of mutant spirit beast meat were filled with large amounts of impurities. No sensible man would absorb flesh power from it.”

She had a feeling that the path of cultivation Nie Tian had chosen was similar to Li Langfeng’s.

In Li Langfeng’s case, he practiced his cultivation by extracting a specific type of toxic energy from the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void. However, aside from that type of toxic energy, there were many more types of toxic energy that Li Langfeng wouldn’t be able to refine and detoxify within the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm. As a result, his body was constantly under great pressure.

Therefore, when she had seen Nie Tian consume the meat of fourth grade mutant spirit beasts, she had assumed that Nie Tian wasn’t able to refine and detoxify the numerous types of impurities in the meat.

That was why she believed that Nie Tian would die prematurely, just like Li Langfeng would.

“We’re not the same, me and him.” With a hearty smile on his face, Nie Tian decided not to tell Pei Qiqi that he had the ability to eliminate the impurities from within the toxic spirit beast meat.

“...Perhaps we have something in common. Sure, I am in a hurry to improve my strength, but I’ll never do it at the expense of my own life.”

“Oh, really?” Pei Qiqi seemed rather skeptical.

“I need to go to the place you talked about.” Nie Tian insisted.

Pei Qiqi pondered in silence for a long while before she finally nodded and said, “Alright, we’ll go to the Void Illusion Mountain Range together. Now that I’ve entered the Greater Heaven stage, I need to spend some time there to ponder the profound truths of spatial energy, as well as to practice and perfect a few of my secret magics. Other than that, I need to find a suitable location for my teleportation station in the mountain range.

“However, I won’t cross the border into the region where all lives are forbidden with you.”

“Okay, I understand,” Nie Tian said.

“We’ll move out today,” Pei Qiqi said with determined tone.

“Sure.”

...

Later that day, the two of them went to the teleportation portal the Blood Skull had set up in the center of Shatter City. Since they were both guest elders of the Blood Skull, they paid the required amount of spirit stones and teleported to the Blood Skull’s base in the Void Illusion Mountain Range via the portal.

Moments later, the two of them appeared in the Blood Skull’s base in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. Gu Yu, the Blood Skull’s highest commander in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, was taken aback upon seeing them.

“Ms. Pei, Hua Tian, how come you’re back here so soon?” Gu Yu asked with a smile.

The news of Nie Tian creating a major stir and killing numerous

Hunters in the hilly area and wasteland had already spread to their base.

Recently, he had also heard of Nie Tian and Shi Nan's battle in the Blood Fighting Pit two weeks ago.

After witnessing and hearing about the series of incidents regarding Nie Tian, Gu Yu had already begun to attach great importance to him.

“Personal affairs,” Pei Qiqi said with an indifferent tone.

Gu Yu nodded as he realized he had better not pursue the matter. Therefore, he turned to Nie Tian and said, “Umm... Shi Hui came the other day.”

Nie Tian's eyebrows furrowed. “Shi Hui?!”

“Exactly...” After a brief hesitation, Gu Yu said, “Hua Tian, Shi Hui is also in the Void Illusion Mountain Range right now.

“You'd better be extra careful and try your best to avoid him in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. Brawls and battles are forbidden amongst Blood Skull members in Shatter City, or any other place where the Blood Skull rules.

“But that's not the case for guest elders of the Blood Skull.

“As for Shatter City, in light of the rules set up by the head, no one dares to fight in Shatter City, no matter who. However, the Void Illusion Mountain Range is out of our jurisdiction. We won't interfere even if guest elders of the Blood Skull kill each other due to conflicts of interest in the mountain range.”

By saying these words, Gu Yu was practically warning Nie Tian of Shi Hui, and reminding him that if he ran into Shi Hui in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Shi Hui definitely wouldn't let him off.

Pei Qiqi's expression flickered slightly as she exclaimed, “Shi Hui!”

“Thank you for the reminder, Uncle Gu.” Nie Tian expressed his

gratitude.

“Just be careful when you go out there.” Gu Yu didn’t want to be too open about the situation.

Shortly thereafter, Pei Qiqi and Nie Tian left the Blood Skull’s base and marched into the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

While the two of them were traveling alone in the vast mountain range, Pei Qiqi turned to Nie Tian and said with a serious expression on her face, “I originally planned to part ways with you once we got to the Void Illusion Mountain Range. However, since Shi Hui is somewhere in the mountain range, I’ll keep you company until you leave the mountain range and head towards Ash City.”

Now that she had entered the Greater Heaven stage, Pei Qiqi was confident that even if she ran into the late Greater Heaven stage Shi Hui in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, she wouldn’t be in danger.

She was aware that Shi Hui enjoyed a high prestige among the Blood Skull’s guest elders. Many of them even served him as his informants.

Pei Qiqi assumed that the news of her and Nie Tian coming to the Void Illusion Mountain Range would soon find its way to Shi Hui.

Just as Gu Yu had reminded Nie Tian, Shi Hui didn’t dare to do anything to him in Shatter City. However, now that they were both in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the Blood Skull wouldn’t have the right to interfere if he wanted to make a move on Nie Tian.

After all, they were only guest elders of the Blood Skull, and the Blood Skull didn’t have much power over their actions.

“Actually, that won’t be necessary.” Nie Tian took out the mask Dong Baijie had given him as a gift, put it on, and said, “Shi Hui won’t be able to recognize me when I’m wearing this.”

With a slightly surprised expression on her face, Pei Qiqi said, “It’s quite a fine piece of work. I can tell it’s of premium quality, and it must have cost you quite a fortune. However, you should know that Shi Hui is by no means an ordinary person. Even though he doesn’t quite match up to Li Langfeng in terms of battle prowess, he is one of the most hard to deal with people in the Realm of Split Void. If you actually run into him, you won’t necessarily be able to fool him with that mask.

“Furthermore, I doubt that Shi Hui will be the only one looking for you. Li Langfeng and the Fang probably will be after you too once they learn about your actions.

“You’ve made too many enemies in the Void Illusion Mountain Range. The news of your return might soon find its way to their ears. If it comes down to that, I don’t think you’ll be able to fool them all by only relying on this mask.”

After hearing her words, Nie Tian grew somewhat worried.

“Put the mask away for now. You’d better show your real face before we part ways,” Pei Qiqi advised. “Otherwise, if someone else sees us together, they’ll easily deduce your true identity, and your mask will lose its effectiveness. I think it’s better that you put it on when it’s time for us to part ways, and you travel alone to the forbidden region by Ash City.”

“Alright.” Nie Tian took Pei Qiqi’s advice and put the mask away.

After a moment of pondering, Pei Qiqi explained, “Also, escorting you isn’t the primary purpose of my trip. I’m here to find a suitable location to set up my teleportation station. I’ll keep an eye out for such a location as we march onward, since I might just find a suitable location on our way. You never know.”

As the two of them marched onward, Nie Tian unleashed all seven Heaven Eyes, through which he scanned the vicinity for humans and ferocious mutant spirit beasts.

Whenever he detected exploring Qi warriors in their surroundings, they would make a detour to avoid them; whenever they encountered low-grade mutant spirit beasts, they would attack and slaughter them.

Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes saved them all the unnecessary trouble along their way.

After slaughtering a handful of second-grade and third-grade mutant spirit beasts, the two of them set foot in the Wild Fire's territory in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

The Void Illusion Mountain Range covered an extremely vast area, and the Wild Fire's territory was a realm of bone-piercing coldness. In the icy land that stretched as far as the eye could see, immense glaciers could be seen everywhere.

However, from time to time, torrential flames would spew out of some of the spatial rifts that slithered in the icy wind.

If it were some other part of the Void Illusion Mountain Range, the blazing flames would be a tremendous fire hazard.

However, since the Wild Fire's territory was covered in ice year-round, the spewing flames normally wouldn't cause any disastrous results.

As Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi traveled in the icy land, Nie Tian discovered a few Qi warriors dressed in Wild Fire garments via his Heaven Eyes.

However, he didn't feel the need to inform Pei Qiqi of their presence. Rather, he took the lead and circled around them. Just like that, they marched among the bitter-cold glaciers at a fast speed.

On this day, while the two of them were marching forward, Nie Tian suddenly sensed an unusual movement from the Flame Dragon Armor within his bracelet of holding.

Without the slightest hesitation, he stopped to examine the

Flame Dragon Armor with his psychic awareness, and immediately received a vague message from the Flame Dragon Armor.

Surprisingly, the strand of will from the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to be guiding him to a certain location.

However, the direction of that location deviated greatly from the directions Pei Qiqi had given, which made Nie Tian somewhat hesitant.

Just as he was about to ignore the message, another more urgent strand of will came across to his mind.

After pondering in silence for a while, he turned to Pei Qiqi and said, "How about we take a look over there?" With these words, he pointed in the direction given by the Flame Dragon Armor.

Baffled, Pei Qiqi asked, "What? Do you sense something?"

Nie Tian nodded.

"Alright," Pei Qiqi agreed. Immediately afterward, she seemed to have realized something, and thus turned to Nie Tian and asked, "Do you have a method of detecting signs of life in your vicinity? We've been marching for some time now, but other than a handful of low-grade spirit beasts, we haven't encountered any human cultivators. It's a little bit strange."

As a matter of fact, she had long since suspected that Nie Tian had something to do with this.

Previously, when the two of them had run away from the injured Li Langfeng, their escape had been surprisingly smooth.

Back then, since the both of them had been in poor condition, they had desperately needed to avoid enemies on their path of escape, and coincidentally enough, they hadn't run into anyone along their way.

It was precisely because of this that no one had seen them, and thus Li Langfeng hadn't been able to pry their whereabouts out of

anyone.

That alone had been strange enough.

Later, rumor had it that Nie Tian had possessed numerous pursuing Hunters in the palm of his hand in the hilly area and wasteland. The Fang had even been forced to invite Xiao Lin to their cause.

She had long since heard stories about Xiao Lin, and learned that he had been an expert in tracking skills and magics.

The fact that Xiao Lin had joined the pursuit against him and he had met with the Blood Skull's rescuing team anyways was enough evidence to Nie Tian's prominence.

As for this time, the two of them had been traveling for about ten days already, yet they hadn't come across anyone. Connecting all the dots together, she began to see a pattern.

"Yeah." Nie Tian didn't intend to hide the truth any further. "I've mastered a special magic which allows me to detect even the most trivial fluctuations of life energy within a large area around me. Not only that, but I can also tell whether the fluctuations are from humans or spirit beasts, as well as their rough cultivation bases and grades."

Upon hearing Nie Tian's words, Pei Qiqi's crystal-clear eyes shone with the light of excitement. "No wonder you dared to return to Shatter City alone. If I had known you had such a divine skill, I wouldn't have worried about your safety."

Knowing that Nie Tian possessed multiple secret magics, Pei Qiqi felt increasingly relieved as she led the way for Nie Tian.

After marching a short while in the direction given by the Flame Dragon Armor, Nie Tian discovered an area filled with active spatial rifts via his Heaven Eyes.

Not only that, but he also saw an acquaintance --- Shi Hui.

“I detect Shi Hui! It seems that he and some people from the Wild Fire are getting along pretty well!”

Chapter 321: Despoil

Shi Hui, a few guest elders of the Blood Skull, as well as a handful of Qi warriors wearing garments with fire patterns on them, were standing in a solemn manner under the slithering spatial rifts, as if they were waiting for something.

ZZZZZLA!

All of a sudden, clusters of blazing flames shot out of one of the spatial rifts and plummeted towards the earth, unleashing scorching auras.

One after another, they crashed into the earth, melting away the ice and creating huge holes in the frigid-cold ground.

Meanwhile, Shi Hui, the guest elders of the Blood Skull, and the people from the Wild Fire moved about swiftly and cautiously to avoid the plummeting clusters of flames, as if the mere contact with the flames would mean their doom.

When the flames died out and huge holes were left in the icy ground, they would surge forward like a swarm of hornets and search the holes for something.

WHOOSH!

Shi Hui jumped out of one of the icy holes with a crimson, crystal-like gem in his hand, which was still shining with bright light.

Upon a closer look, fine red lines could be seen within the gem, which were like flickering red lightning bolts.

Face full of smiles, Shi Hui held the crimson gem in his splayed hand. A fascinated look filled his wide eyes.

From the look of it, his cultivation attribute was none other than fire, and the crimson gem would be extremely helpful to the improvement of his cultivation base.

At the same time, he had animated conversations with the few Wild Fire members around him.

Via his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian obtained a clear view of what was happening within that area. Then, he came to a stop, turned to Pei Qiqi, who was traveling side by side with him, and said, “Shi Hui, a few guest elders of the Blood Skull, and a handful of Wild Fire members are collecting some kind of fire-attributed gems. Aren’t guest elders of the Blood Skull forbidden to have any contact or dealings with people from the Wild Fire or Dark Moon?”

Pei Qiqi was taken aback. “You can see each and every move they make?!”

Nie Tian nodded.

“What is this secret magic you practice anyways?” Instead of answering his question, Pei Qiqi showed great concern with his mystical magic. “From what I know, only when a cultivator reaches the Worldly realm and transforms their psychic power into soul power will they be able to capture every slightest move in his vicinity.

“However, you’re only at the Heaven stage!”

A wry smile appeared on Nie Tian’s face as he said, “All you need to know is that I know some extraordinary magics and techniques.”

At that moment, Nie Tian suddenly felt another pulse from the Flame Dragon Armor, which felt so urgent that it seemed as if it was itching to charge out of his bracelet of holding immediately.

Nie Tian’s eyebrows knitted.

Shi Hui was at the late Greater Heaven stage. Most of the few guest elders by his side were also at the Greater Heaven stage.

Shi Hui and his men alone were formidable enough that he and Pei Qiqi wouldn’t stand a chance fighting them, much less when they were in the Wild Fire’s territory and numerous powerful Wild

Fire experts could be roaming nearby.

He attempted to get his worries through to the Flame Dragon Armor and tell it that it was a bad time.

However, the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to ignore Nie Tian's worries, and whizzed out of his bracelet of holding in spite of them.

SHEW!

The Flame Dragon Armor shot out, as if it had turned into a streak of splendid flames, and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

BANG!

"W-what was that?" Pei Qiqi didn't catch a clear view of the Flame Dragon Armor. She just felt an incomparably fierce surge of blazing energy bursting forth from Nie Tian's hand.

When she wanted to get a clear view of it, the Flame Dragon Armor had already vanished into the distance, leaving behind a long flaming tail.

Nie Tian's expression changed dramatically as he hastily turned to Pei Qiqi and blurted, "It's time for us to part ways. Don't you worry about my safety. I know many secret magics that I can use to avoid Shi Hui and the Wild Fire members. I've memorized the general direction you showed me. I'll be able to find my way to my destination."

With these words, he cast a short-range Starshift and appeared in a location 300 meters away, before Pei Qiqi had the chance to ask any questions.

With a flabbergasted expression on her face, Pei Qiqi watched him practically teleport to a distant location. Just as she was about to call Nie Tian, she saw Nie Tian's figure shift again and disappear from her view.

"Did he use this method to repeatedly escape from the Hunters' "

blockades?”

The truth suddenly dawned on Pei Qiqi. After witnessing some of Nie Tian’s mystical skills, Pei Qiqi finally realized that even though his cultivation base was low, if there were no mishaps, he would be able to survive the sorts of danger that existed in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

“Bastard!” Staring into the distance, she whispered a curse before turning around and going back the way they had come to get here.

SHEW!

After another short-rang Starshift, Nie Tian appeared in a location close to Shi Hui and his gang, putting a significant distance between Pei Qiqi and himself.

After making sure Pei Qiqi didn’t follow him into trouble, he spied on them via his Heaven Eyes.

The Flame Dragon Armor flew to the area where Shi Hui and his gang were, like a streak of glorious fire.

WHOOSH!

The crimson crystal-like gem in Shi Hui’s splayed hand was suddenly attracted by an irresistible force and flew out of his palm.

At that very moment, the Flame Dragon Armor whizzed through in the air above him and pulled the crimson, crystal-like gem away.

The gem flew towards the Flame Dragon Armor like a piece of steel drawn to a giant magnet.

Shi Hui, the guest elders of the Blood Skull, as well as the Wild Fire members were all flabbergasted at the scene. “What was that!?”

In the next moment, Shi Hui snapped out of his daze and roared at the whizzing cluster of flames, “My Heaven Flame Crystal!”

Wreathed in an enormous cluster of flames, the Flame Dragon Armor sailed through the air above them like a burning meteor.

None of them were able to get a clear view of it.

Just like that, the Flame Dragon Armor continued to whizz across in the air like a blazing bolt of lightning, intercepting and capturing the balls of flames that shot out of the spatial rifts.

Three more gems, which Shi Hui referred to as Heaven Flame Crystals, were peeled away from the balls of flames, drawn and adhering to the surface of the Flame Dragon Armor before they could plummet to the earth.

Looking at the whizzing cluster of flames, one of the Wild Fire Qi warriors shouted loudly with reddened eyes, “Spirit Channeling grade treasure! It must be a fire-attributed, Spirit Channeling grade treasure! A Spirit Channeling grade treasure has appeared in the Void Illusion Mountain Range!

“This fire-attributed Spirit Channeling grade treasure has its own soul, and this is why it can take the initiative and snatch Heaven Flame Crystals from us!”

Upon hearing these words, Shi Hui trembled involuntarily, greed filling his eyes.

The eyes of a few others who also practiced fire-attributed incantations shone with the light of greed upon hearing that man’s statement. “Let’s go get that Spirit Channeling grade treasure!”

In the next moment, each and every cultivator who practiced fire-attributed incantations cast their exquisite spells respectively as they attempted to attract the Flame Dragon Armor down from the heavens and take it for themselves.

HUFF! HUFF! HUFF!

One after another, numerous fireballs laced with their psychic awareness shot into the air, along with their various fire-attributed spiritual tools, and chased after the Flame Dragon Armor.

Even so, the Flame Dragon Armor whizzed across the sky above them with lightning speed, and absorbed two more Heaven Flame

Crystals.

It wasn't long before the spatial rift stopped spewing clusters of flames.

After plundering all of the Heaven Flame Crystals, the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to have achieved its goal. After taking a brief moment to sense Nie Tian's aura, it found its bearings and flew away.

With greedy eyes, those people madly chased after the Flame Dragon Armor.

“Go after it!”

“It's a Spirit Channeling grade treasure unearthed in the Void Illusion Mountain Range! Whoever gets it will obtain a fortune as large as the heavens!”

“It must be unclaimed. Otherwise, the master of such a high-level treasure would have every right to show himself!”

The way they saw it, whoever had the power to obtain and harness a Spirit Channeling grade treasure must be at the Profound realm or higher.

Such a powerful figure would have every right to show himself and openly take those Heaven Flame Crystals for himself.

The fact that such a master had not appeared so far meant that this Spirit Channeling grade treasure was very likely still unclaimed.

Since they all practiced fire-attributed incantations, it would be fairly easily for them to tame an unclaimed Spirit Channeling treasure and merge it with themselves, enhancing their battle prowess severalfold.

SHEW!

The Flame Dragon Armor whizzed to Nie Tian's side and flew back into his bracelet of holding.

At that moment, Nie Tian could hear constant roars and shouts coming from the direction the Flame Dragon Armor had returned from.

“You’re such a trouble-magnet!” Nie Tian muttered.

In a poised manner, he rapidly summoned his star power and cast a long-range Starshift.

PUFF!

Nie Tian coughed up a mouthful of blood. With his head spinning, he watched everything around him shoot behind him with lightning speed.

In the next moment, he disappeared from his original location like he had vaporized, albeit hurting all over.

BANG!!!

Immediately afterward, he appeared and fell to the ground by a valley creek, feeling very pained and light-headed.

After a brief examination of his injuries, Nie Tian rapidly braced himself again. By the time his seven Heaven Eyes returned to his side, he once again sped away at his fastest possible speed.

Chapter 322: Forbidden Region

Even after chasing that red streak for a long time, Shi Hui and the others still failed to come to any findings.

After recovering the Flame Dragon Armor, with the help of his seven Heaven Eyes and the Starshift escape magic, Nie Tian left the place that was rife with trouble at his fastest possible speed.

Unwilling to give up, Shi Hui and the others asked the Wild Fire to send out people to help them search for the Flame Dragon Armor, but after quite some time, their joint search turned out to be fruitless as well.

Even though they felt very frustrated, they didn't plan to give up just like that.

During the following days, all Shi Hui and the others thought about was how to get that fire-attributed Spirit Channeling grade treasure, so much so that their eyes turned red with greed.

Even Fu Heng, the Wild Fire's highest commander in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, had his enthusiasm aroused after learning about this Spirit Channeling treasure.

Similarly, it wasn't long before the news found its way to the Dark Moon and the Blood Skull.

Even explorers who had come to the Void Illusion Mountain Range for their own reasons joined the search for this Spirit Channeling treasure after learning about its appearance.

Nie Tian, however, had long since left the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Two weeks passed...

Under the fierce, burning sun, Nie Tian arrived at the region Pei Qiqi had pointed out for him.

As Pei Qiqi had warned him, along the way, he had encountered a

few groups of Hunters who roamed this region by Ash City.

With the help of his Heaven Eyes, he maneuvered around them and kept moving forward. After that, until he set foot in this region where all living forms were forbidden, he hadn't come across a single person.

It was a vast desert to the east of Ash City where countless craters could be seen almost everywhere.

Some of the craters were as small as the mouths of wells, while others were as enormous as dried-up lakes.

Many of the craters had meteors in them, each of which was strange in shape and color, and embedded deep into the earth.

Every now and then, Nie Tian could see piles of pale-gray bones, which had obviously belonged to humans.

Evidently, no matter how deadly a place was, as long as there was fortune waiting to be unearthed, people would risk their lives and set foot in it. This desert was no exception.

When meteors plummeted to the earth from the unknown outer space and exploded, Star Stones would fall out of them.

Other than those, there might also be extremely rare spiritual materials within the meteors.

Both the spiritual materials and Star Stones were of extremely high value. People would be able to gain significant amounts of spirit stones if they obtained and traded them in Ash City, the Land of the Abandoned, or Shatter City.

Under the fierce sunlight, Nie Tian slowly walked deeper into the desert filled with enormous craters.

His seven Heaven Eyes hung high in the sky like invisible lanterns, keeping a close watch on everything in their vicinity.

As he walked further, Nie Tian discovered that the green light shield around him, created by his jade bracelet, began to give off

fizzing sounds.

With furrowed eyebrows, he came to a stop and examined his surroundings with rapt attention.

Immediately afterwards, he found that not only was the density of the toxic spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the crater much higher than in other parts of the Void Illusion Mountain Range, but there seemed to be other special features of the Spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this desert.

Even spiritual tools like the green jade bracelet that could protect their owners from the toxic Spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in other parts of the Realm of Split Void seemed to have a hard time withstanding the strong corrosion here.

After walking for another two hours in the endless desert, when Nie Tian sensed that his jade bracelet was on the verge of breaking, he rapidly put it away.

At the same time, he quietly enveloped himself with a two-meter range chaotic magnetic field.

Soon night fell, and the moon rose in the sky...

In distinct contrast to the hotness of the day, during the night, the desert was shrouded in frigid coldness. Even inside of his chaotic magnetic field, Nie Tian could feel the bone-piercing coldness.

Standing by the edge of an enormous crater, Nie Tian muttered to himself with a frown, “The tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this place much denser than in other parts of the Void Illusion Mountain Range. Even normal protective spiritual tools couldn’t resist the dreadful corrosion. This feature alone would stop explorers with insignificant cultivation bases from entering this deadly desert.

“Not to mention the fact that meteors could plummet from the heavens at any moment in this region where the day is scorchingly

hot and the night is frigidly cold.”

Instead of continuing to wander around, he slowly sat down on the ground and looked up into the mysterious night sky.

Like gorgeous gems, countless bright stars lit up and decorated the unfathomable heavens.

He calmed himself and removed all distracting thoughts from his mind as he began to go over and contemplate the profundity of Starfall.

According to Pei Qiqi, meteors would occasionally fall from the heavens and plummet to the earth in this region. Yet, no one knew why they would fall at this part of the Realm of Split Void over all others.

Two days later...

At sundown, a dark-red streak of light suddenly appeared in the distant sky and shot towards Nie Tian's direction. Like a dark-red river of fire, it sailed through the wine-red evening glow.

Having waited for days, Nie Tian's eyes suddenly lit up as he hastily concentrated his psychic awareness and attempted to attract that streak of dark-red light.

BOOM!

Before he could establish a psychic connection with the streak of dark-red light, the light flashed passed him and crashed into the earth in a location several dozen kilometers away.

Accompanied by a loud rumble, a terrifyingly violent quake spread out across the earth, and caused Nie Tian, who was sitting on the ground, to tremble unceasingly.

Failing to channel the streak of dark-red light with his psychic awareness, Nie Tian sprung to his feet, his face filled with frustration.

With a fast speed, he ran towards the location where the dark-red

light had landed.

Two hours later, when darkness descended upon the earth, he finally arrived at the landing site.

As soon as he did, a huge crater with a diameter of more than forty meters entered his sight, inside of which dying-out flames and sparks could be seen everywhere.

A pitch-black meteor was sitting at the bottom of the crater; sparks were still sputtering out of it every now and then.

Instead of rushing into the crater to explore its mysteries, Nie Tian stood by the edge of the crater and pondered with furrowed eyebrows. “Interesting...”

He thought about the meteors that had fallen to the Realm of Flame Heaven preceding the appearance of the Heaven Gate.

Right before the Heaven Gate had appeared near the Hell Sect, numerous meteors like this one had plummeted to every part of the Realm of Flame Heaven, and each of those meteors had carried a Heaven Gate pattern.

Those patterns had been the keys to the Heaven Gate. Only those who had obtained a key would be granted access to the Heaven Gate trial.

The Yun Clan of Black Cloud City had been hit and reduced to shambles by a giant meteor like this one. Just like that, the entire Yun Clan had been eliminated, not a single member surviving the calamity.

“Starfall is about channeling meteors that fall from outer space, changing their paths and redirecting them to bombard enemies.

“It’s also a magic from the Fragmentary Star Incantation, which is a legacy from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and the ultimate secret within the Heaven Gate. Meteors like this one fell in every corner of the Realm of Flame Heaven right before the Heaven Gate appeared.”

Nie Tian racked his brains for an answer to why the meteors would plummet to this part of the Realm of Split Void instead of other parts, as he had a feeling that there must be secrets behind such phenomenon.

All of a sudden, he sensed scorching heat from the two fragmentary star marks on his chest.

Since this was the first time that the fragmentary star marks had undergone any change after shifting to his chest, a shocked expression appeared on Nie Tian's face.

At the same time, one of the Heaven Eyes he had deployed in the vicinity captured two human figures approaching him with lightning speed.

One of them had a plain look. Yet, for some reason, Nie Tian felt a strong sense of familiarity towards him.

As the two of them rapidly rushed towards his location, Nie Tian didn't think too much before casting three short-range Starshifts in a row to leave the crater and thus avoid contact with them.

Meanwhile, he summoned three of his Heaven Eyes from the vicinity and commanded them to float right above the meteor, so that they could keep a close watch on everything happening in the crater.

Moments later, the two men arrived at the edge of the crater, where they stood and looked towards the meteor at the bottom of the crater with furrowed eyebrows.

After a moment of silence, one of them said, "Do you feel anything, Lord Ning?"

The man who Nie Tian felt familiar with opened the lapels of his garment, revealing the fragmentary star mark on his chest. Seconds later, he said, "Nothing special."

The moment Nie Tian caught sight of the fragmentary star mark, he was convinced that the man was Ning Yang from the Heaven

Palace Sect.

Even so, he found it hard to believe that Ning Yang had actually assumed a different appearance and showed up in this place!

The other man sighed and said, “Lord Ning, if you can’t solve the profound mysteries within that fragmentary star mark in this place and make it a part of you, I’m afraid you won’t be able to return to the sect without losing it.”

Great determination could be heard in Ning Yang’s voice as he blurted, “If returning to the sect means I’ll have to give up my fragmentary star mark, I’d rather be a wandering rogue cultivator like you, Senior Martial Brother, and never return to the Heaven Palace Sect! I went to great lengths to win it from others in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Why on earth would I give it away to others!?”

“Not to mention that Nie Tian isn’t even a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect!”

“We’re different.” A bitter smile spread out across the other man’s face. “I only concealed my true identity and became a guest elder of the Wild Fire because I couldn’t go back. All I’m doing is dragging out my feeble existence in this remote corner of the world. However, you’ve got a promising future. Even if you lose this fragmentary star mark, you’ll still have great opportunities in the future.”

“Say no more, Senior Martial Brother,” Ning Yang said with a cold tone. “I’ve made up my mind.”

“Well, alright then.” The man nodded. “I wish you can receive some enlightenment from your fragmentary star mark here. Before, meteors only fell from the heavens and crashed into this area once every few months. However, recently, meteors fall once every few days. I think it’s safe to say that there’s some reason behind it.

“If you can’t dig out the reason and somehow refine your fragmentary star mark here, I don’t think there will be another way to achieve that.”

Ning Yang said, “Thank you, Senior Martial Brother. I’ll forever remember your kindness.”

Chapter 323: Easy Fortune!

“According to our sect, the Domain of the Falling Stars was first discovered by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

“And the name ‘the Domain of the Falling Stars’ was given by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Then, the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace descended and eliminated the outsider demons from each and every realm. After some time, when everything was in order, they gradually evacuated.

“Back then, the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace was without a doubt the number one sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars. Only after they left did other human sects move here.

“Later, no one knew what happened, but it seemed that internal conflicts occurred within the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Or perhaps they encountered powerful enemies that eventually forced these powerful pioneers to leave.

“Back when they explored the Domain of the Falling Stars, they must have had bases or strongholds set up in different locations. My speculation is that this part of the Realm of Split Void used to be one of their strongholds.

“Otherwise, this place shouldn’t be attracting meteors from outer space all year long.

“When the Heaven Gates appeared in the Realm of Mystic Heaven, the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, and the Realm of Flame Heaven, and numerous meteors fell in these three realms, meteors also fell much more frequently in this region than before.

“Ever since I learned about your situation, I’ve wanted to invite you here, hoping that you’d be able to receive enlightenment from that fragmentary star mark of yours.”

The man, who was a former disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect and a guest elder of the Wild Fire now, took his time and explained

the stories of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and the origin of the Domain of the Falling Stars to Ning Yang in detail.

Ning Yang listened with rapt attention, and nodded from time to time as he pondered the man's words.

Nie Tian, however, who heard every word of their conversation from a distant location, was taken aback.

Soon after he had obtained his two fragmentary star marks, outsiders demons had invaded the Realm of Flame Heaven and war had broken out. For the purpose of hiding the fact that he had the fragmentary star marks, he hadn't dared to ask anyone about the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

That was why he knew nothing of the mysterious Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace inside the Heaven Gate.

Only at this point did he realize that the legacies he had received from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace actually had such an impressive background.

Originally, the entirety of the Domain of the Falling Stars had been inhabited by an outsider race.

Only after powerful experts from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had arrived from an unknowably remote realm in the boundless starry river had they driven out the outsiders.

The outsiders in the Domain of the Falling Stars probably hadn't been able to match up to the strength of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and thus vacated from all the realms, making the Domain of the Falling Stars a promised land for human Qi warriors.

However, as more and more human Qi warriors took root in the Domain of the Falling Stars, some unforeseen event had happened inside the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, causing them to leave.

Accompanied by their evacuation, their influence upon the Domain of the Falling Stars also gradually disappeared.

However, for some unknown reason, even though the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had long since left the Domain of the Falling Stars, Heaven Gates would somehow appear in the Domain of the Falling Stars every few centuries, providing access to the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

After eavesdropping for a while, Nie Tian noticed the guest elder of the Wild Fire bid farewell to Ning Yang.

After the man left, Ning Yang stood by himself by the edge of the enormous crater for a long time before suddenly jumping into the crater and whizzing to the top of the pitch black meteor.

In the next moment, a sword wreathed in a frosty aura flew out of Ning Yang's hand.

The incomparably sharp sword seemed to be of premium quality, since it chopped and sliced the gigantic meteor as easily as if it was slicing a piece of tofu.

Meanwhile, Ning Yang's expression was very grim, and his eyes were filled with urgency, as if he was in a hurry to find something.

CRACK! CRACK!

Carved by Ning Yang's sharp sword, the meteor from an unknown outer space was gradually reduced to broken stones.

Many of the broken stones exploded and revealed fist-sized Star Stones within them when they were chopped off the meteor and sputtered into the surroundings.

Within those Star Stones, fragmented shiny spots that contained star power could be seen.

After observing for a short while, Nie Tian counted at least seven hundred Star Stones that had been unearthed.

Even if he added the Star Stones he had looted from the Hunters and those Dong Baijie had gifted him together, he didn't have that many on him.

However, Ning Yang didn't seem to attach the slightest importance to the Star Stones that Nie Tian desired longingly. He let the Star Stones scatter on the ground as he continued to slice at the meteor with his sword like a mad person.

It seemed that Ning Yang was hoping to discover some secret from within this gigantic meteor, which would allow him to receive enlightenment from the fragmentary star mark on his chest.

Two hours later...

Under Ning Yang's mad hacking and chopping, the gigantic meteor was finally reduced to tens of thousands of broken pieces.

More than 1,000 Star Stones were unearthed because of that. Under the night sky, countless fragmented sparks shone brightly within the numerous Star Stones.

However, Ning Yang didn't pay any attention to any of that as he stood in the field of chopped up stones, none of which was larger than the size of a table, with a sinister expression on his face.

“Nothing... Still nothing!”

Rooooar!

Looking at the completely unchanged fragmentary star mark on his chest, Ning Yang let out beastly bellows.

As he did, he brandished his sword under the moonlight and sliced the relatively large stones around him into smaller pieces.

Then, he used his non-sword-bearing hand to bombard the broken stones, causing them to explode, and the air to be filled with tiny stone fragments.

Many Star Stones also bore his wrath and were turned into dust.

Nie Tian's heart ached as he watched the precious Star Stones explode, yet he didn't dare to show himself to stop Ning Yang.

The formidable strength and battle prowess Ning Yang displayed

made Ning Yang's expression flicker. Via his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian made an assessment of Ning Yang's strength, and discovered that he was even stronger than Li Langfeng, even though they were both at the late Greater Heaven stage.

However, Li Langfeng was already the most powerful person in the Realm of Split Void aside from the few Worldly realm experts.

Therefore, he didn't have the audacity to reveal himself, and he could only sit back and observe.

A long time passed, and Ning Yang finally finished venting his anger. With a frustrated expression on his face, he turned around and left empty-handed.

Nie Tian didn't rush over instantly. Instead, he hid for a while longer and made sure there wasn't any danger.

Only after another hour, when he was convinced that Ning Yang was long gone, did he come out from hiding and collect the Star Stones that Ning Yang had left scattered around in the crater one by one.

From this incident alone, Nie Tian gained 1,200 Star Stones, which would be enough for him to practice cultivation for a long time.

All excitement aside, he was also confused why Ning Yang didn't have the slightest desire to collect those Star Stones.

What he didn't know was that Ning Yang couldn't practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation like he did, since he couldn't read or learn from his fragmentary star mark. Therefore, even if he had taken those Star Stones, they wouldn't have been useful to him at all.

As a core disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect, Ning Yang had stockpiled a substantial amount of Star Stones before entering the Heaven Gate, so that he would be able to practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation immediately after winning the fragmentary star

marks.

However, now that he couldn't practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation even though he had obtained a fragmentary star mark, he grew increasingly disgusted with the Star Stones in his ring of holding.

Over the following two months, Nie Tian wandered around in the so-called forbidden region, and encountered three occasions where meteors fell from outer space.

Every time he saw a streak of fire scraping through the heavens, he would cast Starfall as he attempted to alter the path of the plummeting meteor.

However, he failed all three times.

Each time, he and Ning Yang would rush to the meteor landing sites at different times. Sometimes he would arrive first, and sometimes Ning Yang would beat him to it.

Either way, he avoided Ning Yang every time. He would wait for Ning Yang to explore the meteor and vent his anger on it after discovering nothing useful. Then, after Ning Yang left in frustration, he would show up and examine the ruins for Star Stones.

However, not every meteor that fell from the outer space carried Star Stones.

As it turned out, none of the three meteors carried Star Stones, and the largest of the three meteors was about one tenth the size of the one he had first encountered in this region.

During the two months, Nie Tian spent most of his time contemplating the profundity of Starfall and using his sizable stock of Star Stones to condense more stardew.

When his vortex of star power was filled to the brim and no more stardew could be formed, he went on to refine his flame power and wood power with fire-attributed and wood-attributed spiritual

materials.

By the time his spiritual sea, as well as his vortexes of flame power, wood power, and star power were filled to the limit, Nie Tian still couldn't find the key to break through the bottleneck and enter the next cultivation stage.

On this day, Nie Tian consumed a large amount of spirit beast meat, and sensed that the green aura within his heart had suddenly grown silent after devouring part of the flesh power generated by the spirit beast meat.

Upon closer examination, he discovered that dazzling green light was shooting out of the translucent and sparkling chains within the green aura that was coiled at the bottom of his heart. Then, he immediately realized that the green aura, which was the embodiment of his bloodline, had finally accumulated enough flesh power to the point where it was ready for its next upgrade and transcendence.

The green aura was like a snake that lay dormant, waiting for its next molt.

The wisps of flesh power that had survived the green aura's hunger went on and dispersed into every bone and muscle in Nie Tian's body.

As the wisps of flesh power seeped into his flesh and bones, Nie Tian was suddenly struck by a feeling that his vortex of wood power had begun to rotate at an abnormally fast speed.

"I've come to fairly deep understandings regarding star power and flame power, and I've mastered the relative incantations and magics. However, I've still yet to understand wood power and wood-attributed incantations better."

From the trivial changes he had detected in his vortex of wood power, Nie Tian had finally awakened to the truth: "It seems that learning the profound mysteries of wood power is the key to my

breakthrough in cultivation!”

Chapter 324: Contemplating the Profundity of Two Types of Essence

For a long time, Nie Tian had been focusing on learning and tempering the several powerful magics he had learned from the mysterious land, as well as the profound truths of flame power and star power.

He seldom spent time contemplating the profundity of wood power.

He wasn't aware that in order for him to make his next breakthrough, he would have to gain a fairly deep understanding of each of the various types of power within his spiritual sea. The mere act of accumulating and refining spiritual power was far from enough.

When the green aura stopped devouring the newly-generated essence of flesh and let it disperse to every corner of his body, Nie Tian sensed a subtle change in his vortex of wood power, and thus realized that this was a signal telling him that his understanding of wood power was not deep enough.

After realizing this point, he finally found the right direction. During the following days, he took out his collection of scrolls about wood power cultivation, most of which had been looted from the Dark Moon's experts and Hunters, and read them around the clock.

Some of the scrolls recorded techniques and skills regarding the application of wood power, while others stated the profound truths of wood power.

After reading wholeheartedly for a few days, Nie Tian's understanding of wood power and wood-attributed incantations rose to a new level.

He also conducted thorough examinations of the green aura that

carried his bloodline power and his vortex of wood power. After combining his findings with his understanding of wood power, some new thoughts emerged in his mind.

Wood power was spiritual power with the wood attribute, and was contained in the essence from plants and vegetation.

Some plants and vegetation lived on for thousands of years. Being nurtured by the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth for such a long time, they contained extremely rich wood power.

These plants and vegetation were the main ingredients in making high-level medicinal pills, since they carried copious amount of energy that could be directly refined and absorbed by Qi warriors.

The essence of these plants and vegetation was by nature their life power.

However, humans, outsiders, and spirit beasts were also living creatures, so the essence of flesh within their bodies was also life power by nature.

Even though they belonged to two different types of life forms and there were noticeable differences between their life powers, the differences were not unbridgeable.

Many Qi warriors who practiced wood-attributed incantations had unique ways of channeling their wood power into their bones and muscles in order to strengthen their flesh power and enhance their physical body.

Nie Tian had done the same thing before.

Back when he had cast a long-range Starshift to escape the pursuit of numerous Hunters in the wasteland, he had used the essence of wood in his vortex of wood power to replenish his flesh power and heal his seriously wounded body.

This meant that cultivators who practiced wood-attributed incantations were able to convert wood power into flesh power.

The green aura that coiled at the bottom of Nie Tian's heart was the soul of his life power, inside of which was branded the profound mysteries of life.

After realizing that wood power and flesh power shared a similar origin and fell into the same category, Nie Tian began to channel the wood essence in his vortex of wood power in an attempt to refine his physical body.

A wisp of wood power quietly flew out of his vortex of wood power and entered his meridians and blood vessels.

In the next moment, a soothing and comfortable feeling was born in his heart, making him feel as if he were filled with vigorous life force.

As he continued to channel the wisp of wood power, it ran through his meridians, and slowly flowed to every single bone and internal organ.

Via his Heaven Eyes, he could see that the wisp of wood essence was gradually wearing down as it circulated within him.

It seemed that whenever it reached a certain part of his body, a small portion of the wood essence would be kept and absorbed by the flesh or bone.

This feeling was slightly different from the feeling he had when he tempered his body with flesh power from spirit beast meat.

Whenever he tempered his physical body with flesh power, he would always experience soreness and pain. However, when he nourished his fleshy body with wood power, it felt as mild as a drizzle and as gentle as a breeze. The warm and comfortable feeling gave him great physical and mental pleasure.

At that moment, he sensed that both his flesh power and wood power began to work together, and were circulating inside of him simultaneously.

He observed and contemplated attentively, hoping to discover

the differences between the two types of power and their unique features.

It wasn't very long before he discovered that whenever he tempered his body with his flesh power, the process would follow the strange pattern of breaking down before repairing.

By nature, flesh power was more violent and fierce. It would usually rip Nie Tian's muscle fibers, bones, and meridians apart before healing them.

The healed muscle fibers, bones, and meridians would turn out to be even tougher and more resilient, and thus his refined body would be able to contain richer and purer flesh power.

The breaking down process was usually very quick. However, the repairing process was usually rather slow.

That wasn't the case with wood power.

The destructive power of wood power was no match for that of flesh power. However, wood power possessed a healing ability far stronger than that of the flesh power when his flesh, bones, and meridians needed repairing. Perhaps this was the main difference between the two types of power.

No matter whether it was the human race, an outsider race, or spirit beasts, they shared the same process of body refinement, which was destruction before construction.

When they had both flesh power and wood power inside of them, flesh power would be mainly in charge of tearing their meridians, muscle fibers, and bones, and that would be where its duty ended. The extra flesh power would be deposited in their blood.

Afterwards, wood power would take charge as it gradually healed the destroyed parts and made them strong again.

Since the two types of power had unique features and a clear division of work, when he tempered his body with both of them, the efficiency would increase severalfold.

Only then did he come to realize how fast his wounds had healed when he had drawn on wood power instead of flesh power.

Flesh power resided in his flesh, bones, and blood. In a battle, it could immediately burst forth and form powerful strikes as soon as it was summoned.

However, since wood power originated from plants and vegetation, it couldn't reside in his flesh, bones, and blood for a long period of time. Therefore, it would only circulate within him and rapidly heal his wounds when he was injured.

After contemplating for a few days straight, Nie Tian finally achieved a fairly deep understanding of the two types of power.

After that, he also discovered that even though he could channel his wood power to help with the refinement of his body, he wasn't able to channel his flesh power into his spiritual sea and use it to replenish the wood essence within his vortex of wood power.

That was when he came to realize that since he was a fleshy creature, he could only strengthen his flesh power with wood power, and not the other way around.

Upon such enlightenment, Nie Tian immediately began consuming spirit beast meat and using both his flesh power and wood power to temper his outstandingly tough fleshy body.

Soon, two weeks passed...

During this period of time, neither did Nie Tian witness anymore meteors fall from the sky, nor did he come across Ning Yang again.

Early in the morning...

After consuming some more spirit beast meat, Nie Tian attempted to circulate the newly-generated flesh power within him, along with his wood power.

At that very moment, he suddenly had a feeling that his physical strength had also come to a bottleneck, and his body had been

refined to the point where it could no longer be strengthened by the two types of power.

However, in the next moment, a loud snapping sound rang out through his mind as Nie Tian was struck by a wonderful feeling, as if he had just broken away from the shackles that had been holding him down for a long time.

Afterwards, huge waves were immediately created in his dantian's spiritual sea, and his vortexes of spiritual power, flame power, wood power, and star power all started to rotate madly.

“I've finally shattered the barrier in my path of cultivation!”

Joy filling his eyes, Nie Tian didn't hesitate in the least before taking out the spirit jades he had prepared for such occasions and jumping into an enormous crater, where he began to focus solely on breaking through into the next cultivation stage.

Only at that moment did he realize that he had ignored a very important factor to the breakthrough in his cultivation: refinement of his physical body.

Due to his uniqueness, not only did he need to refine and contemplate the profundities of spiritual power, flame power, wood power, and star power, but he also needed to temper his physical body consistently.

Only when the refinement of his body and spiritual sea both reached their limits would he be able to shatter the barrier in his cultivation and naturally enter the next stage.

Chapter 325: Refining the Mark

A few days passed...

After consuming 13 spirit jades, Nie Tian eventually entered the middle Heaven stage in the forbidden region to the east of Ash City.

As he did, a brand new vortex of spiritual power came to shape within his spiritual sea.

Advancing to a new cultivation stage meant many changes.

First of all, he would be able to allow more energy into his five vortexes of spiritual power, and he would be able to further expand and refine his spiritual sea.

Then, he would be able to further his cultivation of flame power, wood power, and star power.

That aside, he would also be able to continue to temper his physical body now that his cultivation had entered a new stage.

Thanks to the breakthrough in his cultivation, not only were his various types of spiritual power greatly enhanced, but the rotation of the vortexes within his spiritual sea also sped up significantly.

After entering the middle Heaven stage, Nie Tian didn't rush into other things, but instead took a few more days to steady his cultivation base and resume a calm state of mind.

Afterwards, he went on to condense stardew, one drop after another, using large amounts of Star Stones, and add them to the lake of stardew in his spiritual sea.

Soon, a week passed...

On this night, Nie Tian was still condensing stardew when he suddenly caught sight of a streak of glorious light soaring through the starlit sky.

The streak of light seemed so close to him that it was as if it were

right above his head.

Without the slightest delay, he focused his attention as he gazed up at the dashing streak of light. Simultaneously, following the profound methods stipulated by Starfall, he summoned his psychic power and star power and had them resonate with each other.

The streak of light seemed extremely thin, and the meteor in its head seemed quite small as well.

As he cast the mysterious technique and focused his psychic awareness on the streak of light this time, he finally captured the path it was moving in!

As a profound connection was established between him and the streak of light, star power rushed out of his spiritual sea like a devastating flood rushing out of an opened floodgate.

At the same time, both his star power and the wisp of his psychic awareness he had used to lock onto the streak of light ran low at an amazing speed.

Even though it was only a small meteor and he was only attempting to use Starfall to slightly bend its path, the consumption seemed to be getting out of hand.

Furthermore, as his vortex of star power spun at a speed several times faster than usual, Nie Tian started to experience a splitting pain in his mind.

With all of his strength, he stabilized his mind and attempted to slightly alter the falling star's path.

SHEW!

To his surprise, he succeeded this time, as the falling star deviated slightly from its original track towards the direction he attempted to channel it.

However, in such a short time, he had consumed more than half of his psychic power and star power.

BOOM!

The streak of light plummeted to the earth in a location more than five kilometers from where he was standing, but he could only sense a slight tremor from the ground under his feet.

This meant the meteor must be very small in size. Otherwise, considering how close he was to the crash site, the land and mountains around him should have been shaking violently and unceasingly.

Nie Tian let out a long sigh as he tried to calm himself. That was when he suddenly realized that he was covered in sweat and felt somewhat dizzy.

After a few deep breaths, the dizziness went away. Yet, his heart was still racing.

As a wisp of Nie Tian's psychic awareness flew into the first fragmentary star mark on his chest, he saw with great clarity that the ancient magical symbols that had recorded Starfall and its profound mysteries were gradually disappearing.

“Starfall!” A shudder ran through his body as he immediately realized that, at this point, he had finally mastered all of the three magics recorded in the first fragmentary star mark!

Also at that moment, he came to understand why his previous attempts had failed.

It hadn't been because he didn't have a deep understanding of Starfall, or that he didn't focus his attention, or that he didn't try hard enough.

Rather, his repeated failures had been because the amount of star power within him wasn't enough to allow him to cast such a consuming magic!

Even though it was a very small meteor, it required a terrifyingly substantial amount of psychic power and star power to channel it and alter its direction.

Back then, he hadn't entered the middle Heaven stage, so the amount of star power he had accumulated had been fairly limited.

Later, the breakthrough in his cultivation had allowed him to condense more stardew and continue to gather more star power in his spiritual sea.

Over the past few days, he had been cultivating with Star Stones, and the star power in his lake of stardew had risen to at least twice the amount he had possessed before he made the breakthrough.

The increase in his star power and the fact that it was an extremely small meteor contributed to his successful casting of Starfall.

All the meteors he had encountered before had been too large for him. Considering his cultivation base and the amount of his star power he had possessed back then, it was only natural that he hadn't been able to alter the path they moved in, much less channel them towards a certain location.

"It was such a small meteor, and I merely altered its track a bit. Yet, I used up almost all of my psychic power and star power!"

"This magic is clearly not something I can use freely or apply in battle for the time being!"

The truth became increasingly clear to Nie Tian.

Of the three magics recorded in the first part of the Fragmentary Star Incantation, Nie Tian was already able to exercise Starstrike and Starshift.

However, it was a whole other case with Starfall. Considering his current cultivation base and strength, he definitely couldn't use it in a confrontation.

From what he could tell, perhaps only when he entered the Worldly realm or the Profound realm would he be able to cast it skillfully and use it to channel meteors to bombard his enemies.

If he wanted to channel enormous meteors from outer space, he

might need to advance to an even higher cultivation base and possess star power as immense as the sea.

“Fortunately, I’ve finally mastered all three profound magics recorded in the first fragmentary star mark.” As Nie Tian watched the ancient symbols within the first fragmentary star mark vanish bit by bit, joy rose from the bottom of his heart, knowing that he wouldn’t have to remain in hiding and worry about his true identity being revealed anymore.

He opened his lapels and looked down at his chest, discovering that the originally tattoo-like fragmentary star mark was fading away. Moments later, it disappeared completely, as if it had seeped into his flesh and merged with him.

Meanwhile, the fragmentary star mark he hadn’t been able to learn was still clearly showing.

“Does this mean that I’ve fully refined the mark?” With these thoughts, he suddenly experienced a burning sensation from the fragmentary star mark that had already merged with his flesh.

He immediately examined that area with a wisp of psychic awareness, and found that lines of brand new magical symbols had appeared within the refined fragmentary star mark.

After a brief glance at the magical symbols, Nie Tian managed to brand them deeply in his mind and make them a part of his soul.

Shortly afterwards, the magical symbols gradually vanished.

He went over the magical symbols he had imprinted in his memory, and discovered that they actually recorded the secret method of sealing spatial rifts, and that in order to do that, he would have to mobilize all three fragmentary star marks, as well as the mysterious power of the starry river.

He would be the spellcaster. All he needed to do would be to follow the secret method as he released the three fragmentary star marks and controlled them with his soul to seal the opened spatial

rifts.

At that moment, he also suddenly sensed the existence of the third fragmentary star mark.

It was as if the third fragmentary star mark was now reflected in his mind, enabling him to sense its precise location.

He didn't achieve that with his Heaven Eyes. It seemed that all he needed to do was form a thought in his mind, and immediately afterwards he would learn the location of the third fragmentary star mark.

“Ning Yang! That's the fragmentary star mark on Ning Yang!” That was when Nie Tian came to realize that mysterious connections existed between the three fragmentary star marks.

The reason he hadn't discovered those connections before was because he hadn't fully refined the first fragmentary star mark back then. Now that it had become a part of him, he could learn the location of the third fragmentary star mark, and thus capture Ning Yang's location and movements with great precision. “He's close to the crash site of that small meteor!”

After determining Ning Yang's location, Nie Tian didn't rush into action. Instead, he took out some Star Stones and used them to restore the star power he had consumed.

Then, he fished out a few medicinal pills that could replenish his psychic power and stuffed them down his throat.

Only after almost a whole day did he finally recover the star power and psychic power he had consumed.

By the time he got up and arrived at the meteor's crash site, Ning Yang was already gone. With a brief examination, he found that Ning Yang was searching for ways to refine his fragmentary star mark in a location 50 kilometers away now.

However, at that moment, Nie Tian suddenly felt a burning sensation from the fragmentary star mark on his chest while

standing by the edge of the crater, which was only the size of a well.

For some reason, he had a feeling that something deep beneath the crater was attracting his fragmentary star mark.

“What’s going on?” Eyes filled with confusion and curiosity, Nie Tian gazed into the crater as he commanded one of his Heaven Eyes to probe into the depths of the earth.

Chapter 326: Underground Relic

This was the second time Nie Tian had felt that strange feeling with the fragmentary star mark on his chest after entering the forbidden region.

The first time had been soon after he had come to this region, when he had arrived at the edge of the crater of the first and largest meteor he had encountered.

However, due to Ning Yang and that other man's arrival, he had rapidly backed away to avoid them.

This time, standing by the edge of the small yet deep crater, Nie Tian once again felt a burning sensation from the fragmentary star mark on his chest.

Under his command, one of his Heaven Eyes flew into the crater and towards the deepest parts of the earth.

However, it wasn't long before the Heaven Eye came across the extremely small meteor, which was already reduced to scattered rubble.

Not a single Star Stone could be seen.

Apparently, Ning Yang had done this. In recent days, Ning Yang had been wandering around in this region, and whenever he saw meteors fall from the sky, he would rush to the crash site.

There, he would cut up every meteor, hoping to find methods to refine his fragmentary star mark from within them.

From what Nie Tian could tell, there wasn't anything worth noting within the shattered meteor.

The thing that had caused the burning sensation from the fragmentary star mark on his chest was probably not the meteor, but rather something in the depths of the earth.

After a brief stay, the Heaven Eye went deeper towards the

depths of the earth. As it did, it scanned its surroundings with rapt psychic awareness.

Several dozen seconds later...

Nie Tian sensed that the Heaven Eye had already sunk more than 2,000 meters into the depths of the earth.

Even the connection between him and that Heaven Eye of his started to flicker due to the exceeding distance between them.

However, just as he faced the risk of losing contact with that Heaven Eye, a water-like ward suddenly entered his mind.

The ward lay in a location very deep underground, and it seemed that he was only able to sense its existence with the power that originated from the seven fragmentary stars in his soul.

For some reason, he had a feeling that only those who inherited legacies from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, practiced the Fragmentary Star Incantation, and had fragmentary stars in their souls would be able to detect that ward with their Heaven Eyes.

Otherwise, even if it were powerful experts whose cultivation bases were several stages higher than his, and who had already transcended their psychic power into soul power, they still probably wouldn't be able to sense the existence of that ward.

The reason was that when that Heaven Eye of his made contact with that ward deep underground, he sensed a strong aura released by the ward, which carried extremely rich and pure star power.

However, as he attempted to send that Heaven Eye deeper into the earth to explore the secrets behind the ward, he realized that his Heaven Eye had already reached its limit, and couldn't go any further.

With another step, he would lose contact with that Heaven Eye, and he wouldn't be able to reflect whatever there was under there in his mind via that Heaven Eye.

After a moment of pondering, Nie Tian retracted that Heaven Eye and sat down by the crater.

He was convinced that a relic of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace sat in the deepest parts of this so-called forbidden region.

It must have been hidden and sealed away by powerful experts from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Only those who received their legacies and practiced the Fragmentary Star Incantation would be able to pry into what was hidden behind that ward.

It seemed that his current cultivation base was still so insignificant that he didn't have the ability to dig into this secret hidden deep underground.

However, as long as he kept progressing in his cultivation, the day would come when he finally reached the point where his psychic power was fully upgraded to soul power, and then he would be able to solve the profound mysteries hidden in the depths of the earth.

Over the following few days, Nie Tian tracked down and examined many more fallen meteors in this forbidden region.

However, every time he sent his Heaven Eye into the depths of the earth, it failed to penetrate that ward wreathed in star power before he lost his connection with it.

After a few attempts, he was finally convinced that with his current cultivation base and strength, there was no way he could unearth the secret hidden in the depths of the earth.

Via the fragmentary star mark he had refined, Nie Tian could easily obtain Ning Yang's accurate location without any assistance from his Heaven Eyes.

He knew that Ning Yang hadn't given up on refining the third fragmentary star mark yet, and that he was still busting his ass looking for a method.

“The third fragmentary star mark...” With a frown, Nie Tian contemplated for quite a long time.

Then, he grew convinced that, considering his current strength and battle prowess, it would be impossible for him to forcibly take the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.

On the other hand, he didn't have the ability to pry into the secrets in the depths of the earth for the time being. Therefore, after entering the middle Heaven stage and mastering Starfall, he decided to return to Shatter City.

He planned to go find Hu Rong. He could either seek help from the Spirit Condor and ask them to help him take the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang, or disclose his true identity, so that powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect would descend upon the Realm of Split Void and strip the fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.

After all, only when he obtained all three fragmentary star marks would he be able to use the secret magic to seal the opened spatial rifts in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

A few days passed...

After taking a few detours to steer clear of the Hunters that roamed about near Ash City, Nie Tian returned to the Void Illusion Mountain Range and set foot in the Wild Fire's territory.

As soon as he did, via his Heaven Eyes, he learned from conversations between Wild Fire members, as well as exploring Qi warriors, that they had all heard about the appearance of a fire-attributed Spirit Channeling grade treasure in this part of the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Therefore, at this moment, a variety of Qi warriors could be seen in every corner of the Wild Fire's territory, including people from the Blood Skull, Dark Moon, Wild Fire, and different Hunter

organizations.

Each and every one of them harbored the intention to appropriate the Spirit Channeling grade treasure for themselves.

This area that should have been exclusive to the Wild Fire was now crowded with people from various organizations. Even though Nie Tian had his Heaven Eyes to help him, he had a strong feeling that it was becoming more and more difficult to avoid all those people.

It felt as if everyone who made their living in the Void Illusion Mountain Range was gathered in this region now.

The appearance of a Spirit Channeling grade treasure seemed to have demented those people, and made them feel as if they all had a good chance at owning it.

It wasn't long before Nie Tian ran into people from the Blood Skull. Via his Heaven Eyes, he discovered that Pei Qiqi and Cai Yuan were also in the group. Therefore, he took the initiative to approach them.

As soon as he appeared, Cai Yuan exclaimed with a shocked expression, "Hua Tian! Where the hell did you go?"

"I found a place where I could focus on my cultivation." Nie Tian grinned as he asked, although he knew the answer all along, "Why are you here?"

He snuck a glance at Pei Qiqi, and discovered that her expression was the same as ever as she gently nodded at him.

Pei Qiqi had witnessed the Flame Dragon Armor turn into a streak of blazing light and fly out of his bracelet of holding. When it snatched Heaven Flame Crystals from Shi Hui and the others, he had forcibly parted ways with her without giving her a chance to argue, and cast a few Starshifts to put a sizable distance between them.

He wasn't sure if Pei Qiqi knew that the Spirit Channeling grade

treasure had actually been unleashed by him.

With a serious expression, Cai Yuan explained, “An unclaimed Spirit Channeling grade treasure appeared in this region. Normally speaking, those who own Spirit Channeling grade treasures are usually experts at the Profound realm or Soul realm. Or they could even be unearthly masters at the three Domains!

“As we know, there are countless interlaced spatial rifts in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

“Some of them lead to regions of death, while others lead to outsiders’ realms. However, it’s also possible that some of them lead to unknown dimensions where powerful human Qi warriors live.

“Perhaps that Spirit Channeling grade treasure flew out of one of those mysterious dimensions. If that’s indeed the case, it means that the Spirit Channeling grade treasure’s master is already dead.

“If we can find that Spirit Channeling grade treasure and figure out which dimension it came from, we’d probably come to some shocking findings.”

Aspiration filled Cai Yuan’s eyes as he spoke, as if he were already living the scene where he obtained the Spirit Channeling grade treasure and entered a deadly dimension ruled by powerful human Qi warriors.

Nie Tian stood in silence.

Chapter 327: Overcrowded Region

Almost every human Qi warrior in the Domain of the Falling Stars knew that the Domain of the Falling Stars wasn't all there was to this world.

Furthermore, many people were aware that the Domain of the Falling Stars hadn't always been home to humans, but rather it used to be a paradise for outsiders.

For centuries, the Void Illusion Mountain Range in the Realm of Split Void had been considered the most mysterious place in the Domain of the Falling Stars. People even viewed it as a window to the outside world.

As for the numerous spatial rifts in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, some led to outsiders' realms, while others led to unknown forbidden dimensions.

Some explorers even discovered brand-new dimensions through those spatial rifts.

The Green Illusion dimension had first been discovered in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

That was why, when rumor had it that a Spirit Channeling grade treasure had appeared in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, no one doubted its authenticity.

After all, similar incidents had happened in the Void Illusion Mountain Range before.

People suspected that the unclaimed Spirit Channeling grade treasure had flown out of one of the spatial rifts, which led to an unknown dimension.

Therefore, every major force in the Realm of the Split Void had been searching this region for the Spirit Channeling grade treasure and the mysterious dimension, their eyes green with greed.

That was exactly why the Wild Fire's territory was so overcrowded.

While Cai Yuan was explaining the Spirit Channeling grade treasure and the possible arcane dimension to Nie Tian with a face filled with excitement, Nie Tian cleared his throat and asked, "Well, are you aware that Shi Hui has secretly contacted the Wild Fire?"

Upon hearing these words, Cai Yuan let out a cold harrumph as a disgusted expression appeared on his face, as if a fly had just flown into his mouth. "Yeah, Qiqi told me. We have been treating Shi Hui with nothing but respect since he was a revered guest elder of the Blood Skull. I can't believe that he actually colluded with the Wild Fire! He and the few guest elders close to him have already been removed from our list of guest elders.

"He's not a guest elder of the Blood Skull anymore!"

Gu Yu's expression was also unpleasant as he explained, "Shi Hui enjoyed forming his own faction within our organization. Having him removed is not a bad thing for us."

Nie Tian seemed somewhat embarrassed as he said with an apologetic tone, "I'm partly responsible for this. If I didn't seriously injure his nephew Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit, perhaps he wouldn't have left the Blood Skull so soon."

Shi Hui was at the late Greater Heaven stage, and only one step away from entering the Worldly realm. He was one of the handful of guest elders of the Blood Skull who possessed such strength.

Now that Shi Hui and the few guest elders who pledged themselves to him were gone, the overall strength of the Blood Skull had taken quite a blow.

He felt like he had caused great losses for the Blood Skull.

Gu Yu shook his head and said with a frown, "It doesn't have much to do with what you did. Even if you hadn't done that, he

would have found other opportunities to leave the Blood Skull. That man was too ambitious. He always wanted more. Actually, the head was already fed up with him. Now that he has joined the Wild Fire, let him be. There'll come a day where we meet on the battlefield.”

After having a few words with Cai Yuan and Gu Yu, the Blood Skull's group stopped to recover.

Naturally, as guest elders of the Blood Skull, Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi stood together, while all the other Blood Skull members rested in another location.

“You've made another breakthrough in your cultivation, haven't you?” Pei Qiqi asked with a plain tone.

Smiling, Nie Tian nodded. “I was quite lucky; soon after we parted ways, I found the key to my breakthrough in that forbidden region, and thus entered the middle Heaven stage rather successfully.”

Pei Qiqi seemed to have anticipated Nie Tian's answer, so she didn't seem very surprised. Then, she glanced at the Blood Skull members who were recovering from a certain distance away before lowering her voice and asking, “That Spirit Channeling grade treasure belongs to you, doesn't it?”

Nie Tian nodded, not saying a word.

Pei Qiqi gave him a hard look as she said, “I knew it.”

Nie Tian cracked a smile.

“If you dare to trick me and leave me like that again, I won't let you off!” Pei Qiqi said angrily.

Nie Tian was surprised by her attitude.

“Did you get my consent before leaving?” Pei Qiqi gritted her teeth slightly. Seeing that Nie Tian hadn't understood what she meant, she grew increasingly angry. Her bright, star-like eyes

shone with frosty light as she asked, “Did you worry that I might learn your secrets, or did you not want to drag me into trouble?”

Back then, Nie Tian had cast three short-range Starshifts in a row and disappeared from Pei Qiqi’s sight in a split second.

Right before he had left in a hurry, Nie Tian had only said a few words to bid her farewell, not even giving her a chance to say anything. This had made her indignant.

“Umm... I feared for your safety.” A bitter smile stretched across Nie Tian’s face. “Not only was Shi Hui there, but also those guest elders who were close to him and a few members of the Wild Fire. I had confidence that I would be able to avoid them if I went by myself. But if you came along, I feared that it would be harder for us to stay hidden from the whole lot of them. After all, we were on the Wild Fire’s turf. Even though you’re skilled in spatial magics, we might have had to go through quite some trouble once we were discovered.”

In his opinion, he had only done this to protect Pei Qiqi, so he didn’t understand why she was so mad.

“I hate being left alone!” Pei Qiqi said coldly. “Especially when people say they did it for my own good!”

As she said these words, slight sorrow and bitterness flashed across her glittering eyes, as if unpleasant memories had come back to her at that moment.

Looking deeply at her, Nie Tian remembered the time when Pei Qiqi had wept and called for her parents in her dreams while the two of them had hidden in the stone room under a creek.

Nie Tian seemed to have suddenly realized what was going on. He nodded gently as he apologized sincerely, “I’m sorry. I won’t do things like that again.”

Pei Qiqi rapidly resumed her indifferent attitude and said, “Shi Hui has learned from his informants that you are currently in the

Void Illusion Mountain Range. However, Shi Hui isn't the only one who's looking for you. I've heard that Li Langfeng and the woman from the Fang are also searching for you in this region."

"Let them come at me then." Nie Tian sounded as if he couldn't care less.

"I really don't know where you get your confidence." After a moment of silence, she added, "By the way, Xue Long is here too. I ran into him a couple of days ago, and he asked me about you. He told me that he had business to discuss with you, and he asked me to tell you not to leave this region, since he'll come back for you."

"Xue Long?" Nie Tian frowned. "What does he want me for? Didn't he chase after Li Langfeng when we returned from the wasteland to Shatter City? And there wasn't news of him returning to Shatter City after that."

"That's because he stayed in the Void Illusion Mountain Range the whole time," Pei Qiqi said.

"I see." Originally, Nie Tian had planned to return to Shatter City as soon as possible, so that he could inform Hu Rong of the Spirit Condor of his refinement of the first fragmentary star mark and Ning Yang's appearance in the forbidden region. However, after hearing Pei Qiqi's words, he said, "Alright, I'll stick around for a few more days and see what he wants from me."

Over the following days, Nie Tian traveled with the Blood Skull's group as they searched in the vicinity.

Since Nie Tian knew that what they were looking for this entire time was the Flame Dragon Armor within his bracelet of holding, he didn't attach the slightest importance to the search.

After the recent breakthrough in his cultivation, Nie Tian had many things to do, such as filling and refining his vortexes of spiritual power of different attributes.

Therefore, he spent the days cultivating his various types of

spiritual power with spirit stones and spiritual materials.

Since the Blood Skull was one of the three major powers in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, even though they were walking on the Wild Fire's turf, they had nothing to fear.

It didn't matter whether it was independent cultivators or Qi warriors who had come in groups, they would all steer clear of the Blood Skull's group as soon as they spotted the Blood Skull's banner from afar.

Ma Jiu from the Dark Moon seemed to have been demoted due to his major misconduct in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Another person had already taken his place as the Dark Moon's highest commander in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, and they were in the middle of reestablishing their teleportation portal. Thus, they were rather fragile at this moment.

Furthermore, since the Blood Skull had sent a large force to search for the Spirit Channeling grade treasure and possible new dimension, the Dark Moon and Wild Fire didn't have the slightest intention to fight them before they came to any valuable findings themselves.

Even though the Dark Moon had been itching for revenge, they had suppressed their anger and backed away when they had encountered the Blood Skull's group earlier.

Since then, all the forces seemed to get along rather well. However, no one came to any findings in the region.

On this day, Xue Long appeared as he had promised.

The moment he did, he approached Nie Tian and expressed his wish to speak to Nie Tian alone. Nie Tian agreed.

Afterwards, Xue Long led Nie Tian to a location relatively far from Gu Yu and the other Blood Skull members. With a solemn expression, he said, "The Spirit Condor asked me to help you with something."

“Do you work for them?!” Nie Tian was taken aback.

“No.” Xue Long shook his head. “I owe them a favor. That’s all.”

“I see,” Nie Tian said.

SHEW!

All of a sudden, a skinny figure of a man flashed into appearance from behind a bare, ancient tree. The man let out a snort and said to Nie Tian with a meaningful expression on his face, “Crafty little punk! We meet again!”

“Li Langfeng!” Nie Tian was flabbergasted.

Chapter 328: Two Helpers

As little as it was, it required psychic power and soul power to use Heaven Eyes.

Since Nie Tian had been traveling with the Blood Skull's group recently, he didn't expect that he would run into trouble at all. After all, the Blood Skull was one of the most dominant forces in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Therefore, he hadn't unleashed his Heaven Eyes and used them to scan the vicinity for movement during these past days.

Furthermore, he had never been far from the Blood Skull's group, so he didn't feel the need to unleash his Heaven Eyes.

That was why he had failed to sense Li Langfeng's existence.

The sudden appearance of Li Langfeng made Nie Tian assume Xue Long had lured him into a trap. His expression immediately changed as he rapidly formed a chaotic magnetic field around him and prepared to call for help.

"Hua Tian!" Xue Long hastily called out in a soft voice to stop Nie Tian. "Li Langfeng is also here to help you! We both came upon the Spirit Condor's request. Our mission is to help you deal with Ning Yang!"

Upon hearing these words, Nie Tian felt slightly relieved.

Yet, he still kept a secure distance from Li Langfeng as his chaotic magnetic field replaced the protective light shield created by his green jade bracelet.

Li Langfeng's face was still sickly and pale. After flashing into appearance, he coughed softly where he stood, as he seemed to know what Nie Tian was worrying about.

"I made a deal with the Spirit Condor, which is to help you deal with Ning Yang." Then, Li Langfeng let out a snort as he

continued, “But in return, you will spend some time to help me with my cultivation after our mission is accomplished.”

At that moment, Xue Long explained to Nie Tian, “Ning Yang is only one step away from entering the Worldly realm. Also, since he’s from the Heaven Palace Sect, not only is he skilled in various profound magics, but he also possesses high grade spiritual tools. Hence, I don’t have the confidence that I’ll be able to overtake him single-handedly. It will only be possible if Brother Li joins me.”

“The Spirit Condor...” Nie Tian was secretly shocked.

Nie Tian hadn’t known a thing about this mysterious organization before he came to the Realm of the Split Void, including how they worked and how powerful they were.

However, they were actually capable of getting Xue Long, a guest elder of the Blood Skull, to work for them, and persuading Li Langfeng, a guest elder of the Dark Moon, to set his enmity towards Nie Tian aside and go on a mission with him.

Although it was like looking at a leopard through a bamboo tube, he realized how profound the Spirit Condor’s strength and influence was.

He had examined Ning Yang via his Heaven Eyes when he had encountered him in the forbidden region to the east of Ash City. Then, he had been convinced that he still wouldn’t stand a chance fighting him.

He had a feeling that Ning Yang, who was a core disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect, possessed battle prowess far higher than other late Greater Heaven stage cultivators.

Even if it was Li Langfeng or Xue Long, he suspected that neither of them would be able to take Ning Yang single-handedly.

However, if the two of them joined hands, they might be able to overpower Ning Yang and take the third fragmentary star mark from him. After all, both of them were outstanding fighters at the

late Greater Heaven stage.

Upon thinking of the fragmentary star mark, Nie Tian's eyes flickered as he asked, "What else do you know?"

"We only know that the Spirit Condor wants us to take Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark, and they seem to be doing this upon the Heaven Palace Sect's request." Then, Xue Long's eyes rolled as he said, "According to the Spirit Condor, you have something that will help us locate Ning Yang. Also, they want us to hand the fragmentary star mark to you once we successfully strip it from Ning Yang."

The information the Spirit Condor had given Xue Long was limited, yet the rumor about Ning Yang running away from the Heaven Palace Sect had already provoked animated discussion among people. Xue Long knew about it as well.

He naturally understood the focus of the matter was Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark.

When it came to fragmentary star marks, another person was concerned: Nie Tian, a young man from the Realm of Flame Heaven, who had been missing for a long time. Up to this point, the Heaven Palace Sect and many other powerful Qi warrior sects were still searching for him.

Nie Tian, Hua Tian, fragmentary star mark, Nie Tian...

Connecting all these dots, Xue Long had already figured out Nie Tian's true identity. He just didn't want to reveal such knowledge.

"Do you really dare to fight Ning Yang?" Nie Tian questioned their determination.

Xue Long pondered for a moment before replying, "If Ning Yang hadn't run away from the Heaven Palace Sect, and he were still a talented core disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect, I probably wouldn't have had the audacity to do anything to him."

With these words, he shot a glance at Li Langfeng and said,

“Perhaps Brother Li would.

“However, times have changed. Ning Yang went against the Heaven Palace Sect’s will, which means he has broken away with the Heaven Palace Sect. Adding in the assurance from the Spirit Condor, I don’t think there will be a problem.” At that moment, Xue Long seemed to have thought of another matter and thus added, “However, you’ve got to understand that I will only help you take Ning Yang’s fragmentary star mark, but I will never help you kill him.

“All things said, he still belongs to the Heaven Palace Sect. They have the final say on his life or death. I don’t ever want to anger the Heaven Palace Sect!”

“Xue Long, you’ve been overcautious your entire life. This is where you need to learn from me.” Li Langfeng’s tone was filled with ridicule. “It’s just because you’re burdened by too many fears that you can never beat me. If I were you, and I was caught up in a situation like you were in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, I would have...” Li Langfeng didn’t finish his sentence.

Xue Long suddenly assumed a cold face. “I don’t need you to judge me!”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered as he thought to himself, “The Realm of a Hundred Battles!”

Since he had overheard conversations between Song Li and Han Mu, he had learned that Song Li and Xue Long knew each other, and that ‘Xue Long’ wasn’t his real name.

From the look of it, Li Langfeng knew about Xue Long’s history. The fact that he mentioned that Xue Long was from the Realm of a Hundred Battles made Nie Tian realize that Song Li and Han Mu from the Fang had also come from the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

“Ning Yang is currently wandering in the forbidden region to the east of Ash City.” Nie Tian blurted.

Xue Long's eyes lit up as he said, "Good! We'd better hurry over there now and strip that fragmentary star mark from him while he's still at the late Greater Heaven stage. I've long since heard people talk about this man. It's said that if he hadn't been distracted by his fragmentary star mark, he would have broken through into the Worldly realm already."

It appeared that Xue Long also harbored fear towards Ning Yang.

"With the just two of you?" Nie Tian asked with a frown.

"The two of us should suffice," Xue Long said with a smile. "I know how powerful Brother Li is. Ning Yang might be slightly stronger than him. However, with me there to help Brother Li, our success is pretty much guaranteed."

"You two are not enough." Nie Tian shook his head as he explained the problem to them, "Ning Yang is traveling with a guest elder of the Wild Fire. That man is also at the late Greater Heaven stage, and just like Ning Yang, he also used to be a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect. Not only that, I overheard Ning Yang refer to that man as 'senior martial brother', so I doubt that he's any weaker than you."

Xue Long's expression changed as he asked, "Have you ever seen the man in person? Can you briefly describe his appearance to me?"

Nie Tian describe the man's appearance according to his impression of him.

After hearing his description, the facial expressions of Li Langfeng and Xue Long both flickered as they called out simultaneously, "It's Tong Jianfeng!"

"You both know that man?!" Nie Tian was taken aback.

A grim expression clouded Xue Long's face as he said with a deep frown, "Yeah, Tong Jianfeng is probably a fake name. He's a guest elder of the Wild Fire. His status among the Wild Fire's guest

elders is similar to Brother Li's status amongst the Dark Moon's guest elders. That man and Brother Li are probably evenly matched in strength, but he might be slightly stronger than me."

"You were right. If he is indeed traveling with Ning Yang, I'm afraid the two of us won't be able to take them."

After learning that Ning Yang had Tong Jianfeng by his side, Li Langfeng also fell silent.

After a moment of pondering, Xue Long said, "That changes everything. We can't go into the forbidden region to the east of Ash City now. I'll inform the Spirit Condor of the current situation. If the Spirit Condor doesn't send other powerful experts to our aid, our operation against Ning Yang will be doomed to fail!"

With a deep breath, he turned to Nie Tian and said, "Luckily, you told us that Tong Jianfeng was Ning Yang's senior martial brother and that they are traveling together now. Otherwise, if we acted rashly and engaged in battle with the two of them, we would definitely have suffered a great loss!"

At that point, a fierce aura seemed to suddenly burst forth from within Li Langfeng's sickly body as he said, "We don't need to ask the Spirit Condor for reinforcement. There's another way to turn the situation around.

"Hua Tian! You come with me and help me with my cultivation for a few days. I've got a feeling that with your help, I'll be able to step into the Worldly realm in ten days!"

"Once I enter the Worldly realm, I'll be able to overtake Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng by myself!"

"What?!" Xue Long asked with a shocked expression on his face. "Are you really that close to your next breakthrough?"

"Yes, I'm just one step away, but this last step is very crucial. If there's no one to help me, I'm afraid it will still take me three months to finish this final step. However, if Hua Tian agrees to

help me, I have confidence that I'll be able to break the barrier and enter the Worldly realm in ten days." Confidence could be seen on Li Langfeng's face as he continued, "Once I enter the Worldly realm, Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng won't be able to pose any threat to me! I won't even need you to do anything, Xue Long!"

Xue Long's expression flickered as he asked, "How about this: I'll inform the Spirit Condor of the current situation. In the meantime, Hua Tian will help you with your cultivation. If you can advance to the Worldly realm in ten days, we'll act according to our original plan. If you fail to do that in ten days, we'll sit tight and wait for the Spirit Condor to make other arrangements."

"Very well!" Li Langfeng agreed.

Xue Tong turned to Nie Tian and asked, "What do you say?"

"That sounds good to me," Nie Tian blurted.

Chapter 329: Cultivation Assistant

After reaching an agreement with Li Langfeng and Xue Long, Nie Tian bid farewell to Cai Yuan and Gu Yu, and left the Blood Skull's group.

Both Xue Long and Nie Tian were only guest elders of the Blood Skull, not formal members. Therefore, the Blood Skull didn't have much control over the actions of either of them.

They weren't obligated to travel with the Blood Skull and work for them just because of their strong desire to find the Spirit Channeling grade treasure in this region.

Before they left, Pei Qiqi was slightly worried that Nie Tian might get in trouble, but after learning that he was leaving with Xue Long, she set her mind at ease.

She knew how powerful Xue Long was.

She assumed that as long as Nie Tian traveled with Xue Long, even if they encountered Shi Hui, who had switched sides and joined the Wild Fire, he would still be safe.

After parting ways with Pei Qiqi and the Blood Skull's group, Nie Tian followed Xue Long and Li Langfeng out of the Wild Fire's territory in the Void Illusion Mountain Range and into the desert again.

The forbidden region where Ning Yang was currently in belonged to a part of the desert which sat to the east of Ash City.

However, the three of them didn't rush over to the region where no plants or spirit beasts could survive.

Instead, they found an untraversed region in the desert, where Nie Tian started helping Li Langfeng with his cultivation.

Deep into the night, frigid-cold wind whizzed by as Xue Long sat in a location 100 meters away from Nie Tian and Li Langfeng.

He was rather sensible by doing this.

He understood that no matter whether it was Nie Tian or Li Langfeng, neither of them would want to reveal their secrets to others while they practiced cultivation.

No one was willing to expose their secrets to others, especially when it came to cultivation methods.

“Come on! Bombard me with your spiritual energy balls like you did last time!” A sickly yearning expression appeared on Li Langfeng’s face, as if he couldn’t wait to be mistreated.

However, Nie Tian didn’t form spiritual energy balls instantly, but rather he looked at him with a frown and asked, “If you don’t mind, can I examine your body briefly before we do this?”

Li Langfeng was taken aback. “What?”

“Just don’t raise your guard, and let me check your physical body,” Nie Tian said. “If I do that, I might be able to help you better.”

Li Langfeng seemed a bit hesitant. He pondered silently for a while before saying, “Alright.”

He would never agree to such a demand if it were someone else. However, he needed Nie Tian to help him improve his cultivation base as quickly as possible, and he understood that Nie Tian had mastered some mysterious skills and techniques that no one else knew.

Back when he had failed to find Nie Tian in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, he had gone to the wasteland and learned from a few Hunters that Nie Tian possessed bizarre escape magics that had allowed him to escape from the Hunters’ blockades repeatedly.

Many factors made Li Langfeng realize that Nie Tian was by no means an ordinary young man.

Then, Nie Tian unleashed one Heaven Eye and manipulated it to

run an examination of Li Langfeng's flesh and blood from a close distance, since he didn't dare to command the Heaven Eye to enter Li Langfeng's body.

With the Heaven Eye moving across his body so close to his skin, Li Langfeng had a feeling that he was being scanned by something.

However, since he hadn't entered the Worldly realm, he wasn't able to discover the Heaven Eye. The only thing he could be sure of was that the strange feeling was caused by Nie Tian.

While he was caught up in the strange sensation, Nie Tian had already obtained a thorough understanding of Li Langfeng's condition.

He could sense a certain, extremely toxic deposit in Li Langfeng's sickly body, which resided in his blood, bones, and meridians.

It was the deposit of the mysterious green energy within the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this realm.

Even though the deposit carried deadly toxins, it could inflict damage that was just as dreadful when Li Langfeng used it to attack his enemies.

Therefore, it was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it boosted Li Langfeng's strength; on the other, it continued to corrode his body from the inside.

The fact that Li Langfeng never stopped coughing and looked as if he was afflicted with an incurable disease was because he had the extremely toxic deposit inside his body all the time.

Eyes narrowed, Nie Tian said with a soft voice, "You have an extremely toxic deposit inside your body.

"The deadly toxins are damaging your physical body continuously. I know you have a method to heal the damage to your body and resist the corrosion of the toxins. However, the speed at which you heal yourself isn't always as fast as the speed at which the toxins corrode your body...

“As your cultivation base advances, more toxins will accumulate inside your body, and your body will be under increasingly heavy pressure.

“Sooner or later, your body will be overwhelmed, and the deadly toxins will eventually nibble away every last bit of your life force and kill you.”

After hearing Nie Tian’s analysis, Li Langfeng’s face remained expressionless, as he didn’t seem to be moved at all.

After looking deeply at him for a moment, Nie Tian added, “I don’t think bombarding you with my spiritual energy balls is a good idea. As you probably know, the explosion of spiritual energy balls will send out concentrated energy. Other than the green toxic energy, you’ll be allowing many other types of energy that don’t get along with each other inside your body.

“Furthermore, after absorbing them all into your body, you’ll have to drive the unwanted energy out of your body by puking blood.

“This will put your body under an even heavier burden.”

With these words, Nie Tian raised his hands as he cast the spell he had learned from the mysterious land. Shortly afterwards, a football-sized spiritual energy ball came to form between his palms.

Even though the spiritual energy ball looked gray and misty from the outside, it was actually filled with multicolored light.

The various types of spiritual energy from unknown origins grew increasingly violent and restless after being concentrated and constrained into such a small space.

After holding it for about 10 seconds, Nie Tian unleashed it.

BOOM!

The spiritual energy ball exploded behind Li Langfeng. The

explosion created a rather sizable hole in the desert ground and sent multicolored light sputtering in every direction.

Xue Long, who was cultivating with his eyes closed in a distant location, turned his head to check the situation upon hearing the explosion, before rapidly turning his head back.

Meanwhile, Li Langfeng's eyes lit up as he instantly shot towards the area which was now covered in multicolored light. While the light was still lingering in the air, he stood where the ball had exploded and used his secret magic to channel the green mist into himself, hoping to use the toxins within it to build up his strength and boost his cultivation.

During this process, the lingering light of other colors fell on him from time to time.

The green light shield around him kept giving out fizzing sounds as it shielded him from most of the corrosive energy and prevented him from receiving much damage.

Back when he and Nie Tian had fought in the mountain valley, all the spiritual energy balls Nie Tian had cast towards him had exploded close to him.

The impact of the explosions was so mighty that his spiritual power shield had shattered almost immediately, exposing his skinny body to the corrosion of various types of foreign energy.

At that time, copious amount of energy beyond his refining ability had forcibly entered his body.

That was why he had had to drive those types of invading impurities out of his body by coughing up many mouthfuls of blood, lest his body fail due to the excessive burden.

However, now that the spiritual energy ball had exploded in another location, the formidable explosive impact would wear out and become bearable by his protective shield. Since his protective shield didn't burst, when he went over to absorb the lingering

green energy, he wouldn't have to bear the corrosion of other types of energy, and thus he would be able to focus on channeling the green energy.

"Thanks." Enveloped by his green light shield, Li Langfeng nodded briefly towards Nie Tian as he channeled the useful energy into his body.

Nie Tian didn't say anything, as he was contemplating with a frown.

He took note that the explosive impact of his spiritual energy ball was very powerful.

However, after the explosion, as the blast impact dissipated, the various kinds of highly concentrated energy were also rapidly scattered over a large area.

The energy Li Langfeng was absorbing now was actually diluted, which meant that by doing this, he had significantly undermined Li Langfeng's cultivation efficiency.

However, if the spiritual energy ball didn't explode at all, and Li Langfeng could extract the highly concentrated green energy directly from within the intact spiritual energy ball, Li Langfeng's cultivation efficiency would improve by a great margin.

That was when it occurred to Nie Tian that if he could suppress the violent clash between the different types of energy and stabilize his spiritual energy balls, it would work out for him as well.

Before, when he had fought the Dark Moon experts and pursuing Hunters, he actually hadn't displayed the full might of his spiritual energy balls because the excessively violent clash and turbulence had rapidly grown out of control, causing his spiritual energy balls to explode prematurely.

Some of them had even exploded by themselves when they were still meters away from their target.

The damage the spiritual energy balls inflicted on the enemy varied greatly between scenarios where the explosion happened close to the enemy and in a location several meters from the enemy.

He had long since known that the closer to the center of the explosion, the mightier the explosive impact and destructive force would be.

Since he hadn't been able to control his spiritual energy balls, the attack range of his spiritual energy balls had been rather limited.

If he was standing too far from his enemy, it would be very likely that his spiritual energy balls would explode prematurely midway, rendering his attacks meaningless.

That was why he had had no choice but to approach his targets when he had fought those Dark Moon experts and pursuing Hunters.

If his target was too far away, he wouldn't be able to inflict much damage to it. Even if his target was close enough, he wouldn't be able to hit it precisely with his spiritual energy balls.

The ultimate reason for all this was rooted in the unceasing violent clash between the different types of energy within his spiritual energy balls.

“Come again!” Li Langfeng shouted.

With furrowed eyebrows, Nie Tian formed another spiritual energy ball. He examined it carefully, and found that it was just as unstable as the last one, and it could explode at any moment.

BOOM!

The spiritual energy ball exploded in a location to Li Langfeng's left. Without any hesitation, Li Langfeng rushed over and started absorbing energy.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The following three spiritual energy balls also exploded soon after leaving Nie Tian's hands, and Li Langfeng also rushed over to absorb the sputtering energy.

After some time, Li Langfeng called a timeout, as it seemed that he needed some time to recover.

After returning to Nie Tian's side, he slowly channeled the green energy into his spiritual sea with his eyes narrowed. In the meantime, he grimaced as if he was experiencing excruciating pain all over his body while he tried his best to resist the corrosion of the toxins.

“What exactly does the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void consist of?” Nie Tian asked. “Also, where are those elements from? Other than the mutant spirit beasts, are you the only one in the world who is capable of making use of the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth?”

“Of course not,” Li Langfeng answered, shaking his head. “Let me put it this way: as you know, the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth filling every corner of the Realm of Split Void is deadly to us. However, it is a necessity to many outsider races. They can use it to strengthen their bloodlines and enhance their power.

“As a matter of fact, we shouldn't call it deadly. It's just not designed for us humans. That's all.

“For example, we can't practice cultivation with the demon Qi. Forcibly channeling it into our bodies would only achieve adverse effects.

“However, for outsiders, the demon Qi is just as indispensable to them as water and air.

“The same goes for the green energy I cultivate with. Even though I'm a master of toxins, I will still be corroded by this extremely toxic energy.

“However, I know there is an outsider race whose people rely on

this kind of energy to strengthen themselves. Not only will they not suffer from any sort of backlash after absorbing this kind of energy, but the energy will greatly increase their physical strength and improve their bloodline power.”

Chapter 330: Demons, Phantasms, Bonebrutes, Fiends

Years and years ago, the Realm of Split Void had undergone heaven-changing and earth-overturning upheavals, and the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this realm had been tainted. Because of this, every Qi warrior who lived in the Realm of Split Void had a fairly deep understanding of the special spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth they were surrounded by.

One of the reasons Li Langfeng, who practiced the art of poison, had come to the Realm of Split Void was to stay away from trouble.

The other reason was that he knew that the special green energy in the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth here could speed up his cultivation.

Perhaps this was why he had a better understanding of the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void than most people.

After hearing Li Langfeng's explanation, Nie Tian's understanding of the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void also rose to a whole new level.

According to Li Langfeng, the most common and basic energy in this world was spiritual Qi, which human Qi warriors could use to practice cultivation by channeling it into their spiritual seas in their dantian regions.

Spiritual Qi existed in every major realm and dimension that was inhabited by a variety of races.

However, the uniqueness of some realms and dimensions attributed to the change and mutation of their spiritual Qi.

Simply put, since the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, where the Spiritual Treasure Sect was located, was scorchingly hot year-round, and volcanoes erupted there from time to time, the

spiritual Qi in that region turned out to be laced with copious amount of flame energy.

If Qi warriors who practiced fire-attributed incantations practiced cultivation in the Spiritual Treasure Sect, they would be able to channel the mixed spiritual Qi into their spiritual seas, where they could sort the spiritual Qi and distribute flame energy into their vortexes of flame power and the plain spiritual energy into their vortexes of spiritual power.

In this way, those Qi warriors' cultivation speed could be greatly enhanced.

Similarly, in frigidly cold regions, the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth was usually laced with frost energy. These regions would be ideal locations for Qi warriors who practiced ice-attributed incantations to practice their cultivation.

In the same way, some regions had lightning bolts flash across the sky year-round, so the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in these regions would carry rich lightning energy. Qi warriors who practiced lightning-attributed incantations would be able to improve their strength in these regions rapidly.

The same went for the heavens and earths where outsiders lived. Due to the special structures and features of their realms, the spiritual Qi gradually mutated and turned into demon Qi.

Demons were able to refine energy from demon Qi, infuse it into their blood, and use it to strengthen their physical strength, as well as their bloodline power.

The so-called tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void had actually formed when different types of mutated Qi started to leak into this realm through some of the spatial rifts.

Those types of Qi suited outsiders' cultivation perfectly, but when they merged with the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the

Realm of Split Void, variation occurred.

Such variation made the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void unsuitable for human Qi warriors' cultivation. If they forcibly allowed the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth inside of them, they would have their flesh and blood corroded.

After hearing Li Langfeng's lecture about the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void, Nie Tian finally understood what had happened here.

“As far as I know, the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void contains at least four types of Qi: demon Qi, phantasm Qi, death Qi, and toxic Qi.

“Other than these, other types of mysterious energy that have been spread to this realm via spatial rifts can also be found in the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth. However, I don't know much about them.”

Li Langfeng took his time as he explained things to Nie Tian.

“Demons cultivate with demon Qi; Phantasms cultivate with phantasm Qi; Bonebrutes cultivate with death Qi; Fiends cultivate with toxic Qi.

“We refer to Demons, Phantasms, Bonebrutes, and Fiends as outsiders.

“All of these four outsider races used to live in the Domain of the Falling Stars. As a matter of fact, without exception, the realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars used to be these outsiders' homes.

“For example, the Realm of Flame Heaven used to be a paradise for Demons, and was controlled by a powerful Demon clan.

“The Realm of Dark Underworld, where I come from, used to belong to Phantasms. Fiends used to live in the Realm of Black Marsh. And the Realm of Unbounded Desolation used to be home to Bonebrutes.

“Of course, back then, the Domain of the Falling Stars wasn’t called the Domain of the Falling Stars. It had a different name.

“Furthermore, the Demons, Phantasms, Fiends, and Bonebrutes who used to live in those realms were only small branches. The majority of their people lived somewhere else in this vast universe.

“Then, people from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and other powerful human Qi warriors came here, and after years of bloody warfare, they finally drove all the outsiders out of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

“They purged the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth using mysterious magics and techniques, and finally transformed the Domain of the Falling Stars into a paradise that suited humans.”

Without holding anything back, Li Langfeng explained everything he knew to Nie Tian in great detail.

Nie Tian listened attentively, and took his time to digest the newly-acquired information. Now, he finally had a fairly thorough understanding of the four major outsider races and the special Qi they cultivated.

“Alright, let’s get back to work!”

While Li Langfeng lectured Nie Tian about the different features of different Qi, he didn’t halt his refinement of the toxic Qi he had absorbed. Now that he was finished, he rose to his feet, backed up to put a sizeable distance between Nie Tian and himself, and beckoned for Nie Tian to form more spiritual energy balls.

Nie Tian snapped out of his train of thought as he formed four more spiritual energy balls and cast them towards locations close to Li Langfeng.

As he condensed those spiritual energy balls, he kept attempting to suppress the violent clash between the various types of frenzied energy within them.

However, the result turned out to be next to nothing. The four

spiritual energy balls still exploded soon after leaving his hand.

Over the following few days, Li Langfeng continued to practice cultivation with Nie Tian's help, and at the same time, told Nie Tian about the unique features of the different Qi that formed the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void, along with stories about the outsider races.

In the meantime, there wasn't any noticeable progress in Nie Tian's mastery of his spiritual energy balls, as he still couldn't stop them from exploding within a very limited amount of time.

However, as he formed those spiritual energy balls one by one, he paid close attention to the phantasm Qi, demon Qi, death Qi, and toxic Qi within them, and he gradually developed the ability to tell those four types of Qi apart from each other.

The cyan light within the spiritual energy balls was phantasm Qi; the purple light was demon Qi, the gray light was death Qi, and the green light was toxic Qi.

The four types of Qi were all extremely unstable, and they were the major types of Qi that constituted the spiritual energy balls.

Other than them, there were also a variety of energies of unknown origins, but they only took up a very small proportion of the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Split Void.

Each of the four types of Qi was very active and restless. Once they were concentrated and confined to a small spiritual energy ball, they would constantly clash with one another, and cause strong turbulence.

Compared to these types of Qi that suited outsiders' cultivation, spiritual Qi, which suited human Qi warriors' cultivation, seemed especially calm and quiet.

However, the proportion it took up in a spiritual energy ball was far less than the four types of foreign Qi, and thus it couldn't bring peace to the spiritual energy ball.

On this day, a bright idea suddenly occurred to Nie Tian. “If I increase the percentage of spiritual Qi in my spiritual energy balls, will it make them easier for me to control?”

Therefore, as he continued to condense more spiritual energy balls later, he intentionally channeled his own spiritual power out of his spiritual sea and into his spiritual energy balls in order to increase the percentage of spiritual Qi in his spiritual energy balls.

To his surprise, when copious amount of peaceful spiritual Qi poured into his spiritual energy balls, although the four types of foreign Qi still clashed with one another and the spiritual energy balls were still turbulent, he could use his psychic awareness to manipulate the spiritual energy he had put in there and try to separate the four types of foreign Qi, resulting in conspicuous changes.

His spiritual energy spread out into thin layers. Like wards, they separated the four types of violent Qi, which greatly weakened the conflict between them.

Furthermore, the more spiritual energy Nie Tian infused into his spiritual energy balls, the stabler they became.

As a result, his spiritual energy balls became much stabler than before, and the time before they exploded became longer and more controllable.

Although, by doing this, he might have to consume his own power, he would be able to control the spiritual energy balls more accurately, and in battle, he would be able to use them to attack enemies over a long distance without worrying that they would explode midway and cut their might in half.

Chapter 331: Shi Huis Demand

Another spiritual energy ball formed between Nie Tian's palms.

Inside its misty, gray exterior, concentrated energies of different colors made the spiritual energy ball increasingly turbulent. Then, Nie Tian channeled spiritual power from his dantian region and infused it into the spiritual energy ball.

When his spiritual power in the spiritual energy ball reached a certain percentage, he skillfully manipulated it to separate the cyan phantasm Qi, purple demon Qi, pale-gray death Qi, and green toxic Qi, using his psychic awareness.

Just like that, the clash amongst the four major types of energy was effectively suppressed.

The spiritual energy ball was no longer turbulent, and the feeling that it could go off at any moment disappeared.

“Senior Li!” Nie Tian called out to Li Langfeng, beckoning for him to come over to him.

Face ghastly and eyes seeming to be coated with a green paint, Li Langfeng shot towards him lightly like a ghost.

While Li Langfeng absorbed toxic Qi that was suited for Fiends, he needed to refine the energy and allow its essence into his spiritual sea. Meanwhile, toxic deposits were left inside of him, where they would continue to corrode his fleshy body day and night.

This process was by no means pleasant. From his increasingly frequent coughs, Nie Tian could tell that as he sought a quick breakthrough into the Worldly realm, he had brought enormous trauma to his body at the same time.

“What's up?” As soon as Li Langfeng arrived by Nie Tian's side, he took a glance at the spiritual energy ball in Nie Tian's hands, and a shocked look instantly appeared in his eyes.

After spending several days cultivating with Nie Tian's help, he had long since noticed that Nie Tian didn't have total control over his spiritual energy balls.

With no exception, every spiritual energy ball he had formed had exploded soon after coming to shape.

At this moment, Li Langfeng noticed that Nie Tian had already been holding that spiritual energy ball for some time.

If it were the same as before, the spiritual energy ball should have exploded already.

“This spiritual energy ball can last 15 minutes without exploding.” With a slight move of Nie Tian's fingers, the misty, gray spiritual energy ball slowly floated towards Li Langfeng like an air bubble. “According to my observations, the energy within unexploded spiritual energy balls is the most concentrated and pure. Be my guest and try to channel the toxic Qi into yourself.”

The light of ecstasy burst forth from within Li Langfeng's emerald-like eyes.

He nodded as a strong attracting force was born within his palm. When the spiritual energy ball was firmly attached to his palm, his eyes narrowed as he began to absorb the green toxic Qi from within it with rapt attention.

Nie Tian observed carefully, and noticed that numerous wisps of green toxic Qi were flowing from the spiritual energy ball into Li Langfeng's palm, like green creeks.

Moments later, that hand of Li Langfeng's turned dark-green, while a faint green mist slowly rose from within his pores.

As the green toxic Qi was extracted bit by bit, the spiritual energy ball grew increasingly stable.

Originally, according to Nie Tian's assessment, the spiritual energy ball would remain stable for 15 minutes.

However, as the green toxic Qi was rapidly channeled away, part of Nie Tian's spiritual energy were freed, and thus more power was redistributed to the separation of demon Qi, death Qi, and phantasm Qi.

In that way, the level of stability in the spiritual energy ball improved by a great deal.

It only took Li Langfeng 5 minutes to absorb every last bit of concentrated toxic Qi from within the spiritual energy ball.

Li Langfeng retracted his hand, and with a flick of his fingers, the processed spiritual energy ball flew away.

At that moment, Nie Tian stopped using his psychic awareness to separate the different types of energy within that spiritual energy ball.

BOOM!

The spiritual energy ball exploded instantly. Due to the depletion of the toxic Qi, the explosive impact was slightly weaker than before.

Li Langfeng took a deep breath and started cultivating. However, in the next moment, the light of excitement shot out of his eyes, which had turned dark-green.

After a thorough examination, he discovered that the toxic Qi he had just absorbed from Nie Tian's spiritual energy ball was extremely pure and rich. He could channel most of it directly into his spiritual sea without any further refinement of his own.

Only a puny amount of harmful deposits were created after the process.

If he could continue to absorb toxic Qi from Nie Tian's spiritual energy balls, not only would the speed at which he accumulated strength increase by a great margin, but his physical body would also be under much less pressure.

“Well...” Excitement could be seen on his face as he rubbed his hands together while looking at Nie Tian. It seemed that he wished to speak, but stopped on second thought.

He, who was only one step away from entering the Worldly realm, had shrewd observation skills. He could tell that this spiritual energy ball was laced with Nie Tian’s own spiritual power.

It was none other than Nie Tian’s spiritual power that had interrupted the clash and turbulence within the spiritual energy ball and stopped it from exploding within a short time.

He realized that the green toxic energy within the intact spiritual energy ball was highly concentrated and extremely pure. Not only could it greatly boost his cultivation efficiency, but it could also relieve the burden on his fleshy body.

He intended to ask Nie Tian to continue.

However, he knew that, by doing this, Nie Tian needed to consume his own strength, which could jeopardize his cultivation.

“Our interests coincide. The sooner you breakthrough into the Worldly realm, the sooner you can help me strip that fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.” After a brief pondering, Nie Tian added, “I’ll do my best to help you before you enter the Worldly realm. However, once you’ve made the breakthrough, I won’t be able to help you like this, since it will affect my own cultivation.”

“Sure, I understand.” Li Langfeng nodded repeatedly as he promised, “Kid, if you can help me break through into the Worldly realm, consider me in your debt, my deal with the Spirit Condor aside. I’ll help you snatch that fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang all the same.”

“Thank you in advance then.” Nie Tian cut the pleasantries and accepted Li Langfeng’s offer of good will.

Over the following days, every time Nie Tian formed a spiritual

energy ball, he infused it with his own spiritual power, above all else, so that the spiritual energy ball wouldn't explode.

In the meantime, Li Langfeng absorbed copious amounts of green toxic Qi, which had originated from the Fiends' realms, from Nie Tian's spiritual energy balls, and used it to increase his strength at a stunning speed.

On the eighth day, Li Langfeng took the initiative and called for a stop.

Under the pitch-black, starless night sky, his eyes looked like two clusters of burning ghost fire, which was very spooky.

“It's about time! You stay here with Xue Long. I'll find another place to finish my breakthrough. I'll come back for you when I've entered the Worldly realm.”

With these words, he shouted out towards Xue Long from afar before flashing into the distance, leaving a dark-green afterimage behind him.

It was natural that he acted with caution when he was about to make his breakthrough.

No matter whether it was Nie Tian or Xue Long, he didn't have deep friendships with either of them. It was mutual benefit that had brought the three of them together. He knew that he would be very vulnerable when he tried to make the breakthrough. Therefore, he intentionally distanced himself from them, fearing that they might take advantage of the situation.

After he was gone, Nie Tian remained silent as he took out spirit stones and used them to recover the spiritual power he had consumed.

Xue Long seemed to know that Li Langfeng didn't trust him, and understood that Li Langfeng would find another place to make his breakthrough.

Hence, he didn't seem surprised at all about Li Langfeng's

leaving.

The only thing that had surprised him was that Li Langfeng had left before the expected time.

According to Li Langfeng, it should have taken ten days for him to accumulate enough strength and reach the point where he would be ready for the breakthrough.

However, it had only been eight days, and Li Langfeng had left in a hurry, which meant that he had already accumulated his strength to the point where he was ready for his next breakthrough.

“Did Hua Tian really provide such great help to Li Langfeng’s cultivation?” Xue Long was secretly amazed.

After midnight...

Knowing that Li Langfeng was on the threshold of entering the Worldly realm, Xue Long somehow felt a sense of pressure.

While he was cultivating wholeheartedly with his eyes closed, his eyes suddenly snapped wide open.

With a grim expression, he gazed into the distance as he exclaimed in a soft voice, “Hua Tian!”

Nie Tian instantly awoke from his cultivation and asked with a confused expression, “What’s up?”

He hadn’t released his seven Heaven Eyes to keep a close watch on everything in their vicinity during this entire time he had been with Li Langfeng and Xue Long.

The reason was that he assumed Li Langfeng and Xue Long were powerful enough. The way he saw it, even if they encountered unforeseen events, Li Langfeng and Xue Long would be able to handle them well.

“Someone's coming!” Xue Long exclaimed in a soft voice.

Nie Tian was taken aback.

He discovered grimness on Xue Long face, which make him realize that whoever was coming towards them must be so powerful that they even made Xue Long feel pressure.

He hastily flashed over to Xue Long's side. Meanwhile, he subconsciously unleashed his Heaven Eyes, hoping to use them to learn about the situation around them.

However, by the time he had only formed and unleashed his first Heaven Eye, Shi Hui and four others appeared in front of them.

“Shi Hui!” Nie Tian muttered to himself.

Shi Hui cracked a broad smile as he said, “Long time no see, Brother Xue! Haven't you been chasing after Li Langfeng from the Dark Moon lately? Why are you here with Hua Tian?”

Standing by Shi Hui's side, the other four men, who also used to be guest elders of the Blood Skull, stared at Nie Tian with evil smiles on their faces.

The four of them were all at the middle Greater Heaven stage, which was only slightly inferior to Shi Hui's and Xue Long's cultivation bases.

A fierce sword intent suddenly shot straight into the sky from the top of Xue Long's head.

Under Nie Tian's Heaven Eye's perception, it was as if an incomparably sharp sword had flown out of the top of Xue Long's head and pierced into the heavens.

“Shi Hui, are you here for me, or are you just passing by?” Xue Long asked with a frown.

“Neither.” With a sarcastic chuckle, Shi Hui's gaze landed on Nie Tian. Then, he said, “I heard that you and Nie Tian were in this area by chance. I've actually come for him.”

“As you probably know, I was kicked out of the Blood Skull. If it weren't for this brat, my relationship with the Blood Skull

wouldn't have soured so quickly. As a former guest elder of the Blood Skull, I have friends in the Blood Skull. I'm a man who cares about his face. Now that my title as the Blood Skull's guest elder was taken away from me because of him, I can't just sit back and do nothing, can I?"

Xue Long let out a snort and said, "Considering how you behaved in the Blood Skull, even if Hua Tian didn't do anything, Cai Lan wouldn't have tolerated you for much longer!"

"Brother Xue, it's not right on your part to make such comments." Shi Hui's face grew cold as he said, "You and I were both guest elders of the Blood Skull. The well water did not interfere with the river water. And we never had any feuds with each other. However, I did hear people say that you didn't approve of the way I did things."

"That's correct." Xue Long didn't mask his feelings towards Shi Hui at all.

Shi Hui rubbed his chin before his eyes flickered and he said, "It doesn't really matter. We'll be on different sides from now on. The day will come when we meet again. But this time..."

He pointed his finger at Nie Tian and said in a loud voice, "I've come for him! As soon as you give this brat to me, I'll take him and leave, not staying a moment longer. We will pretend we never met. We can settle things the next time we meet if you wish. What do you say?"

Chapter 332: Escape

“No!” Xue Long rejected Shi Hui’s offer neatly with one word.

Shi Hui’s face grew grim as he said, “Brother Xue, I bet you understand perfectly well that our strengths are equally matched. If things get ugly, you won’t be able to protect him anyway, so why would you do such a thing? What’s in it for you if you go to battle against me just to protect this swanking little punk?”

He turned to nod towards the four men standing beside him. After receiving Shi Hui’s signal, the four of them, who used to be guest elders of the Blood Skull, began moving towards Nie Tian stealthily.

“Someone asked me to take care of Hua Tian for a few days.” With these words, Xue Long rose to his feet, and a sword wreathed in a frosty aura suddenly appeared in his hand.

Holding the sword, he looked deeply at Shi Hui as he said, “Hua Tian is under my protection. If any of you dares to touch him, I won’t let you off easily!”

“Now that you’ve refused to give me face, don’t blame me for my manners!” Shi Hui exclaimed.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

One after another, numerous clusters of flames shot out of Shi Hui’s palms and the cuffs of his sleeves.

At the same time, Shi Hui took out a whip made of snake bones.

The moment the Snake Bone Whip appeared, blazing flames shot out from within it, turning it into a giant, burning python.

Shi Hui seemed to be holding the tail of the giant, burning python. With a gentle swing of the Snake Bone Whip, Shi Hui immediately unleashed raging flames into his surroundings, turning the area around him into a sea of fire.

“Leave Xue Long to me. You four go capture Hua Tian alive!” The moment the Snake Bone Whip appeared, Shi Hui seemed to have dropped all scruples, as if he knew that it had come to the point where the veneer of mutual respect between them was already gone.

“Don’t mind me, Hua Tian!” Xue Long called out, his face as grim as lake water. “Leave whenever you find an opportunity!”

He knew that Nie Tian had mastered many secret magics, and he was skilled in certain escape magics. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to escape from the numerous Hunters’ blockade and pursuit repeatedly.

Shi Hui threw his head back and laughed broadly. “Hahaha! Who are you kidding, Xue Long? If an insignificant Heaven stage Qi warrior can manage to escape from the four of them, I’ll write my name backwards!”

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

As he spoke, the Snake Bone Whip shivered violently before swooping directly towards Xue Long.

The torrential flames that had been hovering around Shi Hui followed the movement of the Snake Bone Whip as they rapidly engulfed Xue Long.

Simultaneously, the four middle Greater Heaven stage cultivators charged towards Nie Tian with evil smiles on their faces.

SHEW!

An incomparably sharp sword made of spiritual power shot straight up into the sky from within the sea of raging flames where Xue Long was standing.

It split into numerous smaller swords, and like sputtering, shattered pieces of swords, they pierced towards the four men in an attempt to intercept their attacks towards Nie Tian.

Shi Hui let out a cold laugh and said, “Your opponent is me!”

All of a sudden, numerous sparkling magical symbols appeared within the torrential flames.

They were like transparent, crimson crystals, within which were branded the profound truths of fire.

Each of them seemed to have their own awareness as they targeted the fragmented spiritual power swords Xue Long had unleashed with great accuracy.

BOOM! BOOM!

The moment the magical symbols clashed with the light swords, they both exploded, sending dazzling, bright light into their surroundings.

Shi Hui and Xue Long snorted almost simultaneously as they engaged in fierce battle with each other.

Nie Tian turned his head to take a look at them, and discovered that light swords and blazing flames were flashing across in the area where they fought. A giant, burning python was slithering in midair as it continued to nibble away at the light swords unleashed by Xue Long.

It seemed that Xue Long and Shi Hui were indeed equally matched in strength. It would probably take a long time for a winner to surface.

The fact that they were equally strong was none other than the reason why, even though they disliked each other, they had exercised restraint when Shi Hui was still a guest elder of the Blood Skull.

They hadn't done any business or started a feud with each other back when they were both in the Blood Skull.

It was only until now that the two of them confronted each other for the first time, since Shi Hui had left the Blood Skull and Xue

Long insisted on protecting Nie Tian.

“Hey brat, you’d better not fight back and immediately submit to us so that we don’t kill you by accident.” One of the four men, whose name was Qiu Yang, tilted his head as he approached Nie Tian. Without any warning, he suddenly reached out to grab Nie Tian’s neck.

Numerous pitch-black strings that were as fine as hairs suddenly shot out from within his palm and flew lightly towards Nie Tian’s neck.

The other three were standing to Nie Tian’s sides and back respectively, where they cooperated with Qiu Yang and formed a joint-attack formation.

Seeing that Qiu Yang had make a move, they didn’t rush into action. Instead, they observed with cold looks in their eyes, as if they wanted to see how powerful this young man, who had the lowest cultivation base among all of the Blood Skull’s guest elders, really was.

“Come and kill me then, if you think you can.” Already wreathed in his chaotic magnetic field, Nie Tian’s expression was as calm as ever, as if he hadn’t realized what he was facing.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The pitch-black strings Qiu Yang had unleashed, which were as fine as hairs, finally entered Nie Tian’s chaotic magnetic field.

The moment they flew straight into the chaotic magnetic field, they were distorted and began to tremble as they moved forward.

“What?!” Qiu Yang exclaimed as he sensed the anomaly. That was when he planned to put in more psychic power, so that he could continue to manipulate those strings accurately.

WHOOSH!

At that very moment, Nie Tian formed a spiritual energy ball and

strode a few steps forward.

With a swing of his hand, the spiritual energy ball left his hand and crashed towards Qiu Yang, like a misty gray ball of air.

Shaking his head disdainfully, Qiu Yang swiftly floated away into midair, as if he had become an inflated balloon.

BOOM!

The spiritual energy ball exploded. However, Qiu Yang was suddenly nowhere to be seen. In the next moment, he appeared in a location very close to Nie Tian's left.

SHEW!

Nie Tian cast a short-range Starshift without any hesitation, and appeared behind Qiu Yang, where he formed a Rage Punch with thirty percent of his strength. Along with a heaven-overthrowing rage, his clenched fist bombarded towards Qiu Yang's back.

As soon as Nie Tian appeared behind him, Qiu Yang was enveloped by Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field. His face couldn't help but twitch.

The different types of spiritual power within him sudden fell into a state of chaos. He even experience a stabbing pain in his mind. This made him realize he was in a terrible situation.

Then, thanks to his keen perception, he sensed a surge of raging power approaching his back.

He turned around violently and met Nie Tian's incoming Rage Punch with his left palm.

Meanwhile, many more pitch-black, hair-like strings flew out of the center of his left palm and wrapped themselves around Nie Tian's fist.

BOOM!

Nie Tian's fist bombarded Qiu Yang's palm heavily.

Upon contact, Nie Tian had a strange feeling as if he had hit a ball of cotton, and that all of his power had somehow been discharged.

Qiu Yang, on the other hand, staggered two steps backwards and left Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field. Most of the black strings, which had flown out of his palm and wrapped around Nie Tian's fist, had broken off.

However, the broken strings didn't disappear. Instead, they pierced into Nie Tian's fist and arm like steel needles, leaving numerous fine wounds.

Meanwhile, the black strings that remained intact on Nie Tian's fist rapidly tightened, as if they were struggling to cut into Nie Tian's skin and flesh.

After escaping from Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field, Qiu Qing shook his left hand in pain as he grimaced.

He waved at the other three men and said, "This kid indeed possesses some bizarre skills. Be careful, all of you. He's surrounding himself with a strange magnetic field, which can disrupt our internal powers and keep us from displaying our battle prowess fully. Also, try not to fight him up close. His physical strength is also quite impressive!"

"Hahaha! Big Brother Qiu seems to have suffered a loss from this little kid."

"This is fun."

"Rest assured, Big Brother Qiu. No matter how many strange skills this kid has, he won't be able to get away from us."

The other three spoke with easy tones. They even teased Qiu Yang for making a big fuss out of this unimpressive young man.

After launching the strike, Nie Tian stood within his chaotic magnetic field and looked down at his fist with a deep frown.

The numerous pitch-black, hair-like strings were still wiggling as

they attempted to get inside of him. Some strings that had succeeded were following his meridians up into his arm.

He noticed that his arm was growing thicker by the second, as if it was being inflated.

Soreness came from the parts that had been invaded by the pitch-black strings. As his arm gradually expanded, it occurred to him that if he didn't do anything, his arm would probably expand to the point where it would explode.

Furthermore, if he let those pitch-black strings swim into his internal organs, his whole body would expand until he eventually exploded.

His expression flickered as he finally realized that even though he had entered the middle Heaven stage, he probably wouldn't have a chance at killing Qiu Yang, unless he used the Flame Dragon Armor.

Not to mention that, other than Qiu Yang, three other middle Greater Heaven stage cultivators were glaring at him like tigers eyeing their prey.

The only reason he hadn't left at the first possible moment was that he wanted to clash with Qiu Yang and test his own battle prowess.

The result of failing to inflict serious damage to Qiu Yang made him realize that the sizable gap between cultivation bases wasn't that easy to make up for.

With these thoughts in mind, he turned to check Xue Long's situation, and discovered that the battle between him and Shi Hui couldn't possibly end any time soon. That was when he made his decision.

"See you later, Uncle Xue." With these words, he cast a long-range Starshift, not waiting for Xue Long to give his response.

In a split second, Nie Tian disappeared from the blockade formed

by Qiu Yang and the other three.

Chapter 333: You're A Dead Man Already!

“Where did he go?”

Qiu Yang was still shaking his left hand as he tried to neutralize the aftermath of Nie Tian's Rage Punch. His eyebrows furrowed as he stared at the location where Nie Tian had been a moment ago.

“Escape magic!” One of the middle Greater Heaven stage experts exclaimed with a grim expression. “This Hua Tian kid is indeed beyond ordinary. He must have relied on this escape magic to escape from the Hunters' blockade repeatedly. Only a profound escape magic can allow its caster to advance his potential and escape to a distant location at the price of suffering serious physical injuries.”

Qiu Yang gave a cold harrumph and said, “Even still, he's only at the middle Heaven stage. Using that escape magic would mean immediate and serious damage to his body! Escape magics are not flawless. I believe that he is in a terrible condition at this moment. Let's spread out, and each of us go in a separate direction. If we do this, we'll definitely find him in no time!

“As long as we can find him, considering his current condition, I believe his battle prowess won't even allow him to fight back!

“Furthermore, since he's only at the middle Heaven stage, I doubt he'll be able to cast that bizarre escape magic again. We find him, and then he'll be a dead man!”

The three middle Greater Heaven stage experts also had a certain knowledge of escape magics, and they shared the same view with Qiu Yang. Therefore, they rapidly spread out and sped off in four different directions according to Qiu Yang's proposal.

...

In a corner of the desert, Nie Tian appeared and collapsed by a sand dune.

Not only did it require a substantial amount of star power to cast a long-range Starshift, but it also caused a serious backlash to his physical body.

Every time he had used a long-range Starshift to escape from his enemies, he had sustained heavy injuries.

However, compared to the few times he had cast a long-range Starshift before, the backlash he had suffered this time seemed to be much milder and lighter.

After a brief pondering, he realized that since he had recently spent plenty of time refining his body under the joint action of his flesh power and wood power, his physical body had become increasingly tough and resilient.

This was why the trauma on his body wasn't so terrible after he cast the long-range Starshift this time.

He slowly sat up straight as he began to summon his wood power from his spiritual sea and use it to heal his fleshy injuries.

By doing this, he was also waiting for his seven Heaven Eyes to fly to his side.

"Xue Long..." Eyes narrowed, he thought to himself, as he seemed to be a bit worried about him.

However, he understood that if he hadn't escaped, Xue Long would have wanted to protect him, and thus been distracted and trapped deeper in that place.

Only when he left would Xue Long stop worrying about him and get to make the best decision between fighting and leaving.

By escaping using a long-range Starshift, Nie Tian actually gave Xue Long an opportunity to make choices. Considering Xue Long's battle prowess, perhaps he wouldn't be able to fight Shi Hui and those four experts single-handedly. However, if he was bent on escaping from them, Nie Tian believed that Shi Hui and the others wouldn't have any effective way to stop him.

“Damn it!” Nie Tian cursed. “Talk about bad luck!”

Shi Hui and his men had come along so soon after Li Langfeng had left.

If Li Langfeng had been there, he would have single-handedly put Shi Hui in a lot of trouble.

Xue Long, who was also at the late Greater Heaven stage probably wouldn't be under as much pressure if he were to handle the other four, including Qiu Yang.

Nie Tian himself would have been able to launch sneak attacks when opportunities presented themselves, and given Shi Hui and his men a lesson that they would have remembered for the rest of their lives.

As he pondered the matter, he took out pieces of spirit beast meat and started eating, hoping to heal his trauma as soon as possible with the help of the spirit beast meat and his wood power.

At that moment, he was struck by a feeling that the green aura that had been lying dormant within his heart suddenly began to emanate glorious light.

He was shocked into a daze before soon snapping back to reality and examining himself carefully.

He saw with great clarity that countless detailed lines and patterns had appeared within the numerous crystal-like bloodline chains inside the green aura.

By magnifying the finger-sized green aura, Nie Tian could see a large amount of sparkling bloodline chains that were as fine as hairs within it, which were slithering around like puny spirit snakes made of green crystals.

At that moment, new bloodline chains kept appearing within the green aura, as it seemed to be growing.

The newborn bloodline chains contained countless rays of bright

light, as if they carried the profound truths of life.

All of a sudden, a vague message was born within those newborn bloodline chains, and almost simultaneously, the message was branded in the depths of Nie Tian's soul.

“Bloodline talent: Life Stealth!” After being branded onto Nie Tian's soul, the originally vague message suddenly became clear in an inexplicable way.

He didn't even need to learn it with focused attention and he was able to comprehend the profound truths of Life Stealth. Not only did he master its casting method, but he also understood when and how to use it.

Subconsciously, he cast his newly awakened bloodline talent, Life Stealth, according to its method.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Misty, bright green spots flew out of the green aura in his heart and almost instantly filled every single one of his internal organs.

In the next moment, the vigorous life energy was silenced, and all signs of life on him disappeared completely.

Even though he was still a living person, sitting by the sand dune, he didn't release the slightest aura of a living being.

He examined himself with rapt attention, and discovered that at this moment, his aura was no different from that of a rock, a handful of dirt, or a pile of sand, which could be seen everywhere.

Not a single fluctuation of flesh and blood, or even a single movement of spiritual energy, could be found on him.

Nie Tian's eyes suddenly lit up. “Life Stealth! All my life force has been cloaked, as if I've become a rock or some sand!”

After briefly going through the newly-obtained bloodline talent in his mind, he managed to master its quintessence, and understood how to make the best use of it.

Qi warriors with cultivation bases lower than the Worldly realm hadn't transcended their psychic power into soul power. Therefore, the only way they could detect movement in their surroundings was through tracing signs of life.

If he cast Life Stealth and then found a place to hide himself, even if those Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors were standing right next to him, they wouldn't be able to sense a thing.

Like right now, even if Qiu Yang and the other Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors were all scanning this region using their psychic awareness while standing within meters of Nie Tian, they wouldn't be able to sense any sign of him.

Therefore, firstly, Life Stealth could be used to hide himself from pursuers, and thus escape from the pursuit of powerful experts when he was seriously injured.

Secondly, it was also a perfect sneak attack magic!

When he cast Life Stealth and snuck up on his enemy, the other party wouldn't notice a thing.

"A fantastic sneak attack magic..." As a series of thoughts rapidly flashed across his mind, an interesting idea suddenly entered his mind.

Upon the thought of it, he decided to carry it out. Therefore, he sprung to his feet, canceled Life Stealth, and dashed off in the direction he had come from.

He made some arrangements along the way.

Moments later, he returned and dug out a hole in the sandy ground right next to the sand dune.

Afterward, he ripped off a piece of his garment that had a bloodstain on it and left it right beside the hole in the sandy ground. Then, he jumped into the hole and buried himself in it.

He had also written a line of very small words on the piece of

bloodstained cloth.

Then, he lay there and waited patiently.

About fifteen minutes later...

Under the night sky, Shang Zhi, one of the four former guest elders of the Blood Skull, was running at a high speed in the vast desert.

His nose flared as he caught a whiff of fresh blood.

Without any delay, he sped off in the direction of the bloody smell. Before long, he saw a few drops of fresh blood on the ice-cold sandy ground.

He stopped and looked down at the blood, which hadn't dried up yet, before saying with a smirk, "It seems that I'm pretty lucky for having come in the right direction."

With these words, he dashed off again.

After that, he discovered blood drops in two other spots along his way.

Shang Zhi was increasingly convinced that the direction he was going was the direction Nie Tian had escaped in.

It wasn't very long before Shang Zhi came to the sand dune. As soon as he did, he caught sight of the piece of bloodstained cloth lying beside the sand dune, and he also noticed that there seemed to be a line of words on the cloth, which seemed to be from someone's garment.

"Hmm?!" A curious expression appeared on Shang Zhi's face. Since it was the middle of the night and he was standing quite a distance away, he couldn't obtain a clear view of the words.

Therefore, he stepped forward and crouched down to grab the piece of bloodstained cloth.

During this whole time, Shang Zhi had unleashed his psychic awareness to cover a large area around him, and he had used his

secret magics to search for signs of Nie Tian's life aura.

However, he hadn't discovered a single fluctuation of life aura, nor had he sensed any condensing or releasing of spiritual power.

He reached out with one hand and grabbed the bloodstained cloth from Nie Tian's garment. Only after he held it close did he see what was written on it: You're a dead man already.

Shang Zhi was dumbstruck.

Just as he was thinking why anyone would leave such a line of words on the bloodstained cloth, fluctuations of a violent and fierce life aura suddenly rushed out from underneath the sandy ground where he was crouching.

The moment he sensed the explosive life aura, he realized that he was in a very dangerous situation.

However, since the two of them were too close to each other, and he was caught off guard, he couldn't possibly defend himself in an effective way.

In the next moment, he experienced an unbearable pain in his waist.

He looked down and saw that a burning broadsword had already pierced into his abdomen.

At the same time, sand shot up into the air as Nie Tian shot up from under the ground and bombarded his chest with his fist.

BANG!

Shang Zhi was sent flying into the air. Meanwhile, fiercely burning flame power rushed out from within the broadsword and ravaged his internal organs.

By the time he went past the highest point and began to fall, he had a feeling that he was plummeting to the ice-cold abyss of death.

That was when he finally understood the meaning of that line of

words.

--- You're a dead man already.

Chapter 334: Repeated Success!

“Life Stealth! It’s such an awesome magic!” Nie Tian grinned as he climbed out of the hole he had dug in the sand and walked to Shang Zhi’s corpse.

He had looted that incomparably sharp broadsword from one of the late Heaven stage Hunters he had killed before. He had kept it because it was fire-attributed and he was able to infuse it with his own flame power.

At that moment, the broadsword was still stuck in Shang Zhi’s chest.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Even though Shang Zhi had already stopped breathing, flames were still burning on his chest and abdomen.

Nie Tian stepped forward and pulled the broadsword out. Then, he looted Shang Zhi’s ring of holding with an increasingly pleasant smile on his face.

He hadn’t expected that he could have snuck up on and killed a Greater Heaven stage expert so easily by using his newly-awakened bloodline talent, Life Stealth.

If it weren’t for Life Stealth, and if he had attacked him with regular means, he never would have been able to kill him.

Considering his current cultivation base and battle prowess, if he had contended against Shang Zhi face-to-face, not only would he have not been able to kill Shang Zhi, but on the contrary, it would have been very likely that he would have been killed by Shang Zhi.

Anyhow, Nie Tian’s unpredictable sneak attack had achieved a very ideal result. He drove a sword through Shang Zhi’s heart when he was completely unprepared and killed him with a single strike.

“On the one hand, Life Stealth can allow me to seal up my life aura completely, along with even the most subtle fluctuations of my spiritual power, and thus allow me to escape from powerful enemies’ pursuit. As long as it’s not Qi warriors who have entered the three Realms and transcended their psychic power into soul power, their perception will be clouded and they won’t be able to sense anything.

“On the other hand, it can be used as a perfect sneak attack magic!

“It’s such an awesome magic with multiple uses!”

Face full of smiles, Nie Tian continued to search Shang Zhi’s body for valuables. Soon, he found a Sound Stone in his waist pouch.

He held it in his palm and listened using his psychic power. Every now and then, he could hear Qiu Yang and the other two exchanging information.

Since they wanted to keep searching for him in separate locations in order to cover a larger area, they constantly communicated their locations with each other.

Nie Tian snorted disdainfully, a fierce look filling his eyes. “Three to go!”

After getting ahold of his bearings, he cast a number of short-range Starshifts as he flashed off into the distance.

Qiu Yang and the other two didn’t travel in straight lines as they searched for Nie Tian.

Considering they didn’t know exactly which direction Nie Tian had escaped in, they moved in serpentine patterns or even traveled in circles in the directions they chose. They scanned their surroundings for signs of life as they moved bit by bit.

By doing this, they had significantly compromised their searching speed.

Via the Sound Stone, Nie Tian located the one who was the closest to him. In order to rush to that man's location as quickly as possible, he cast a few more short-range Starshifts.

Four hours passed...

Nie Tian came close to the area where the man was searching with the help of his Heaven Eyes and the Sound Stone.

After locking down the man's exact location, he make similar arrangements as he had done hours ago.

...

Night lifted, and the sun hung high in the sky.

It was midday on the following day, and Nie Tian had successfully snuck up on and killed two of the remaining three pursuers using the same method he had used to kill Shang Zhi.

The sun was burning fiercely as Nie Tian buried himself in a pile of sand.

Similarly, a piece of bloodstained, tattered garment could be seen on the pile of sand, and a line of tiny words was written on the piece of cloth.

Via his Heaven Eye, Nie Tian kept a close watch on everything happening in the vicinity. He wasn't in a hurry to stimulate his bloodline talent and cast Life Stealth, but rather waited silently for Qiu Yang to approach.

An hour passed...

One of his Heaven Eyes captured signs of Qiu Yang, and learned that he was gradually coming toward him by following the bloodstains he had left on the sandy ground.

Only then did he stimulate his newly-acquired bloodline talent and hide his life aura and spiritual power fluctuations completely.

He lay under the sand, not releasing the slightest sign of life, as if he had become a part of it.

Since Qiu Yang was also at the middle Greater Heaven stage, just like the other three, he hadn't acquired soul power and developed the ability to capture the subtle fluctuations of people's souls, and thus he came straight towards Nie Tian's location.

"Strange. How come those three aren't responding? Can it be that they have gone so far that their Sound Stones are out of my reach?" Qiu Yang whispered to himself while his incomparably sharp eyes suddenly caught sight of the bloodstained cloth.

Over the past few hours, he had failed to communicate with Shang Zhi and the other two via his Sound Stone.

He wasn't aware that his friends had already been ambushed and slaughtered by Nie Tian, and at that moment, the three of them were already on their way to the Yellow Springs.

He only thought the three of them had left the range of his Sound Stone and gone searching in further locations.

As he came along, he saw the blood drops on the sandy ground. Even though he was somewhat thrilled, he couldn't be sure that those blood drops were from Nie Tian.

He knew that large amounts of Hunters that normally roamed areas close to Ash City had left this region and poured into the Void Illusion Mountain Range recently after hearing about the appearance of a Spirit Channeling grade treasure.

However, some Hunters might still be preying on passing-by explorers in this region.

At first, he assumed the blood drops belonged to Hunters or Qi warriors from Ash City.

Only when he caught sight of the piece of bloodstained cloth did he change his speculation. At first glance, he felt that it looked familiar. Immediately afterwards, he realized that the cloth was from Nie Tian's garment.

Excitement finally appeared on his face as he thought to himself,

“I’m coming for you!”

As he stepped closer, he saw the line of tiny words on the piece of cloth. As Shang Zhi and the other two had done, he crouched down and reached out to grab the bloodstained cloth so that he could get a clearer view of the words.

And just like Shang Zhi and the other two, he hadn’t detected any signs of life from the beginning.

As he held the bloodstained cloth close to read the line of tiny words, a broadsword suddenly pierced out from under the pile of sand, and blazing flames rapidly wreathed the sword.

The moment he finally read what was written on the piece of cloth, the burning broadsword penetrated into his stomach.

WHOOSH!

All of a sudden, Qiu Yang’s body expanded like an inflated balloon and became bulky.

Then, the broadsword, which had already pierced about 13 centimeters into his abdomen, couldn’t go any deeper.

BOOM!

Nie Tian surfaced from the pile of sand, formed a Rage Punch with half of his strength, and bombarded Qiu Yang’s chest vigorously.

As a mouthful of blood shot out of Qiu Yang’s mouth, he soared into the air like a balloon bouncing off the ground.

“Hua Tian!” He let out a enraged roar in midair while blood kept coming out of his mouth.

After climbing out of the pile of sand, Nie Tian looked up at him, and his expression flickered slightly.

Just now, he had sensed how hard it was for him to drive that broadsword into Qiu Yang’s abdomen. Every centimeter was extremely difficult.

The incantation Qiu Yang practiced must be exceptional and profound, which resulted in Nie Tian's failure to slaughter Qiu Yang with one sword strike the way he had slaughtered the other three.

Later, when he had launched the Rage Punch into Qiu Yang's chest, he had felt as if he had hit a giant balloon, and all of his force had been abated.

Only when he saw Qiu Yang fly into the air from the impact was he convinced that Qiu Yang had sustained heavy injuries.

However, he realized that Qiu Yang had survived even though he had intentionally increased the might of his Rage Punch by summoning almost half of his total strength.

Compared to the other three, although they were all at the middle Greater Heaven stage, Qiu Yang's defensive power against physical attacks was far better.

Even though he had been caught off guard, the moment the broadsword had pierced into his abdomen, he was able to respond instantly and cast a secret magic to prevent the wide sword from going any further.

“Are you looking to die!?” he thundered.

His garment was covered in blood and the burning broadsword didn't fall out of his abdomen, as if it had pierced into a rock.

However, as he fell from midair, his hands weaved as he formed hand seals to send out thousands of fine, black strings. In the next moment, the pitch-black strings swooped towards Nie Tian like a shoal of bloodthirsty fish.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

In a flash, several pitch-black strings pierced into Nie Tian's shoulders and abdomen.

Nie Tian experienced pain and soreness throughout his body, so

he hastily summoned wood power to repair his fleshy wounds.

Even the green aura, which was branded with the profound truths of his bloodline power, seemed to have discovered his unfavorable condition, and thus rushed out of his heart to devour the strange pitch-black strings.

Nie Tian had dealt with this strange attack before when he had used the long-range Starshift last time.

He knew perfectly well that the strange energy within those black strings carried the profound truths of wind. As it roamed about within his body, it would create air currents, and thus cause his flesh to expand at a high speed.

Since Qiu Yang practiced the profound power of the wind, he was able to control the expansion of his own body and use it as a great defensive mechanism.

As for Nie Tian, however, if he allowed his body to be filled with the strange air currents and expand out of control, he would eventually explode and die, the same way a balloon would explode after being overinflated.

Thanks to the green aura, which rushed out of his heart and ripped apart the pitch-black strings, the expansion of his body was effectively contained.

As a thought appeared in Nie Tian's mind, bright starlight shone within his palm.

Soon, five starsparks appeared before they rapidly aligned and formed a star formation. Like a miniature nebula, they shot towards Qiu Yang. "Go!"

Staring at the mysterious formation of five starsparks, which were shining extremely brightly even in broad daylight, Qiu Yang went blank due to great shock. "Star power! Star magic!"

All of a sudden, he came to a realization. "Hua Tian... Nie Tian... You're the Nie Tian who obtained the legacies of the Ancient

Fragmentary Star Palace!”

Chapter 335: Back Thrust

The news that the Heaven Palace Sect from the Realm of Mystic Heaven and many other powerful sects from other realms had launched a joint search for a young man from the Realm of Flame Heaven named Nie Tian had long since spread to every corner of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

The Realm of Split Void was no exception.

Qiu Yang had also learned that the young man named Nie Tian had only attracted the attention of so many powerful Qi warrior sects because he had obtained legacies from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

After witnessing Nie Tian cast Starstrike and attack him with a mysterious formation of five starsparks, Qiu Yang thought about the numerous unbelievable things that had happened to Nie Tian. Connecting the dots, he immediately guessed Nie Tian's real identity.

“Nie Tian! Hahaha! You're Nie Tian!” Qiu Yang was more thrilled than shocked.

His eyes shone with the light of excitement as he said, “Legacies from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace!! This is great!!”

SHEW!

Like a dazzling, bright mark, the formation of five starsparks shot directly towards his chest.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Qiu Yang waved his hands through the air to form exquisite hand seals. In the next moment, more fine, pitch-black strings flew out of his open sleeve cuffs.

The numerous pitch-black strings acted as he commanded as they attempted to bind that star formation.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

However, as soon as they made contact with the star formation, each and every string exploded.

Qiu Yang let out a muffled groan as his expression flickered. No longer daring to fight the star formation head-on, he moved about swiftly to avoid it.

However, the star formation, which Nie Tian was able to control with great accuracy, continued to pursue him and changed directions whenever he did.

Watching Qiu Yang shift between locations like a ghost as he avoided the star formation, Nie Tian grew increasingly determined to kill him as his expression grew grim. "I've got to kill this man. I can't afford to let him live!"

He had consumed half of his strength to launch that Rage Punch. Yet, he had failed to kill him with it.

Thus, he had no choice but to bring out Starstrike of the Fragmentary Star Incantation to deal with Qiu Yang.

Ever since he had cast that Starstrike, he was bent on killing the seriously injured Qiu Yang in this region.

After all, he couldn't afford to expose his identity before he arrived in the forbidden region and stripped the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.

He didn't want to scare the snake by beating the grass.

Only when Qiu Yang was dead would Nie Tian's true identity remain a secret, and would Ning Yang not be alarmed.

Only in that way would they be able to carry out the plan he had made with Li Langfeng and Xue Long. If he let Qiu Yang get out of here alive, Ning Yang might somehow learn about his whereabouts.

If it really came down to that, it would be much more difficult to

deal with Ning Yang.

WHOOSH!

A spiritual energy ball filled with the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth of the Realm of Split Void rapidly came to shape and shot towards Qiu Yang.

Since Nie Tian had infused the spiritual energy ball with some of his own spiritual power, it became completely controllable. In the blink of an eye, it flew to the location where Qiu Yang was standing.

BOOM!

The spiritual energy ball exploded, sending multicolored light in every direction. The gray light shield Qiu Yang protected himself with instantly shattered.

At that very moment, the star formation composed of five starsparks seized the opportunity and rushed over.

Engulfed by sputtering, multicolored light, Qiu Yang let out an agonized shriek as he was struck by the star formation, dazzlingly bright rays of starlight shooting out in every direction from the contact point.

Immediately afterwards, another surge of devastating force burst forth from within the star formation and inflicted serious damage on Qiu Yang for a second time.

PUFF!

Meanwhile, Nie Tian also puked a mouthful of blood after exerting his power repeatedly.

Some of the numerous pitch-black strings Qiu Yang had used to attack him were still roaming inside of him.

Even though the green aura was ripping apart and devouring many of the pitch-black strings, some of them were still ravaging his flesh and releasing air currents that could cause him to expand.

Since he had to spare some of his attention to condense the spiritual energy ball and cast the Fragmentary Star Incantation, he didn't focus all of his attention on stabilizing his injuries, which gave the pitch-black strings an opportunity to create an outburst.

“Flame Dragon Armor!” Bent on killing Qiu Yang to keep his secret, Nie Tian finally dropped all scruples and called upon his Spirit Channeling grade treasure using his psychic awareness.

WHOOSH!

The Flame Dragon Armor, which had lay dormant within his bracelet of holding for a long time, whizzed out of Nie Tian's bracelet of holding, leaving a trail of blazing flames behind it.

The Flame Dragon Armor seemed to be able to read his mind, and it seemed to understand that it didn't need to act in discretion any more. Therefore, it flew right out, unleashing raging flames.

Nie Tian looked up into the air and discovered that the Flame Dragon Armor was covered in numerous sparkling, red threads, which seemed like streams of lava flowing on the crimson surface of the Flame Dragon Armor.

Under his gaze, the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to turn into a river of flames or a slithering flame dragon as it swooped down from the air towards the area filled with sputtering, multicolored light and flashing starlight.

Qiu Yang, who was struggling to defend himself against the overwhelming toxic energies and the aftermath of the star formation, exclaimed, “Spirit Channeling grade treasure! This is the fire-attributed Spirit Channeling grade treasure people have been talking about!”

HUFF! HUFF! HUFF!

Torrential flames spread out, filling the sky over Qiu Yang's head, and seemed to turn the area where he was standing into a world of flames.

Cracking sounds even echoed out from the air, as if everything within this area, including the air, was being burned by the raging flames.

As powerful as Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes were, they couldn't see into the area, which looked like a fire-wrought dome from the air.

He could only hear Qiu Yang's voice, which transitioned from excited cries to threatening roars.

It wasn't long before it turned into hysterical screams as he charged about in an attempt to break out of that world of flames.

Moments later, Nie Tian sensed via his Heaven Eyes that Qiu Yang's life aura seemed to have been burnt out by the blazing flames as it gradually disappeared.

It took about ten minutes for the violent struggle and intense energy fluctuations to finally calm down.

SHEW!

The Flame Dragon Armor whizzed back after the job was done. As it did, it summoned the raging flames back into itself. Right after that, it returned to Nie Tian's bracelet of holding and fell silent again.

At this moment, the raging flames in the area Qiu Yang had been in had already dissipated, leaving only scattered sparks visible in certain locations.

With a frown, Nie Tian summoned his remaining strength to contend with the residual black strings in him. With the help of the green aura and his wood power, he finally eliminated every last black string Qiu Yang had left inside of him.

Only after some time, when he was certain that he had stabilized his condition, did he march over to the area where the land had already been burned black.

On the charred, sandy land, Qiu Yang's flesh had already melted

away. All that was left was a scorched, red-gray skeleton.

Nie Tian's broadsword was lying at the abdominal area of the skeleton, giving off tiny sparks from time to time.

"That broadsword..." Nie Tian's expression flickered as he suddenly realized that when the Flame Dragon Armor had descended and enveloped that area with blazing flames, the broadsword that had been lodged in Qiu Yang's abdomen must have also been stimulated and displayed its full might because it shared the same fire attribute as the Flame Dragon Armor.

If it hadn't caused severe damage to Qiu Yang's abdomen, he probably wouldn't have been burned into a pile of bones so easily. The broadsword must have sped up the process.

"This guy is finally dead." Nie Tian stepped forward and took Qiu Yang's ring of holding from his finger bone. After a thorough scan of the area, he made sure that nothing valuable was left behind and quietly left.

Afterwards, Nie Tian found a secluded location and immediately started recuperating with spirit beast meat, spirit stones, and Star Stones.

One night, he awoke from his prolonged cultivation. With the help of the mysterious green aura and his wood power, he had healed seventy percent of his wounds.

In the meantime, however, he had only restored approximately forty percent of his various types of spiritual power, each of which was far from their peak state.

After a moment of pondering, he decided to put his cultivation on hold and march back to the location where Xue Long and Shi Hui had been fighting.

Now, with Qiu Yang and the other three dead, Shi Hui was the only one left, and he wasn't any stronger than Xue Long.

Therefore, he felt that he could openly return to the area where

Shi Hui and Xue Long had been without worrying about being surrounded and attacked by powerful enemies.

Bathed in the bright and clear moonlight, Shi Hui and Xue Long clashed and exchanged dozens of attacks in midair, filling the air with their sword blasts and fire beams.

After landing, the two of them panted heavily, but judging from their facial expressions, their fighting spirits were still soaring.

It was the first time the two of them had engaged in a real fight. Since they were both at the late Greater Heaven stage and their strengths were equally matched, they had been fighting continually for days.

The both of them had been stuck at the late Greater Heaven stage for many years, and they were both eager to break through the bottleneck. Therefore, the battle between them hadn't been as fierce and desperate as Nie Tian had imagined.

Since they both knew they didn't have what it took to kill the other party, they both reserved their strength as they attacked. It was like they were testing their understandings of their power with this battle in order to find the key to a breakthrough in their cultivation.

Furthermore, since Qiu Yang and the other three hadn't returned, Xue Long didn't feel the urgency to withdraw from the battle and leave.

On the other hand, he had heard some stories regarding Nie Tian's resourcefulness. He assumed that since Nie Tian had successfully escaped from those Hunters' blockades, if there were no mishaps, he would probably be able to escape from Qiu Yang and the other three as well.

Also, since Li Langfeng had promised to return to this location, he stayed and drew enlightenment from his battle against Shi Hui.

Panting heavily, Shi Hui cracked a smile and said, "I bet my men

have already captured Hua Tian by now. It won't be long before they come back here. But don't you worry. I won't let them interfere with our fight.

“You and I have both been stuck at the Greater Heaven stage for years. We both need an opportunity to break through the bottleneck. This battle between us might just be what we need!”

Xue Long nodded and said, “I was thinking the exact same thing!”

At that moment, another voice suddenly echoed out, “Alright. Since you want to continue with this battle, Uncle Xue, I'll just sit back and watch then.”

In the next moment, Nie Tian slowly walked out from behind a sand dune.

Only when he appeared did Shi Hui and Xue Long discover him.

Astonished, Xue Long asked, “How come you are back, Hua Tian?”

“Because Qiu Yang and the others are dead.” With a hearty smile, Nie Tian waved the rings of holding he had looted from his four pursuers at Xue Long and Shi Hui so that they could get a clear view of them.

Shi Hui's expression flickered drastically as he said, “How can that be?!”

Chapter 336: You Actually Believe That?!

Shi Hui had been friends with Qiu Yang and the other three for many years. He had even purchased two of those rings of holding for them.

He knew their rings of holding so well that, with a quick glance from afar, he was able to tell that the four rings of holding Nie Tian was holding indeed belonged to Qiu Yang and the other three.

Every Qi warrior would consider their ring of holding to be as important as their own life, so they would never give their ring of holding to another person, not even people who they were very close to.

The only circumstance where a cultivator's ring of holding would appear in another person's hand would be if the owner had already died.

The fact that Nie Tian was holding Qiu Yang and the other three's rings of holding meant that they were truly dead.

Shi Hui was flabbergasted.

During recent days, numerous Hunters had been attracted to the Void Illusion Mountain Range by the alleged appearance of a Spirit Channeling grade treasure.

This meant that there shouldn't be many powerful Hunters left in this region at this moment.

Even if there were, considering the combined strengths of Qiu Yang and the other three, they should have been very hard to kill.

Normally speaking, at the same cultivation level, a Hunter's battle prowess was usually inferior to that of a formal member of the Wild Fire, Blood Skull, or Dark Moon, and the battle prowess of a formal member of these three major forces was inferior to that of a guest elder.

This was a requirement one must meet if he or she wished to become a guest elder.

Shi Hui knew perfectly clearly that the reason why the Blood Skull had acknowledged Qiu Yang and the other three's identities as their guest elders was different from why they had acknowledged Shi Nan.

They were competent and well-trained.

Even if they had encountered late Greater Heaven stage Hunters who roamed this region, they would have had a good chance of winning.

Not to mention that very few Hunters who roamed in this region close to Ash City could actually reach the late Greater Heaven stage.

A series of thoughts flashed across Shi Hui's mind, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't come up with a reasonable explanation as to how Qiu Yang and the other three had died, and why would Nie Tian have their rings of holding.

It was Xue Long who gave voice to his speculation first after a moment of bewilderment. "You ran into him, didn't you, Hua Tian?"

Of course, by "him", Xue Long was referring to Li Langfeng, who had left to make an attempt to break through into the Worldly realm in another location.

In his eyes, only Li Langfeng would be willing to help Nie Tian and have the ability to kill Qiu Yang and the others single-handedly.

He assumed that Li Langfeng had discovered that Nie Tian was in an unfavorable situation, and thus halted his effort to break through into the Worldly realm to help Nie Tian get rid of Qiu Yang and the others.

Nie Tian smiled and didn't deny it, since he knew if he told Xue

Long that he had killed Qiu Yang and the others by himself, it would be too shocking and Xue Long probably wouldn't believe him. After all, he was only at the middle Heaven stage, and it wouldn't make sense.

Therefore, he didn't explain, but tacitly agreed that it had been Li Langfeng who had annihilated Qiu Yang and the others.

After getting a positive response, Xue Long nodded gently before he once again laid his eyes on Shi Hui and said with an increasingly relieved tone, "Alright. Like you said, from now on, Qiu Yang and the others won't interfere with our battle anymore. Don't you imagine that you can take Hua Tian from me."

"That being the case, we might as well drop everything else and continue our battle."

Numerous expressions flashed across Shi Hui's face as he stood silently in his original place, as if he was still racking his brains for an answer.

Nie Tian, however, seemed free from any restraint as he sat down in a location more than two hundred meters from the two, where he took out spirit stones and started cultivating. As he channeled power from his spirit stones, he examined Shi Hui with strange looks in his eyes from time to time.

For some reason, Shi Hui felt very uncomfortable under Nie Tian's roving gaze.

He had a strange feeling that Nie Tian was a threat to him.

He understood that his feeling didn't make sense. Rationally speaking, Nie Tian was only at the middle Heaven stage, so he couldn't possibly pose any threat to him.

Even still, whenever Nie Tian looked at him, he felt somewhat uneasy. It even made him suspect whether he had become overly nervous after having fought Xue Long for so long.

What he didn't know was that Nie Tian was actually pondering

whether or not he should summon the Flame Dragon Armor and use it along with every powerful means at his disposal to kill Shi Hui with Xue Long's help.

He had a feeling that Xue Long had already figured out his real identity.

If that was the case, he actually wouldn't need to hide anything from Xue Long anymore.

He didn't think it would be a big deal if he used the Flame Dragon Armor and Fragmentary Star Incantation in front of Xue Long. After all, they were already old news to many people.

The only thing that worried him was that he might fail to kill Shi Hui with them.

If Shi Hui didn't die, the news that he was Nie Tian would soon spread out across the entire Realm of Split Void, and Ning Yang would also learn about it within a short time.

Their upcoming plans would be jeopardized.

After a thorough consideration, he decided to stay put for the time being and keep a close watch on the battle between Xue Long and Shi Hui.

When an opportunity presented itself where he was confident enough that he would be able to kill Shi Hui with a single strike, he would summon both the Flame Dragon Armor and the Fragmentary Star Incantation and annihilate Shi Hui in this place.

That was the reason why he constantly checked Shi Hui with strange looks in his eyes as he practiced cultivation on the side.

His occasional gaze was like a fish bone stuck in Shi Hui's throat, which made him feel very uncomfortable.

The way Nie Tian had been looking at him was none other than the way a lion looked at its prey, ready to lunge forward and kill it at any moment.

With a grim expression, Shi Hui remained silent for a few seconds. That was when he suddenly remembered Xue Long's question for Nie Tian: "You ran into him, didn't you?"

Even though Shi Hui didn't know that Xue Long was referring to Li Langfeng by "him", he believed that this man, who Xue Long was talking about, had killed Qiu Yang and the others.

Considering the man had been able to kill those four, his strength must have been beyond ordinary.

Adding in the fact that he didn't know where the man was at this moment, Shi Hui decided not to take any risks by staying here any longer. "Well, I've got some business to tend to. I've benefited tremendously from our battle, Brother Xue. We'll have many more opportunities to meet in the future. Let's continue our battle next time we meet."

With these words, his eyebrows suddenly furrowed, as he sensed with his psychic awareness that a life aura was rapidly approaching.

It added to his determination to leave as soon as possible. Before Xue Long could say anything, he unleashed clusters of blazing flames. Wreathed in the flames, he dashed off towards the Void Illusion Mountain Range, leaving a trail of fire behind him.

At that time, Xue Long also detected the approaching life aura. "Someone's here!"

After a brief scan with his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian perceived who the person was. With a frown, he thought to himself, "How come it's her?"

Moments later, Pei Qiqi appeared in a tight, ocean-blue suit. Her jade-like forehead was covered in sparkling sweat beads while a few spatial light blades hovered around her.

After seeing that Xue Long and Nie Tian were both fine, she let out a sigh of relief. "I'm not late, am I?"

Having been marching to this location at a fast speed, she had consumed a significant amount of her spiritual power.

At this moment, she was covered in nice-smelling sweat, and her cheeks were slightly flushed. It gave her a different but still gorgeous look.

As she panted softly, her ample chest rose and fell. Together with her slender physique, they made her look especially charming and radiant. Looking at her, Nie Tian couldn't help but drown in her beauty.

“A member of the Blood Skull was very close to Shi Hui. Gu Yu ferreted him out and learned that he had secretly informed Shi Hui of the fact that you and Uncle Xue were coming to this region.” As she tried to calm her breathing, Pei Qiqi continued, “According to that man, Shi Hui had four helpers with him. I was afraid that you wouldn't be able to handle them all, so I came to check on you.”

With a meaningful smile, Xue Long teased Nie Tian, “Miss Pei is truly concerned about your well-being.”

He had lived in Shatter City for many years now, and he knew something about Pei Qiqi's personality. He knew that, aside from her junior martial brother, Li Ye, Pei Qiqi had never truly cared about another person.

Even Cai Yuan had never truly entered Pei Qiqi's heart.

She had only treated him with respect since he was the young lord of the Blood Skull, but she had never opened her heart to him.

Xue Long was well-aware that Pei Qiqi hadn't hastened over here because she was worried about him.

After hearing Xue Long's teasing words, Pei Qiqi said with an expressionless face, “A dear friend of my masters' asked me to take care of Hua Tian. He's a person I respect a lot. Since he put Hua Tian in my hands, it's only right I do my best to protect Hua Tian. It's not what you think, Uncle Xue.”

“Hahaha! How do I dare think?” Xue Long said with a laugh.

Looking at Pei Qiqi, who was still panting softly, Nie Tian felt deeply touched. He said with all seriousness, “Thank you for your concern, senior martial sister.”

For some reason, he had gradually developed subtle feelings towards Pei Qiqi.

Last time, when Pei Qiqi had learned that he had gone on a trip to the Void Illusion Mountain Range with Hu Han, she had decisively followed them into the Void Illusion Mountain Range, hoping to bring him back safely.

By doing this, she had put herself in danger, and ended up surrounded by Ma Jiu from the Dark Moon and his men.

This time, she came right after she had learned that Shi Hui might have come for Nie Tian.

Even though he knew that Pei Qiqi might have done it for Hua Mu’s sake, he, who had grown up loved by only Nie Qian and Nie Donghai, still felt very moved.

“I’m only protecting you because of Mr. Hua,” Pei Qiqi said indifferently.

Sincerity filled Nie Tian’s face as he said, “Anyhow. Now that you’ve come for me, I want to thank you.”

“Alright, that’s enough.” Clearly, Pei Qiqi wasn’t comfortable with the strange atmosphere. “Did Shi Hui come or not?”

With a smile, Xue Long answered, “He just left, right before you showed up. Don’t worry. We’re fine.”

Pei Qiqi was confused. “What happened?”

Xue Long pointed at Nie Tian and said, “You can ask him. I fought Shi Hui long and hard, and I need time to recover, so I’ll leave you two to it. Hahaha!”

With these words, he took the initiative and walked away from

Pei Qiqi and Nie Tian. He sat down in a location several hundred meters away and started to recuperate.

Obviously, those were also words of ridicule. Pei Qiqi bit her lower lip as she intended to explain. However, seeing that Xue Long had already walked out quite far, she swallowed her words.

Nie Tian, however, was calm as ever. As Pei Qiqi turned to approach him, he said, “Shi Hui, Qiu Yang and three others came a few days ago. I was their target. Perhaps he still hates me for seriously injuring Shi Nan in the Blood Fighting Pit. So after he learned that Uncle Xue and I came this way, they tracked us down...”

He briefly explained what had happened during the past few days, but he intentionally did not explain how Qiu Yang and the other three had died.

However, certain things couldn't be avoided. After all, the deaths of Qiu Yang and the other three were the key factor that had resulted in Shi Hui leaving. Pei Qiqi looked deeply at him and asked directly, “How in the world did Qiu Yang and the others die?”

“If I said I killed them, would you believe me?” Nie Tian asked with a smile.

Pei Qiqi nodded. “Yeah.”

A shocked expression stretched across Nie Tian's face. “You actually believe that?!”

“I'd never believe that if it were someone else.” Pei Qiqi suddenly lowered her voice. “However, since it's from the mouth of a guy who rose from amongst numerous talented cultivators and won two fragmentary star marks within the Heaven Gate, owns the Flame Dragon Armor, and has many secrets, no matter how ridiculous it sounds, I will believe it.

Chapter 337: Count Me In!

Nie Tian went blank for a moment before asking, “Since when did you know?”

“Not very long ago.” Pei Qiqi slowly sat down next to him. “After I entered the Greater Heaven stage, I thought about you a lot. Your strange abilities had long since made me feel that you weren’t an ordinary person. The fact that you escaped the pursuit of numerous Hunters and successfully met the Blood Skull’s retrieval team made me even more curious about you.

“So I checked the Blood Skull’s records and learned that you and Mr. Hua came from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Together with your assumed name, I came to realize that you’re the man who all the major sects are looking for.”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to hide the truth from you,” Nie Tian said embarrassedly.

Pei Qiqi took out a canteen of water. She drank a mouthful and said, “It’s alright. I understand. Everyone has their own secrets. Your situation is very special. It’s understandable that you wanted to hide your true identity. After all, very few people are like Li Langfeng, who lives in the Realm of Split Void under a real name.”

Then, she shot a glance at Xue Long, who was sitting far from them. “He’s probably also using a fake name.”

With a smile, Nie Tian said, “You’re right about that. Uncle Xue is from the Realm of a Hundred Battles. I don’t know what his real name is, but I know that everyone who chooses to come to the Realm of Split Void has their own stories.”

“Why did Uncle Xue seek you out?” Pei Qiqi asked with a soft voice.

“Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect is also here in the Realm of Split Void. He’s currently in the forbidden region to the east of

Ash City.” Now that Pei Qiqi had already figured out who he was, Nie Tian no longer felt the need to hide anything from her. “Ning Yang has the third fragmentary star mark, which is very important to me. Uncle Xue is going to help me snatch it from Ning Yang.”

“That’s a bit rash, isn’t it?” Pei Qiqi’s beautiful eyebrows furrowed as she mulled over his choice of words. “Uncle Xue is very strong. There’s no doubt about that. Since Ning Yang was given the important task of obtaining the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace during the Heaven Gate trial, the Heaven Palace Sect must have considered him their most talented disciple.”

“I’m afraid it won’t be so easy for Uncle Xue to single-handedly deal with such a powerful figure, don’t you think?”

She was being implicit.

The fact was that she deemed that, considering Xue Long’s cultivation base and battle prowess, he wouldn’t have a chance of beating Ning Yang.

“There’s another person who’s also going to help me,” Nie Tian replied in a soft voice.

“Who?” Pei Qiqi was very curious.

Nie Tian hadn’t been to the Realm of Split Void for very long. Plus, she had been there with him most of the time.

No matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t figure out how he had persuaded Xue Long to help him deal with Ning Yang.

Not to mention that another powerful expert would also be there to assist him.

“It’s someone you know.” Nie Tian smiled somewhat uncomfortably. “Li Langfeng.”

“Li Langfeng!” Pei Qiqi’s face turned pale with shock, as if she had seen a ghost. “H-have you lost your mind? How could he

possibly be willing to help you? Are you sure that he's not going to betray you and sell you to Ning Yang as a favor?"

Nie Tian nodded. "Yes, I am."

He figured he had better not reveal his deal with the Spirit Condor. However, he knew that if Li Langfeng or Xue Long intended to sell him out, they would have done it already.

"Do you have any other secrets that you haven't told me yet?" Pei Qiqi asked with a suspicious look on her face.

"Yes, I do, but it concerns other people, so I'd rather not tell you about it." Nie Tian told the truth.

"Very well." Pei Qiqi didn't insist on asking about Nie Tian's secrets. "But you've got to let me join your operation against Ning Yang. Now that I don't have much to do anyways, I'd like to see how powerful the Heaven Palace Sect's most talented disciple really is."

"Huh?" A shocked expression stretched across Nie Tian's face.

Pei Qiqi gave him a hard look. "Huh what?"

"But... you have nothing to do with it," Nie Tian said.

"I recently entered the Greater Heaven stage, so I need to temper my skills with battles." Pei Qiqi slowly closed her eyes as she focused on adjusting her breathing. Then, she said with a peaceful tone, "Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect will be a perfect opponent for me. Okay, it's settled. From now on, don't interrupt me. I need time to recover my strength."

With these words, she no longer spoke to Nie Tian, as she seemed to have entered the cultivation state.

Nie Tian scratched his head, as he was unable to make heads or tails of her sudden demand. He intended to tell her that Li Langfeng was about to enter the Worldly realm. Once he did, Li Langfeng alone would be strong enough to help him accomplish

their goal. They wouldn't need her help at all.

However, from the look of it, Pei Qiqi seemed to have already made up her mind, and thus intentionally avoided hearing his reasoning.

Therefore, he had no choice but to drop it.

Afterwards, he calmed himself and started recovering the energies he had consumed with spirit stones and spiritual materials of different attributes.

As they cultivated, a few Hunters passed by and discovered their auras.

However, whenever people approached them, Xue Long would perceive their movements and unleash a fierce sword intent.

As soon as those Hunters sensed Xue Long's sword intent, they would immediately realize that it wasn't someone they could take, and thus retreated voluntarily.

One day passed...

Nie Tian had recovered most of the energies he had consumed, and thus he took out Qiu Yang and the other three's rings of holding.

The four rings of holding had belonged to four Greater Heaven stage experts. Nie Tian desired to know what was in them very much.

However, almost every ring of holding had their own unique restrictive spells.

If people tried to break the spell with force without knowing how to crack the spell properly, it would very likely result in the destruction of the ring of holding, along with everything inside of it.

After a moment of hesitation, Nie Tian turned to Pei Qiqi, who was sitting quietly with her eyes closed and said with a soft voice,

“Well...”

Pei Qiqi opened her eyes and reached out with one hand, saying, “Alright, give them to me.”

With a smile, Nie Tian handed the four rings of holding to her.

“It’s really hard to imagine how you killed Qiu Yang and the other three.” Pei Qiqi muttered to herself as slender beams of bright light blossomed at the tips of her fingers, which seemed to carry the profound truths of spatial energy. In the next moment, they flew into the rings of holding like extensions of her slender fingers, where they skillfully solved the restrictive spells within them.

As she removed the restrictive spells, she took a glance at the items in stock, and she discovered that each of the rings of holding was stocked with large amounts of spirit stones, spirit jades, and jars full of spiritual materials. “Wow, these guest elders of the Blood Skull were all filthy rich. Here you go. You’ve hit gold again.” With these words, she handed the four rings of holding back to Nie Tian.

Nie Tian briefly examined the stocked items after receiving them, and found that there were at least a total of 20,000 spirit stones, along with 50 spirit jades, within the four rings of holding.

Aside from that, he also discovered several premium grade spiritual tools that were suited for their former owners, along with medicinal pills and spiritual materials.

His face was instantly filled with smiles.

Completely at ease, Pei Qiqi took her time as she said, “You must have paid Li Ye handsomely in order to get him to forge a spiritual tool that suits your needs. Now that both Xue Long and Li Langfeng are willing to help you, you must have made some kind of deal with them. I put my own business on hold so that I could come to your aid. You don’t want to see me come out empty-

handed, do you?”

Nie Tian cracked a smile and said, “Alright, spill it. What do you want?”

“10,000 spirit stones.” Pei Qiqi reached out her jade-like right hand and opened it. Then, she said, looking directly into Nie Tian’s eyes, “I’m at the Greater Heaven stage. It’s a fair deal to pay for my service with 10,000 spirit stones.”

“No problem.” Nie Tian laughed heartily as he took out 10,000 spirit stones, put them into an empty bracelet of holding, and placed it in Pei Qiqi’s palm.

As he did, his little finger accidentally touched Pei Qiqi’s soft hand.

Pei Qiqi’s hand trembled slightly as a ray of bright light shone from her eyes, which were looking right into Nie Tian’s eyes.

In a split second, the light in her eyes rapidly disappeared as she retracted her hand, along with the bracelet of holding in her palm.

Then, she sat back down on the ground, closed her eyes, and asked with a calm tone, “Back when I sustained heavy injuries and fell unconscious, did you...” She didn’t finish her question, but her long eyelashes slightly flickered.

“I didn’t do anything!” Nie Tian replied hastily.

Pei Qiqi snorted back at him.

Upon hearing Pei Qiqi’s question, Nie Tian couldn’t help but remember the time he had carried her on his back while he had run away from Li Langfeng’s pursuit.

As he relived the pleasant memories, his gaze wandered up and down Pei Qiqi, who was sitting in front of him, which reminded him of the scene where he had clenched Pei Qiqi’s slender legs with his hands and arms.

Pei Qiqi’s eyes suddenly snapped open. Glaring at him, she asked,

“What are you thinking?”

With a guilty conscience, Nie Tian hastily replied, “I’m thinking about Li Langfeng.”

“Nonsense!” Pei Qiqi blurted angrily.

At that moment, Li Langfeng’s voice echoed out from the distance. “Hahaha! I can’t believe someone would think about me.”

In the blink of an eye, he arrived in front of them.

Upon seeing Li Langfeng appear out of nowhere, Nie Tian’s expression flickered.

He didn’t understand why his Heaven Eyes had failed to detect Li Langfeng’s life aura and the fact that he was approaching.

Chapter 338: Unforeseen Circumstance

Only when Li Langfeng arrived in front of them did Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes perceive his existence.

Keh! Keh!

Li Langfeng's cough seemed to have become worse. His face was as pale as paper. From the look of it, he seemed to be in a worse condition than he had been in before he had left.

His already-skinny body had become even more emaciated. It seemed as if he could easily be blown away by a gale of wind.

However, at this moment, his strength seemed unfathomable to Nie Tian.

Even via his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian wasn't able to tell his real cultivation base.

"Worldly realm!" Nie Tian was secretly shocked.

Only those who had entered the Worldly realm and transcended their psychic power into soul power would be able to cloud the Heaven Eyes' judgment, and thus prevent Nie Tian from learning their cultivation bases.

Before, as powerful as Li Langfeng had been, Nie Tian had been able to perceive his real cultivation base via his Heaven Eyes.

Now that his Heaven Eyes failed to determine Li Langfeng's cultivation base, it proved that Li Langfeng had shattered the barriers in his cultivation and successfully entered the Worldly realm!

Li Langfeng, who had been coughing with his face lowered, lifted his chin.

Green flames seemed to be burning increasingly fiercely in the depths of his eyes.

Nie Tian's expression flickered.

He could sense a gruesome aura rushing out of Li Langfeng's eyes and flying towards one of his Heaven Eyes.

“Now I finally know why you were able to escape from me and the joint pursuit of the Fang and other Hunters so effortlessly.” Li Langfeng looked up at that Heaven Eye and marveled from the bottom of his heart, “Legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace are indeed incredible. They actually allow you to develop the ability to form soul power while you're only at the Heaven stage.”

Neither the early Greater Heaven stage Pei Qiqi nor the late Greater Heaven stage Xue Long had sensed the existence of his Heaven Eyes.

Before entering the Worldly realm, Li Langfeng also hadn't been able to perceive the Heaven Eyes that hovered in the air around Nie Tian and kept a close watch on everything in the vicinity.

At that moment, Xue Long heard their conversation and rushed over. He followed Li Langfeng's gaze as he also looked up into the air and examined the area carefully with his psychic awareness. “He's able to form soul power at the Heaven stage?”

However, under the scan of his sight and psychic awareness, he didn't discover any anomalies, and the sky seemed as void as ever.

“Kid, this secret magic you've obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace is indeed very profound.” Li Langfeng nodded as he continued, “However, you've got to be extra careful in the future when you encounter experts who have entered the three realms and possess soul power. Don't you think you can observe everything from the dark without being discovered.”

With a bitter smile, Nie Tian asked, “Does every Worldly realm expert like you possess the ability to cloud or disrupt my perception?”

The fact that Li Langfeng had appeared while his Heaven Eyes

had failed to capture the slightest sign of him was enough evidence that Li Langfeng possessed such an ability. He had his own ways of keeping Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes from discovering him.

"I'm not sure about other Worldly realm cultivators," Li Langfeng answered honestly. "But yeah, I do have my unique methods to confuse the perception of the soul power you've released into the sky.

"Also, you've got to understand that every cultivator who possesses soul power will be able to discover that eye-shaped cluster of soul power of yours.

"This means that when you encounter Qi warriors at the Worldly realm or higher realms, the secret magics you've obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace probably won't work as well as they normally do.

"Of course, this is based on your current cultivation base. If you enter the Worldly realm like I have, and transcend all of your psychic power into soul power, perhaps your strength will rise to another level, and you will be able to display the true might of those secret magics."

With those words, Li Langfeng turned to look at Pei Qiqi and asked with a confused expression, "Why is she here?"

"You're here. Why can't I be here?" Pei Qiqi's tone was cold and thorny.

She still remembered the unpleasant incident between her and Li Langfeng. Back when they had been in the mountain valley, Li Langfeng had attacked her with the intention to kill her, which had caused her to suffer severe injuries and pass out. If Nie Tian hadn't carried her away and found the secret underwater stronghold of the Blood Skull, she probably would have died by Li Langfeng's hands already.

Everyone in the Realm of Split Void knew that Li Langfeng

wasn't bound by any rules or norms.

Therefore, she hadn't expected a crazy man like him to give face to her master at all.

“Truth be told, now that I've entered the Worldly realm, I won't need help from any of you,” Li Langfeng said with an expressionless face. “Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng are still at the Greater Heaven stage. The two of them won't be able to create much difficulty for me if I want to strip that fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.”

Upon hearing these words, both Xue Long and Pei Qiqi looked displeased.

“This is for your own good.” Li Langfeng's face was as indifferent as ever. “Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng have tricky statuses, since they are both abandoned disciples of the Heaven Palace Sect. I know that you'll be held back by scruples, since you all fear the Heaven Palace Sect. That being the case, you won't be able to go all-out when we attack them.”

After a brief halt, he added, “I'm not like you.”

Even Nie Tian could see that Li Langfeng was a man with no scruples. Not to mention that Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng were only former disciples of the Heaven Palace Sect, even if they were core disciples of the Heaven Palace Sect, he would still have the audacity to lay a murderous hand on them.

Xue Long let out a snort and said, “You have your ways of doing things, and I have mine. Since I made a promise to someone, I'll definitely be a part of it!

“Also, Ning Yang used to be the ‘chosen one’ of the Heaven Palace Sect, and the Heaven Palace Sect hasn't formally declared that they have expelled him!

“I want you to think about the consequences before you act! The Heaven Palace Sect already intends to give Ning Yang's

fragmentary star mark to Nie Tian. So I don't think they will mind if Nie Tian acts out on his own and takes it by force. However, if you kill Ning Yang, people from the Heaven Palace Sect will definitely descend upon the Realm of Split Void. At that time, none of us will be able to live in peace in the Realm of Split Void anymore!"

With these words, he took a deep look at Pei Qiqi and said, "Miss Pei, this actually has nothing to do with you. And you won't be able to make a difference even if you do go. Like Li Langfeng just said, if you insist on joining us and something does happen to Ning Yang, even your master won't be able to protect you. You'd better think it through."

"Senior Martial Sister, how about... you go back?" Nie Tian tried to persuade her.

From Li Langfeng's tone, he realized that this maniac didn't care about Ning Yang's life at all.

If Ning Yang infuriated him in battle, he might actually lose it and strike to kill.

Even Xue Long was afraid that he would get into trouble if Ning Yang died by their hands, so he didn't want to Pei Qiqi to be implicated.

"As I said, me alone will be enough. There's absolutely no need for you to come along." Li Langfeng's attitude didn't change at all, like a dead pig that was not afraid of boiling water.

"I took Nie Tian's spirit stones, so I'll definitely go with him!" said Pei Qiqi.

"Well, suit yourself then." Li Langfeng looked as if he couldn't care less. "Let's head out to that region to the east of Ash City. I'd like to see how strong Ning Yang and Tong Jiangfeng really are."

Afterwards, under Li Langfeng's leadership, the four of them marched towards the region where meteors fell from the heavens

frequently.

With Li Langfeng, a Worldly realm expert who possessed soul power, there to lead the way for them, they easily steered clear of every Hunter in that area and didn't attract any unnecessary attention.

Along their way, Nie Tian didn't unleash his Heaven Eyes, since Li Langfeng's existence served equivalently as his Heaven Eyes.

Several days later, the four of them finally arrived at the forbidden region.

Without running into any obstacles, they soon reached the heart of the forbidden region.

It was late at night when they found a location to rest and wait for the appearance of a plummeting meteor.

According to Nie Tian, the reason Ning Yang had come to this region was that he wished to uncover methods to learn and refine his fragmentary star mark from within the fallen meteors.

Whenever a meteor fell from the heavens, Ning Yang would rush to the crash site in hopes of learning useful information from within them.

Therefore, they waited.

In the meantime, Nie Tian cultivated with Star Stones and added drop after drop of stardew to his spiritual sea.

Days passed, and it was night again.

A trail of light scraped through the starlit sky as it flew closer and closer before it eventually crashed into the earth in a location several dozen kilometers from where they were.

RUUUUUMBLE!

As the earth trembled nonstop, the four of them couldn't help but stagger slightly to assume a firm foothold on the ice-cold desert.

According to Nie Tian's experience, he could tell from the intensity of the rumbling that the fallen meteor would probably be an enormous one.

“Here it comes!”

Li Langfeng couldn't wait any longer. After getting ahold of his bearings, he was the first to speed off into the distance.

Nie Tian and the others followed along.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian unleashed his seven Heaven Eyes.

Via his Heaven Eyes, he obtained a panoramic view of the area around him.

After a dashing at full speed for a while, they finally caught up to Li Langfeng, who was standing by the edge of a huge crater. From the look of it, he had already been waiting there for some time.

Upon seeing the three of them, Li Langfeng frowned and said with a grim expression on his face, “There's an unforeseen circumstance.”

Chapter 339: Life Within the Meteor

A confused expression spread across Nie Tian's face. "Unforeseen circumstance?"

Since he had refined a fragmentary star mark, he had developed the ability to sense Ning Yang's location accurately.

He focused his attention and searched in his mind. He immediately learned that Ning Yang was still quite far from where they were standing.

This meant that Ning Yang had been in a location much farther from the crash site than they had been.

He could sense with great clarity that, as they spoke, Ning Yang was rapidly approaching.

According to their original plan, if they arrived at a meteor crash site before Ning Yang, they could just wait for Ning Yang to come.

Since Ning Yang hadn't arrived, what did Li Langfeng mean by "unforeseen circumstance"?

As this question entered his mind, with a thought, Nie Tian commanded his seven Heaven Eyes, which had been hovering around him, to fly above the area where the meteor had crashed.

It was an enormous crater with a diameter of thousands of meters.

A gigantic, grayish-brown meteor was embedded into the earth at the bottom of the hundred-meter-deep crater. Sparks were still sputtering off of its surface from time to time.

Floating above the enormous crater, Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes scanned the area and didn't discover anything worth noting.

Face filled with confusion, he said, "Everything seems normal to me."

Xue Long and Pei Qiqi were both at the Greater Heaven stage, so

they hadn't transcended their psychic power into soul power.

Since they were standing so far from the fallen meteor that it was beyond the reach of their psychic power's perception, they couldn't sense a thing.

Confusion filled their faces as well.

Li Langfeng's expression was abnormally grim as he explained, "I can sense very subtle, flickering signs of life from within that meteor. I suspect that the reason why the life aura within the meteor is so weak is that the life within it is intentionally suppressing its own life aura. Even I only sensed it shortly after I got here."

"What?!" Xue Long's expression flickered drastically. "There's a person inside that meteor?"

A shocked expression also appeared on Pei Qiqi's face.

Li Langfeng shook his head. "It's not necessarily a human. I think it might be an outsider from some unknown realm."

Upon hearing these words, everyone was flabbergasted.

A gigantic meteor that had plummeted to the earth from an unknown universe actually had an outsider hiding inside of it!

After a moment of hesitation, Li Langfeng said, "Let's not go over there so fast, and wait for Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng to go over there first. If my speculations are correct, and there actually is an outsider in that meteor, we'll be able to see how it interacts with them first.

"Since it's intentionally suppressing its own life aura, even I can't make an accurate judgment of its strength.

"So having Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng explore the meteor for us and draw out whatever is inside of it is probably the safest choice."

"Okay!" Xue Long agreed.

Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi also nodded.

Li Langfeng was the most powerful one among them, and he was known as a man with no scruples. No one in the Realm of Split Void would want to start a feud with him. Even though Nie Tian hadn't known him for long, he knew very well how terrifying he could be.

Li Langfeng had never been one to act with discretion, but now that even he behaved so cautiously facing this meteor and the living creature within it, it was enough evidence that he had truly sensed danger.

Hence, the four of them did their utmost to hide their life auras as they waited in place. Nie Tian even used his newly-awakened bloodline talent, Life Stealth.

With the help of the green aura, which was the embodiment of his bloodline power, Life Stealth allowed Nie Tian to completely seal his life aura.

Not only that, but he could even make adjustments by changing his state of mind and the degree of involvement from the green aura.

At that moment, every bit of aura from his fleshy body and spiritual power had been concealed.

It would be almost impossible for people to sense the extremely weak signs of life on him from locations further than where Li Langfeng and the others on his team were.

At the same time, he concentrated his attention and strengthened the connection between him and his seven Heaven Eyes in order to keep a close watch on the gigantic meteor.

Even though he still couldn't sense the slightest sign of life after having his seven Heaven Eyes hover around the meteor for some time, he had faith in Li Langfeng's judgment.

“Once a cultivator enters the Worldly realm, their psychic power

will undergo overwhelming complete changes. Even their soul will transcend and become different. I'm only at the Heaven stage, and the seven fragmentary stars within my soul were acquired by accident when I was in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

“Perhaps this is why I can't detect signs of life from within that meteor like Li Langfeng can.”

After these thoughts flashed across his mind, Nie Tian concentrated his attention on everything happening in that area instead of being hung up on why he wasn't able to detect the life aura within that meteor.

It wasn't long before he sensed anomalies via his Heaven Eyes.

He discovered that the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth was quietly converging on the grayish brown meteor embedded in the bottom of the enormous crater in an abnormal fashion.

Within the tainted spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, the cyan phantasm Qi, which originated from the Phantasms' realms according to Li Langfeng, seemed especially active.

Nie Tian observed with rapt attention, and discovered that wisps of light-cyan phantasm Qi seemed to be attracted by the meteor as they rapidly attached themselves to its surface.

Meanwhile, those wisps of phantasm Qi disappeared from the surface of meteor at a rate visible to the naked eye.

“Cyan phantasm Qi from the Phantasms' realms...” With these thoughts, Nie Tian gasped and exclaimed, “The outsider inside of that meteor is probably a Phantasm!”

“How come you're so sure?” Li Langfeng asked with a surprised expression on his face.

Even though he had transcended his psychic power into soul power, he was only able to tell that there was a subtle life aura within the meteor, and that it probably didn't belong to a human, considering its strange features.

However, he couldn't be certain which outsider race it belonged to.

“The phantasm Qi within the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth seems to be getting abnormally active,” Nie Tian explained.

After hearing Nie Tian's words, an impressed expression appeared in Li Langfeng's eyes as he nodded and marveled, “The legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace are indeed unfathomable. Even I can't sense the subtle changes in the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, but you can. When you enter the Worldly realm, the perception of your soul power will be far better than mine for sure.”

“A Phantasm!” Xue Long exclaimed softly.

Pei Qiqi said in a soft voice, “Of all the outsider races, Phantasms are the most mysterious. Why in the world would they suddenly come here?”

At that very moment, Li Langfeng said, “Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng are almost here.”

Upon hearing these words, Nie Tian also detected Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng's auras, which were rapidly approaching the meteor from the opposite direction.

“Let them test out that Phantasm for us.” Li Langfeng said calmly.

Therefore, the four of them waited.

In the meantime, not only was Nie Tian able to detect Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng's auras via his Heaven Eyes, but he could also listen into their conversation.

“Lord Ning, it's been quite a long time. You still haven't found anything useful?” Tong Jianfeng asked.

With disheveled hair, Ning Yang looked completely different from the handsome, clean-dressed young man in the Ancient

Fragmentary Star Palace. He didn't even shave his beard. At this moment, he looked very much like a dingy, middle-aged man. "Not yet, but I firmly believe this place has some kind of connection with the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace!"

"Since I haven't refined my fragmentary star mark yet, I can't tell how they are connected and why this place is special. However, I'm sure that the reason why this place attracts so many meteors from outer space is that the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace has deployed some kind of restrictive spell here.

"So many meteors crash in this region. I believe I'll find one that contains the answer to my problem!"

"All I'm waiting for is a meteor that comes from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace."

With these words, Ning Yang had already jumped to the top of the gigantic, grayish-brown meteor. After summoning his incomparably sharp spiritual sword, he started chopping giant pieces off the meteor with stretched sword moves, hoping to unearth the answer he had been looking forward to this entire time from within it.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

Table-size stones were continuously sent into the air by Ning Yang's sword moves before they fell and scattered around.

"Star Stones!" Nie Tian, who had been observing via his Heaven Eyes, noticed that this meteor contained Star Stones.

Since Ning Yang didn't attach any importance to those Star Stones, he just turned a blind eye to them and let them scatter around as he continued hacking.

CRUNCH!

As he once again hacked his spiritual sword into the meteor and turned his wrist in an attempt to break a piece off the meteor, a confused look suddenly appeared in Ning Yang's eyes.

In the next moment, blood shot out of Ning Yang's sword-bearing hand.

“Lord Ning!!!” Tong Jianfeng cried out.

Threads of cyan light flowed out from within the meteor like long, floating rivers before they shot towards Ning Yang and Tong Jianfeng.

Ning Yang sensed the danger, so he let go of his sword and jumped away at the first possible moment. Tong Jianfeng, on the other hand, threw himself towards the meteor out of his concern about Ning Yang's safety, and thus got his torso penetrated by the threads of cyan light.

By the time Tong Jianfeng fell towards the bottom of the crater, the light in his eyes had already dissipated. Just like that, he was killed instantly.

Chapter 340: Phantasm

“Who’s there?!” Ning Yang let out a violent shout as he backed away from the meteor. The skin on his hand was cut open and blood was flowing out of his torn flesh.

SHEW!

With a thought, he summoned the spiritual sword he had hacked into the meteor, and it rapidly flew back into his hand.

At that very moment, Tong Jianfeng’s corpse landed heavily at the bottom of the crater, creating a loud crash.

Numerous threads of cyan light were still snaking around on Tong Jianfeng’s corpse.

Tong Jianfeng had harbored intentions to rescue Ning Yang. However, he ended up being the one penetrated and killed by the numerous threads of cyan light.

In the meantime, more copious amounts of phantasm Qi, which originated from the Phantasms’ realms, continued to converge on the gigantic meteor. The originally subtle life aura inside the meteor instantly grew vigorous and conspicuous.

CRUNCH!

The part of the meteor where Ning Yang’s spiritual sword had hacked at suddenly exploded, and a vague figure whizzed out, wreathed in rich, cyan phantasm Qi.

As soon as it appeared, it shot directly towards Ning Yang.

All the phantasm Qi within the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this region seemed to have found a vent and rushed towards the vague figure.

“A legacy mark from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace!” The vague figure said in broken human language as it immediately focused its attention on Ning Yang.

Just now, as Ning Yang had attempted to shatter the meteor with his sword, he had opened his lapels and looked down at the fragmentary star mark on his chest from time to time, hoping to uncover the mysteries within it.

That was why the vague figure had caught sight of the fragmentary star mark on his chest the moment it flew out of the meteor.

This Phantasm seemed to know that it was a legacy mark he had acquired from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and thus gave voice to its findings.

Ning Yang immediately grew psyched. “W-who are you? How do you know that this is a legacy mark I obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace?”

Staring coldly at the mark on Ning Yang’s chest, the vague figure said, “It’s a shame that you haven’t refined it. This means that you haven’t been acknowledged by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and this is why you haven’t been able to learn secret magics from it. Also, an unrefined legacy mark can be stripped from its owner!”

SHEW! SHEW! SHEW!

One after another, numerous ribbon-like, cyan lights shot out from within the vague figure.

The threads of cyan light moved like spiritual snakes, and there were hundreds of them.

In a split second, the substantial amount of cyan light threads surrounded Ning Yang. They rapidly formed a ward around him, inside of which a strange magnetic field was gradually born.

Ning Yang brandished his spiritual sword as he hoped to break the ward with his sword blasts.

However, not only did his sword blasts fail to shatter the strange ward, but it began to shrink continuously.

All of a sudden, the vague figure wreathed in cyan phantasm Qi whizzed into the ward like a ghost, where it reached out its hand and grabbed towards Ning Yang's chest.

An inconceivably strong attraction force was instantly born within its palm. Like a large magnet, it was actually pulling the legacy mark away from Ning Yang's chest bit by bit.

With angry roars, Ning Yang madly unleashed all kinds of secret magics from the Heaven Palace Sect. The area around him was rapidly filled with sword blasts and lightning bolts.

However, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't stop the legacy mark he had acquired from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace from being gradually detached from him.

The fragmentary star mark seemed to have sensed some kind of danger, and thus began to emanate dazzlingly bright starlight.

After being detached, the floating fragmentary star mark seemed to turn into a glorious nebula. The countless ancient magical symbols within it seemed to turn into stars. They shone so brightly that it was as if they were resisting being captured by that foreign Phantasm.

Meanwhile...

Nie Tian, who had been observing in the dark, noticed that his refined fragmentary star mark had also surfaced from under his skin and detached itself from his chest!

Like another nebula, it floated in front of his chest.

Without any active consciousness of his own, his star power and psychic power madly converged on that fragmentary star mark.

Even the seven fragmentary stars within his soul flew out and rushed into that fragmentary star mark.

Floating in front of Nie Tian's chest, the nebula-like fragmentary star mark unleashed increasingly dazzling, bright starlight.

The starlight was so blindingly bright that Xue Long and Pei Qiqi couldn't even bear to look directly at it.

Astonished by the scene, Xue Long asked, "Nie Tian! What's happening?!"

"What's going on?!" Pei Qiqi also asked hastily.

The two of them hadn't been able to see Tong Jianfeng's death and the battle between Ning Yang and the Phantasm.

Therefore, they were unable to make heads or tails of the sudden drastic changes that were happening to Nie Tian. They thought Nie Tian was in danger.

However, at this moment, Nie Tian was having his star power and psychic power pulled away from him at an extremely fast speed, so he didn't have time to explain.

He focused all of his attention on the increasingly bright fragmentary star mark that was floating in front of his chest.

"Hmm?!" In the enormous crater, the vague figure wreathed in cyan phantasm Qi suddenly sensed an anomaly as it was just about to harvest the legacy mark it had separated from Ning Yang's body.

It noticed that the legacy mark, which it had already locked down using its thoughts, was shaking violently, as if it was doing its utmost to resist it.

Originally, the Phantasm had no problem handling such resistance.

However, at that moment, it suddenly sensed that another force had started to infuse the legacy mark with power from a distant location. Not only that, but the force even began to summon the legacy mark from within its hand.

SHEW!

Before it could react, it sensed a sudden surge in the force, and the legacy mark shot out of its hand and whizzed in Nie Tian's

direction.

In a location about a thousand meters away...

Without any warning, Nie Tian's refined fragmentary star mark suddenly rose and flew straight up into the air, while shining with dazzlingly bright starlight.

Like a rising star, it attracted everyone's attention, including Ning Yang's.

Having his fragmentary star mark stripped from him, Ning Yang almost lost his mind. Staring at the cluster of bright starlight in the distant sky, he couldn't help but let out an enraged roar, "Nie Tian!!!"

He assumed that the vague figure that had come out of the meteor had been invited by Nie Tian, so that it could lure him into a trap and thus take his fragmentary star mark away from him.

Watching the fragmentary star mark he had gone to great lengths to obtain from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace fly further and further away from him and towards the cluster of dazzling starlight, Ning Yang didn't even think for a second before shooting towards Nie Tian's location at his fastest possible speed, completely ignoring the strange creature in front of him.

The visitor from an unknown realm also caught sight of the cluster of bright starlight. "A refined legacy mark!" With a single glance from afar, it was convinced that it was a refined legacy mark that had attracted its newly-acquired legacy mark away.

It went blank for a brief moment, as it didn't understand the relationship between Ning Yang and Nie Tian.

However, in a flash, it snapped back to its senses and dashed towards Nie Tian's location after Ning Yang.

WHOOSH!

In the blink of an eye, the fragmentary star mark that had

belonged to Ning Yang turned into a trail of bright light and arrived in the air above Nie Tian.

Upon contact with Nie Tian's refined fragmentary star mark, the third fragmentary star mark received Nie Tian's star power and psychic power, along with the aura of the seven fragmentary stars from Nie Tian's soul.

Immediately afterwards, the two fragmentary star marks plummeted towards Nie Tian's chest like two falling stars.

The refined fragmentary star mark flew back into Nie Tian's chest and disappeared into his flesh.

However, the fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang appeared on his skin next to his second fragmentary star mark like another mysterious tattoo.

“You've got to leave now!” With a deep breath, Li Langfeng took out his bell and unleashed clusters of green smoke, which carried extremely toxic and corrosive auras.

In a brief moment, he was engulfed by the thick, green smoke, and his eyes took on a dark-green color.

Li Langfeng's bizarre magic and scrawny physique made him look very much like an evil ghost at this moment.

“That Phantasm from some unknown realm possesses formidable power, and even I don't have any confidence in defeating it.” Seeing that Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi, and Xue Long didn't intend to leave, Li Langfeng raised his voice and yelled, “I won't stop Ning Yang from chasing after you. I'll only do my best to stall that Phantasm! You'll only need to escape from Ning Yang's pursuit, and then you'll be fine!

“Ning Yang probably won't be able to do much damage to you, but if that Phantasm somehow catches you, you all will be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!”

After uttering these words, Li Langfeng shot directly towards the

incoming Phantasm, wreathed in thick, green toxic smoke, along with a fierce, gruesome aura.

“Nie Tian!” Ning Yang shouted, his face filled with a mad ecstasy.

He had never expected that he would encounter Nie Tian after days of fruitless exploration and agonizing waiting in this region.

Nie Tian had obtained two fragmentary star marks. As long as Nie Tian hadn't fully refined them, he would be able to strip them from him.

If he could collect all three fragmentary marks and merge them with himself, he would be able to shoulder the important task of sealing the three major spatial rifts. At that time, not only would he be taken back by the Heaven Palace Sect, but he would also become the most famous man across the entire Domain of the Falling Stars.

Nie Tian's appearance made him see the silver lining, so he dropped all other matters and focused on the pursuit of the three fragmentary star marks like a possessed person.

“Nie Tian! Let's go!” Xue Long also sensed the unfavorable situation, so he called out, “Ning Yang isn't the real threat. That Phantasm is what's truly deadly! We have to run as far away as we can from this place while Li Langfeng keeps that Phantasm busy. You absolutely can't be captured by that Phantasm. I believe it's also after the fragmentary star marks you have!”

“I understand!” Nie Tian nodded gently before he followed Xue Long and Pei Qiqi as the three of them sped away at the fastest speed possible.

Chapter 341: Im Back!

In the vast, open desert, Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi followed Xue Long as the three of them ran at full speed.

Behind them, Ning Yang pursued closely.

After about 15 minutes, Ning Yang turned into a brilliant golden flash and rapidly closed in on them.

With disheveled hair, Ning Yang had the appearance of a mad person. “Nie Tian! Even if you run to the ends of the world, I’ll still catch you and take those three fragmentary star marks from you!”

He vigorously cast his spiritual sword forward, and it shot towards Nie Tian and the others so fast that it was as if it could break the barriers of space and reach them at any moment.

Xue Long suddenly stopped. With a grim expression, he said, “This won’t work! Since Li Langfeng is holding that Phantasm off for you, I’ll try my best to hold Ning Yang off for you!”

With these words, Xue Long was immediately wreathed in a fierce sword intent.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

One after another, dazzling swords of light shot out of him as if they had flown out of pores all over him. The countless swords of light rapidly formed a rain of swords between him and Ning Yang.

According to his observations, he could tell that Nie Tian wouldn’t be able to keep up with him if he didn’t use the secret magics he had acquired from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

Pei Qiqi, on the other hand, was skilled in spatial magics, so she was able to keep up with his pace.

However, even he wasn’t as fast as Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect.

Considering Ning Yang’s speed advantage, it was only a matter of

time before he would catch up to them.

That being the case, the only thing he could do was stay and fight Ning Yang. By keeping Ning Yang occupied, he would be able to buy time for Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi to escape.

What he planned to do was exactly the same thing Li Langfeng was doing with the Phantasm.

“Uncle Xue! You...” A worried expression spread across Nie Tian’s face.

Since he knew perfectly well how powerful Ning Yang was, he could tell that Xue Long wouldn’t be able to handle him.

Even if it were Li Langfeng before his breakthrough into the Worldly realm, and the two of them were still both at the same stage, Li Langfeng probably wouldn’t be able to overtake Ning Yang, much less Xue Long.

Therefore, he was afraid that Xue Long would get himself killed by Ning Yang if he insisted on staying and fighting him.

“You can rest assured! I won’t fight him to the death!” Xue Long knew what he was worrying about, and thus urged them in a loud voice, “Go! The sooner you leave Ning Yang’s sight, the safer I’ll become! When I’m certain that he won’t be able to locate you anymore, I’ll immediately end my battle against him and run to the Void Illusion Mountain Range, where I’ll use the Blood Skull’s teleportation portal to return to Shatter City!”

FIZZ! FIZZ!

As he spoke, a golden flash shot into his rain of swords of light.

One after another, the countless swords of light rapidly disappeared like a shoal of fish being chomped away by a shark.

Under his gaze, the barrier he had established with a rain of swords was rapidly falling apart.

“Take care!” Nie Tian didn’t insist. Instead, he exchanged a gaze

with Pei Qiqi before dashing off again.

Soon after they left, Ning Yang's angry roars echoed out from behind them, along with terrifyingly strong fluctuations of spiritual power.

Nie Tian couldn't bear to look back. He forced himself to calm down and run at full speed side by side with Pei Qiqi.

In the meantime, he spared a wisp of his psychic awareness and used it to examine himself. He discovered that he had consumed substantial amounts of strength when his refined fragmentary star mark had attracted Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark.

He had lost sixty percent of his star power and more than half of his psychic power.

WHOOSH!

The seven fragmentary stars suddenly flew out of his refined fragmentary star mark and reentered his mind.

Only then, when they once again hung high in his soul, was the connection between him and his seven Heaven Eyes reestablished.

Immediately afterwards, Nie Tian had a feeling that wisps of rich psychic power and star power had started to exude out of the refined fragmentary star mark, which had already merged with his flesh and blood, and slowly flow towards his mind and dantian region.

Nie Tian's eyes gradually lit up.

Originally, he thought his psychic power, star power, and seven fragmentary stars had been consumed when they had been pulled away from him by that refined fragmentary star mark.

The return of these strengths made him feel greatly relieved.

RUUUUUMBLE!

A heaven-shaking, earth-shattering sound rang out from the region where Xue Long and Ning Yang were fighting. Numerous

golden lights flashed across the air like lightning bolts.

The sword intent and spiritual aura that belonged to Xue Long were gradually overtaken.

After the seven fragmentary stars returned to his soul, the images captured by his seven Heaven Eyes were once again reflected within Nie Tian's mind.

With a thought, he commanded one of his Heaven Eyes that hadn't flown back to his side after the connection was reestablished to fly towards the area where Xue Long and Ning Yang's battle was taking place.

Via that Heaven Eye, he saw Ning Yang brandishing his spiritual sword, and with every swing, it sent out a beam of golden light.

At that moment, there were already dozens of arm-thick golden beams of light hovering around him and Xue Long, each of which was branded with his unlimited fighting spirit, as well as the profound truths of metal power.

Meanwhile, Xue Long contended against the joint attack of the numerous golden light beams with the swords of light he had created according to the profound spiritual incantation he practiced.

However, it was very clear that Xue Long was trapped.

Soon after he cast spells and created more swords of light, many of them were shattered by Ning Yang's numerous golden light beams.

Xue Long was deeply caught up in a very unfavorable situation. The golden light beams had already left a crisscross network of wounds on his body.

Normally speaking, being at the late Greater Heaven stage and a guest elder of the Blood Skull, Xue Long should be stronger than most cultivators who had the same cultivation base as him.

When he had fought Shi Hui earlier, he seemed to have handled Shi Hui with skill and ease, and didn't need to strain himself at all.

However, now that his opponent was Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect, a well-known figure throughout the entire Domain of the Falling Stars, he seemed obviously dominated. From the look of it, he even began to have difficulty fighting back at all.

Nie Tian suddenly stopped his dashing momentum.

Only after running for a dozen more meters did Pei Qiqi, who had reserved her speed to keep pace with him, come to realize that he had stopped. Thus, she stopped as well.

She turned around and asked with her bright eyes filled with confusion, "What are you doing?!"

"You go ahead and leave, senior martial sister," Nie Tian said with a solemn tone. "Uncle Xue is in danger. Ning Yang is too powerful for him. He won't be able to escape from Ning Yang with just his own strength. I can't watch him die because of me and do nothing. I have to go back for him!"

"Are you crazy!?" Pei Qiqi exclaimed.

Nie Tian nodded, saying, "Yeah, I might just be... Thank you for your concern and good intentions, senior martial sister. However, Ning Yang is too powerful. The way I see it, even Li Langfeng didn't have the ability to handle him single-handedly when he was at the peak of the Greater Heaven stage. So there's no way Uncle Xue will be able to do that. If he gets mad and lays a murderous hand on Uncle Xue, I doubt that he'll be able to get away."

"You said it yourself that Ning Yang is way too powerful." Pei Qiqi said anxiously. "What difference will it make if you do go back?"

With a determined expression on his face, Nie Tian said, "If I summon the Flame Dragon Armor, I might be able to help Uncle Xue escape! If worst comes to worst, I can use the escape magic

from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. I'll be fine, senior martial sister. I'm grateful for what you've done for me, truly. I'll see you in Shatter City!"

SHEW!

Without waiting for Pei Qiqi to say anything back, he cast a short-range Starshift and appeared in a location more than three hundred meters away.

SHEW! SHEW!

After two more short-range Starshifts, he disappeared from Pei Qiqi's view like a flickering flame that had gone out.

"The bastard did it again!" Rage filled Pei Qiqi's face.

Last time, when the Flame Dragon Armor had whizzed out of Nie Tian's bracelet of holding to snatch Heaven Flame Crystals from Shi Hui, he had sensed the unfavorable situation. Therefore, in order to avoid dragging her into trouble, he left by casting a few short-range Starshifts in a row and disappeared before she had a chance to respond.

It hadn't been long when he had promised Pei Qiqi that he wouldn't act on his own and leave her before getting her permission again.

However, now that they were in danger again, he did the exact same thing.

"Why would I listen to you!?" Pei Qiqi stomped her feet and turned around after Nie Tian, regardless of the danger she would face, as if she was only doing it out of her anger towards him.

...

Eyes filled with brutality and madness, Ning Yang brandished his spiritual sword that emanated brilliant golden light as he said, "Since you want to be a hero, I'll kill you first! Nie Tian is only at the Heaven stage. He won't be able to run away from me in this

open desert. Even if I take a while to kill you, I'll still be able to chase him down. You won't be able to hold me for long."

With his sword intent being gradually nibbled away by Ning Yang's golden light beams, Xue Long looked especially grim.

He had always known that Ning Yang was very powerful, but only when they were engaged in battle did he understand how formidable this man, who the Heaven Palace Sect had placed high hopes on, really was.

Before their engagement, he had never expected that a man at the same cultivation stage as him could be so powerful that he wouldn't be able to run away from him even though he wanted to.

Even when he had fought Li Langfeng before he had entered the Worldly realm, he hadn't felt such a strong pressure.

Seeing that Ning Yang's golden light beams had blocked every possible escape route, and that the room left for him was shrinking by the second, a sense of desperation rose in Xue Long's heart for the first time.

"This deal I made with the Spirit Condor turned out to be such a losing one. I can't believe it will cost me my life..." Xue Long thought to himself, full of regret.

At that moment, Nie Tian's voice suddenly rang out from the distance, "Uncle Xue! I'm back!!"

Even before his voice died away, Nie Tian turned into a tiny spark of starlight and appeared in front of him.

Chapter 342: Flame Dragon Form

Surrounded by sky-filing golden lights, Xue Long went dumbstruck after seeing that Nie Tian had returned.

ZZZZZLA!

A beam of golden light swept across Xue Long's waist, cutting off a piece of his flesh and leaving a bloody gash.

With a pained cry, Xue Long refocused his attention on defending against the slithering golden light beams that had shot out of Ning Yang's sword.

However, he couldn't help but check Nie Tian out from time to time with a both touched and worried look in his eyes.

After all, he had never expected that Nie Tian would actually have the audacity to come back.

Ning Yang was so powerful that even he was barely able to stay alive. He couldn't even manage to escape from the blockade of Ning Yang's golden sword lights.

He believed that there wasn't a single person in the Realm of Split Void who had the same cultivation base as Ning Yang that would be worthy of being his opponent.

Nie Tian knew perfectly clearly how formidable Ning Yang was, and that he and Xue Long had only come together because of a deal.

Not only that, but the Phantasm currently being held off by Li Langfeng was also a major threat to Nie Tian.

Once the Phantasm broke free from Li Langfeng's blockade and came for Nie Tian, he would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Under such extreme circumstances, Nie Tian was obviously being irrational to come back to his aid.

On the other hand, the way Xue Long saw it, since Nie Tian was only at the Heaven stage, even though he had returned, he actually wouldn't be able to do much to help. It would just be one more life lost.

Therefore, even though he was very touched, he felt that Nie Tian wasn't being smart.

Xue Long's face grew stern as he berated, "Why did you come back? I told you not to mind me. Why didn't you listen? What's the point of you coming back? Will you be able to help me?"

With a sickly ecstatic look in his eyes, Ning Yang laughed broadly. "Great!!! Leave me those three fragmentary star marks and I'll spare your lives! Otherwise, both of you will die here today!"

Nie Tian was surprisingly calm as he said, "Uncle Xue, it doesn't matter what kind of deal you've made with the Spirit Condor. Since you're here to help me accomplish a task, I can't watch you die. Also, how come you're so certain that I won't be able to help you?"

WHOOSH!

The Flame Dragon Armor suddenly flew out of Nie Tian's bracelet of holding.

The crimson Flame Dragon Armor unleashed blazing flames, as if it had turned into a miniature sun, causing crackling sounds to echo out from the air around it.

"A Spirit Channeling grade treasure! And it's fire-attributed!" Xue Long was flabbergasted.

Only then did he finally realize that this was probably the fire-attributed Spirit Channeling grade treasure that Shi Hui and his men had seen in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

After all, aside from people from the Flame God Sect, not many people knew that the Flame Dragon Armor had been in Nie Tian's

possession.

Even though Xue Long had figured out Nie Tian's real identity, he wasn't aware that he was the owner of that Spirit Channeling grade treasure.

Ning Yang gave a cold harrumph and said, "As I expected, the Flame Dragon Armor is indeed in your hands!"

As a core disciple and the lead searcher of the Heaven Palace Sect, Ning Yang naturally had access to more information than Xue Long did.

Upon seeing the Flame Dragon Armor, Ning Yang slightly restrained his disdain and assumed a much more serious attitude as he faced Nie Tian.

He had heard some stories regarding the Flame Dragon Armor, and he knew that this Spirit Channeling grade treasure had never displayed its true might after it had been obtained by the Flame God Sect.

The reason was that the Flame Dragon Armor they had seized hadn't been complete.

The most important part of the Flame Dragon Armor was the Blood Core, which was its source of energy. The Flame God Sect had been searching for the Blood Core ever since they had obtained the Flame Dragon Armor, but their efforts had been fruitless.

However, according to the information Ning Yang had obtained, the Flame Dragon Armor Nie Tian had just summoned out of his bracelet of holding should have merged with its Blood Core and become complete.

Even its damaged parts seemed to be somehow repaired. This meant that the Flame Dragon Armor had become intact in Nie Tian's hands, and it was now a Spirit Channeling grade treasure that was capable of inflicting tremendous damage.

Every Spirit Channeling grade treasure could be considered to be

a weapon of massive destruction, not to mention this was the famous Flame Dragon Armor.

After summoning the Flame Dragon Armor, Nie Tian focused his attention on his firm will to kill Ning Yang, “Help me kill this man!”

He had faith that the Flame Dragon Armor’s soul would be able to read his mind.

As Nie Tian had expected, the moment he made his intentions clear, the Flame Dragon Armor, which was burning fiercely like a sun, morphed into a gigantic flame dragon. Thundering ferociously, it swooped down towards Ning Yang, following the directions given by Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Red flames were unleashed from within the slithering, gigantic flame dragon’s intangible body.

Wherever the flame dragon flew, even the air seemed to be set ablaze. It was as if the terrifying heat had turned the area within a five-kilometer radius into a fiery dimension.

As the flame dragon swam in the air, drops of lava dripped down from it’s blazing body from time to time.

However, the drops of lava didn’t fall to the ground. Instead, they floated in midair like numerous burning fire beads, as if they were completely free from the influence of gravity.

Moments later, the air above Nie Tian’s head was filled with fire beads.

PUFF!

With a swing of his spiritual sword, Ning Yang sent out a golden light beam. As soon as it made contact with the floating fire beads, dazzlingly bright golden light shot out in every direction, along with sputtering sparks.

At this moment, there were as many as several hundred light beams hovering around and trapping Xue Long, each of which contained sharp and profound metal power. They were swirling at a speed so fast that Xue Long couldn't find any possible angle to escape.

As Ning Yang sent out more golden light beams and they continued to clash with the floating fire beads, more golden and fiery light blossomed and sputtered into the surroundings.

In a brief moment, the area was overwhelmed by a splendid feast of fire and light.

Golden and fiery light flashed across and rapidly filled the entire sky, making it a glorious scene.

However, the fierce and frenzied energy the sputtering golden and fiery lights carried continued to cause damage to the area they were in.

As the golden light beams sputtered on the desert ground, one sizable hole after another was created in the sandy ground.

As the fiery lights fell to the the desert ground, the sandy ground turned scorching hot, as if it was raining lava and the sand was burning.

“The might of a Spirit Channeling grade treasure is indeed amazing!” Xue Long was overjoyed as he watched the golden light beams around him be destroyed by the countless fire beads. Finally, the trap was broken, and he charged out through a loophole in the swirling golden sword lights.

Standing outside the collapsing trap formed by the golden sword lights, covered in bloody wounds, Xue Long couldn't stop panting. He hastily took out a handful of medicinal pills from within his ring of holding and stuffed them down his throat.

Immediately afterwards, the numerous gashes on his badly mangled body stopped bleeding.

With a grim expression, Ning Yang let out a sharp cry, “Flame Dragon Armor!”

Holding his spiritual sword, which was glittering with golden bright light, he leapt into the air.

Under Nie Tian and Xue Long’s gazes, Ning Yang seemed to have merged with his golden spiritual sword and become one enormous broadsword. With an unstoppable momentum, it shot into the heavens.

In a split second, the incomparably sharp broadsword engaged in battle with the Flame Dragon Armor in flame dragon form in midair.

If they didn’t sense with their psychic awareness, but rather observed with their naked eyes, they wouldn’t be able to find any trace of the Flame Dragon Armor or Ning Yang. All they would see was an enormous golden broadsword fighting a gigantic flame dragon in midair.

Even more fragmented golden lights and fire drops fell from midair.

The sky was filled with blazing flames and the earth was covered in holes. The fluctuations of spiritual power created by the midair clashes were so violent that they left Nie Tian in awe.

With a shocked expression on his face, he marveled, “I can’t believe Ning Yang is so powerful!”

“Yeah, as the chosen one of the Heaven Palace Sect, he surely possesses unparalleled strength.” Xue Long said with a bitter smile. “Before our engagement, I didn’t expect him to be so powerful either.”

CRUNCH!

As they spoke, the golden broadsword hacked heavily down on the neck of the blazing flame dragon, giving rise to a loud, metallic, clanking sound.

In the next moment, the Flame Dragon Armor resumed its original form.

Ning Yang's figure also appeared, holding his normal-sized golden sword, which had hacked on the surface of the Flame Dragon Armor.

The sword strike didn't leave any fissure or dent on the Flame Dragon Armor.

However, the sharp metal power within the golden spiritual sword turned into tiny, golden light swords and flew into the Flame Dragon Armor.

“This is not good!” Xue Long's expression flickered. “After all, your cultivation base is still too low, and you can't wear this Spirit Channeling grade armor yet. Because of this, you can't activate and display its full might.”

Nie Tian also sensed the unfavorable situation.

No matter how high its grade, it was still a spiritual tool. Just like any other spiritual tool, it would only be able to display its ultimate power when it became one with its master.

This meant that only when he was able to wear the Flame Dragon Armor, and his cultivation base allowed him to have the Flame Dragon Armor follow his heart's desire, would he be able to bring out its full might.

At this moment, he was facing two problems: one, his cultivation base was still too low; second, he still couldn't wear the Flame Dragon Armor.

Although he had killed Qiu Yang by relying on the Flame Dragon Armor's might, it seemed that if he wanted to kill the incomparably strong late Greater Heaven stage Ning Yang, the Flame Dragon Armor's might alone was probably not enough.

Ferocity could be seen on Nie Tian's face as he blurted, “Uncle Xue, we need to either kill him or badly injure him. Otherwise, we

won't be able to lose him at all. I need your help! Together, we can stop him from chasing after us for good!"

"Sure!"

Chapter 343: Three Parties Join Hands

Now that the Flame Dragon Armor was there to distract Ning Yang, Xue Long was no longer worried that he would have to shoulder the task of defending against him single-handedly.

After hearing Nie Tian's words, Xue Long, who had been messed up really badly by Ning Yang, shared his determination to seriously injure or even kill Ning Yang.

"Go!" With a thought, Xue Long commanded his sword to fly out of his ring of holding.

As it did, it slashed in midair, sending out a ten-meter long sword light, which pierced directly towards Ning Yang's chest!

Ning Yang, who had hacked onto the Flame Dragon Armor's surface with his golden sword, was attempting to destroy the Flame Dragon Armor's internal structure according to his understanding of the profound truths of metal power.

When Xue Long's sword light sailed through the air and pierced towards him, he had no choice but to spare some of his attention to defend against it.

"Golden Armor Shield!" With an effortless move of his hand, Ning Yang cast out a shield glittering with brilliant, golden light.

The golden shield was hexagonal. It rotated in the air and immediately formed a wall of golden light, blocking the path of Xue Long's ten-meter long sword light.

"Split!" Upon Xue Long's cold harrumph, his sword light split into three smaller sword lights, two of which bypassed the golden light wall.

Like two swift fish, they flanked Ning Yang, harboring the intentions to pierce into both sides of his ribcage.

"You're just too stubborn!" With a ice-cold look in his eyes, Ning

Yang made a grabbing motion towards Xue Long's sword lights with his empty hand, as if he were channeling something.

In the next moment, countless golden lights shone out of his palm, and a strange force was born, which forcibly bent Xue Long's two sword lights and changed their directions.

They whizzed by Ning Yang's side, one from the left and one from the right, when they were only one meter away from him.

"Hmm?" The tips of Ning Yang's eyebrows rose as he seemed to sense an anomaly, so he rapidly turned around to check.

Watery ripples began to spread out gently in the empty space behind him.

All of a sudden, four slender swords appeared from within the ripples.

Sharp sounds rang out as the four swords seemed to have pierced through the barrier of space and flown towards Ning Yang like four bolts of lightning.

"Ethereal Swords! Senior Martial Sister!" Nie Tian exclaimed.

PUFF! PUFF!

Xue Long's two sword lights pierced into the desert ground. As they did, a blue shadow appeared out of nowhere.

Ning Yang let out a cold harrumph as he retracted his golden spiritual sword from the Flame Dragon Armor. "Are you courting death?!"

With a few graceful swings of the sword, he sent out one golden sword light after another towards the incoming Ethereal Swords.

The Ethereal Swords flickered constantly as they traveled through the air, disappearing in one moment and appearing in the next.

However, Ning Yang's golden sword lights seemed to possess their own spirit and awareness. With great precision, they rapidly

sought out the Ethereal Swords.

CLANK! CLANK! CLANK! CLANK!

Even though the Ethereal Swords hid themselves in the void, they were located, bombarded by the golden sword lights, and brought down from midair.

Pei Qiqi let out a muffled groan as blood trickled down the corner of her exquisite mouth.

WHOOSH!

At that moment, Nie Tian rapidly formed a spiritual energy ball and cast it towards Ning Yang.

Ning Yang didn't even turn around before a dazzling, golden lightning bolt shot out of his back.

When the spiritual energy ball was still ten meters away from him, it was penetrated by the fierce, golden lightning bolt and exploded.

However, as Ning Yang spared his attention to deal with Pei Qiqi and Nie Tian, Xue Long's one remaining sword light finally penetrated the defensive light wall created by Ning Yang's golden shield.

As it happened, Ning Yang's expression finally flickered slightly.

Nie Tian, who was about to summon strength to form more spiritual energy balls, suddenly sensed a strong attractive force being born within the Flame Dragon Armor, which was within arms-reach from Ning Yang.

In the next moment, his flame power was forcibly pulled away from his madly rotating vortex of flame power.

The flame power seemed to have turned into a river of flames and infused into the Flame Dragon Armor in a split second.

As soon as his flame power poured into the Flame Dragon Armor, he was struck by a strong feeling that the connection between him

and the Flame Dragon Armor had become unprecedentedly strong!

At the same time, he noticed that his psychic power was also being pulled away from him at an amazing speed.

SHEW!

By casting a short-range Starshift, Nie Tian suddenly appeared in a location close to Ning Yang.

The Flame Dragon Armor flew back to him after sensing his appearance in the vicinity.

However, unlike the times before, the Flame Dragon Armor didn't return to his bracelet of holding. Instead, it descended upon him from above his head and fell on his body.

Scalding heat immediately came from the heavy, mountain-like suit of armor.

Standing not far from Ning Yang, Nie Tian experienced severe pain in his knees as his whole body sank slightly, as if he had been hammered into the ground. Like a pair of spears, his feet pierced deeply into the sand.

Panting nonstop, he struggled to channel his flesh power towards his legs. Only by doing that was he barely able to withstand the terrifying weight of the Flame Dragon Armor.

At that moment, raging flames were unleashed from the Flame Dragon Armor's crimson surface, while numerous fiery patterns and seals slithered on it like living dragons or snakes.

But for some reason, the blazing flames unleashed by the Flame Dragon Armor only caused slight discomfort to Nie Tian.

They didn't inflict the slightest damage to his fleshy body.

With a brief examination, he discovered that the torrential flames were laced with his own flame power.

The flame power that had been channeled away from him seemed to have merged with the Flame Dragon Armor and thus

allowed it to carry his aura so that he would be able to withstand the destructive flames it released.

While he was secretly amazed, he sensed that the Flame Dragon Armor had started absorbing his flame power again.

Not only that, but his flesh power, which was much richer and purer than that of Qi warriors at his cultivation stage, was infused into the Flame Dragon Armor along with it.

The Flame Dragon Armor, which seemed to weigh over three thousand tons, seemed to have become so much lighter after absorbing his flesh power.

CLANG! CLANG!

Ning Yang met Xue Long's incoming sword with his golden sword. Upon contact, numerous fragmented sparks shot out into the surroundings, many of which flew directly towards Nie Tian like tiny daggers.

At that time, under the Flame Dragon Armor's channeling, raging flames mixed with Nie Tian's flesh power and formed a bloody-red light screen over Nie Tian's body.

As the dagger-like sparks approached Nie Tian, they had their might cut in half by the chaotic magnetic field.

Then, when they actually reached the bloody-red light screen, their attacks were as weak as tickling, and thus didn't cause any damage to the protective screen at all.

Nie Tian examined it with rapt attention, and discovered that the sputtering sparks had failed to bring the slightest changes to the bloody-red light screen.

Astonishment could be seen in his wide eyes. "I-is this the true might of the Flame Dragon Armor?"

With this thought, he attempted to move his legs, and found that even though the Flame Dragon Armor still felt incomparably

heavy, he was able to move about in it.

After neutralizing Xue Long's full-force attack and making Pei Qiqi puke blood, Ning Yang finally laid his eyes on Nie Tian again. "From the look of it, you don't intend to hand me the fragmentary star marks."

At that moment, Nie Tian was standing only ten meters from him, wearing the Flame Dragon Armor.

Without any warning, he shot his golden sword towards Nie Tian.

The golden sword unleashed ear-piercingly sharp whistles as it entered Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field within a breath's time.

The various types of power within the chaotic magnetic field disturbed and distorted the power Ning Yang had infused into his golden sword.

However, the golden was only slowed down slightly as it pierced towards Nie Tian's chest with an unstoppable momentum.

BANG!

The golden sword was finally met with strong obstruction as it made contact with the bloody-red light screen. It was actually stopped by the light screen formed by raging flames and Nie Tian's flesh essence.

The numerous fiery patterns and seals on the Flame Dragon Armor's surface were rapidly slithering around.

Nie Tian and his Flame Dragon Armor seemed to have turned into a burning sun, and started to emanate frighteningly fierce light and heat.

Nie Tian was struck by a feeling that all of his flame power and most of his flesh power had been sucked away by the Flame Dragon Armor in a flash.

"What?!" Ning Yang exclaimed, standing out of Nie Tian's

chaotic magnetic field, constantly waving his hands to form hand seals.

All of a sudden, countless golden electric arcs flew out from between his palms, rushed into the chaotic magnetic field, and disappeared into his golden sword.

After receiving Ning Yang's reinforcement, the golden sword began to pierce into the blood-colored light screen little by little.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The sounds of the Ethereal Swords rang out again.

Xue Long also charged towards Ning Yang, roaring madly.

Ning Yang's expression remained calm as ever. With a thought, he called his floating golden shield back, which morphed into a streak of golden light and flew back to him.

To everyone's surprise, as the golden light approached, Ning Yang actually opened his mouth and swallowed it.

Immediately afterwards, the golden shield seemed to merge with his flesh and blood.

CLANG! CLANG!

Metallic clashes rang out as Pei Qiqi's four Ethereal Swords made contact with Ning Yang's back. None of them managed to pierce into Ning Yang's skin, but rather, they seemed to have met a piece of metal.

Simultaneously, Xue Long's sword slashed down onto Ning Yang's shoulder.

CLANG!

Sparks sputtered off Ning Yang's shoulder. His well-built body shuddered as his eyes were suddenly filled with wrath.

Ning Yang's skin could now be seen through his torn garments, and unexpectedly, it was the same color as the golden shield he had

just swallowed. The shield seemed to have fully merged with him, making his body impenetrable.

“Come on!” Xue Long’s fighting spirit seemed to be further bolstered. After assuming a firm grip on his sword, he hacked madly at Ning Yang’s head and neck over and over again.

Pei Qiqi also approached Ning Yang. She strengthened her Ethereal Swords with her profound spatial magics and commanded them to pierce towards Ning Yang’s back.

On the other hand, enveloped by the bloody-red light screen, Nie Tian’s face start to look sinister.

Every last bit of his flame power and flesh power had been pulled away by the Flame Dragon Armor.

All the other types of power seemed incompatible with the Flame Dragon Armor, and thus couldn’t be used to strengthen the bloody-red light screen.

However, Ning Yang’s golden sword was unleashing increasingly mighty power. From the look of it, it could shatter the blood-colored light screen at any moment.

Nie Tian threw his head back and let out a explosive roar, “Ning Yang!!!”

It was at that moment of life or death that his heart started racing again.

Chapter 344: Leave No Trouble for the Future!

As Nie Tian's heart started to pound heavily, the green aura that had been coiled at the bottom of his heart suddenly rushed out.

Wisps of blood seemed to be channeled by the green aura as they flowed out of his veins all over his body and infused into the bloody-red light screen created by the Flame Dragon Armor.

The moment the light screen received Nie Tian's blood, it seemed to have found a brand-new source of energy, and it instantly lit up!

Ning Yang's golden sword, the tip of which was piercing into the blood-colored light screen, suddenly began to tremble violently.

As the green aura also flew into the bloody-red light screen, Nie Tian could see with great clarity that it rushed directly towards the tip of the golden sword.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Trembling nonstop, Ning Yang's originally sharp sword seemed to have suddenly become dull.

Like a green flash, the green aura flew right into the golden sword.

The floating sword seemed to have been infused with thousands of tons of weight, and suddenly dropped to the ground.

At the same time, Ning Yang, who was focused on infusing the golden sword with more golden light, experienced a violent shudder in his body, his face filled with shock and confusion.

While he was shocked into a daze, his hands, which were rapidly moving to form exquisite hand seals, exploded.

A bloody mist was created around his badly mangled hands. Bloody wounds appeared on his body, which no longer seemed to

be made of pure, impenetrable metal.

POOH!

At that moment, Pei Qiqi's Ethereal Swords finally penetrated his skin and pierced into his back.

Ning Yang let out a muffled groan and prepared to launch counter-attacks. However, Xue Long's sword then slashed heavily into his shoulder.

CRUNCH!

The sound of bone cracking rang out from Ning Yang's shoulder. Standing straight like a spear, Ning Yang's legs sank into the sand from the terrifying impact of Xue Long's full-force slash.

SHEW!

After Ning Yang's golden sword fell to the ground, the green aura immediately rushed back into Nie Tian's body and returned to his heart.

With the major threat lifted, Nie Tian blurred into action and appeared in front of Ning Yang. Without the slightest hesitation, he summoned his remaining strength and bombarded Ning Yang's chest with a Rage Punch.

Upon the explosive impact, the flesh on Ning Yang's chest split open, creating another blood mist.

After puking a large amount of blood, Ning Yang's unwavering, mountain-like body was sent staggering backwards.

Meanwhile, the four Ethereal Swords pierced deeper into his back.

Still standing straight, Ning Yang had blood dripping down from his hands, chest, and mouth.

BANG!

Finally, he fell backwards, shock and fear replacing the fierceness

in his eyes.

Lying facing the sky, he stared off into the heavens, as it seemed that he didn't understand what had just happened.

It appeared that he couldn't believe that the Heaven stage Nie Tian had actually launched such a powerful strike.

“The Flame Dragon Armor...” Staring blankly into the sky, a train of thoughts entered Ning Yang's mind. He seemed to be marveling at the formidable might of this Spirit Channeling grade treasure, among many other things.

At that moment, Xue Long cried out, hoping to stop Pei Qiqi, “Stop! Don't!”

When Ning Yang had collapsed to the ground, Pei Qiqi had unleashed an exquisite spatial magic and formed a sparking spatial blade with a series of hand seals.

At this moment, Pei Qiqi was manipulating the spatial blade to finish Ning Yang off while he wasn't able to protect himself.

ZZZZZLA!

Xue Long fended off Pei Qiqi's spatial blade from Ning Yang's neck with his sword.

He shouted at Pei Qiqi, “Have you lost your mind? He still is a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect! The Heaven Palace Sect hasn't officially expelled him yet, which means he is still under the the Heaven Palace Sect's protection!

“If you kill him, considering the Heaven Palace Sect's influence, they'll definitely get to the bottom of it.

“Once you've angered the Heaven Palace Sect, no one will be able to keep you safe, not even your master!”

Xue Long's cry quelled Pei Qiqi's soaring killing intent. As she gradually calmed herself, she stood in silence, as if she had come to realize that if she had actually killed Ning Yang, she probably

wouldn't be able to find a single place that was safe for her in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars.

RUUUUUMBLE!

At that moment, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering sound echoed out from the direction of the meteor's crash site.

Nie Tian, Xue Long, and Pei Qiqi turned around and discovered that bright lights were flashing across the air in that area. The rampaging spiritual power fluctuations were even causing the earth to tremble.

Furious flames, slithering lightning bolts, endless ice shards, and devastating thunder rolls had turned that area into a realm of death.

In the very distant sky, where spiritual powers were clashing nonstop, two insignificant figures could be seen attacking a cyan cloud together from both sides.

WHOOSH!

All of a sudden, Li Langfeng, who was supposed to be holding off the Phantasm, flashed into appearance, covered in blood and coughing nonstop.

With every cough, he would spit out a mouthful of grimy blood, which fell heavily into the sand, like small cannon balls.

Solid cyan pieces could be seen within them, as if they were clusters of foreign energies within the phantasm Qi which he wasn't able to absorb and refine.

As powerful as he was, he couldn't even support his own weight at this moment.

He had to get down on one knee and process the corrosive energy the Phantasm had left in him in that position. Through spitting out his own blood, he gradually expelled the incompatible alien energies from his system.

Since the moment he appeared, Nie Tian and the others had fixed all of their attention on him.

Under their confused gazes, Li Langfeng said weakly after another cough, “That Phantasm was way too powerful. If those two Worldly realm Wild Fire experts didn’t sense the battle between me and that Phantasm and come to my aid, I would have been killed already.”

Xue Long was flabbergasted. “What? Worldly realm experts from the Wild Fire were attracted by your battle against that Phantasm?”

Face pale and eyes lifeless, Li Langfeng nodded slightly. “Our battle caused a major stir in that area. Since we were not far from Ash City, those two Wild Fire experts were on one of their trips to the forbidden region. They sensed our battle and came.

“After all, the Phantasm is an outsider. Even though I was never close to the Wild Fire, the moment they saw the Phantasm, they threw themselves at it.

“I was so badly injured that I had to get out of there.”

After a brief explanation, he caught sight of Ning Yang, who was lying feeble and staring into the heavens, and said, “Did you three do this to him?”

Even though Li Langfeng had only caught a glimpse of Ning Yang’s battle skills, he was convinced that this man wasn’t someone Xue Long could handle.

Even if he was still at the Greater Heaven stage, he wouldn’t have confidence to beat this man in a battle.

From what Li Langfeng could tell, both Nie Tian’s and Pei Qiqi’s strengths were very limited. He didn’t believe either of them could provide Xue Long with noticeable assistance.

“Umm... Yeah.” A bitter smile filled Xue Long’s face.

He knew perfectly clearly why Li Langfeng seemed so surprised.

He was well-aware that Li Langfeng didn't think very highly of his battle prowess, which was why he had only urged them to try their best to escape from Ning Yang's pursuit.

Li Langfeng believed that if the three of them cooperated well enough, they would probably be able to lose Ning Yang.

As a matter of fact, even now, Xue Long still found the scene in front of him a bit unreal.

He had never expected that Nie Tian would have been able to withstand Ning Yang's full-force attack.

Only because Ning Yang had focused his mind and all of his strength on killing Nie Tian had he and Pei Qiqi found the opportunity to approach and attack Ning Yang without encountering any resistance.

If Nie Tian hadn't shouldered most of Ning Yang's attacking force, he and Pei Qiqi probably wouldn't have been able to even get close to Ning Yang.

Although they had won this battle and Ning Yang was no longer capable of fighting back, he wasn't happy at all.

If Nie Tian hadn't come back for him, he probably would have been killed by Ning Yang already.

"Sorry, Brother Xue," Li Langfeng said solemnly. "I shouldn't have underestimated you."

He assumed that Xue Long was the main reason why the three of them had been able to make Ning Yang suffer from severe injuries and collapse.

Before, he didn't have a high opinion of Xue Long, and assumed that his battle prowess wasn't on the same level as Ning Yang.

Ning Yang's total defeat made him change his opinion about Xue Long completely.

However, after being appraised by him, Xue Long seemed very embarrassed. He put on a wry smile and said, “Well, this was mainly thanks to Nie Tian. I didn’t do much.”

Nie Tian took a deep breath and said, “You’re being humble. If it weren’t for you, I would have been dead already.”

With these words, Nie Tian stepped to Ning Yang’s side, where he looked down at the already-unconscious Ning Yang silently.

“What do you want to do, Nie Tian!?” Xue Long exclaimed.

With a calm expression and a determined tone, Nie Tian said, “Uncle Xue, the enmity between him and me has become so great that it can never be forgiven. I took the third fragmentary star mark from him, along with the unbelievable fortune that comes with it. As long as he’s alive, he won’t allow me to live in peace.”

Flabbergasted, Xue Long said, “You want to kill him?! No! You’ve got to calm down! He’s still a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect!”

“But he’s too powerful. He possesses such formidable battle prowess while he’s only at the Greater Heaven stage.” Nie Tian seemed to have mulled over his decision. “If he survives this fierce battle, he’ll definitely advance into the Worldly realm. Once that happens, I’m afraid that I won’t even be able to sleep at night. I can’t afford to let him live. Otherwise, he’s going to be my worst nightmare.”

With these words, he had already summoned the fire-attributed broadsword he had used to kill Qiu Yang, and intended to drive it through Ning Yang’s neck.

At that moment, Ning Yang’s eyes snapped open as he shouted, “Do you actually dare to kill me?!”

“How about I do it for you, Nie Tian?” Li Langfeng said with an intrigued expression on his face. His eyes were filled with approval and appreciation as he looked at Nie Tian. “I’m all by myself and bound by no rules. Even if killing him means I won’t be able to

make a living in the Realm of Split Void anymore, I can just go to other realms. I'm not afraid of the Heaven Palace Sect. Let me do you the favor."

Nie Tian shook his head. "It won't be necessary."

Amidst Ning Yang's shriek, his sword slashed down from midair.

Unable to defend himself, Ning Yang had his head severed from his body. Even still, his eyes were still wide open, as if he still couldn't believe that Nie Tian would actually have the audacity to kill him despite his noble status.

Chapter 345: Appreciation

Li Langfeng couldn't help but call out, "Good boy!"

He didn't expect that Nie Tian would actually have the audacity to chop off Ning Yang's head.

Since the Heaven Palace Sect hadn't formally declared that they had expelled him, he was still a member of the Heaven Palace Sect.

Not only that, but the Heaven Palace Sect had also placed high hopes in him. They had thrown in endless resources and effort to build him up into a future star, which was apparent from the exquisite golden sword and shield he used

Ever since Xue Long had made his deal with the Spirit Condor, the thought of killing Ning Yang had never entered his mind. When he had learned that Li Langfeng would also join their operation against Ning Yang, he had repeatedly warned Li Langfeng against killing Ning Yang.

Even just now, when Pei Qiqi had been caught up in the moment and almost killed Ning Yang, he had hastily interrupted her. After a second thought, the calmed Pei Qiqi had also dropped the idea of killing Ning Yang.

This was enough evidence that neither Xue Long nor Pei Qiqi had the audacity to kill Ning Yang.

In Li Langfeng's eyes, Nie Tian would behave exactly the same as those two. He would probably also be held back by his worries, and wouldn't dare to launch the murderous strike.

However, Nie Tian actually did!

Furthermore, that was after he had offered to do it and shoulder the responsibility for Nie Tian. Right after Nie Tian respectfully refused his offer, he had chopped off Ning Yang's head without the slightest hesitation.

That was why he came to think very highly of Nie Tian and became full of praise.

“The fact that you actually dare to kill Ning Yang proves that you didn’t obtain those fragmentary star marks by accident. Only those who are strong and fearless deserve those legacy marks from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. I’m truly impressed, kid!”

Xue Long and Pei Qiqi, however, stood speechless as they stared at Ning Yang’s severed head and open eyes, as if they were shocked by Nie Tian’s fierceness and cruelty.

At that moment, Nie Tian said with a surprisingly calm tone, “We’re different. I can feel Ning Yang’s hatred towards me. If I don’t kill him, sooner or later, he’ll seek me out and have his revenge. Since he’s too powerful, if I let him live, the next time we meet, I’ll be the one to die.

“The only way to make sure that doesn’t happen is to kill him and put an end to his threat!”

“Exactly, this is what you’re supposed to do.” An admiring smile appeared on Li Langfeng’s normally gloomy face.

Completely depleted, Nie Tian dropped heavily to the ground. He felt he even had difficulty turning his head as he said, “Uncle Xue, Senior Martial Sister, you can go ahead and take Ning Yang’s valuables.”

After he sat down, the Flame Dragon Armor flew up into the air before turning into a streak of fiery light and disappearing into his bracelet of holding.

The blood-colored light screen disintegrated. His blood, flame power, and flesh power returned to his body like floating streams of flames and blood.

Nie Tian examined himself with rapt attention, and discovered that his battle against Ning Yang had drained almost all of his strength.

With a single glance at Xue Long and Pei Qiqi, he could tell that they were in a situation similar to his, their expressions so exhausted that it seemed as if they could collapse at any moment.

“You don’t want any of Ning Yang’s valuables?” Xue Long asked softly.

“No, I don’t.” Sincerity could be seen on Nie Tian’s face. “You put in so much effort to help me fight him that you almost got killed by him. You did all that for me. It’s only fair that you take his valuables.”

Pei Qiqi, who had been caught up in Nie Tian’s crazy act of killing Ning Yang, finally resumed a calm state of mind and said, “Do you know that golden sword and shield of his are of Premium grade? The way I see it, both of them are spiritual tools of great value, and they are only slightly inferior to Spirit Channeling grade spiritual tools.

“You’re right.” Xue Long chimed in. “Those two spiritual tools the Heaven Palace Sect bestowed upon him are definitely beyond ordinary. Each of them must be worth more than 100,000 spirit stones.”

“It’s alright. What I got is far more valuable.” Nie Tian pointed to his chest, where his fragmentary star marks were.

Xue Long and Pei Qiqi instantly understood what he meant.

After realizing that Nie Tian had obtained the third legacy mark of Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace from Ning Yang, they no longer had the feeling that they were being given more than they deserved.

The two of them exchanged a glance, then stepped towards Ning Yang’s corpse. Pei Qiqi took the golden sword, while Xue Long placed one hand on the abdomen of Ning Yang’s corpse, and slowly detached and pulled out the golden shield from it.

Afterwards, Pei Qiqi, who was an expert in spatial magics, took

Ning Yang's ring of holding and lifted its restrictive spell.

CLATTER!

After a brief glance at its insides, Pei Qiqi poured out every item within the ring of holding.

Xue Long rapidly discovered that there were mainly spirit stones and spiritual materials for cultivation and recuperation.

Other than those, there were also a few hundred Star Stones.

Obviously, Ning Yang was so confident in himself that he didn't believe he would end up severely wounded from battles against others. Therefore, he didn't bring a single bottle of medicinal pills with him.

The only truly valuable items on him were the sword and the shield.

"Here, these Star Stones will be useful to you." Pei Qiqi piled the several hundred Star Stones in front of Nie Tian, since neither of them would need them.

Then, she and Xue Long went ahead and divided what was left.

Li Langfeng waited for them to finish dividing the spoils before saying, "I know that we're all in poor conditions. The truth is my injuries are just as heavy as yours. Nevertheless, I've got to say that we shouldn't stay here for too long. Those two Worldly realm experts from the Wild Fire won't necessarily defeat that Phantasm.

"In my opinion, we need to put our recovery on hold and get out of here as soon as possible."

"That Phantasm is really that formidable?" Xue Long asked with a grim expression.

Li Langfeng nodded slightly and answered, "Like you wouldn't believe."

Xue Long's expression flickered as he hastily rose to his feet and said, "If that's the case, let's return to the Void Illusion Mountain

Range first.”

Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi both nodded in assent.

SHEW!

A cluster of dark-green smoke rushed out of Li Langfeng’s fingertip and flew into Ning Yang’s corpse.

Afterwards, Ning Yang’s corpse melted into bloody water at a rate noticeable to the naked eye before it eventually disappeared, and the bloody water seeped into the sand.

After disposing of Ning Yang’s body, Li Langfeng turned to Nie Tian said with a composed tone, “You don’t need to worry, kid. We’ll unify our statement. Whenever people ask us about it, or the Heaven Palace Sect comes to inquire of us, I’ll tell them that Ning Yang was killed by that Phantasm. We’re the only ones who have witnessed his death. Plus, that Phantasm actually did attack Ning Yang.”

“That exactly what I’m thinking,” Nie Tian said with a smile.

Then, Li Langfeng continued, “Try your best to hide the truth. But if you can’t, you can just tell them that I did it. I won’t be around for long anyways. Perhaps I’ll already be down in the Yellow Springs before the Heaven Palace Sect can find me and make me pay for it.”

With these words, he took the initiative and sped off in the direction of the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

For some reason, watching Li Langfeng run into the distance and thinking about his words, a sense of sadness rose from the bottom of Nie Tian’s heart.

Xue Long let out a sigh.

“Let’s move out,” Pei Qiqi said with an expressionless face.

Afterwards, the four of them dragged their heavily-injured and exhausted bodies as they marched towards the Void Illusion

Mountain Range.

Their return journey turned out surprisingly smooth, and they didn't encounter any Hunters.

What they didn't know was that as they returned to the Void Illusion Mountain Range, two more meteors fell from the heavens and plummeted to the earth almost simultaneously.

Two other Phantasms came out of them, their vague figures wreathed in dense, cyan phantasm Qi.

The first Phantasm that had descended upon the forbidden region had fought against the two Worldly realm Wild Fire experts for hours.

When the other two Phantasms landed and unleashed auras to search for their companion, the two Worldly realm Wild Fire experts immediately sensed their auras.

Surprised, they hastily ended their battle against the Phantasm and returned to Ash City.

It wasn't long before the three Phantasms found each other and reunited at the crash site of the first fallen meteor.

Wreathed in the thick, cyan phantasm Qi, they started to exchange words.

“I accidentally encountered two young men who had been to the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Unfortunately, three Worldly realm human experts came successively. I was held off by them, and failed to kill those two young men and take away their legacy marks.”

“Those three legacy marks will allow them to seal the three opened spatial rifts. If we can figure out a way to kill those two young men and destroy those legacy marks, then the humans will never be able to cast the spell that will allow them to seal the spatial rifts. Then, it won't be long before Demons swarm into the Domain of the Falling Stars, which will be good for the

implementation of our plan.”

“They’ve headed towards the mountain range filled with active spatial rifts.”

“What a coincidence. That’s our destination too. Let’s do go the Demons a favor and help them destroy those legacy marks in that mountain range.”

“Let’s go! “

With these words, the three Phantasms also marched towards the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Chapter 346: News Spreads

After returning to the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Nie Tian discovered that even though Qi warriors from different parts of the Realm of Split Void were still searching for the Flame Dragon Armor, their enthusiasm had faded considerably.

The Blood Skull, Wild Fire, Dark Moon, and numerous Hunters, as well as the individual explorers, had failed to discover any sign of the Spirit Channeling grade treasure.

As time passed, many people decided not to waste any more of their time.

Even the Blood Skull, who had very high hopes in their operation, retreated from the Wild Fire's territory.

...

After marching back to the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Li Langfeng came to a stop. He turned to the others and said, "It's about time we part ways."

After marching without any disruption for about a dozen days, everyone's injuries had recovered to certain degree.

Through circulating his wood power and consuming large amounts of spirit beast meat, Nie Tian had already healed most of the heavy injuries he had sustained from his battle against Ning Yang.

Not only that, but his spiritual sea was also once again brimming with the power of various attributes.

By contrast, it seemed that Li Langfeng hadn't recovered from his battle against the Phantasm yet, and he still needed time to recover to his peak state.

However, Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi, and Xue Long were all guest elders of the Blood Skull, while Li Langfeng was a guest elder of the Dark

Moon.

The three of them planned to return to Shatter City as soon as possible, so it wouldn't be a good choice for him to follow along.

“What exactly is the deal that you made with the Spirit Condor?” Nie Tian's question seemed a bit out of the blue.

He knew that the only reason why Li Langfeng had agreed to help him snatch the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang was the deal he had made with the Spirit Condor, according to which, he would spend some time helping Li Langfeng absorb toxic Qi more efficiently with his spiritual energy ball technique.

“What deal?” Pei Qiqi was confused.

Of the four of them, Pei Qiqi was the only one who didn't know that the Spirit Condor was the reason why Li Langfeng and Xue Long had agreed to help Nie Tian.

Ignoring Pei Qiqi's question, Li Langfeng looked at Nie Tian and said, “According to the deal I made with the Spirit Condor, you'll spend three months helping me cultivate after I help you finish your mission. But, I've already entered the Worldly realm, and I'm not in a hurry to accumulate strength. Right now, I need to stabilize my cultivation base, mull over the difference between the Worldly realm and the Greater Heaven stage, and temper my soul power skills.”

After a moment of pondering, Nie Tian said, “How about this: you can come and find me when you need my help in the future.”

Li Langfeng fell silent for a moment before saying, “I think you'd better return to the Realm of Flame Heaven as soon as you can.”

“He's right,” Xue Long said with a serious expression. “Now that you've collected all three fragmentary star marks, according to you, you'll be able to seal the three spatial rifts in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, so you should get started as soon as

possible. As we speak, those three major spatial rifts are leaking endless demon Qi into our world. We don't know when Demons will invade again.

“The sooner you close those spatial rifts, the better it will be for the Domain of the Falling Stars. After all, Demons are outsiders. They will always be the biggest threat to us.

“Especially now that Phantasms have come to the Realm of Split Void.

“I suspect that those Phantasms have something to do with the Demons' invasion! For some reason, I have a feeling that the arrival of those Phantasms will trigger a series of great changes!”

After hearing Xue Long's analysis, Nie Tian fell silent. After a long time, he nodded and said, “Indeed, I've got to return to the Realm of Flame Heaven as soon as I can. However, I'll come back to the Realm of Split Void for sure.”

“Why would you?” Li Langfeng seemed very surprised.

Nie Tian didn't answer his question.

He had a hunch that there must be a deep connection between the forbidden region, which constantly attracted meteors to fall from the sky, and the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

Before, he had probed into the earth in that forbidden region and learned that secrets were hiding in the depths of the earth.

He also believed that only he, the man who had received the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, would be able to uncover those secrets.

However, his current cultivation base was still too low. Since he hadn't transcended his psychic power into soul power, he didn't have the ability to uncover the underground secret yet.

As his cultivation base improved, and his mastery of the Fragmentary Star Incantation progressed, he would eventually

return to that region and get to the bottom of it.

Li Langfeng nodded, and didn't seem to be displeased by Nie Tian's non-reply. "I see. You have your reasons. Anyhow, I've got to thank you for consuming your own strength to help me advance into the Worldly realm within such a short time. If you ever run into trouble, or need to kill someone, hit me up.

"It doesn't matter if it's in the Realm of Split Void or other realms, I'll do it to return the favor."

"Many thanks." Nie Tian clasped his hands to express his gratitude formally. Then, he said, "When you need me to help you absorb toxic Qi to accumulate strength in the future, you're welcome to come find me, if I'm in the Realm of Split Void."

"Alright, this is it." Li Langfeng waved his hand and bid to Nie Tian and the others farewell.

Looking in the direction Li Langfeng had left in, Nie Tian muttered, "That man isn't always a bad guy."

Only when Li Langfeng disappeared into the distance did Xue Long mutter, "It's definitely not fun to become his enemy. But it's a blessing if you can win his approval and become his friend."

"Come on, let's go to the Blood Skull's base." Pei Qiqi said with an expressionless face.

"Sure."

With these words, the three of them marched on into the Void Illusion Mountain Range again.

By the time they arrived at the Blood Skull's base, Gu Yu seemed deeply surprised by their arrival and asked, "Where did you go?"

"We took a trip to the east of Ash City," Xue Long replied.

"To the east of Ash City?!" A shocked expression appeared on Gu Yu's face as he hastily asked, "Do you know that Phantasms have appeared in the forbidden region to the east of Ash City?"

Nie Tian was taken aback. “How did you know about that?”

A shudder ran through Gu Yu’s body as he asked, “Does that mean Phantasms have actually appeared in that region?”

He looked back and forth between Nie Tian, Xue Long, and Pei Qiqi’s faces, and noticed that their expressions seemed very unnatural. That was when he was convinced that the news was authentic.

Then, he went on to explain, “Word came from the Wild Fire headquarters in Ash City five days ago, saying that they have discovered Phantasms. The forbidden region to the east of Ash City was the place where they discovered the Phantasms. At first, they only discovered one Phantasm, and it was engaged in fierce battle against a guest elder of the Dark Moon, Li Langfeng.

“By the time the Wild Fire’s powerful experts arrived, Li Langfeng was already badly wounded. Even though Li Langfeng had advanced to the Worldly realm, he couldn’t match up to that Phantasm’s battle prowess.

“Therefore, those two Wild Fire experts joined hands and attacked that Phantasm together. However, as their battle went on, two more meteors fell from the heavens, and two more Phantasms emerged from within them!

“Upon seeing that, the Wild Fire experts immediately retreated to Ash City. It wasn’t long before the Wild Fire organized a team of their most powerful experts and sent them to the forbidden region, hoping to find those three Phantasms.

“However, they mysteriously disappeared, and left no trace of where they might have gone.

“Since it’s a matter of great importance, and the Wild Fire was worried that something huge would happen to the Realm of Split Void, they passed the news on to us and the Dark Moon.

“The three parties have reached an agreement that they will all

restrain themselves from starting battles with each other for the time being.”

Without holding anything back, Gu Yu explained the news he had received, as well as the current situation to Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi, and Xue Long.

“Uncle Gu, Hua Tian and I have to return to Shatter City now,” Pei Qiqi said with a face that was as expressionless as ever. “If you have any questions, you can just go ahead and ask Uncle Xue. He knows everything.”

Gu Yu nodded. “Okay.” Then, he arranged for a member of the Blood Skull to take them to the teleportation portal.

He, however, stayed and started an in-depth discussion with Xue Long regarding the appearance of the Phantasms. Obviously, he believed the significance of this matter surpassed that of any other matter.

SHEW!

Moments later, Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi returned to Shatter City via the Blood Skull’s teleportation portal.

It was early in the morning.

As the two of them walked in the chilly, empty street, Pei Qiqi suddenly asked, “You’re really going back to the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

“Yeah,” Nie Tian said, nodding. “The Realm of Flame Heaven is my home. It has already suffered enough recently. As we speak, endless demon Qi is pouring out of a huge spatial rift that has appeared out of nowhere. It won’t be long before the entire Realm of Flame Heaven is filled with poisonous demon Qi and becomes uninhabitable for humans. Now that I’ve obtained all three fragmentary star marks, it’s my duty to seal that spatial rift.”

“I see,” Pei Qiqi said with a soft voice.

After that, she kept silent the whole way back to their residence in Shatter City. Just as they were about to arrive at the gate, she suddenly said, “If you don’t mind, I want to go to the Realm of Flame Heaven with you.”

“Why?” Nie Tian sounded very surprised.

“I practice spatial magics, and I recently entered the Greater Heaven stage,” Pei Qiqi said with a composed expression. “I need to expand my horizons and temper my skills. That spatial rift connects our world with the Demon’s realms, which is already mysterious enough. However, the profound magics from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace can actually allow you to seal that spatial rift. That makes it even more unbelievable.

“I want to take a look at that spatial rift and be there when you seal it, so that I can better my understanding of the profound truths of spatial energy.

Her reason sounded very reasonable.

“Alright then,” Nie Tian agreed.

Chapter 347: A Man Waiting

Pei Qiqi's bright eyes lit up when Nie Tian agreed to let her go to the Realm of Flame Heaven together.

Nie Tian felt Pei Qiqi's concealed delight.

However, it was just a flash before Pei Qiqi's face became indifferent again, as if she didn't care about Nie Tian's consent at all.

As soon as they walked through the door, they saw a man smiling at them. "Hua Tian, Qiqi."

"Mr. Hua!!" Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi exclaimed simultaneously, surprise filling their eyes.

Hu Rong from the Spirit Condor was standing next to Hua Mu. From the look of it, they had been waiting for some time.

Li Ye also rushed to the door upon hearing them. "You're finally back, Senior Martial Sister!"

Unlike before, this time, Li Ye looked surprisingly radiant. Not only was he neatly dressed, but he also wasn't drinking. Both his mindset and appearance seemed to have gone through great changes.

"Did you break through to the Greater Heaven stage?" Pei Qiqi asked with a surprised tone.

Li Ye threw his head back and let out a broad laugh. "Hahaha! As you know, senior martial sister, the advancement of my cultivation base is closely linked with the advancement of my equipment forging skills. Forging satisfactory spiritual tools contributes greatly to my cultivation. My Dao is to forge high-quality equipment."

"Have you finished with Hua Tian's spiritual tool?" Pei Qiqi felt enlivened.

“Yeah, I did!” Li Ye nodded repeatedly. “It was because that spiritual tool for Hua Tian is so complicated that I came to discover many new equipment forging skills throughout the nerve-wracking process, which eventually allowed me to break through into the Greater Heaven stage.

“I guess I’ve got to thank you for this, Hua Tian!”

Hua Mu turned to Li Ye and said with a hearty smile on his face, “You’re a smart kid, Li Ye. If your biggest interest didn’t lie in equipment forging, but rather in cultivation, I believe very few people would have a better talent than you do. Even the disciples of the Heaven Palace Sect who practice fire-attributed incantations wouldn’t match up to your talent.”

“That’s too kind of you, Mr. Hua,” Li Ye said with a titter.

At that moment, he planned to fetch the spiritual tool he had customized for Nie Tian’s needs. However, Hua Mu waved his hand at him and said, “That can wait. I have some important matters that I need to discuss with Hua Tian. You can bring out that spiritual tool and take your time explaining its features to Hua Tian after we’re finished.”

Somewhat dispirited, Li Ye answered, “Alright.”

He took tremendous pride in the spiritual tool he had customized for Nie Tian. He took it as the culmination of his equipment forging career.

Otherwise, he would not have received critical enlightenment and thus entered the Greater Heaven stage during the forging process.

Since he was so proud of this masterpiece of his, he was very eager to present it to Nie Tian.

“Come with me, Hua Tian.” With these words, Hua Mu led Nie Tian and Hu Rong from the Spirit Condor to the stone room where he had been resting recently.

Upon entering the room, the tips of Hua Mu's eyebrows moved, and a blue-green light screen rapidly spread out along the walls, ceiling, and floor, enveloping the entire room.

Sealed away by that layer of faint light, Hua Mu was confident that no one in Shatter City would be able to eavesdrop on their conversation, including Cai Lan, the head of the Blood Skull.

Nie Tian bowed respectfully towards Hu Rong, saying, "Thank you, Uncle Hu, for arranging for Xue Long and Li Langfeng to assist me."

He understood that if it weren't for the Spirit Condor's maneuvers, Xue Long and Li Langfeng would never have bothered to help him. Xue Long had agreed to lend him a hand because he owed the Spirit Condor a favor.

Li Langfeng had also only agreed to join his team because of the deal the Spirit Condor had put forth.

"I do not dare to accept the honor," Hu Rong immediately said, waving his hands. Then, he turned to Hua Mu and said in a respectful manner, "Everything has been done according to Mr. Hua's will. Otherwise, Xue Long would have never given me face and agreed to help you. I'm only a foot soldier, and I'm only delivering a task that Mr. Hua put into my hands."

From the way Hu Rong treated Hua Mu, Nie Tian could tell that Hu Rong hadn't lied to him the last time they'd met. Hua Mu must hold a lofty position in the Spirit Condor.

"How did your mission go?" Hua Mu gradually put away his smiles and assumed a serious expression. "I received word that Phantasms have appeared in that so-called forbidden region; is that true? Did you encounter Ning Yang? Is Li Langfeng still okay?" He asked a series of questions that he was the most concerned with.

He had only been back in Shatter City for a few days.

As soon as he had arrived in Shatter City, he had learned from Hu

Rong that Xue Long and Li Langfeng had both moved out to help Nie Tian snatch the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.

Soon afterwards, he had received word from the Wild Fire that Phantasms had descended upon the forbidden region to the east of Ash City, which had made him worry a great deal for Nie Tian's safety.

Meanwhile, he was always well-aware how formidable Ning Yang was. He had even suspected that Xue Long and Li Langfeng might not have the ability to overtake Ning Yang together.

Both Hua Mu and Hu Rong knew his real identity and the situation he was in. Therefore, he didn't feel the need to hide anything when he talked to them. "It was a complicated and breathtaking journey..."

He started by telling them about how he had met Li Langfeng and helped him break through into the Worldly realm. Then, he went on to detailedly explain how he had run into Shi Hui and his men, along with how they had encountered a Phantasm and started a fierce battle against Ning Yang.

Since he started telling his story, which had happened not long ago, Hua Mu and Hu Rong hadn't made a single sound. They listened to him attentively.

Many expressions flashed across their faces as they were repeatedly shocked by Nie Tian's treacherous encounters.

After Nie Tian was finished, the two of them remained silent for a while. From their expressions, he could tell they were still digesting the substantial amount of information he had poured on them.

An astonished expression appeared on Hu Rong's face as he asked, "Umm, did you sneak up on and kill Qiu Yang and the other three middle Greater Heaven stage experts all by yourself?"

"Yeah."

“Have you already obtained Ning Yang’s fragmentary star mark?”

“Yeah.”

“And you killed him?”

“Yeah.”

With wide eyes, Hu Rong asked one question after another, and Nie Tian answered each of them by nodding back at him.

Afterwards, Hu Rong looked at Nie Tian with a gaze that was so full of disbelief that it was as if he was looking at a monster that was even more dreadful than a Demon or a Phantasm.

Hua Mu, however, stayed silent and did not say a thing.

But his expression flickered subtly. Clearly, deep down, he was just as shocked as Hu Rong was.

After a long time, Hua Mu rubbed his temples and said with a sigh, “You little punk. I was almost scared to death when I heard that you had brought two fragmentary star marks back from your trip into the Heaven Gate. I didn’t expect that the surprises you’d give me were far from over... God... I wasn’t mistaken when I discovered you when you were still a boy. You can even say that it was my good luck that I discovered you in Black Cloud City.”

“I couldn’t have done all this without the profound legacies I received from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and a bit of luck.” Nie Tian sounded very humble. “If I hadn’t received those legacies, and you didn’t arranged for Xue Long and Li Langfeng to assist me, there is no way that I could have finished such an impossible task on my own.”

Only he knew his bloodline power, his newly-acquired bloodline talent, and the techniques he had learned from the mysterious land had also played important roles in his success.

However, he would rather keep those secrets to himself for the

time being.

Hua Mu rubbed his temples as he digested all the information. Only after some time did he nod and say, “Alright... Ning Yang is dead. So be it. After all, obtaining the third fragmentary star mark was your first priority. You should know that the situation out there is worsening fast. I even thought about helping you snatch Ning Yang’s fragmentary star mark myself.

“I just didn’t expect that you would actually manage to obtain it within such a short time.

“We’d better make haste. Go take the spiritual tool Li Ye made for you. We leave for the Realm of Flame Heaven today.

“I’ll tell you on our way how dire the situation is right now.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Alright, we can go anytime you see fit.”

After a brief hesitation, he added, “Right, I promised Senior Martial Sister Pei that I’d take her back to the Realm of Flame Heaven with me.”

Upon hearing these words, Hua Mu’s expression instantly grew strange as he asked, “Hua Tian, you and her didn’t, well, you know...?”

Hu Rong also went blank as he gazed at Nie Tian, his eyes filled with admiration and ambiguity.

“No, no, no... It’s not like that...” Nie Tian hastily explained. “As you know, she’s practices the art of spatial energy. She only wants to go the Realm of Flame Heaven so that she can check on the spatial rift and see how I seal it. She hopes to deepen her understanding of profound spatial energy.

Disappointment could be seen on Hua Mu’s face as he said, “Oh, okay. I thought you and Qiqi... Hahaha, she’s a good girl and she’d be a perfect match for you. If she really wants to go, we’ll take her with us. It won’t be a problem.”

“Thank you,” Nie Tian said.

“Alright, let’s go,” Hua Mu urged. “We’ll head out as soon as you fetch that spiritual tool from Li Ye. Time is of the essence here.”

“Okay.”

Chapter 348: Return **Festival Feature Included**

It was an isolated island in the middle of an ocean that stretched as far as the eye could see in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Hua Mu, Pei Qiqi, and Nie Tian arrived on this island from the Blood Skull's grand teleportation portal in Shatter City.

The three of them walked out of the teleportation portal inside the mountain's belly and found that it was already midday. The sun shone fiercely above the lonely island.

Nie Tian was holding a dark-red saber in his hands. He would infuse it with streams of power of different attributes from time to time and marvel at it.

This saber, with the name "Flame Star," was none other than the masterful spiritual tool Li Ye had customized for Nie Tian.

The Flame Star was 1.5 meters in length and dark-red in color. Its hilt was made of wood-attributed spiritual materials, and its blade was forged from essence extracted from numerous Star Stones, along with precious fire-attributed spiritual materials.

Its blade was engraved with numerous complicated, detailed spell formations, which would allow it to channel and circulate flame power, wood power, and star power within itself.

Holding the beautiful saber, Nie Tian could almost still hear Li Ye's endless bragging and detailed explanation regarding it.

Li Ye's pleased and proud face constantly flashed across Nie Tian's mind, making him realize this saber was the culmination of his equipment forging career.

According to Li Ye, the Flame Star fell into the level three Premium grade.

Since it was custom-made for Nie Tian's needs, it could be

bolstered by Nie Tian's three different types of spiritual power, making it Nie Tian's go-to spiritual tool for a long time in the future.

Numerous bright spots that contained refined spiritual power flashed across the marvelous spell formations on the Flame Star's surface. Eyes narrowed, Nie Tian felt the subtle flow of his spiritual power within the Flame Star as he tried to learn more about this remarkable piece of work.

The more he fiddled with it, the more marvelous he felt it to be. Clearly, he had already grown attached to it, and he couldn't help but marvel at it from time to time.

He clicked his tongue as he said, "I never thought I'd say this, but Li Ye does have true talent. The moment I laid my hand on the Flame Star, I could tell it suited me perfectly, as if it was born for me and no one else."

"Yeah, of course. You're the only reason it exists," Pei Qiqi replied with a plain tone.

Hua Mu shot a glance at him and said, "Alright, I've never seen you put it down since the moment you got it. You'll have plenty of time to learn the features of the Flame Star later. You don't need to figure them all out now."

With these words, Hua Mu summoned his Lightning Shuttle and beckoned for Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi to get on board.

Pei Qiqi's eyes lit up as she exclaimed softly, "A Lightning Shuttle! Wow, Mr. Hua! I can't believe you actually possesses such a rare air-transportation spiritual tool!"

Even for the Wild Fire, Dark Moon, and Blood Skull, they only owned ground-transportation spiritual tools.

None of the three major forces of the Realm of Split Void had ever possessed a fast air-transportation spiritual tool like the Lightning Shuttle.

As far as she knew, only a handful of sects that were as powerful as the Heaven Palace Sect possessed similar air-transportation spiritual tools, and only their top figures would have access to those rare treasures.

The fact that Hua Mu had a Lightning Shuttle was enough evidence of his substantial wealth and lofty status.

“Actually, it was thanks to your master that I came to own it,” Hua Mu said with a smile. “There are very few Qi warriors who know how to forge a Lightning Shuttle in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars. Luckily for me, your master is one of them. So, I gathered all the required spiritual materials and asked her to forge this Lightning Shuttle for me.”

“How come I didn’t know about this?” Pei Qiqi was curious.

A complicated look flashed across Hua Mu’s eye as he said, “That was a very long time ago.”

Pei Qiqi seemed to have understood something, and thus didn’t pursue the matter.

As soon as she and Nie Tian both stepped into the Lightning Shuttle, Hua Mu started it. Then, it rose up into the air and disappeared into the distant horizon like a bright flash in broad daylight.

As the Lightning Shuttle traveled at an immeasurably fast speed, Hua Mu took the time to explain the perilous situation to Nie Tian.

It had been about two years since Nie Tian had left the Realm of Flame Heaven.

During this period of time, the speed at which the three spatial rifts had leaked demon Qi into the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, and the and Realm of Mystic Heaven had surpassed everyone’s expectations.

It had only been two years and yet one fourth of the Realm of Flame Heaven was already drowning in raging demon Qi.

The Hell Sect had been forced to move from their original location.

The Heaven Palace Sect from the Realm of Mystic Heaven was also on the verge of being submerged by demon Qi, so it wouldn't be long before they were driven out of their headquarters as well.

The situation was just as bad in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Nie Tian had been missing for a long time. Numerous sects and forces had joined the search. Yet, none of them had been able to ferret him out.

As time passed, rumors emerged that Nie Tian, who had obtained two fragmentary star marks, was already dead.

Even though people in the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations felt insecure and uneasy after hearing such rumors, since those two realms were overseen and ruled by powerful sects, no significant turmoil had occurred.

However, as for Realm of Flame Heaven, perhaps due to the widely-spread rumor of Nie Tian being dead, and the fact that the raging demon Qi had been spreading exceedingly fast, everyone in the Realm of Flame Heaven had started panicking, as if they couldn't see any hope.

It wasn't long before the sects that had connections with other realms started to pull some strings and arrange for their core disciples to evacuate from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Soon afterwards, word of such actions leaked out, making the clans that clung to those sects, as well as the mortals who lived in cities like Black Cloud City, feel terrified and desperate.

After all, they knew in their hearts that the power of those sects was very limited, and they couldn't possibly evacuate every man and woman from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

As the desperate emotions spread out among the people, the

situation in the Realm of Flame Heaven grew increasingly complicated and hard to contain.

Mortals and low-level Qi warriors sensed their imminent doom, and thus gave in to their evil side and did whatever they liked. As a result, numerous mortal cities were plagued by constant killing, raping, and plundering.

The disciples of the major sects who had low cultivation bases and statuses were also drowned in desperation, and thus abandoned themselves.

Sects and clans that used to plot against the Realm of Flame Heaven also gave up their original plans and cut off their connections with the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Living in such peril, people in the Realm of Flame Heaven grew increasingly pessimistic. Qi warriors were no longer in the mood for practicing cultivation, and mortals were no longer in the mood for cultivating their lives. They either sat around and waited to die, or sought one last spur of joy before their deaths.

Nie Tian, who had been considered highly by the major sects after returning in triumph from the Heaven Gate trial, also became the target of people's scorn.

In many people's opinions, since Nie Tian hadn't had the ability to refine his two fragmentary star marks two years ago, he should have been smart and handed them to Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect, so that Ning Yang would be able to seal the spatial rifts and save them from their miserable lives where they worried about the inundation of demon Qi and mass invasions of Demon armies day and night.

It didn't matter to them anymore whether Nie Tian was dead or alive. To them, Nie Tian had already become the source of all of their miseries.

They all believed that he was the reason why the Realm of Flame

Heaven was what it was now.

The Heaven Palace Sect and powerful sects from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations harbored the same opinion, as they also considered Nie Tian to be a brat who didn't understand the greater good, and it was none other than his rash decisions that had put the entire Domain of the Falling Stars into such a perilous situation.

On the Lightning Shuttle.

Nie Tian looked down at the vast, open ground. Eyebrows knitted, he suddenly said, "What happened to my grandfather and aunt?"

"Your master sent them to the Realm of a Hundred Battles not long ago," Hua Mu replied with a bitter smile. "There was no other choice. As long as your grandfather and aunt were still in the Realm of Flame Heaven, they would face hostility wherever they went. Even some people within the Cloudsoaring Sect were resentful towards them because of you.

"It would have been very dangerous for them to continue to stay in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

"In order to prevent unpleasant things from happening to them, your master could only secretly send them to the Realm of a Hundred Battles."

Nie Tian's expression was very grim as he asked, "What do you mean by unpleasant things?"

Hua Mu let out a sigh and continued, "Some people think if you're still alive, your aunt and grandfather would be the best tool to make you emerge by yourself and hand over the fragmentary star marks. Desperation always brings out the worst in human nature.

"At first, when the spread of demon Qi didn't seem as fast, and people's lives weren't threatened, everything seemed fine.

“However, as the spread of the demon Qi accelerated, raging demon Qi filled an increasingly larger area. Yet, there was still no sign of you.

“Everyone panicked, and all they could think of was how to stay alive. That was when all kinds of ideas regarding ways to force you to reveal yourself appeared in their minds.

“Your master was under a lot of pressure for sheltering your grandfather and aunt.

“As he realized the situation was getting out of hand, he eventually secretly sent your grandfather and aunt away. Furthermore, he couldn’t tell anyone where he had sent them. He was afraid that the Heaven Palace Sect and powerful sects from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations would adopt similar approaches and threaten your grandfather and aunt’s lives.

“The worst of human nature indeed,” Nie Tian said coldly.

“We’re almost at the Cloudsoaring Sect.” Han Mu said with a soft voice.

Chapter 349: Human Nature

Even though Hua Mu had said that they were almost at the Cloudsoaring Sect, there was still some ground to cover.

Standing on the Lightning Shuttle, Nie Tian looked off into the distance, and he could see the cloud-wreathed Cloudsoaring Mountain already.

Normally speaking, they would have to pass over Black Cloud City to get to Cloudsoaring Mountain. However, Hua Mu seemed to be intentionally circling around it.

Nie Tian turned to Hua Mu and asked in a soft voice, “Is my master in the Cloudsoaring Sect right now?”

Hua Mu shook his head, saying, “I’m afraid not.”

“Do you know where he is now?” Nie Tian was curious.

“Pulling strings somewhere in order to secure the Cloudsoaring Sect’s future. Where else could he be?” Hua Mu said, his face filled with helplessness. “Your master has never lost faith in you. However, many people within the Cloudsoaring Sect believe that you won’t return to the Realm of Flame Heaven again. The way they see it, even if you’re still alive, you won’t be able to refine the fragmentary star marks within such a short time.

“Not to mention that you only had two fragmentary star marks when you disappeared. As everyone knows, the third fragmentary star mark was in Ning Yang’s hands, and all three fragmentary star marks need to become one to seal the spatial rifts and restore peace to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Most of them assume that even if you’re still alive, the Realm of Flame Heaven will be submerged in dense demon Qi before you return. By that time, Demon armies will once again pour into the Realm of Flame Heaven and make it their paradise.

“That was why the senior members of the Cloudsoaring Sect

asked your master to help them seek a place in another realm where the Cloudsoaring Sect could keep a foothold.

“Therefore, he went to the Realm of a Hundred Battles.”

After hearing Hua Mu’s description. Nie Tian said with a deep frown, “My grandfather, my aunt, and my master are the only ones I truly care about in the Realm of Flame Heaven. Now that none of them are in the Cloudsoaring Sect, I’m not in a hurry to go there. Mr. Hua, if you don’t mind, can you take me to Black Cloud City? I want to take a look there.”

Upon hearing these words, Hua Mu fell silent.

A concerned look appeared in Nie Tian’s eyes as he asked, “Is there something wrong?”

Hua Mu smiled bitterly. “As a matter of fact, I intentionally took a detour so that we wouldn’t pass above Black Cloud City. I just don’t want you to return to Black Cloud City and see how nasty it has become.”

However, Hua Mu’s words made Nie Tian even more curious, and thus he insisted, “I went through lots of things in the Green Illusion dimension, the Heaven Gate, and the Realm of Split Void. I’m no longer the child you think I am, and I’m strong enough to handle whatever is happening in Black Cloud City.

“No matter how bad it has become, handling it will be a part of me growing up. I hope you can understand.”

“Alright...” With a soft sigh, Hua Mu changed the direction of the Lightning Shuttle and steered it towards Black Cloud City.

Even in powerful realms such as the Realm of Mystic Heaven, air-transportation spiritual tools were rarely seen, much less in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Even though the Lightning Shuttle was flying close to the ground, since Hua Mu had completely sealed its trace and aura, it would be very difficult for ordinary Qi warriors to sense its

existence.

As the Lightning Shuttle flew closer and closer towards Black Cloud City, Nie Tian looked down from midair, and discovered that the fields outside Black Cloud City were completely wasted, as if no one was farming them anymore.

In his memories, the areas outside of Black Cloud City used to bustle with farming activities; farmers could be seen everywhere, working hard in their fields.

However, all he could see now were farmers sitting idle at their doors. Each of them was wearing a grim expression, and not the slightest spirit could be seen in their eyes.

Even though they were still alive, their hearts seemed to have died already.

In a secluded location outside Black Cloud City, Hua Mu landed the Lightning Shuttle. Nie Tian hesitated for a moment before taking out the mask Dong Baijie had gifted him. After putting it on, he turned to Pei Qiqi and Hua Mu and said, "I'll take a walk in the city."

Hua Mu nodded and said, "Sure."

Then, he turned to Pei Qiqi. "Qiqi, you might want to make some alterations to your appearance as well. The current Realm of Flame Heaven is a bit... strange. Your appearance might attract some unnecessary trouble."

"Oh, I see." Pei Qiqi took out a plain-looking mask from within her ring of holding and gently placed it on her face.

Afterwards, the three of them walked quietly into the city.

After entering Black Cloud City, Nie Tian didn't head directly towards the Nie Clan. Instead, he strolled around without a destination, and observed what changes had happened to Black Cloud City.

He saw that the citizens of Black Cloud City were in similar state to the farmers he had just seen; they all lived soulless lives.

Most of them had sluggish eyes, as if their lives had lost all purpose.

Some stronger citizens bullied the weak to vent their negative emotions. Brothels had become the most popular places within the city. People ate, drank, and whored all day long, as if they were enjoying their final moment of madness before the impending doom.

Bloody fights took place day and night in every corner of the city.

Plundering, murdering, and raping could be seen everywhere.

The former three great clans, the Nie Clan, the An Clan, and the Yun Clan, seemed to have left the security within the city completely unattended.

During the night, every household locked their doors and didn't dare to go out.

From behind those tightly-locked doors, the sounds of wives weeping, drunk husbands cursing, and children mediating could be heard.

A spirit of desperation and insanity seemed to have pervaded the entire city, making every Qi warrior abandon their cultivation, indulge themselves in whatever pleased them, and murder people as long as they felt like it.

Mortals abandoned work and left fields unattended. They lived on the grains they had stockpiled and waited for the day to come when Demons invaded their homeland.

After roaming the city for a day, as Hua Mu had warned him, Nie Tian saw the darkest side of human nature, and how days without hope could drive people crazy.

The thing he didn't foresee was that after the Yun Clan had been

extinguished by a fallen meteor, neither the Nie Clan nor the An clan had taken its place as the most powerful clan in Black Cloud City.

On the contrary, the Yuan Clan from Frost Stone City had become the most powerful clan in Black Cloud City.

Frost Stone City had been hit by several meteors. Most parts of the city were in ruins. Therefore, the heavily damaged Yuan Clan decided to leave Frost Stone City and move to Black Cloud City.

Their arrival made them the most powerful clan in Black Cloud City.

At first, in light of Nie Tian's stunning accomplishments, the Yuan Clan hadn't dared to make moves on the Nie Clan. However, as Nie Tian had disappeared, everyone had blamed and hated Nie Tian for his irrational behavior. Later, when Wu Ji had secretly sent Nie Donghai and Nie Qian to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, the Yuan Clan had lost all scruples and started to confront the Nie Clan at every chance.

Originally, the Yuan Clan had been backed by the Grayvale Sect. However, since the Grayvale Sect had been flooded by the Demon invaders, it was basically wiped out from the Realm of Flame Heaven, with only a handful of members being lucky enough to have escaped death.

As one of the valemasters, Yuan Xian from the Yuan Clan was one of them.

Because of that, Yuan Xian and a few others became the last remaining force of the Grayvale Sect.

In such perilous times, all the major sects set aside their differences and united as never before.

Considering the calamity the Grayvale Sect had suffered, all the other sects showed great sympathy towards them and provided help as long as it was within their power.

That was why the Cloudsoaring Sect hadn't opposed the Yuan Clan when they had asked to move into Black Cloud City.

The An Clan was formerly backed by the Spiritual Treasure Sect. After the upheaval that had ravished the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, the Spiritual Treasure Sect had also sustained heavy losses. Soon afterwards, when they had been invaded by Demon outsiders, they had lost most of their members.

Even though the Spiritual Treasure Sect had survived the series of devastating calamities, they had become the weakest sect since then.

However, the An Clan had somehow lost this backer of theirs.

The reason behind this was that An Shiyi and An Ying had been driven out of the Spiritual Treasure Sect, and thus secretly gone to the Blood Sect.

Even though Li Jing, the sectmaster of the Blood Sect, had agreed to shelter the pair of sisters for Nie Tian's sake, many senior members of the Blood Sect had detested the An Clan, and thus refused to acknowledge its status as their subordinate clan.

Meanwhile, the Spiritual Treasure Sect had removed the An Clan from their subordinate clans after learning about An Shiyi's unauthorized leave.

On the other hand, due to Nie Donghai and Nie Qian's evacuation, the Nie Clan had once again been detested by many members of the Cloudsoaring Sect.

Even though the Nie Clan was still a subordinate clan of the Cloudsoaring Sect, they hadn't received any special care from them. Adding in the fact that many people attributed the disorder and downfall of the entire Realm of Flame Heaven to Nie Tian, in people's eyes, the Nie Clan had become a pest, a thorn in their flesh.

Many Qi warriors and mortals of Black Cloud City would take

every opportunity to start fights with members of the Nie Clan, which made every trip Nie Clan members took outside full of danger.

Worst of all, the Yuan Clan had even openly sought trouble with members of the Nie Clan and An Clan. There had been many occasions where members of the Nie Clan and An Clan had been secretly ambushed or assassinated soon after coming through their clan gate.

Having roaming the city for some time, Nie Tian subconsciously walked towards the direction of the Nie Clan.

Along the way, both Hua Mu and Pei Qiqi followed Nie Tian without uttering a single word.

Hua Mu had been to many places and experienced many things, so the unspeakable things that were taking place in Black Cloud City didn't create much of a wave in his heart.

Pei Qiqi, however, had never imagined that an impending doom could breed so many evils in such a small city.

Her eyebrows were deeply knitted the entire time they strolled the city streets, as if she was absorbed in thought.

Since it was the first time she had witnessed this kind of thing, it seemed to have come as a great shock to her.

Just as they were about to arrive at the Nie Clan's front gate, Nie Tian saw an acquaintance whom he hadn't seen for a long time, Nie You.

Nie You was one of the few members of the entire Nie Clan from whom Nie Tian had felt warmth.

A few years had passed, and Nie You had already grown into a slim and graceful young woman. It was just that she seemed a bit too thin for her age. As for her cultivation base, she was only at the ninth level of Qi Refining, and hadn't entered the Lesser Heaven stage yet.

She seemed to have snuck out of the clan gate, and now she was about to sneak back into the Nie Clan. However, someone had targeted her.

Nie You was trotting towards the Nie Clan's gate with her chin lowered when two Lesser Heaven stage Qi warriors suddenly appeared in front of her and blocked her path.

At that very moment, Nie Tian, Hua Mu, and Pei Qiqi showed up at the corner of the street.

Nie Tian came to a stop, and standing several dozen meters away, he glared at the two Qi warriors who were wearing Yuan Clan garments, his eyes shining with frosty light.

Chapter 350: Sinner?

“You! Stop!” Standing in front of her, the two members of the Yuan Clan looked at Nie You out of the corner of their eyes, their faces filled with malicious smiles.

Nie You’s expression flickered slightly as she asked timidly, “Who are you? What do you want?”

“Didn’t your seniors tell you not to leave your clan recently?” One man said with an evil grin. “If members of your clan dare to come out and walk in Black Cloud City, they’ll be treated like rats crossing the street. You should have stayed inside your clan at all times and never come out.”

Upon hearing the man’s words, Nie You subconsciously took a step backward.

She knew that senior clan members had repeatedly warned them against going out recently.

However, since she had made an appointment with someone, she had snuck out when the guard at the clan gate hadn’t been looking.

She didn’t expect that she would be trapped when she was this close to returning safely.

She glanced around and discovered that Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi, and Hua Mu were the only ones on the street.

Nie You’s eyes lit up before she immediately ran towards them at the fastest possible speed.

Within seconds, she arrived in front of Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi, and Hua Mu.

“Uncle, Big Brother, Sister, those bad men won’t let me go. Will you please help me?” She implored, panting slightly. Urgency could be seen in her eyes.

Nie Tian had left the Nie Clan long before he had even left the

Realm of Flame Heaven.

After that, he had spent two years in the Realm of Split Void. Adding the time together, he hadn't returned to Black Cloud City in about four to five years.

During this period of time, he had gone through great changes, not to mention that he had altered his appearance, so no matter what, Nie You wouldn't be able to imagine that the tall, well-built man was the Nie Tian from her clan who had repeatedly worked wonders in the past.

"Don't worry. Everything is going to be fine," Nie Tian said with a comforting tone.

Looking at the thin but graceful young woman standing in front of him, he couldn't help but get carried away by his thoughts.

I can't believe it's been five years already, and she has grown up... After sighing inwardly over how fast time passed, Nie Tian snapped back to reality. With a frown, he looked at the two Yuan Clan Qi warriors who were taking their time as they stepped towards him.

Nie Tian had never expected that they would actually dare to come towards them and pursue the matter.

Even though they had intentionally concealed their auras, the two Yuan Clan members, who were only at the Lesser Heaven stage, should be able to sense that these mysterious strangers were not to be trifled with.

However, not only did they come, but they even assumed an attitude as if they feared no one with the Yuan Clan at their back.

"Hey buddy, I don't think I've ever seen you in Black Cloud City. Visitors, aren't you?" One man said with a casual and arrogant tone.

Nie Tian's eyebrows furrowed. "Yeah, so?"

“So you’d better stay out of our business, newcomer,” The other man said with a cold harrumph. “This girl is a member of the Nie Clan, the clan that Nie Tian is from!”

“Nie Tian is the sinner who led the Realm of Flame Heaven to hell!”

“The bastard thought too much of himself after obtaining two fragmentary star marks by luck. Not only did he refuse to hand them over to the Heaven Palace Sect, but he even holed up somewhere. It’s because of him that one fourth of the Realm of Flame Heaven is now submerged in raging demon Qi!”

“It’s because of him that people are living in fear, and every major sect is trying every possible method to evacuate their core disciples.”

“Meanwhile, people like us and those from subordinate clans probably won’t even have a chance to be evacuated. Our deaths are certain, and it’s all that bastard’s fault! For that, he and all of his clan members have to take the blame and bear the wrath of every man and woman in the Realm of Flame Heaven!”

After blurting out his indignant complaint in Nie Tian’s face, the man added, “Those who dare to be on friendly terms with the Nie Clan are also enemies to every sect and clan in the Realm of Flame Heaven! We’re all victims of Nie Clan’s actions. You lot better be smart and stay out of this.”

Nie You shook her head repeatedly as she protested eagerly. “No! It’s not like that! Brother Tian isn’t the man you say he is! When the Realm of Flame Heaven was invaded by Demon armies, it was him who helped save the Blood Sect and killed countless Demons! He’s a hero! A hero of the Nie Clan, and the entire Realm of Flame Heaven!”

“He must be exerting all effort to uncover the secrets within those fragmentary star marks. Once he’s mastered the spells recorded within them, he will definitely come back to our rescue at

the first possible moment!

“He’ll work with the Heaven Palace Sect and Ning Yang to seal the ripped-open spatial rift!

“I won’t allow you to slander his good name!”

With flushed cheeks, Nie You glared at the two Yuan Clan members. Her fists were clenched so tightly that it was as if she would launch attacks if they didn’t shut their mouths.

“Even Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan have admitted to Nie Tian’s crimes. Who would take the words of a silly little girl seriously? Don’t make a fool of yourself, will you?” A man mocked impatiently. “I don’t have the time to argue with you. Come on. Let’s go.”

With these words, he reached out his hand to grab Nie You’s arm.

Meanwhile, the other man stared coldly at Nie Tian and said, “You’d better stay out of our business. Make no mistake, the Yuan Clan owns Black Cloud City now. Also, Black Cloud City isn’t what it used to be. People die every day. If you dare to mess with our clan, don’t you imagine that you can live in peace in Black Cloud City.”

BANG!

A violent explosion rang out, and the first man’s extended arm, as well as that side of his torso, were blown to shreds.

Just as Nie You cried out in fear, another spiritual energy ball left Nie Tian and hit the other Yuan Clan member, reducing him to a bloody mist.

In the blink of an eye, the two Yuan Clan members were reduced to scattered broken limbs and bits of flesh.

A strong bloody smell instantly filled the air. Nie You’s face turned pale from fright, her slender body trembling nonstop.

Nie Tian’s face was expressionless as he asked her with a plain

tone, “Are there many people in the Nie Clan who consider Nie Tian to be the one to blame for what’s happening to the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

“Don’t listen to them,” Nie You hastily explained. “Those people are only trying to undermine Brother Nie Tian and Grandpa Nie Donghai.”

After a moment of silence, Nie Tian said, “You can go back now. No one from the Yuan Clan will ever give you trouble again.”

“Thank you,” Nie You replied timidly.

Having watched the two Yuan Clan members dying such bloody and horrible deaths, she was slightly fearful towards Nie Tian. Therefore, after hearing that she was free to leave, she seemed like a person absolved of guilt. She carefully ran through the area scattered with bits of human flesh and rapidly disappeared from Nie Tian’s sight.

“Nie Tian...” Hua Mu wanted to say something, but stopped on second thought.

Nie Tian forced a smile and said, “I’m fine. Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan have never been fond of me since I was little. I have been like a thorn in their flesh. I’m not at all surprised that they would intentionally undermine me.”

With these words, he walked past this bloody street block. Soon, he came to a stop in front of the Nie Clan’s gate, where he closed his eyes and unleashed his Heaven Eyes.

His Heaven Eyes quietly flew into the Nie Clan...

After some time, his eyes opened. He turned to Pei Qiqi and Hua Mu, who had been waiting for him, and with an apologetic smile, he said, “We can go now.”

Surprised, Hua Mu asked, “Do you not want to go in?”

Pei Qiqi’s eyes were also filled with surprise and confusion.

Even though she didn't know much about Nie Tian's past, when Nie Tian had demanded to go to Black Cloud City and take a look, she had assumed that he would definitely visit his home.

She had never expected that Nie Tian would only stand outside the Nie Clan for some time and then leave.

She couldn't figure out the reason.

Nie Tian shook his head. "It's okay. Only a handful of people in my clan were close to me. Most Nie Clan members disliked me. Since they see me as trouble, why would I go back and make everybody unhappy?" With those words, he strode towards the An Clan.

The reason he had decided to leave was that via his seven Heaven Eyes, he had heard nothing but conversations that made him very unhappy.

He found it hard to believe that his own clansmen were actually no different from people he had seen in the streets. Most of them blamed him for the perilous situation the Realm of Flame Heaven was in. They also blamed him for bringing the tremendous blame and hostility of others upon the Nie Clan.

Before, only a handful of people had acknowledged and accepted him. However, even those few people had now turned on him, and were complaining about what he had done.

That being the case, he couldn't think of any reason to return to the Nie Clan.

The reason why he had decided to stop by the An Clan before he left was that An Rong, the clanmaster of the An Clan, had helped him contend against Nie Beichuan before. Furthermore, he had gone through a lot with An Shiyi and her sister.

He wanted to see how the An Clan was holding up.

By the time he saw the An Clan's front gate, he discovered that many powerful experts of the Yuan Clan were gathered there,

including Yuan Fengchun, the clanmaster of the Yuan Clan.

Nie Tian stepped closer and blended into the chattering crowd of onlookers. After listening for a brief moment, he understood what was happening.

The Yuan Clan was forcing the An Clan to move out of their property so that they could take it for their own.

Before the Yuan Clan had come along, the An Clan had always been the most powerful clan in Black Cloud City. Therefore, their property was located in the most prosperous section of the city, and their buildings were the most splendid and magnificent.

It hadn't been long since the Yuan Clan had moved to Black Cloud City. They hadn't had the time or energy to build a new property with all the stone pavilions and courts that suited their needs.

Forcibly occupying the An Clan or the Nie Clan would be a simpler solution, considering the Yun Clan was already in ruins.

Even though some people within the Cloudsoaring Sect weren't happy with the Nie Clan, they were still one of their subordinate clans. Therefore, the Yuan Clan only dared to play little tricks or make secret moves against them.

They wouldn't dare to force the Nie Clan to abandon their property.

However, that wasn't the case for the An Clan. Ever since An Shiyi had left the Spiritual Treasure Sect and sought shelter in the Blood Sect, the Spiritual Treasure Sect had removed the An Clan from their list of subordinate clans.

Meanwhile, the Blood Sect hadn't decided to take the An Clan under their protection yet, which had put the An Clan in a very difficult position.

It was exactly because the An Clan didn't have a backer for the time being that Yuan Fengchun dared to make such an

unreasonable demand.

“Give me a few moments,” Nie Tian said to Pei Qiqi and Hua Mu.
“I want to settle some things for good before I leave.”

Chapter 351: Unfortunate Men Must Have Detestable Qualities

The completely unbacked An Clan declined rapidly.

All of their guest elders had left after learning that the Spiritual Treasure Sect had discarded the An Clan.

Even some of their own clan members had left and drifted to other cities since they couldn't see any hope in their clan's future.

That being the case, the An Clan's strength had been weakened by a great deal.

Before, the citizens of Black Cloud City had treated the An Clan and An Rong with nothing but respect. They had even given him the title of "Lord of Black Cloud City".

However, at this moment, excitement for drama filled every onlooker's eyes, as if what was happening between the An Clan and the Yuan Clan was nothing but a show to them.

Standing in front of the clan gate, An Rong's expression was especially grim. Staring at Yuan Fengchun, he strongly protested against his unreasonable demand, hoping everyone present would preside over justice for him and the An Clan.

An He, who had escorted Nie Tian to attend the Green Illusion dimension, was standing beside An Rong, trembling from indignation.

The only remaining An Clan members who were strong enough to fight had all armed themselves to the teeth and rushed to their front gate, as if they were ready to fight the people from the Yuan Clan to the death.

In the meantime, Yuan Fengchun's expression was indifferent and arrogant.

The reason he had made his demand in front of the An Clan's

gate instead of delivering his demand to An Rong privately was that he wanted to humiliate An Rong and the entire An Clan in front of everyone, and let people know who the Lord of Black Cloud City was now.

“My offer is final; You and every member of your clan will have the rest of today to move out of your property.” Yuan Fengchun intentionally raised his voice as he said each and every word clearly, so that everyone present would be able to hear him. “I hope you can appreciate the current situation and take my kind offer. As long as you do that, I’ll leave you and your clan members alone. However, if you don’t, then don’t blame me for not being polite.”

An Rong was at the early Greater Heaven stage, while Yuan Fengchun was at the middle Greater Heaven stage.

Considering the noticeable gap between their strengths, Yuan Fengchun alone would probably be enough to overtake An Rong.

Not to mention that there was still a crowd of Yuan Clan members and Qi warriors who had attached themselves to the Yuan Clan, most of whom were at the middle or late Heaven stage.

Even if they decided to go to war with the An Clan, considering their collective strengths, they would probably be able to drive away or kill every single member of the An Clan.

“Yuan Fengchun! You’ve gone too far!” An Rong gave voice to his rage. “Shi Yi and Little Ying are in the Blood Sect. Even though the Blood Sect hasn’t taken them in as formal disciples, sectmaster Li Jing is very fond of them. If you dare to make a move on us, the Blood Sect will never forgive you!”

Yuan Fengchun shook his head as a sneer appeared at the corner of his mouth. “The Blood Sect? Everyone knows that Li Jing only agreed to shelter those two girls from your clan because she was giving Nie Tian face. But now, no one knows if Nie Tian is still alive. Even if he is alive, he has become the sinner who took away

the two fragmentary star marks that should have belonged to the Heaven Palace Sect, and turned the Realm of Flame Heaven into a living hell!

“You probably know that part of the reason why the Blood Sect has been hesitant to make you their subordinate clan is that many Blood Sect members detest Nie Tian for his rash behavior!

“At present, one fourth of the Realm of Flame Heaven is already submerged in demon Qi. Considering the speed at which the demon Qi is spreading, it won't be long before the whole Realm of Flame Heaven is doomed.

“Even if Nie Tian is still alive, it will be too late when he finally returns to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Open your eyes to reality. We're on our own now.”

When Nie Tian's name came up, many onlookers cursed in low voices.

Some of them blamed Nie Tian for being too stubborn and blindly insisting on refining the fragmentary star marks, and eventually inflicting this great calamity on the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Yuan Fengchun's comments created a major stir among the crowd; everyone assumed an attitude as if they wanted the An Clan to pay for their connection with Nie Tian, the sinner.

The look in Nie Tian's eyes was very grim as he stood amongst the worked-up crowd.

He almost lost control and charged through the crowd, but upon second thought, he forced himself to hold it. He remained in his original place and let himself be submerged in everyone's endless blame.

Heart filled with bitterness and sadness, he shook his head. “Human nature.”

He had a feeling that the last remaining sense of connection he had with the Nie Clan and Black Cloud City had been cut off.

An Rong let out a cold harrumph and said, “You’re all fools if you believe this man. I know you blame Nie Tian for what’s happening in the Realm of Flame Heaven. But, as far as I know, if Nie Tian didn’t awaken the Blood Sect’s Bone Giant after returning from the Heaven Gate trial, the Blood Sect would already be gone! If he hadn’t helped lift the siege on the Blood Sect and then rushed to the Hell Sect’s aid with the unoccupied Li Jing and Bone Giant, do you really think those Demons would have retreated so easily?”

“If it weren’t for Nie Tian, the Realm of Flame Heaven wouldn’t even have survived that calamity!

“You think about nothing but yourselves and your own benefits! None of you have the right to blame Nie Tian for anything!

“Why would he hand over his fragmentary star marks to Ning Yang? He obtained two fragmentary star marks, while Ning Yang only obtained one! Why don’t you blame Ning Yang for not giving his fragmentary star mark to Nie Tian, so that Nie Tian could unite all three fragmentary star marks?!

“Nie Tian is a hero who has saved Black Cloud City, the Cloudsoaring Sect, and even the Realm of Flame Heaven. What right does the Heaven Palace Sect have to force him to make way?”

An Rong reasoned with a loud voice.

However, his voice was soon drowned by the curses and name-calling of the Yuan Clan members and the observing citizens of Black Cloud City.

None of them remembered the good deeds Nie Tian had done for the Realm of Flame Heaven. They only dwelt on the fact that Nie Tian had taken two fragmentary star marks and gone missing. In their eyes, Nie Tian had betrayed the Realm of Flame Heaven and put them in a hopeless situation.

They went on and on, clamoring about how Ning Yang was more competent than Nie Tian, and that since years had passed and Nie Tian still hadn't been able to refine those fragmentary star marks, he shouldn't have taken them.

From what they believed, as the chosen one from the Heaven Palace Sect, the noble and lofty Ning Yang was the one who would have been able to save them from their endless pain and fear.

“Unfortunate men must have detestable qualities,” Pei Qiqi muttered to herself.

Hua Mu's face was still expressionless, as it seemed that he had been through situations worse than this, and thus his understanding of the dark side of human nature had become very deep.

The fact was that he had expected things to be like this.

He knew that if Nie Tian returned to Black Cloud City, he would have to face these ugly things. That was why he had intentionally taken a detour, hoping Nie Tian wouldn't see Black Cloud City for what it was now.

However, Nie Tian had insisted on coming.

Subconsciously, Hua Mu took a quick glance at Nie Tian, suspecting that, after witnessing what was going on in Black Cloud City at such close quarters, his temperament might even go through changes.

He was afraid that, after today, Nie Tian would become increasingly cold and cruel.

“Is it a good thing for him, or bad?” Hua Mu thought to himself with a frown. “Many people will change significantly after seeing so much of the dark side of human nature. They'll no longer be able to see the kind side of human nature, and then they'll become bloodthirsty and fall into depravity. I hope this doesn't happen to him.”

The reason he didn't want Nie Tian to come so close to all this was that he worried that Nie Tian would have a nervous breakdown, and that he would develop a hostile attitude towards everything and grow into a fallen killer.

"I've changed my mind." Nie Tian said in a low voice. "I no longer want to go to the Cloudsoaring Sect after I settle things here. We'll go to the Blood Sect instead."

A surprised expression appeared on Hua Mu's face as he asked, "Are you sure?"

"Now that my master isn't in the Cloudsoaring Sect, I don't see why I would want to go there." Nie Tian answered.

Even before everything had gone sour, he had felt little sense of belonging in the Cloudsoaring Sect. Many years ago, the Cloudsoaring Sect had placed tremendous hope in his mother. However, his mother had somehow gotten pregnant and died soon after giving birth to Nie Tian. For this reason, many people in the Cloudsoaring Sect had thought his mother had betrayed their trust and wasted the substantial amount of resources they had provided for her.

They had even detested the Nie Clan because of it.

Nie Donghai had only gone through so much unpleasantness because the Cloudsoaring Sect had once lost their faith in him.

Now that Nie Donghai and Nie Qiao had disappeared from the Realm of Flame Heaven, some people within the Cloudsoaring Sect had adopted the same attitude as before, and once again became indifferent to the Nie Clan and Black Cloud City, which caused Black Cloud City to fall into a state of chaos.

It was only natural that Nie Tian held the Cloudsoaring Sect responsible to some extent for everything happening in Black Cloud City.

"Clanmaster of the Yuan Clan, a cultivator at the middle Greater

Heaven stage...” After a moment of hesitation, Hua Mu said, “How about I take care of him for you when this whole thing is over?”

His identity was very tricky, so he would rather not overtly kill Yuan Fengchun for Nie Tian under so many people’s gazes.

However, he sensed that Nie Tian was going to make a move on him even though he was only at the Heaven stage. Therefore, he was worried that Nie Tian might fail to kill Yuan Fengchun in single combat and cause future trouble.

“No, thanks. I’ll do it myself.” With these words, Nie Tian quietly stepped closer towards Yuan Fengchun.

As he took the first step, he unleashed his newly-acquired bloodline talent: Life Stealth.

The fluctuations of his spiritual power and flesh power rapidly quieted and became undetectable.

“Huh?!” Hua Mu exclaimed softly. If he didn’t examine Nie Tian closely with his soul power, Nie Tian would seem no different from a normal mortal to him, and he would never raise his guard against such an unimpressive mortal.

Passing through the crowd of onlookers, Nie Tian quietly approached the members of the Yuan Clan.

He suddenly formed a chaotic magnetic field around him and cast a short-range Starshift.

In a split second, he appeared behind Yuan Fengchun’s back and drew his Flame Star.

Chapter 352: Let Me Send You On Your Way!

This was the first time Nie Tian had used the Flame Star.

After appearing behind Yuan Fengchun's back and bringing out the Flame Star, Nie Tian infused it with his flame power, wood power, and star power. The Flame Star immediately began to shine with glorious, fiery light.

The numerous tiny stars on its blade also seemed to suddenly light up.

The various types of power flowed within the spell formations on the Flame Star at a very fast speed. Bolstered by the spell formations, the streams of power of different attributes rushed towards the tip of the blade like torrential rivers.

FIZZ!

A beam of dazzling, fiery light laced with starlight suddenly shot out from the tip of the Flame Star.

Yuan Fengchun, who was still imposing his offer on An Rong, suddenly sensed the aura of death from behind him, and thus summoned earth power as quickly as he could.

An earthy-yellow light shield instantly formed on his back. Not only that, but even his skin and flesh under his garments seemed to be infused with his earthy-yellow spiritual aura.

BANG!

The moment the mixed light unleashed by the Flame Star made contact with the earthy-yellow light shield, the light shield shattered.

PUFF!

Immediately afterwards, the Flame Star pierced into Yuan Fengchun's back and infused the various types of spiritual power into his flesh and blood.

“Ahhhh!”

Yuan Fengchun let out an agonized shriek, and hastily attempted to summon more of his strength to defend against the various types of spiritual power that had invaded his body.

However, enveloped by Nie Tian’s chaotic magnetic field, he was no longer capable of wielding his own strength.

He even began to experience an excruciating pain in his head, and he had to make great efforts to maintain a clear mind.

Assuming a firm grip on the Flame Star, his eyes filled with frigid coldness, Nie Tian once again summoned the various types of power within him.

CRACKLE! CRACKLE!

As the Flame Star pierced deeper into Yuan Fengchun’s back, it broke a few bones.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian madly drew from his burning rage and formed a Rage Punch with his unoccupied hand.

As Nie Tian’s fist bombarded Yuan Fengchun’s back with great force, Yuan Fengchun was sent flying towards where An Rong was standing.

An Rong, however, seemed to have been shocked into a daze.

Only at that moment did the Yuan Clan members realize what was happening, and charge madly towards Nie Tian.

“Kill that man!”

“He actually dares to make a move on our clanmaster!”

“Kill him!”

When Nie Tian had quietly approached Yuan Fengchun from behind, none of the Yuan Clan members had been alarmed. After all, he had cloaked all of his spiritual and fleshy aura using Life Stealth, so in the eyes of those Yuan Clan members, he was

nothing more than a mortal onlooker.

Normally, they wouldn't raise their guard at all when a mortal approached them.

Not to mention that the Yuan Clan was the most powerful clan in Black Cloud City now. Every man and woman in Black Cloud City had been exerting all measures to please the Yuan Clan.

This had attributed to the Yuan Clan's blind arrogance.

They had never expected that anyone would dare to openly lay a murderous hand on their clanmaster in Black Cloud City.

By the time they realized what was going on, Nie Tian had already driven his Flame Star into Yuan Fengchun's back.

“Who are you?!” Enraged, every Yuan Clan member summoned their spiritual tools and assumed a stance that showed that they were determined to rip Nie Tian into pieces.

Holding the Flame Star with one hand, Nie Tian didn't spare Yuan Fengchun another glance, but rather expanded his chaotic magnetic field to a five-meter radius.

The first few Yuan Clan members who unwittingly charged into the chaotic magnetic field were all at the Heaven stage. Having their inner powers disrupted by the chaotic magnetic field, they couldn't help but stagger about.

Like a blade that was designated for reaping lives, the Flame Star unleashed numerous beams of fiery light laced with frosty sparks of starlight.

PUFF! PUFF!

The few men who were the closest to Nie Tian were the first to have their chests penetrated by the Flame Star's blade lights, and died instantly.

Upon seeing this scene, the citizens of Black Cloud City seemed to have sensed danger, and all began shoving each other backwards to

keep a longer distance from Nie Tian in a loud clamor.

Nie Tian still didn't say a word. Holding his Flame Star, he repeatedly cast Starshifts to appear in different locations.

Every time he cast a Starshift and appeared in another location, he would slaughter a member of the Yuan Clan effortlessly with the same method he had used to sneak up on Yuan Fengchun.

Yuan Fengchun was the only one in the Yuan Clan who could be considered a truly powerful expert.

As a matter of fact, they used to have another Greater Heaven stage expert in their clan. However, he had been crushed to death by a meteor right before the Heaven Gate had opened.

At present, none of the Yuan Clan members or guest elders were experts with Greater Heaven stage or higher cultivation bases; Yuan Fengchun had been the only exception.

Nie Tian had already lost count of how many Qi warriors with similar cultivation bases he had killed in the Realm of Split Void.

Furthermore, the strength of these Heaven stage Yuan Clan members couldn't even match up to that of a Heaven stage Hunter, much less that of Heaven stage Dark Moon member.

Combining his unpredictable movement magics and the Flame Star together, Nie Tian was like a tiger that had grown wings.

Even though the Yuan Clan members and guest elders had formed a blockade, Nie Tian moved unpredictably around them, and rapidly reaped their lives with his Flame Star.

It wasn't very long before the guest elders realized that it was a lost cause, and fled with their tails between their legs.

Even the formal members of the Yuan Clan gradually grew desperate, watching their brothers pierced through and killed by Nie Tian in such bizarre ways one by one.

Even though they still kept shouting threatening words, they

backed further and further away from Nie Tian.

As soon as they left Nie Tian's sight, they rapidly turned around and scurried away at full speed.

It wasn't long before they were all gone.

Lying around Nie Tian were more than twenty bodies, all of whom were elite members of the Yuan Clan at the Heaven stage.

After this encounter, even if the Yuan Clan wasn't completely uprooted from Black Cloud City, it would be very hard for them to maintain a foothold here.

Nie Tian didn't run after the fleeing Yuan Clan members and guest elders. Instead, he glared at Yuan Fengchun, standing amongst the scattered corpses.

He knew Yuan Fengchun hadn't died.

At that moment, Yuan Fengchun had already sat up. Blood was pouring out of the deep wound in his back, and his chest was painted red by the blood he had puked. His eyes were filled with hate as he stared back at Nie Tian.

"Who are you?! What did the Yuan Clan ever do to you?!" Yuan Fengchun asked, gnashing his teeth.

At this point, only a handful of onlookers were still standing in the street, and they all seemed to be at the late Heaven stage.

Their eyes were filled with fear as they gazed at Nie Tian from a safe distance, as if they were prepared to turn around and run the moment Nie Tian pointed the Flame Star at them.

An Rong still hadn't recovered from the shock. Completely dumbstruck, he stood in his original location and didn't utter a word.

He had never expected that some stranger would show up and basically annihilate the Yuan Clan that had lorded over Black Cloud City for more than half a year.

He couldn't figure out who in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven would massacre members of the Yuan Clan like this.

As far as he knew, since the Grayvale Sect had almost been wiped out and Yuan Xian had become their last remaining force, all the sects had united against their common enemies during perilous times, and they had all shown great sympathy towards Yuan Xian.

Under these circumstances, each sect would restrain their members from making any moves on the Yuan Clan, even if they had unsettled feuds between them.

“You don't recognize me, but I've heard so much about you.” As Nie Tian paced towards Yuan Fengchun, the Flame Star in his hand once again blossomed with glorious, fiery light and starlight. “Ever since I was old enough to remember things, I learned that you and Yun Meng from the Yun Clan ganged up on my grandfather and shattered his spiritual sea, which caused his cultivation base to decay.”

He spoke in a calm manner as he paced his way towards Yuan Fengchun.

“Before, I wasn't strong enough, so even though I hated your guts, I couldn't do anything.

“However, when I entered the Green Illusion dimension, I finally had my first chance. So, I killed Yun Song from the Yun Clan and the rising star of your clan, Yuan Feng.”

“What?!” Yuan Fengchun became agitated and puked another mouthful of blood. “It was you who killed Little Feng?!”

Yuan Feng from the Grayvale Sect had been the most promising member of his generation in the Yuan Clan. However, he had died prematurely during the Green Illusion dimension trial.

According to the Spiritual Treasure Sect, Yuan Feng had been killed by trial-takers from the Blood Sect and the Ghost Sect.

“Exactly. Both Yuan Feng and Yun Song died at my hands.” Nie

Tian grinned and pulled off his mask, saying, “Before, I was weak, so I could only bury the truth deeply in my heart. However, times have changed. It feels so good to be able to spill it out!”

The moment he took off his mask, An Rong and An He shouted out his name, their faces filled with disbelief. “Nie Tian!”

“It’s Nie Tian!”

Yuan Fengchun shrieked. “Nie Tian! You are Nie Tian?!”

Nie Tian nodded, saying, “Exactly. I’m Nie Donghai’s grandson. I’ve come here today to send you on your way.”

A beam of blindingly bright light flashed across Yuan Fengchun’s eyes.

In the next moment, his head was severed and pushed up into the air by the blood rushing out of his neck, though his eyes were still wide open.

Chapter 353: Deep Disappointment

As Nie Tian took off his mask and killed Yuan Fengchun, Hua Mu couldn't help but marvel in a soft voice, "Impressive kid!"

In fact, this was the first time Hua Mu had witnessed Nie Tian battle against someone.

Before, he had only heard about his stunning battle achievements in the Green Illusion dimension, Heaven Gate trial, and the Realm of Split Void.

Even though he had never doubted Nie Tian's extraordinary battle prowess, knowing that he possessed bloodline power, two fragmentary star marks, and the Flame Dragon Armor, he had never expected that Nie Tian would actually be able to sneak up on and kill the middle Greater Heaven stage Yuan Fengchun so effortlessly.

Furthermore, the numerous clan members and guest elders Yuan Fengchun had brought with him were all at the Heaven stage, roughly at the same stage as Nie Tian.

However, none of them had survived Nie Tian's attacks. In fact, they were not even capable of withstanding a single strike.

The outstanding battle prowess Nie Tian had displayed shocked Hua Mu to the core. He had an increasingly strong feeling that he had made a smart decision by saving Nie Tian many years ago when he had stopped by Black Cloud City and accidentally discovered that he had been seriously ill.

On the other hand, he had become more confident that Nie Tian would be able to progress and transcend at a fast speed, considering his unique qualities.

Sooner or later, Nie Tian would be able to help him with his lifespan problem.

After seeing Nie Tian take off his mask, state his real identity,

and behead Yuan Fengchun, a clamor immediately burst forth amongst the onlookers that had stayed.

“Nie Tian!”

“He’s Nie Tian?!”

“He’s back!!”

Shocked, An Rong stood in silence.

An He took a deep breath to calm himself. His eyes glittered with the light of excitement as he gazed at Nie Tian.

Neither An Rong nor An He had expected that Nie Tian would show up while the Yuan Clan was forcing them to move out of their own home.

Mixed emotions rose in An He’s heart as he muttered to himself, “Shiyi’s insightful judgment was indeed our clan’s most valuable fortune!”

He still remembered many years ago when An Shiyi had ignored their clan’s rules and gifted one of their Green Illusion dimension trial slots to Nie Tian. Many seniors in the An Clan had strongly opposed her decision, and thought it had been beyond ridiculous.

Back then, even An He hadn’t quite understood why An Shiyi had made such an odd decision.

He could still remember distinctively that when he had escorted Nie Tian to participate in the Green Illusion dimension trial, he had only been at the Qi Refining stage.

A few years passed so quickly, and Nie Tian had finished the Green Illusion dimension trial, gone through the upheaval in the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, survived the bloodbaths in Heaven Gate trial, repulsed the Demon invaders, and eventually grown into a figure that attracted the entire Realm of Flame Heaven’s focus.

Today, he had even killed Yuan Fengchun, the clanmaster of the

Yuan Clan, a middle Greater Heaven stage expert.

None of the Yuan Clan's members or guest elders could withstand a single strike from him.

Within such a short time, he had greatly damaged the Yuan Clan's vital force. Even though they didn't get annihilated, they would probably wither away from this point forward.

An He searched in his memories, and then looked at Nie Tian, who was standing right before his eyes. A sense of inauthenticity rose in his heart.

After Yuan Fengchun died, Nie Tian walked over to An He and An Rong in a composed manner. He bowed to them and said with a grin, "Uncle An, Grandpa An."

As for the dead Yuan Clan members, guest elders, and Yuan Fengchun, he didn't even have the slightest intention to spare them another glance.

Similarly, he turned a blind eye to the onlooking citizens of Black Cloud City.

An Rong snapped to reality and hastily took a step forward. Face filled with complicated emotions, he gently patted Nie Tian's shoulder and said, "It's so nice to see that you're back. If your grandfather knew that you've killed Yuan Fengchun, whom he hated with all his heart, he would surely be very happy."

He knew the dispute between the Nie Clan and the Yun Clan and Yuan Clan better than anyone.

An He took the initiative and invited Nie Tian. "Come on, Nie Tian. Let's go in and have a talk."

"Sorry, I still have business to tend to." Nie Tian refused respectfully.

An He seemed to suddenly realize something, and nodded repeatedly as he said, "Oh, right. You've probably just returned to

Black Cloud City. It's only right that you go back to your clan first. How about this: you go ahead and return to your clan. Later, you'll come visit us?" He assumed that Nie Tian had just returned to Black Cloud City, and was on his way to the Nie Clan.

An Rong chimed in. "Yeah, don't forget to visit us after you get things settled in your clan. Now that you've taken Shiyi as your sworn sister, we're family. We don't treat you as an outsider, so you shouldn't either. Plus, you helped our clan so much this time, we'll arrange a feast as a thank you!"

"There isn't anyone in the Nie Clan I feel attached to now, so I won't be going back." Nie Tian said with a expression that was the same as ever, "I'll go to the Blood Sect and visit Big Sister An and An Ying."

Upon hearing these words, An Rong and An He fell silent.

The onlookers went blank as well. They all wondered with their eyebrows furrowed.

After a few seconds of silence, An Rong seemed to have realized something. He sighed softly and said, "Alright then. If you're going to the Blood Sect, will you tell Shiyi and Little Ying that everything is fine here in the An Clan, they need not worry about us, and tell them to focus on their cultivation. We have placed all of our hopes on them. Only if they are strong enough will the An Clan have a possible future."

An Rong was actually thinking that if the Realm of Flame Heaven was really sacked by Demon armies someday, the Blood Sect might give face to the pair of sisters and evacuate several core members of the An Clan.

"Don't worry, Grandpa An," Nie Tian said with a faint smile. "Nothing will happen to the Realm of Flame Heaven. Even if the day comes when you need to be evacuated from the Realm of Flame Heaven, you won't need the Blood Sect for that. I'll personally arrange for you to move out of the Realm of Flame

Heaven and reestablish your clan in another realm.”

An Rong’s eyes instantly lit up.

At that very moment, Hua Mu, who was standing among the onlookers, cleared his throat, signalling him that they shouldn’t waste too much time here.

“See you, Grandpa An, Uncle An.” With these words, Nie Tian stepped away from the An Clan’s front gate. The onlookers saw him coming towards them and automatically stepped back to clear a path for him.

Before Nie Tian had revealed himself, those onlookers had chattered about him being the one to blame for the misfortune happening to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

However, after witnessing him slaughter Yuan Fengchun, as well as his numerous clan members and guest elders, with such fierce and merciless methods, they had all fallen silent.

The moment they saw Nie Tian move his feet, they voluntarily stepped back and didn’t dare to say another disrespectful word.

Their eyes were filled with fear and insecurity as they looked at Nie Tian.

Nie Tian, however, didn’t spare them a glance, and strode directly towards the city gate in an imposing manner. Even after he had gone through the city gate, no one dared to stop him. Only a few onlookers dared to whisper something to each other in low voices.

After exiting Black Cloud City and returning to a secluded location, Hua Mu once again brought out his Lightning Shuttle and urged Nie Tian and Pei Qiqi to get on board.

Afterwards, the Lightning Shuttle rose up into the air and whizzed away from Black Cloud City like a bolt of lightning. Hua Mu steered clear of the Cloudsoaring Sect and steered directly towards the Blood Sect.

Soon after their Lightning Shuttle flew past the Cloudsoaring Sect, Jiang Zhisu, the sectmaster of the Cloudsoaring Sect, heard about what had just happened in Black Cloud City.

Without any delay, he summoned all of the elders.

“Nie Tian came back.” Jiang Zhisu said with a frown. “He went to Black Cloud City, where he killed Yuan Fengchun and practically annihilated the Yuan Clan single-handedly. However, he told An Rong that he would return to the Blood Sect, instead of the Cloudsoaring Sect.”

The expression of every elder flickered as they heard these words.

With a deep sigh, Wu Xing said, “Back in the day, I made many mistakes with Little Jin. Only later when I saw Nie Tian was the burden that had been weighing on my mind gradually lifted. I told you long ago that Nie Tian was far beyond ordinary, and that he would definitely come back, but you never listened.”

With a complaining gaze, he looked at the other three elders standing beside him, who hadn't believed that Nie Tian would be able to survive the Heaven Palace Sect and return to the Realm of Flame Heaven alive.

They detested Nie Tian for not thinking of the greater good and handing his fragmentary star marks over to the Heaven Palace Sect.

It was their panicking mindset that had spread out to the entire Realm of Flame Heaven. It was also because of their endless pleading that Wu Ji had agreed to go to the Realm of a Hundred Battles and make arrangements for the Cloudsoaring Sect's evacuation.

Furthermore, the reason why Nie Donghai and Nie Qian had lived uncomfortably in the Cloudsoaring Sect was because they had failed to restrain their disciples. Their disciples would usually

say mean things to them every time they met, which deeply disappointed them.

“He was capable of killing Yuan Fengchun?! Can it be that he has actually refined his fragmentary star marks?” Elder Feng He said in a hoarse voice.

“That’s very likely,” Jiang Zhisu said with a plain tone.

Discontent could be seen in his eyes as he gazed at Feng He and the other two elders. As a matter of fact, just like Wu Xing, he had also believed that Nie Tian would eventually come back to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

However, because Feng He and the others hadn’t restrained their disciples from secretly creating difficulties for Nie Donghai and Nie Qian, they eventually decided to leave.

They were also the reason why people had dared to treated the Nie Clan so harshly.

Feng He let out a cold snort and said, “We have always been kind to him. Yet, he didn’t come to our sect after returning to the Realm of Flame Heaven, but rather went to the Blood Sect. What is this?! Don’t tell me that he wants to leave the Cloudsoaring Sect and join the Blood Sect.”

Wu Xing shook his head. “Since he obtained those fragmentary star marks, he was destined to be outstanding in the future. Neither the Cloudsoaring Sect nor the Blood Sect is the best choice for him. I’m afraid that the Heaven Palace Sect and many other powerful sects from the other realms will reach out to him and ask him to join them.

“Considering that he has received the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and learned the profound incantations they recorded, whichever sect he decides to join, he will make a great impact and give a strong boost to the sect’s strength.

“Originally, we could have gained an upper hand in the contest

by relying on our deep connection with him and his family.

“But it doesn’t seem we have much hope now.”

Wu Xing felt very regretful, and secretly blamed Feng He and the others for causing Nie Tian to lose faith in the Cloudsoaring Sect.

Chapter 354: A Shred of Warmth

The Lightning Shuttle could cover thousands of kilometers in a day.

By the time the Lightning Shuttle arrived in the Blood Sect's territory, word of Nie Tian's deeds in Black Cloud City hadn't spread to the Blood Sect yet.

After Nie Tian got off the Lightning Shuttle, Hua Mu said to him, "We're not going to the Blood Sect with you. I'll take Qiqi to check the spatial rift. Also, there's no need to let that woman from the Blood Sect know that I took you to the Realm of Split Void."

Nie Tian nodded, saying, "I know."

After a moment of hesitation, Hua Mu added, "Plus, you might want to spend some time to adjust yourself. There are two sides to human nature. Lately, you've experienced a lot of the dark side. I hope you can understand how ugly and disgusting people can be, but at the same time, I want you to hold fast to what you believe, and don't err from the right path."

Nie Tian nodded again.

"Alright, that's about all." Hua Mu took another deep look at him before steering the Lightning Shuttle around and disappearing into the distant horizon.

Nie Tian traveled by himself in the Blood Sect's territory.

It wasn't long before he ran into a disciple of the Blood Sect. After Nie Tian stated his identity, the man's expression flickered dramatically, and he hastily showed him to the Blood Sect's headquarters.

As the man led the way in front, he repeatedly turned his head to check Nie Tian out.

The man's eyes were filled with respect, and it looked as if he

wanted to say something, but stopped on second thought.

“What’s wrong?” Nie Tian asked curiously.

“My name is Zhang Xu.” After stating his own name, the man slowed his pace to express his gratitude towards Nie Tian, “I always wanted to thank you, but I never had the chance.”

“Thank me?” Greatly surprised, Nie Tian adopted a self-mocking tone. “Thank me for what? I holed up somewhere right after obtaining two fragmentary star marks, which makes every man and woman in the Realm of Flame Heaven live in fear. Everyone takes me as a great sinner. What do you want to thank me for?”

A sincere and serious expression filled Zhang Xu’s face as he said, “I don’t care what others think, but most of my sectmates and I are very grateful to you. If you didn’t awaken the Bone Blood Demon, the Blood Sect would have been annihilated when the Demon armies invaded us.

“It was you who saved the Blood Sect, rushed to the Hell Sect’s aid with our sectmaster and the Bone Blood Demon, and eventually forced the Demons to retreat from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“You’re our savior!”

“Savior?” Nie Tian was at a loss for words.

“Exactly! You’re the one who saved our sect!” Zhang Xu said with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron. “Actually, you made great contributions to the entire Realm of Flame Heaven. If it weren’t for you, our sect would have been gnawed away by the Demons. If you didn’t awaken the Bone Blood Demon and rush to the Hell Sect, the Demons that were besieging the Hell Sect wouldn’t have retreated so easily.”

After hearing these words, Nie Tian’s thoughts drifted away, and a current of warmth flowed into his heart.

At that moment, the two of them arrived at a area filled with blood cisterns that stretched as far as the eye could see.

Each and every blood cistern was brimming with blood. Numerous Blood Sect disciples were bathing in the blood cisterns, practicing the Blood Sect's secret magics by refining the spirit beast blood.

All of a sudden, a woman's figure flew out of one of the blood cisterns.

It was Yu Tong, her curvaceous body soaked in blood.

The moment Yu Tong saw Nie Tian, she recognized him. Her eyes instantly turned as red as blood as she launched the Blood Sect's secret magics. Her slender, jade-like hands waved in the air, sending out numerous scarlet blood strings, which flew straight towards Nie Tian's chest like spirit snakes made of pure blood.

“Senior Martial Sister Yu!” Zhang Xu exclaimed, his voice filled with fright.

Nie Tian's expression remained as calm as ever. With a thought, he summoned his flame power and rapidly formed a barrier of blazing flames in front of him.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

One blood string after another flew into the barrier, and were rapidly burned away by the raging flames.

SHEW!

Yu Tong stopped in front of Nie Tian and restrained herself from launching another attack. She coldly looked him up and down, and then asked with a somewhat surprised tone, “Did you also advance to the middle Heaven stage?”

Nie Tian nodded, saying, “Your cultivation progressed impressively fast as well.”

He discovered that, although only two years had passed, Yu Tong had already advanced to the middle Heaven stage, the same as him.

Such speed was actually very stunning.

“I practiced cultivation day and night over the past two years, and never have I ever missed a single day,” With a cold snort, Yu Tong spoke through her slightly gritted teeth. “I only practiced so hard so that I can defeat you fair and square one day!”

A surprised expression spread across Nie Tian’s face.

He knew that Yu Tong hated his guts for the things he had done to her, so much so that every time Yu Tong had mentioned him, she had claimed that she would rip him apart.

However, this time, Yu Tong only said she would defeat him, instead of killing him.

This was enough evidence that Yu Tong’s attitude towards Nie Tian had undergone essential changes.

“Alright, we can have a battle whenever you want.” Nie Tian grinned.

The other young men and women, all of whom were at the Qi Refining and Lesser Heaven stages, whispered to each other as they sneakily looked at Nie Tian with measuring and worshipful gazes.

“Nie Tian! That’s Nie Tian!”

“He’s the one who awakened the Bone Blood Demon and commanded it to slaughter countless low-tier Demons! He’s the reason why our sect survived that calamity.”

“I heard that he obtained two fragmentary star marks during the Heaven Gate trial.”

“You might not know that those who participated in the Heaven Gate trial were all the most talented disciples from the most powerful sects from different realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars. Not only were there Lesser Heaven stage cultivators, but there were even extremely powerful Heaven stage and Greater Heaven stage experts!”

“He’s a legend of our generation!”

There wasn't any hate or disgust in their eyes. There was only gratefulness and veneration.

“Thank you, Zhang Xu. That will be all.” Yu Tong waved her hand at Zhang Xu and signaled to him that he could go. Afterwards, she turned to Nie Tian and said, “Come with me. I'll take you to the sectmaster.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Alright.”

Under the Blood Sect's young disciples' revering gazes and marveling whispers, Nie Tian followed Yu Tong through the area filled with blood cisterns meant for beginner cultivators.

On their way, Yu Tong suddenly turned to Nie Tian and asked, “Do you want to see An Shiyi and An Ying first?”

“That would be the best.” Nie Tian answered without any hesitation.

Accordingly, Yu Tong took a turn just as they were about to enter the Blood Sect's sect gate and led Nie Tian towards a secluded valley.

Before they even entered the mountain valley, Yu Tong's footsteps caught An Ying's attention, and thus An Ying asked, before even seeing either Yu Tong or Nie Tian, “What good stuff did you bring us this time, Yu Tong?”

Over the past two years, Yu Tong and the An sisters had long since forgotten about their previous disagreements and resumed good relations.

Whenever Yu Tong had the time, she would come to the valley to discuss the Dao of cultivation with An Shiyi. Every once in a while, she would bring over some cultivation resources for the sisters.

That was why, upon hearing footsteps, An Ying immediately assumed Yu Tong had come to visit them again. By the time An Ying walked out from the belly of the valley, and she saw that Nie Tian had come with Yu Tong, she was shocked into a daze. She

subconsciously rubbed her eyes and called out, “Nie Tian!”

“Who? Who is it? Am I hearing right?” Upon hearing An Ying’s shout, An Shiyi immediately rushed to the mouth of the valley, where An Ying was standing.

Wearing a fiery-red, long dress, An Shiyi seemed like a blossoming flower, mature and glorious. Having entered the Greater Heaven stage, her entire body was releasing an imposing flame aura.

She seemed to be practicing her fire incantations when Nie Tian and Yu Tong had first arrived, and thus, at this moment, there were some ashes on her beautiful face and fiery dress.

Standing several dozen meters away, her bright eyes instantly fixed on Nie Tian. She gently bit her plump and smooth lower lip. Her curvaceous body trembled slightly, huge waves surging in her pounding heart.

“Long time no see, Big Sister An,” Nie Tian said with a smile.

An Shiyi recovered from the shock of seeing him, and said somewhat sheepishly, “F-finally, you’re back. Give me a second.”

She rushed back into her cottage and hastily tidied up her appearance. After getting rid of even the slightest bits of ash and dust on her face and dress, she walked out of her cottage, looking enlivened and radiant.

At that moment, Nie Tian and Yu Tong had already walked to An Ying’s side.

An Shiyi smiled embarrassedly at Nie Tian and said with a somewhat complaining tone, “How come you didn’t even say a word before you left? You made me, sorry, us worry about you for two whole years!”

“Well, I didn’t worry about him. You’re the one who worried about him.” An Ying pursed her lips into a smile and said to Nie Tian, “Over these two years, she talked about you all the time,

fearing that the Heaven Palace Sect might find you, that Ning Yang might take your fragmentary star marks, and that the Heaven Palace Sect might kill you.”

“She’s right. I can testify to that,” Yu Tong said calmly.

“What? No!” Embarrassment filled An Shiyi’s face. Immediately afterwards, she said with a harsh tone, “Nie Tian is my sworn brother, and I care about him. What’s wrong with that?”

“You’re right. There’s nothing wrong with that, and I didn’t say there was.” An Ying blinked a few times, smiling.

“You go ahead and catch up. I’ll wait for you right outside the valley.” With these words, Yu Tong turned around and intended to leave.

“Why are you leaving? Come back.” An Shiyi stepped forward and grabbed Yu Tong by her arm. Then, she said to Nie Tian with a serious expression, “Yu Tong took good care of us during the past two years we spent in the Blood Sect. She’s a nice person. I’d say you two should let bygones be bygones and forget about the unpleasantness between you.”

“Fine by me.” Nie Tian laughed softly. “I didn’t suffer any loss from her, anyways.”

“You!” Remembering how Nie Tian had repeatedly violated her, Yu Tong glowered at him and said with a tone full of hate, “Sister Shiyi, the feud between me and him can’t be settled so easily!”

“Come on. Let it go already.” An Shiyi did her utmost to persuade Yu Tong. “Ever since Nie Tian awakened the Bone Blood Demon, he could be considered a member of the Blood Sect. Not to mention that your sectmaster openly declared that he had become a member of the Blood Sect. Do you dare to oppose her? Furthermore, he saved the Blood Sect. Many people who are close to you and your martial brothers and sisters survived because of him. What feud can’t you forgive?”

“Nevertheless, we’re far from over!” Yu Tong said stubbornly.

That was when Nie Tian intentionally changed the subject by saying, “Well, Sister An, I came from Black Cloud City.”

“Black Cloud City!” The smile on An Shiyi’s face instantly vanished. “How is the situation over there?”

“Everything is fine now,” Nie Tian said. “The Yuan Clan is done for.”

“What?!” An Shiyi and An Ying exclaimed at the same time.

Chapter 355: A Series of Shocks

An Shiyi and her sister were both well-aware of the situation the An Clan had been in; ever since they had left the Spiritual Treasure Sect and sought shelter in the Blood Sect, the An Clan had lost the protection of the Spiritual Treasure Sect.

However, they had been forced.

The An Clan couldn't provide them with a strong backing, while the An sisters were blessed with good appearances, especially An Shiyi.

Back when they had been disciples of the Spiritual Treasure Sect, an endless line of men had drooled over her.

Later, when Nie Tian had come along, An Shiyi's situation had improved slightly because of her relationship with Nie Tian.

However, soon afterwards, Nie Tian had gone missing, and An Shiyi's situation in the Spiritual Treasure Sect had quickly worsened.

Finally, it had come to a point where the sisters couldn't put up with the abuse anymore, and thus left the Spiritual Treasure Sect.

Relying on her relationship with Nie Tian, An Shiyi had reached out to the Blood Sect, and to her surprise, Li Jing had readily agreed to take them in.

Meanwhile, the An Clan had originally been doing fine in Black Cloud City, but after the Yuan Clan had come along, the An Clan's days had become increasingly difficult.

An Shiyi and her sister were both aware of the situation. However, they hadn't truly integrated into the Blood Sect, and thus they hadn't been able to pressure the Yuan Clan using the Blood Sect's influence.

All they could do was practice cultivation wholeheartedly. When

they were strong enough, they would be able to support the An Clan with their own strengths.

Therefore, Nie Tian telling them that the Yuan Clan was done for greatly surprised and delighted the sisters. They hastily asked Nie Tian for details.

“Let’s just say that I took care of them for your clan,” Nie Tian said with a smile.

Upon hearing these words, the sisters grew increasingly excited. However, they assumed that Nie Tian had inflicted disasters on the Yuan Clan with others’ help. Never did they imagine that Nie Tian had single-handedly overthrown the Yuan Clan.

An Shiyi went on to ask Nie Tian where he had been during the past two years’ time.

Since the topic was too sensitive, Nie Tian didn’t give her a direct answer. He only said that he had found a secluded location, where he had refined his fragmentary star marks, and then rushed back to the Realm of Flame Heaven immediately afterwards.

WHOOSH!

Li Jing suddenly descended upon the valley, sitting on her Blood Lotus.

Floating in midair, Li Jing glanced down at Nie Tian and said with an expressionless face, “Hop on.”

It was only natural that she, as the sectmaster, rapidly learned about Nie Tian’s appearance in the Blood Sect.

After all, the entire Realm of Flame Heaven was currently enveloped in a desperate atmosphere.

As a matter of fact, Li Jing had been waiting for Nie Tian to come to her. However, after waiting fruitlessly for some time, she eventually couldn’t help but search for him using her soul power, which was strong enough to cover the entire Blood Sect, and

instantly determined Nie Tian's location.

Looking embarrassed, Nie Tian intended to explain. "Well..."

Two years ago, he had left the Blood Sect without telling anyone about it, which had caused numerous powerful experts from the Blood Sect, Hell Sect, Ghost Sect, and Heaven Palace Sect to go to great lengths to search for him.

He, on the other hand, had secretly left with Hua Mu in his Lightning Shuttle.

He was somewhat apologetic towards Li Jing, thinking that his leaving might have put her in trouble when she had to explain things to the Heaven Palace Sect.

"There's nothing wrong with your decision," Li Jing said with an expressionless face. "Actually, if you hadn't left, we probably would have had to give you to the Heaven Palace Sect because of all the pressure they were giving us. Since you left on your own, that actually gave me an excuse I could use to explain things to the Heaven Palace Sect. So don't apologize."

Nie Tian was also aware that the situation was urgent, and they couldn't afford to waste more time. Therefore, he jumped onto the Blood Lotus after it descended close to the ground, saying, "Many thanks."

Eyes narrowed, Li Jing looked deeply at him as she said, "I just received word of your deeds in Black Cloud City. The speed at which you have progressed over the past two years truly amazes me. It came as a great shock to me when they told me that you actually killed Yuan Fengchun, who was at the middle Greater Heaven stage. That was simply unbelievable."

A shudder ran through An Shiyi's alluring body. "What?! You killed Yuan Fengchun?"

Yu Tong was also shocked, a deeply frustrated expression spreading across her face.

For all these years, killing Nie Tian had been the goal and motive of her unrelenting cultivation. After Nie Tian had awakened the Bone Blood Demon, she had realized that killing Nie Tian wouldn't be an option, and thus she had altered her resolution to defeat Nie Tian in a battle.

This was reason she had pulled through the hard times and entered the middle Heaven stage in years.

However, she had never imagined that Nie Tian, who possessed the same cultivation base as she did, actually had the ability to kill the middle Greater Heaven stage Yuan Fengchun.

“He has received the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Now that he dares to come back, it means that he must have refined them already.” Li Jing's tone was calm as ever. “So, if you want to beat him, your cultivation base will have to be several levels higher than his. Otherwise, I don't think you'll stand a chance, if you were to fight one-on-one. Yu Tong, Nie Tian practices incantations of several attributes, yet he has already entered the middle Heaven stage. From that point, you're actually lagging behind a bit.”

After these words, the Blood Lotus whizzed away and disappeared into the distant sky.

“Such a monster!” Yu Tong muttered, her voice filled with hate.

She surely knew that those who practiced multiple types of incantations normally would progress much slower than people like her, who practiced only one specific type of incantation.

However, Nie Tian had somehow managed to advance to the middle Heaven stage within two years.

Even though she had worked hard day and night, never missing a single day of practice, her cultivation base was only equal to Nie Tian's.

As for actual battle prowess, hers couldn't even be mentioned in

the same breath with Nie Tian's.

With these thoughts, Yu Tong's heart was filled with frustration and hopelessness. It occurred to her that however hard she continued to work, she might not be able to beat Nie Tian in her lifetime.

"Yu Tong, Nie Tian is unlike anyone we have ever seen," An Ying said, her voice filled with sympathy. "You don't want to compare yourself with him."

"She's right, Little Tong." An Shiyi also tried to console her. "Don't bother comparing yourself with him. Common sense doesn't apply to that man."

"I just can't swallow it!" Yu Tong said begrudgingly.

...

"Where have you been during the past two years?"

Sitting on the Blood Lotus, Li Jing had her eyes fixed on the distant horizon as she manipulated it to fly towards the Hell Sect.

The Blood Lotus was her Spirit Channeling grade treasure, which, unlike the Lightning Shuttle, wasn't purely an air-transportation spiritual tool.

Instead of consuming spirit stones, Li Jing needed to power the Blood Lotus with her own spiritual power, and the speed at which the Blood Lotus traveled was far inferior to the Lightning Shuttle.

"I'd rather not say. Is that okay?" Nie Tian said.

"Alright then. Don't if you don't want to." Li Jing didn't insist. "Powerful experts from the Ghost Sect, Hell Sect, Spiritual Treasure Sect, and Cloudsoaring Sect will all be gathered by the spatial rift. I guess the Hell Sect has relayed the news of your appearance in Black Cloud City to the Heaven Palace Sect. So they are probably waiting for you there already as well.

"I bet the Hell Sect and the Ghost Sect have already arrived by

now.

“I believe they’ll ask you the same question I asked you just now, so I hope you can come up with a reasonable answer for them.”

After brief hesitation, she continued, “People say that it would require all three fragmentary star marks to seal that spatial rift. Plus, the three fragmentary star marks need to be on the same person for it to work. You’re back, but Ning Yang from the Heaven Palace Sect, who has the the third fragmentary star mark, is still missing.

“That means that even if you go over there now, you won’t be able to seal that spatial rift by yourself, right?”

“Well...” Nie Tian cleared his throat. “Actually, I’ve obtained Ning Yang’s fragmentary star mark already.”

Li Jing’s expression flickered dramatically. “What?!”

“Alright, it doesn’t look like I’ll be able to keep this as a secret anyways.” With a shrug, Nie Tian revealed the truth. “I spent the past two years in the Realm of Split Void. And that’s where I got Ning Yang’s fragmentary star mark. He was killed by a Phantasm that had come from an unknown realm, and I happened to be in the vicinity when it happened.

“After he was killed, his fragmentary star mark flew towards me on its own.”

Nie Tian explained everything to Li Jing, except the fact that he and others had worked together and killed Ning Yang.

Li Jing listened quietly, yet her face was filled with shock.

She found it hard to believe that Ning Yang, who was at the peak of the Greater Heaven stage and only a step away from entering the Worldly realm, had been accidentally killed by a Phantasm in the Realm of Split Void, while Nie Tian had been so lucky that he had happened to be in the vicinity, and thus obtained that fragmentary star mark.

Numerous expressions flashed across her face. Only after a long time did she ask with a shocked and confused expression, “Do you have confidence that you will be able to seal that spatial rift by yourself?”

She didn’t dwell on the authenticity of Nie Tian’s story.

“I’ve got to try to see,” Nie Tian answered.

She nodded, saying, “Right. I hope you can do it.”

Two days passed...

They entered the Hell Sect’s territory, which was already submerged in raging demon Qi. As they did, a layer of dark-red light instantly formed around the Blood Lotus, shielding them from the demon Qi that had come from Demons’ realms.

After traveling at full speed for another half day, they finally arrived at the location where Li Jing and the other big shots had agreed to meet.

The blackish-violet demon Qi had already filled heaven and earth. A few vague figures could be seen standing atop a magnificent mountain peak.

As the dark-red light gradually entered their sight, the few people on the mountain peak all grew enlivened.

“They’re here!”

Chapter 356: Forced to Join the Sect

Blackish-violet demon Qi filled heaven and earth. Not only would the human Qi warriors' vision be compromised when they were in it, but their senses would also be influenced to a great extent.

Standing atop that mountain peak, the few figures were all wreathed in faint spiritual light, which protected them from the corrosion of the demon Qi.

Each and every one of them was a person with great power and influence in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Among them were Chang Sen from the Hell Sect, Ghost Eye from the Ghost Sect, and Fang Hui from the Spiritual Treasure Sect, all of whom were powerful Profound realm Qi warriors.

Aside from them, Huang Fan, an elder from the Heaven Palace Sect, and Su Lin were also waiting silently.

Only representatives from the Cloudsoaring Sect, Grayvale Sect, and Mystic Mist Sect hadn't shown up yet, due to the long journeys they had to take to get here.

As the dark-red light unleashed by the Blood Lotus gradually entered their view, everyone atop the mountain peak seemed to be suddenly enlivened.

The moment the white-garbed Su Lin caught sight of Nie Tian on the Blood Lotus, she couldn't help but call out, "Nie Tian!"

"Are you sure it's him?" Huang Fan asked in a soft voice.

Huang Fan was the powerful expert the Heaven Palace Sect had sent to the Realm of Flame Heaven to take the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang.

He was at the late Profound realm, the same as Chang Sen, the strongest man in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Originally, he had come to the Realm of Flame Heaven for Ning

Yang. However, after learning that Ning Yang had disappeared from the Realm of Flame Heaven, he had chosen to stay.

The reason for that was that he was convinced that Nie Tian would eventually return to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

After learning about Nie Tian's stories and that the first thing he had done after returning from the Heaven Gate trial had been to awaken the Bone Blood Demon and lift the Blood Sect's siege, Huang Fan was convinced that Nie Tian was affectionate and faithful, and that once he refined his fragmentary star marks, he would return to the Realm of Flame Heaven as quickly as he could.

His assessment had been accurate.

SHEW!

The Blood Lotus descended upon the mountain peak.

After the two of them got down, Li Jing didn't put away her Blood Lotus, but rather stared at Huang Fan with her eyes filled with vigilance, and said, "Here. I've brought him to you."

"Greetings." Nie Tian bowed in a respectful yet proud fashion.

Chang Sen, Ghost Eye, and Fang Hui all nodded briefly in reply.

Only Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect unleashed wisps of his soul power to carefully examine Nie Tian with his eyes narrowed.

A moment later, a slightly surprised expression appeared on his face as he said, "You practice different types of incantations. Yet, you managed to step into the middle Heaven stage in two years. Quite impressive, I've got to say."

During these two years, Su Lin, a promising disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect, had made the same progress in her cultivation as Nie Tian.

However, Su Lin only practiced only one type of incantation, and all the secret magics she practiced were of the same attribute. Her

being able to make such rapid progress had a great deal to do with the fact that the Heaven Palace Sect had provided her with endless cultivation resources, and that she possessed amazing talent.

Nie Tian had needed to hide from numerous search teams sent out by different forces. In addition, he had needed to spend time to learn and refine the fragmentary star mark. The fact that he had managed to advance to the middle Heaven stage under such circumstances greatly amazed Huang Fan.

Chang Sen and Ghost Eye were also secretly amazed by Nie Tian's exceedingly fast cultivation.

With a frown, Chang Sen from the Hell Sect said, "Brother Huang. Nie Tian is here now. Where is Ning Yang? According to you, only when the three fragmentary star marks become one will we be able to start the restrictive spell left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and use the grand spell formation formed by these three gigantic mountain peaks to seal that spatial rift.

"If Ning Yang doesn't show up with his fragmentary star mark, won't Nie Tian's return be in vain?"

Ghost Eye and Fang Hui also frowned, unpleasant expressions appearing on their faces.

During the past six months, they had communicated with Huang Fan occasionally, from whom they had learned that, in light of the urgency of the situation, the Heaven Palace Sect had already planned to take the third fragmentary star mark from Ning Yang and give it to Nie Tian.

That was why they had been waiting for Nie Tian to show up as soon as possible after refining his fragmentary star marks.

Now that Nie Tian had appeared, the fragmentary star mark on Ning Yang had become the heart of the matter.

"Ning Yang won't be coming." With a calm expression, Huang Fan looked deeply at Nie Tian for a while before asking with a

hoarse voice, “Were you the one who killed him?”

Upon hearing these words, everyone’s expression turned pale with fright, with Huang Fan and Su Lin being the only exceptions.

Nie Tian shook his head, and said in a composed manner, “What? Ning Yang was at the late Greater Heaven stage, and his cultivation base doesn’t do justice to his actual strength. Given my limited cultivation base and strength, how could I possibly kill him?”

“But he’s dead!” Huang Fan raised his voice. “And his fragmentary star mark is now in your possession. How do explain that?”

Meanwhile, Su Lin glared at Nie Tian, her eyes filled with burning enmity.

Everyone from the Realm of Flame Heaven seemed to be dumbstruck.

“How did you know that Ning Yang was dead?” Nie Tian asked curiously.

Huang Fan let out a snort and said, “Ning Yang was one of the Heaven Palace Sect’s chosen ones. Of course we have ways to know whether he’s alive or dead. We learned about his death the moment he died. However, soon after his death, you showed up in the Realm of Flame Heaven with all three fragmentary star marks. There’s no way that we’ll believe you if you say you had nothing to do with his death!”

Nie Tian turned a blind eye to his intimidation, and said with a plain tone, “I didn’t kill him. He was killed by a Phantasm.

“After I refined the first fragmentary star mark, I discovered that I could sense Ning Yang’s existence, but when I went to find him, I happened to see that he was fighting a Phantasm. The Phantasm killed him in order to take his fragmentary star mark. However, it somehow flew towards me on its own and merged with my body.”

“Are you talking about the Phantasms that appeared in the Realm

of Split Void?” Huang Fan asked, lowering his voice again.

The Heaven Palace Sect was extremely resourceful and well-informed, so that it was only natural that they had learned about the Phantasms that had appeared in the Realm of Split Void.

Before, they had only learned that Ning Yang had died, but they hadn't been aware of where he died, and the fact that he had been hiding in the Realm of Split Void.

The Heaven Palace Sect possessed a special instrument which allowed them to store a strand of their most talented disciples' souls.

Once one of them died, his or her strand of soul would automatically dissipate and vanish from the instrument.

However, it only allowed them to learn their chosen ones' life or death, not determine their accurate location through the soul strand.

That was why they only knew that Ning Yang was dead, but didn't know how and where he died.

“Yeah, Ning Yang was killed by one of the Phantasms that descended upon the Realm of Split Void.” Nie Tian clung to his statement. “There's a special region to the east of Ash City in the Realm of Split Void, which people call a forbidden region because, in that region, meteors fall from the heavens from time to time. Since Ning Yang hadn't been able to learn and refine his fragmentary star mark, and he believed that region had some kind of connection to the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, he went there to try his luck and see if he could find ways to refine his fragmentary star mark.

“I, on the other hand, needed large amounts of Star Stones to practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation, so I was there as well.

“I saw Ning Yang rush towards a meteor right after it fell from the sky and crashed into the earth. However, nobody knew there

was a Phantasm hiding inside that meteor.”

...

He hid the part where he, Pei Qiqi, and Xue Long had joined hands and killed Ning Yang, but rather blamed all that on the Phantasm.

Huang Fan, as well as the Profound realm experts from the Realm of Flame Heaven, frowned as they listened to Nie Tian's narration and pondered its authenticity.

After Nie Tian was finished, everyone remained silent for a while, as if they were judging how much of the story he just told was truthful, and how much was not.

Only after a long time did Huang Fan snort coldly and say, “I'll believe you for now, but now that we know that Ning Yang died in the Realm of Split Void, we'll send people there to conduct a thorough investigation. If we ever find evidence that it was you who killed Ning Yang, you'll have to atone for your crime!”

“What do you mean?” Li Jing asked coldly.

Huang Fan shot a glance at her and said calmly, “It's simple. Whoever kills one of our chosen ones will have to compensate us. Our sect poured in endless effort and resources to cultivate Ning Yang and make him what he was. If we find out that he killed Ning Yang, then he will have to join the Heaven Palace Sect and fill the void he has left.”

Upon hearing these words, the expressions of everyone present grew strange, even including Su Lin.

It seemed that even she didn't expect that the fuming and angry Huang Fan's punishment for killing Ning Yang would be for the criminal to join the Heaven Palace Sect.

Soon, Chang Sen and the others came to their senses.

They gradually understood Huang Fan's thinking. Now that Nie

Tian had gathered all three fragmentary star marks, it meant that he would receive the complete legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

That being the case, whichever sect Nie Tian decided to join, he would be able to bring brand-new, profound cultivation concepts and secret magics to that new sect.

As a matter of fact, the reason why the Heaven Palace Sect had prepared to take Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark and give it to Nie Tian, after learning that Ning Yang hadn't been able to refine it, was that they wanted to offer it to Nie Tian on the condition that he agreed to become a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect.

However, Huang Fan hadn't expected that Nie Tian had taken the fragmentary star from Ning Yang without their arrangement.

Considering that, their plan to lure Nie Tian to join the Heaven Palace Sect using the third fragmentary star mark would be destined to fail.

Therefore, Huang Fan thought of a new way, where he would use Nie Tian's killing of Ning Yang as an excuse to force Nie Tian to join the Heaven Palace Sect.

Once Nie Tian joined the Heaven Palace Sect, that would mean that the legacies he had obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace would also belong to the Heaven Palace Sect.

"We can focus on that later, but at present, our number one priority is to seal the spatial rift," Chang Sen from the Hell Sect said.

"Alright." Huang Fan nodded in assent. Then, he turned to Nie Tian and asked somewhat suspiciously, "Nie Tian, you've only refined one fragmentary star mark; do you have confidence that you'll be able to start the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and use it to seal the spatial rift?"

"The grand spell formation has been here all along," Nie Tian

explained. “I just need to start it with the three fragmentary star marks.”

Spirited, Chang Sen said, “Good. Do what you have to do. No one will interrupt you.”

Afterwards, Nie Tian sat down on the mountain peak, which he knew was one of the three mountain peaks that formed the grand spell formation, and started communicating with the three fragmentary star marks on his chest.

Chapter 357: Seal!

Within the belly of each of the three high mountain peaks, there was a special spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. In order to seal the spatial rift, the three spell formations would have to work together.

The fragmentary star marks were the keys to start those spell formations.

Nie Tian would only be the initiator.

After sitting down and quietly going through the spell, which would allow him to start the spell formations, in his mind, he started casting the spell accordingly.

His psychic awareness flew into his refined fragmentary star mark.

As soon as his psychic awareness flew into the fragmentary star mark, he sensed that three extremely strong gravitational forces were born within the mountain peak he was sitting on, as well as the two other mountain peaks, forming a perfect triangle.

The moment the gravitational forces were created, his two unrefined fragmentary star marks left his chest and floated in front of him.

WHOOSH!

They turned into two clusters of dazzling starlight and shot towards the other two mountain peaks.

Atop the mountain peak, every Profound realm expert focused their sight and soul power on the two clusters of starlight as they flew away and disappeared into the dense demon Qi in a flash.

In the next moment, the refined fragmentary star mark, which was infused with Nie Tian's psychic awareness, also morphed into a streak of dazzling starlight and flew into the mountain peak he

was sitting on.

At that moment, the seven fragmentary stars in Nie Tian's soul simultaneously started to shine with bright light!

Furthermore, after leaving his body, the three fragmentary star marks seemed to have turned into three brand-new Heaven Eyes.

He could sense everything with great clarity as they flew inside the three mountain peaks at an extremely high speed.

Within seconds, he discovered that the three fragmentary star marks had reached the bellies of the mountain peaks.

Every mountain peak was hollow in the middle. As the fragmentary star marks sailed through the vast hollow space, Nie Tian had a very clear view of their surroundings.

He noticed that countless detailed and spectacular star power spell formations covered the insides of the three mountain peaks.

In the middle of the empty space, surrounded by countless spell formations, was a elegant pagoda.

The three fragmentary star marks rapidly flew into the three pagodas without pausing for a moment.

Immediately afterwards, the pagodas were lit up by the fragmentary star marks and became glorious and brilliant.

At that very moment, the countless beautiful spell formations on the insides of the mountain peaks also began to shine with dazzlingly bright light and the numerous fine lines that formed them began wiggling.

The spell formations reminded Nie Tian very much of the star formations he had formed with starsparks when he launched Starstrike.

The only difference was that they were in much greater number.

After lighting up, the numerous small spell formations gradually connected with each other and formed a mysterious, enormous

spell formation within each mountain peak.

Afterwards, the enormous spell formations start to activate, and rapidly turned the empty space within the three mountain peaks into oceans of starlight, with the pagodas in the middle seeming to act as their central hubs.

RUUUUMBLE!

Muffled rumbles constantly rang out from within the three extremely high mountain peaks.

Bright starlight started to rise from the stone ground at the tops of the mountain peaks, making the three lofty mountain peaks look like lit candles.

After another glance, the three mountain peaks seemed to have turned into three gigantic beacons that were attracting something.

Shock could be seen in the eyes of the Profound realm experts who were standing beside Nie Tian as they looked down at the stone ground.

Sparkling starlight was rising from the dark-cyan stone ground, enveloping every one of them.

In the meantime, the blackish-violet demon Qi that had filled the entire area seemed to be purged at an increasingly fast speed.

“Look! Up in the air!” Ghost Eye from the Ghost Sect called out.

Everyone immediately looked up.

As the raging demon Qi gradually dissipated, the starlit sky could be seen again for the first time in two years.

In the night sky, the stars seemed to be shining brighter than ever.

All of a sudden, numerous streaks of bright starlight started to pour down from the unknown outer space like rivers of light.

It seemed that the reason why the starlight could find this area

with great precision was that they were able to follow the direction of the three beacon-like mountain peaks.

One after another, numerous rivers of starlight fell from the heavens and converged on the area.

As the starlight poured down, the dense demon Qi that had ravaged the area for two whole years rapidly dissipated like smoke being blown away by a gust of wind.

Within moments, the dense demon Qi was shattered and washed away by the pouring rivers of starlight.

Chang Sen, Huang Fan, and the others who had been standing beside Nie Tian seemed to be overwhelmed by the spectacular scene, and sat down in the lotus position one by one.

Eyes narrowed, they each unleashed their soul power, hoping to sense and draw enlightenment from the pouring starlight and the three gigantic mountain peaks that were shining with dazzling starlight.

The way they saw it, the magnificent changes that were happening to the mountain peaks and the starlight that was pouring down from the highest heavens was the work of extremely powerful experts that could shake Heaven and Earth. Therefore, they did their best to perceive the heaven-connecting grand spell formation they had created following the laws of Heaven, Earth, and the universe.

Even though they didn't practice star-power-related incantations, they assumed if they could receive even the slightest enlightenment from this magnificent heaven-channeling magic, it would be very helpful to the advancement of their cultivation.

Therefore, every single one of them held their breaths as they focused all of their attention on sensing the subtle changes happening in their surroundings.

Atop another mountain peak...

Hua Mu and Pei Qiqi, who had arrived before Nie Tian and the others, also sat down on the ground.

An intangible magnetic field spread out from within Hua Mu's body, enveloping Hua Mu and Pei Qiqi together.

The mountain peak they were on wasn't very far from the one Nie Tian and the others were on.

Yet, since Hua Mu had intentionally masked his and Pei Qiqi's aura, even Chang Sen and Huang Fan hadn't been able to sense their existence.

“Qiqi, sense the unusual movement within the spatial rift underneath us with your heart,” Hua Mu said softly. “Since you practice space power, if you can derive even the slightest enlightenment from the profound methods those grand Qi warriors used to seal the spatial rift, you'll benefit from it your whole life.”

Pei Qiqi nodded gently. “Yeah, okay.”

Sitting atop the extremely high mountain peak, with a deep breath, she looked down at the huge spatial rift that had revealed itself due to the dispelling of the demon Qi.

In the middle of the three high mountain peaks, blackish-violet demon Qi was oozing out of an enormous black hole unceasingly.

Meanwhile, a large number of fine spatial rifts seemed to have appeared around the black hole.

At that moment, more and more dazzlingly bright starlight poured down from the highest heavens and converged on the black hole like torrential rivers of light.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The numerous scattered and broken fine spatial rifts began to swim around rapidly.

It seemed as if a giant invisible hand was pulling those rivers of

starlight in order to fix something.

As that happened, the numerous small spatial rifts rapidly wiggled and slithered as they gradually gathered over the enormous black hole, where they rearranged themselves and formed a network of spatial rifts that seemed like an ancient, restrictive spell formation, full of star power.

Pei Qiqi could see with great clarity that the volume of the demon Qi flowing out of the black hole had declined noticeably.

The mouth of the black hole seemed like a bowl that had its mouth covered by a piece of paper that was full of rifts.

At this moment, the demon Qi could only flow out through the rifts.

Meanwhile, as rivers of starlight continued to pour down on the mouth of the black hole, the numerous rifts were healing rapidly. It seemed as if it wouldn't take long before all the fine rifts healed completely.

Just like that, the rivers of starlight repaired the broken grand spell formation while purging the demon Qi in the area.

Nie Tian had noticed that, after he had lit up the pagodas within the three mountain peaks, everything worked in an orderly fashion, driven by the profound spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

As the initiator, his job had finished, since the fragmentary star marks had flown into the pagodas.

At that moment, everyone around him was trying to pry into the mysterious spell formation and sense how it interacted with the profound star power within the pouring rivers of starlight.

He wanted to practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation and channel some of the unique-sensing starlight into his spiritual sea. However, he was afraid that he would affect the operation of the spell formation by doing that.

Therefore, he rose to his feet and stepped to the edge of the mountaintop, where he looked down and observed carefully.

He took note that as the demon Qi was being dispelled by the starlight, substantial amounts of strange-looking plants could be seen in the valley among the three high mountain peaks.

There seemed to be a great variety of plants, each of which had strange appearances. Some had black branches and leaves, while others were purple.

Many of them had even borne fruits that were translucent like purple jades, with bright lights sparkling inside of them.

While his eyes were seized by the beautiful fruits, a few spirit beasts suddenly caught his attention.

Each and every one of them had dark-purple eyes, as if they had gone through a mutation.

Some of them were eating the plants' leaves, while others were fighting over the fruits that resembled purple jades. They fought each other fiercely and unleashed bellows from time to time.

Nie Tian's expression flickered as he secretly formed his seven heaven Eyes and spread them out to observe the vicinity.

Soon, he discovered that the surrounding valleys were filled with even more mutant spirit beasts. He even discovered large amounts of skeletons that seemed to have belonged to spirit beasts.

That was when he realized that as the raging demon Qi had filled this area, most of the spirit beasts that breathed the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth had died. Only those that gradually adapted to the demon Qi had survived. At that moment, Su Lin quietly appeared next to him and said, "It's our fortune that Demons haven't descended upon us. Otherwise, they could have easily infused those mutant spirit beasts with demonblood and turned them into low-tier Demons.

"Wow... That's just..." Nie Tian said.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

At that very moment, three people suddenly arrived.

One of them was the sectmaster of the Cloudsoaring Sect, Jiang Zhisu, who he had met just once in Black Cloud City.

However, now he looked very bedraggled with his face covered in blood, as if he had just gone through a bloody battle.

Chapter 358: Mutant Spirit Beasts

As the sectmaster of the Cloudsoaring Sect, Jiang Zhisu was at the late Worldly realm, only one step away from entering the Profound realm.

No more than a handful of experts in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven had the ability to injure him so badly, and most of them had been gathered by Nie Tian's side.

Nie Tian was shocked by Jiang Zhisu's bedraggled appearance, not knowing what he had gone through on his way over.

Two others came with Jiang Zhisu, one of whom was Yuan Xian from the Grayvale Sect, who Nie Tian knew fairly well.

Since the moment she had arrived, her ice-cold gaze had never left Nie Tian.

She was from the Yuan Clan, and Yuan Fengchun was her older brother.

Apparently, she had already learned about the heaven-overthrowing incident that had happened in Black Cloud City, and that Nie Tian was the one to blame.

“Alright, Yuan Xian!” The other man, Song Wenshi from the Mystic Mist Sect, called out softly. “Every sect gave you face and didn't interfere when the Yuan Clan decided to move to Black Cloud City. However, we didn't foresee that your big brother would actually rely on our mercy and do those underhanded things to the Nie Clan and the An Clan over and over again, which eventually resulted in the tragedy.”

Song Wenshi was a middle Profound realm Qi warrior, and the most powerful expert in the Mystic Mist Sect. His status in the Mystic Mist Sect was similar to Wu Ji's status in the Cloudsoaring Sect.

Jiang Zhisu jumped in and said, “What's done is done. I hope you

can calm down and not create new disturbances.”

Li Jing from the Blood Sect was originally trying to receive enlightenment from the profound grand spell formation. However, the moment Yuan Xian arrived, her eyes snapped open and locked onto her.

In a flash, her eyes turned blood-red as they became filled with an intense killing intent.

Various expressions flashed across Yuan Xian’s face.

The Grayvale Sect also had a Profound realm expert. However, he had sustained heavy injuries when the Grayvale Sect had been flooded by the invading Demons.

Seeing that the Grayvale Sect was almost gone, and it would only be a matter of time before the entire realm fell, that Profound realm expert had decided to betray his sect and leave the Realm of Flame Heaven.

The way he had seen it, the Grayvale Sect would never rise to prominence again, and he didn’t want to be dragged down by it.

His leaving and the great losses they had suffered were the reasons why the Grayvale Sect existed only in name now.

Chang Sen chimed in by saying, “They’re right, Yuan Xian. Try to look at the bigger picture.”

After glaring at Nie Tian for a while, Yuan Xian forcibly calmed herself and sat down without uttering a word.

After all, she sensed that, at this sensitive time, Nie Tian shouldered the keen hope and responsibility of the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

In this situation, not to mention that Nie Tian had only killed Yuan Fengchun, even if he had killed Yuan Xian as well and annihilated the entire Grayvale Sect, no one would do anything to

him.

Since she knew she couldn't do anything to him for the time being, she decided to restrain herself.

“What happened to you, Brother Song?” Chang Sen asked.

With a grim expression, Song Wenshi from the Mystic Mist Sect replied, “We encountered mutant spirit beasts on our way here.”

“Mutant spirit beasts?!” With a frown, Chang Sen looked the three of them up and down, and discovered that Song Wenshi seemed unharmed, but both Jiang Zhisu and Yuan Xian had sustained injuries to certain degrees. Surprised, he asked, “The mutant spirit beasts in this area shouldn't be of very high levels. Considering your strengths, how could they possibly hurt you?”

Since the Hell Sect was very close to this area, Chang Sen had recently come to this area every few days to see if there were signs of Demon armies arriving.

He had discovered that, as demon Qi had submerged this area, large amounts of spirit beasts had died. The spirit beasts that had survived the demon Qi had mutated and developed the ability to practice cultivation with demon Qi, instead of the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth.

After mutation, those spirit beasts had become much more powerful, but their grades hadn't seemed to have increased noticeably.

“Jiang Zhisu and Yuan Xian encountered a few fifth grade mutant spirit beasts on their way to this place. I detected the aura of a sixth grade mutant spirit beast on my way over, and I avoided contact with it.” Song Wenshi said in a solemn voice.

The strength of a fifth grade spirit beast could match up to that of a Worldly realm human Qi warrior; the strength of a sixth grade spirit beast was roughly equal to that of a Profound realm human cultivator, let alone the fact that their strengths had improved to

different extents after mutating.

“What?!” Chang Sen was taken aback. “I examined this area repeatedly. How come I didn’t discover any fifth grade or sixth grade mutant spirit beasts?”

At that moment, Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect said with an indifferent tone. “Actually, that’s understandable. After reaching the fifth or sixth grade, not only will the spirit beasts’ intelligence go through a sharp increase, but their fleshy body will become incomparably tough, which will allow them to adapt to the demon Qi that has leaked into our world from the demon realms.

“Once they have adapted, not only will they not run away from demon Qi, but they will even gather to the places where demon Qi is the richest.

“Since, for them, not only is demon Qi not a burden, but it can even help them improve their strength and spur their bloodline to transcend.

“I’m guessing the fifth and six grade spirit beasts they encountered on their way here didn’t live in this area originally. Rather, they were drawn to this area recently.

“In addition...”

With these words, Huang Fan took a deep breath and added, “As you probably know, in ancient times, the Realm of Flame Heaven was originally a paradise for Demons. Before the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace came along, there wasn’t any spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in this realm. Instead, it was demon Qi that filled every corner of this vast land.

“During that time, low-tier and high-tier demons were the inhabitants and owners of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Till this day, many spirit beasts that practice cultivation with the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Realm of Flame Heaven still carry demon bloodlines. It was the spiritual Qi’s replacement

of demon Qi that forced their bodies to go through dramatic changes and become the spirit beasts we know today.

“However, they still have a thirst for demon Qi in their blood, so they will follow their natural urges and converge on this area, where the rich demon Qi would gradually awaken their true strength.

“In essence, they are low-tier Demons.”

Upon hearing these words, everyone’s expression flickered as they understood what Huang Fan’s words meant.

With an expressionless face, Huang Fan continued, “This is why the Demons haven’t been in a hurry to invade us. As demon Qi drowns most parts of the Realm of Flame Heaven, many spirit beasts will mutate and awaken their incubating demon bloodlines, and eventually become low-tier Demons.

“If high-tier Demons launch an invasion at that time, they will have a large amount of low-tier Demons to command at the beginning of the war.

“Even now, when they haven’t invaded us, we are forced to deal with those low-tier Demons.

“He’s right!” An exclamation escaped Nie Tian’s mouth.

As he listened to Huang Fan’s explanation, Nie Tian noticed via his seven Heaven Eyes that large amounts of mutant spirit beasts were converging on them from every direction.

It seemed as if those purple-eyed, sinister spirit beasts didn’t want to see that spatial rift be sealed.

On the contrary, they yearned for even richer demon Qi to pour out of that spatial rift, and they wanted the entire Realm of Flame Heaven to be submerged in demon Qi again.

Chang Sen rose to his feet and said to Nie Tian, “You stay here and oversee the operation of the restrictive spell left by the

Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Make sure that spatial rift is sealed! Since those spirit beasts carry Demon bloodlines, we can't let them live in the Realm of Flame Heaven anymore! If we don't get rid of them now, they'll cause us trouble in the future!"

"I'll stay here and guard Nie Tian," Li Jing said.

Chang Sen nodded, saying, "Good."

Immediately afterwards, the most powerful Qi warriors in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven flew down from the mountain peak and unleashed their divine magics to kill the converging mutant spirit beasts.

"Mutant spirit beasts..." Nie Tian's eyes shone with a strange light.

After his previous experience in the Realm of Split Void, he had learned that the spirit beasts that could bear the corrosion of different types of Qi and survive hostile environments must possess incomparably vigorous life force.

Considering that his own bloodline power need to be bolstered by an endless supply of flesh power, the numerous mutant spirit beasts that were converging on him from every direction were like numerous nourishment pills.

Chapter 359: Spirit Beasts

Atop the mountain peak, Huang Fan and Su Lin from the Heaven Palace Sect stood still in their original place.

Since they weren't from the Realm of Flame Heaven, they weren't obligated to kill the incoming spirit beasts, which posed a tremendous threat to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

They were only here to make sure that Nie Tian, who possessed the three fragmentary star marks, finished his duty and sealed the spatial rift.

“How long will it take for you to completely seal that spatial rift?” Huang Fan asked.

The truth was that he was actually very anxious inwardly.

The Heaven Palace Sect in the Realm of Mystic Heaven was on the verge of being submerged by the raging demon Qi. If they couldn't seal the spatial rift soon, their sect would soon be forced to move.

Surrounding the Heaven Palace Sect, there were many herb gardens where they had grown large amounts of medicinal plants and herbs. However, as the demon Qi pervaded the area, many of them had been ruined and become completely worthless.

With every day that passed, the Heaven Palace Sect was sustaining significant losses.

The reason the Heaven Palace Sect had even decided to take Ning Yang's fragmentary star mark and use it to lure Nie Tian out of hiding had been because they were losing patience.

“I don't know for sure, but I think it will take a while,” Nie Tian answered.

In the depths of night, bright starlight was still pouring down from the starlit sky.

In the middle of the three high mountain peaks, countless beams of starlight interwove over the mouth of the unfathomable black hole. They seemed to be channeling and threading the fine spatial rifts together.

At this point, as the initiator, Nie Tian actually didn't need to do anything.

Since the fragmentary star marks had lit up the internal pagodas and started the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, everything seemed to be moving on the right track.

In distant locations, a handful of the most powerful experts in the Realm of Flame Heaven were killing mutant spirit beasts under Chang Sen's leadership.

Nie Tian noticed via his seven Heaven Eyes that one powerful mutant spirit beast after another was cut down or bombarded to death.

However, Chang Sen and the others only focused on killing, and didn't seem to have the slightest intention to collect the spiritual materials or flesh and blood of the dead spirit beasts.

Nie Tian secretly sighed over the incredible waste.

WHOOSH!

At that moment, Li Jing's Blood Lotus suddenly flew away from her side.

It rushed to the area where dead mutant spirit beasts were scattered on the ground and unleashed numerous blood strings.

One blood string after another pierced into the scattered corpses and drew their blood into the Blood Lotus.

As the Blood Lotus absorbed more and more blood, the blood-colored lotus grew increasingly translucent and sparkling. Like a gorgeous, red gem, it emanated dazzlingly bright light.

“Blood Refining Incantation,” Nie Tian muttered to himself.

The Blood Sect’s Blood Refining Incantation was indeed very amazing. Back when he had used it to refine the tainted blood of the mutant spirit beasts in the Realm of Split Void, it had allowed him to extract nothing but the purest and most refined flesh power.

Meanwhile, it had filtered out and left the toxic impurities at the bottom of the wooden barrel.

At this moment, Li Jing’s Blood Lotus seemed to be using the Blood Refining Incantation to refine the dead mutant spirit beasts’ blood and absorb the essence into itself.

As a Spirit Channeling grade spiritual tool, that Blood Lotus possessed its own soul. It seemed that it was able to practice cultivation with the blood it had absorbed and use it to transcend.

“How are you doing with your Blood Refining Incantation?” Li Jing suddenly asked.

“I think I’ve mastered the basics,” Nie Tian relied respectfully. “Thank you for passing the Blood Sect’s secret cultivation incantation to me, sectmaster Li.”

“It’s alright. I never treated you as an outsider. Even though I know you don’t want to join the Blood Sect, since you practice our sect’s secret incantation, I’ve always considered you as an honorary disciple of our sect.” After a moment of hesitation, Li Jing added, “When you’re finished with your business in the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, I want you to come back to the Blood Sect. There must be some kind of bond between you and that Bone Blood Demon you awakened.

“It fell dormant right after you left, and no one has been able to awaken it since then.

“That being the case, I’ve decided to give it to you.

“Next time you come back to the Blood Sect, it will be yours. You’ll be free to take it anywhere you want.”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered dramatically. “Really?!... This is very kind of you, but is this appropriate?”

That Bone Blood Demon’s strength could match up to that of a Profound realm Qi warrior. Not only was it extremely powerful and fierce, but it was also completely at Nie Tian’s disposal.

If he could take it away with him, it would be like having a Profound realm Qi warrior by his side at all times. No matter where he went in the future, he would have a formidable force at his disposal.

However, the Blood Sect had always considered that Bone Blood Demon to be their most precious treasure, so Nie Tian found it very hard to believe that Li Jing would actually allow him to take it away.

“There’s nothing inappropriate about this,” Li Jing said with an expressionless face.

ROOOAARRRR!!

At that moment a heaven-shaking, earth-moving beast roar rang out in the distance.

Immediately afterwards, all the mutant spirit beasts seemed to grow mad.

Sitting on the mountain peak, Nie Tian experienced a sudden ache in his heart as he heard that roar.

He examined himself with rapt attention, and discovered that the green aura coiled in his heart was unleashing dazzling green light and using the wisps of life aura to wrap up his heart.

POOH!

Next to him, Su Lin from the Heaven Palace Sect suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood, her face ghastly.

The violent beast roar seemed to have inflicted serious damage on her while she was completely off guard.

Subconsciously, she turned to looked at Nie Tian.

Even though Nie Tian's face was filled with shock and confusion, he seemed unharmed.

Huang Fan's expression flickered as he exclaimed, "What a powerful mutant spirit beast! From the roar alone, I'm positive that it's a sixth grade mutant spirit beast. Normally speaking, the strength of a sixth grade mutant spirit beast is equivalent to that of a Profound realm Qi warrior like me. This mutant spirit beast must possess formidable strength!"

The experts from the Realm of Flame Heaven, who were cutting down mutant spirit beasts, also looked shocked as they heard the extremely loud beast roar.

ROOOAARRRR!!

Another loud roar echoed out from another location.

Gazing towards the source of the second roar, Song Wenshi from the Mystic Mist Sect turned to Chang Sen and the others and said, "That's the sixth grade mutant spirit beast I encountered on my way over! You all should be familiar with it."

"It's the overlord that rules the boundless glaciers to the north of the Grayvale Sect -- the Ice Liger!"

"Ice Liger!?" An astonished expression spread across Chang Sen's face. "That Ice Liger has long since reached the sixth grade, but since it was holed up in those boundless glaciers year round, even though I wanted to hunt it down and kill it, my hands were tied. Now that it has left its home and marched to this place from such a great distance, do you think it was also drawn by the demon Qi? Can it be that it also carries a Demon bloodline?"

With a bitter smile, Song Wenshi said, "I believe so."

“Damn it!” Chang Sen’s eyebrows knitted. “That Ice Liger never left the glaciers, so we kind of left each other alone. I didn’t expect that it would come here at this critical time when we’re sealing the spatial rift.”

Eyes narrowed, Ghost Eye from the Ghost Sect said with a gruesome voice, “The Ice Liger didn’t let out the first roar. That one should be a sixth grade mutant spirit beast as well. Actually, I have a feeling that whatever beast let out the first roar is probably even more powerful than the Ice Liger. It just gave one roar and vanished.

“I don’t even have the slightest clue regarding its current whereabouts.”

ROOOOAR!

As they spoke, another heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar rang out from a third location.

“Here comes a third sixth grade spirit beast!?”

Chapter 360: Attack!

Upon hearing the violent roar of a third beast, Nie Tian couldn't help but exclaim, "It's the Earth Flame Beast!"

He had been there when the Earth Flame Beast had escaped from the lava lake in the earth's core, which was also when the Flame Dragon Armor had obtained great fortune from that devastating upheaval in the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range.

Therefore, he was very familiar with the Earth Flame Beast's roars.

Li Jing's expression also flickered slightly as she said, "I can't believe the Earth Flame Beast is here too!"

She had also witnessed the blazing calamity that had struck the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range.

Back then, she and Ghost Eye had been there to deal with Fang Hui from the Spiritual Treasure Sect.

The escape of the Earth Flame Beast had caused great turbulences to the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, and resulted in burning lava rushing out of the earth's core and flooding the mountain range.

It was the Earth Flame Beast's sudden appearance that had forced the Blood Sect and Ghost Sect to abort their joint operation against the Spiritual Treasure Sect.

"How powerful is that Earth Flame Beast exactly, Senior Li?" Nie Tian subconsciously asked the question.

After a moment of pondering, Li Jing said, "That Earth Flame Beast was a sixth grade spirit beast. In the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, I witnessed charged out from the depths of the earth and channeled boiling lava from the earth's core to flood almost the entire Spiritual Treasure Sect.

"After seeing its devastating strength, Ghost Eye and I

immediately ended our battle against Fang Hui.

“As the most powerful expert in the Spiritual Treasure Sect, Fang Hui tried to trap it and send it back to the earth’s core, but he failed. Ghost Eye and I tried to stop it from flying away, but we failed as well.

“Since then, it seemed to have vanished into thin air, and no one has ever seen it again.

“I never thought it would show up here at this moment.”

At this moment, Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect said, the look in his eyes turning grim, “A sixth grade Earth Flame Beast, a sixth grade Ice Liger, and an unknown mutant spirit beast that is equally as strong, if not stronger. I didn’t know that there were so many fierce, high-grade spirit beasts hiding in the unimpressive Realm of Flame Heaven. These three are only the ones that have surfaced. It’s hard to say whether or not more powerful spirit beasts are lurking in the dark.”

Face clouded by worries, he gazed down at the huge spatial rift, which hadn’t been fully sealed yet.

Beside him, Li Jing’s expression was also as grim as lake water.

At that moment, enormous clusters of flames sudden burst forth in a far location, where, due to the long distance, the demon Qi was still yet to be purged by the pouring rivers of starlight.

In the midst of the torrential flames, the Earth Flame Beast’s gigantic body gradually rose into the air.

The blackish-violet demon Qi in its surroundings seemed to be attracted by it and rapidly converged on it from every direction.

Then, the Earth Flame Beast opened its huge mouth and inhaled every last wisp of the surging demon Qi.

In the next moment, its dark-red skin, which looked like heated rocks, took on a purple hue.

It threw its head back and let out a fierce roar, as if its innermost bloodline had been nourished by the demon Qi, and was gradually awakening.

Simultaneously, another heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar rang out.

A giant translucent beast emerged from the rolling demon Qi and charged towards Nie Tian's location. The beast resembled a mix between a tiger and a lion, and it had silvery-white pupils.

“The Ice Liger!” Chang Sen from the Hell Sect took a deep breath and discovered that wherever the spirit beast went, the ground would freeze, and the temperature would drop dramatically.

The sixth grade Ice Liger breathed in the rich demon Qi as its translucent body emanated a frigid-cold aura.

The cold aura gradually pervaded its surroundings and turned the area within several kilometers around it into a world of ice and snow. Furthermore, as it came closer and closer, its frigid aura influenced an increasingly large area.

The scattered mutant spirit beasts that practiced ice power rapidly gathered to the Ice Liger's side.

Many mutant spirit beasts that drew strength from flame power swiftly converged on the Earth Flame Beast.

The appearance of the Ice Liger and Earth Flame Beast continued to change heaven and earth, enveloping one direction in frigid coldness, and filling the other direction with torrential flames.

The two formidable beasts with completely incompatible attributes seemed to have reached a mutual understanding, and thus jointly charged towards the spatial rift from two opposite directions.

As they approached, they unleashed devastating power to change heaven and earth around them, as if they intended to stop the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace

from sealing the huge spatial rift.

Huang Fan ceased sensing the Ice Liger and Earth Flame Beast's auras and said, "It's our fortune that Demon outsiders haven't descended upon us. Otherwise, the Realm of Flame Heaven would fall within days. There are simply too many spirit beasts in the Realm of Flame Heaven that carry Demon bloodlines, and it's hard to believe that there are even sixth grade spirit beasts among them.

"The three sixth grade spirit beasts and the numerous low-grade spirit beasts alone are already hard enough to deal with. If Demon armies had come along at this moment, the Realm of Flame Heaven would have been doomed for sure."

Li Jing abruptly turned to Huang Fan and said, "Look after Nie Tian for me. I'll go help them deal with the Ice Liger and Earth Flame Beast. You won't make things difficult for Nie Tian while I'm gone, will you?"

With these words, she didn't even wait for Huang Fan to answer before blurring into a streak of blood-colored light and flying down the mountain peak.

"Sure..." Huang Fan muttered.

At that moment, Su Lin discovered that Nie Tian seemed as composed as ever, as if the appearance of the Ice Liger and Earth Flame Beast didn't worry him at all. On the contrary, he actually seemed to be itching to join the battle. Confused, she asked, "Aren't you afraid of those sixth grade mutant spirit beasts?"

"The most powerful experts in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven are gathered here now. What's there to be afraid of?" Nie Tian answered casually.

After a moment of silence, Su Lin said, "From what I know, sixth grade mutant spirit beasts possess remarkable intelligence. Perhaps they'll find out that you're the key to sealing that spatial rift. Once they do, those mutant spirit beasts will all set you as

their primary target.”

Upon hearing her words, Huang Fan’s expression flickered as he hastily berated her, “Shut your mouth!”

Confusion filled Su Lin’s face as she asked, “What’s the matter?”

Nie Tian, who had been standing on top of the mountain peak and observing the fight between the powerful experts of the Realm of Flame Heaven and the fierce mutant spirit beasts in a carefree manner, suddenly felt a strong sense of crisis.

The green aura seemed to have given his heart a jolt and caused his heart to ache abruptly and strongly.

“Watch out, Nie Tian!” Huang Fan exclaimed.

Not taking the time to think, Nie Tian immediately cast a short-range Starshift.

BANG!

The place he had been standing a moment ago exploded, filling the air with flying rocks and dirt. The vague figure of a spirit beast appeared out of nowhere, but after a brief moment, it disappeared into thin air again.

“A mutant spirit beast!” After shifting to another corner of the mountaintop, Nie Tian’s face turned pale with fright. He rapidly summoned his seven Heaven Eyes to his side, hoping to locate the spirit beast that had just attacked him.

“Come here to me!” Huang Fan called out to Nie Tian.

As he uttered these words, numerous bright-yellow banners flew out of his ring of holding.

A total of 24 banners floated in midair around Huang Fan and Su Lin. They constantly moved about, following unpredictable patterns, as if they were switching between different spell formations.

Dragons and phoenixes were embroidered on the banners’

bright-yellow surfaces, each of which emanated dazzlingly bright light and looked very elegant and graceful.

The moment Huang Fan called out to Nie Tian, his 24 flying banners rapidly realigned and remained still in midair to secure a opening for Nie Tian, through which he would be able to run to Huang Fan's side safely.

However, just as Nie Tian was about to launch another short-range Starshift and shift to Huang Fan's side, a spirit beast suddenly appeared in front of him, blocking his path to Huang Fan.

Chapter 361: Demonounds Bewitchment

It was none other than the spirit beast that had just launched a sneak attack on him.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

It shifted among locations in the area between Huang Fan and Nie Tian so fast that it looked like a blurry shadow.

Huang Fan let out a cold harrumph as he berated Su Lin for her ignorant behavior, “This is all thanks to your blabbing!”

It was because she had pointed out that Nie Tian was the key to sealing the spatial rift that a mutant spirit beast had suddenly attacked Nie Tian from the dark.

Su Lin kept silent like a cicada in cold weather and did not dare to utter another word.

“Nie Tian! Come to me! Quick!” Huang Fan urged.

The 24 banners remained still in midair, leaving a wide opening for Nie Tian.

However, Nie Tian could only smile bitterly, since the spirit beast was blocking his path to Huang Fan and Su Lin.

Starshifts wouldn't allow him to defy space and simply teleport to another location. It only would allow him to move at an extremely fast speed, so that it would seem as if he had vanished from one location and reappeared in another.

Considering that, he would have to figure out a way to bypass that rapidly shifting spirit beast.

Just as he was hesitating, the mutant spirit beast let out a sharp scream.

In the next moment, interweaving cyan lightning bolts suddenly shot out from its blurry, rapidly-moving figure.

Numerous cyan lightning bolts that were as thick as babies' arms formed a network that seemed solid like a electric grid, and shot towards Nie Tian.

After unleashing the cyan lightning attack, the originally-blurry figure gradually became clearer.

Nie Tian, who was ready to escape by casting another short-range Starshift, suddenly went blank after getting a clear view of the spirit beast.

“My master’s Thunder Beast!” He couldn’t help but exclaim.

The mutant spirit beast that was attacking him was his master’s Thunder Beast, which had captured second grade spirit beasts for him and taken him to and from the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range!

This shocking discovery astounded Nie Tian into a daze. He couldn’t believe his own eyes.

“Watch out!” Huang Fan saw that he was met with trouble, and thus unleashed secret magics to command his 24 banners to fly towards the Thunder Beast.

ROOOAARRRR!!

At that very moment, another heaven-shaking, earth-moving roar rang out.

Unable to locate the source of the roar, Su Lin experienced a strong impact in her chest. Bits of redness appeared on her cheeks as she almost coughed up another mouthful of blood.

Huang Fan wove his hands in the air, forming exquisite hand seals. However, he could feel his hands suddenly being pulled and restricted by a mysterious force.

It seemed as if Huang Fan was the target of that beast roar.

Huang Fan’s body shook violently as two beams of dazzling blue light shot out from his eyes. With a cold snort, he shouted, “Quit sneaking around! Show yourself, coward!!”

SHEW!

Nie Tian launched another short-range Starshift and avoided the huge incoming network of lightning bolts.

CRACKLE! BOOM!

The interwoven lightning bolts bombarded the stone ground, under which misty starlight was continuously rising into the air.

Afterwards, the Thunder Beast came to land in the location Nie Tian had been standing just now.

Gently shaking its lightning-wreathed wings, it turned its head to relocate the escaping Nie Tian.

Its eyes, which should have been a cyan color, were now dark-purple. As it panted, wisps of demon Qi came out of its sharp muzzle. As it met Nie Tian's gaze, a slight helplessness and misery appeared in its eyes, as if it was reluctant to attack Nie Tian, yet had no choice.

"It's being manipulated by another mutant spirit beast!" After a brief moment of eye contact with the Thunder Beast, Nie Tian immediately realized that the sixth grade mutant spirit beast, which had been lurking in the dark and occasionally unleashing roars that could shake heaven and earth, was none other the one that was forcing the Thunder Beast to attack him.

That unknown mutant spirit beast seemed even more formidable than the Ice Liger and the Earth Flame Beast, and more importantly, more intelligent.

From the look of it, it was the one that had summoned the numerous mutant spirit beasts to this area and thus was the initiator of this operation.

The Ice Liger, the Earth Flame Beast, and the Thunder Beast had all gathered in this area from every corner of the Realm of Flame Heaven under its commands.

ROOOAARRRR!!

The unknown mutant spirit beast let out another roar, as if it had been angered.

Upon hearing that roar, the hesitant Thunder Beast's eyes, which had momentarily cleared up, were suddenly filled by frenzy and thirst for blood again.

It once again fluttered its lightning-wreathed wings and swooped towards Nie Tian.

Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect scanned the vicinity with his profound soul power, which could cover a very large area, yet again he failed to locate that unknown mutant spirit beast.

Rage filling his heart, Huang Fan finally lost his patience and laid his murderous gaze on the Thunder Beast. He said coldly, "A fifth grade Thunder Beast dares to attempt to kill Nie Tian? Wishful thinking!"

With these words, he commanded half of his banners to shoot towards the Thunder Beast.

The reason why he hadn't come to Nie Tian's aid earlier wasn't because he was afraid of the Thunder Beast.

It was because he had considered the intelligent mutant spirit beast, which had been lurking in the dark from the start, to be their biggest threat.

Seeing that it continued to pull the strings in the dark and didn't intend to show itself in the slightest, Huang Fan decided not to waste any more of his time and prepared to kill the Thunder Beast first.

After realizing that twelve of Huang Fan's banners were shooting towards the Thunder Beast, each of which was unleashing incomparably fierce killing intent, Nie Tian's expression flickered as he hastily stopped him. "Wait! Don't, Senior Huang!"

Confusion filled Huang Fan's face as he asked, "Why?"

"This Thunder Beast belongs to my master," Nie Tian hastened to explain. "It used to be my friend, and it helped me a few times."

"That was before, but now is a different time!" Huang Fan blurted with a frown. "I'm certain that this Thunder Beast carries a Demon bloodline as well. Otherwise, it wouldn't have shown up here, and it wouldn't have been manipulated by that most powerful mutant spirit beast to attack you."

"It will only be able to escape that sixth grade mutant spirit beast's manipulation when it advances to the sixth grade itself."

"Also, if we spare its life, such a high-grade spirit beast with Demon blood running through its veins will be a great potential threat to the Realm of Flame Heaven."

"If Demons invade and unleash demon Qi again, it will be very likely that its Demon bloodline will become activated, which will cause it to go through a more thorough mutation, turning it into a terrifying Demon."

A complicated expression filling his face, Nie Tian said, "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Bottom line is that this spirit beast belongs to my master. Even if it has to die, my master should be the one to swing the sword."

With these words, he cast another short-range Starshift.

SHEW!

This time, he found the right angle, shifted through an small opening, and arrived by Su Lin's side.

Seeing that Nie Tian had come to his side unscathed, he felt relieved, saying, "Alright, suit yourself. As long as you stay close to me, that fifth grade Thunder Beast won't be able to hurt you anyways."

Atop another mountain peak...

Shaken by the violent roar of the unknown mutant spirit beast, Pei Qiqi's face also turned pale. She had to pause her studies of the grand spell formations and spatial energy.

“Mr. Hua, can you locate the powerful mutant spirit beast that has been lurking in the dark this whole time?” She asked Hua Mu.

Eyebrows furrowed, Hua Mu said, “That's not a mutant spirit beast. That's a real Demon! And it's not here in the Realm of Flame Heaven; it's in that closing spatial rift. That Demon must have sensed what's happening to the spatial rift, and thus secretly unleashed demonsounds to summon mutant spirit beasts to this area.

“By activating the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, Nie Tian eliminated the possibility of it passing through the sealing spatial rift and entering the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Therefore, it can only use demonsound to influence those mutant spirit beasts and manipulate them to thwart the successful sealing of the spatial rift.”

Chapter 362: Discovery

The Thunder Beast screeched as it repeatedly swooped towards Nie Tian and Huang Fan.

Meanwhile, Huang Fan's 24 yellow banners hovered and rotated around them at a fast speed, creating violent spiritual power fluctuations.

The Thunder Beast made repeated attempts to charge through the protective spell formation formed by the hovering banners, but failed each and every time.

Under Nie Tian's request, Huang Fan forced himself to hold his temper and not kill the Thunder Beast.

Considering his late Profound realm cultivation base and the might of his flying banners, it would be a piece of cake for him to slaughter that Thunder Beast.

What Huang Fan truly attached importance to was the mutant spirit beast that was lurking in the dark this whole time and letting out commanding roars.

Watching the Thunder Beast be bewitched by the demon sounds and swoop towards him repeatedly as if it had completely lost its mind, Nie Tian sighed and said, "I can't believe it also carries a Demon bloodline..."

"From the look of it, most of the high-grade spirit beasts in the Realm of Flame Heaven probably carry Demon bloodlines and have deep-rooted bonds with Demons.

"If we let the Realm of Flame Heaven be flooded by demon Qi, I'm afraid it would soon turn into a purgatory for humans."

At that moment, Su Lin said, "That was why the Realm of Earth Sieve and the Realm of Dark Underworld aborted their invasion plan after learning about the Realm of Flame Heaven's situation."

Nie Tian's expression grew grim as he turned to her and asked, "Back when the Heaven Gate opened in our realm, did the Heaven Palace Sect know that it would be followed by a massive Demon invasion? Did the Heaven Palace Sect take part in the Realm of Earth Sieve and the Realm of Dark Underworld's scheme?"

"In the Heaven Palace Sect, I'm just a small figure, and I don't have access to those confidential matters," Su Lin said with an indifferent tone.

Standing off to the side, Huang Fan picked up their conversation between by saying, "We didn't know that the opening of the Heaven Gates would result in the appearance of spatial rifts, much less that Demons would come through them and invade the Realm of Flame Heaven.

"However, we did receive information about the Realm of Earth Sieve and the Realm of Dark Underworld's plan to invade your realm. You should know that, before the Demons' invasion, the nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars didn't always get along peacefully. It's natural for wars to break out among realms.

"Weren't the seven sects of the Realm of Flame Heaven engaged in pitched battles right before the Demons came along?"

"The same goes for the nine realms in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

"Some realms would go to war with nearby realms due to their contradictory cultivating concepts or feuds between their sects or even individuals. This has always been the main theme of the nine realms. There's nothing unusual about it."

With these words, Huang Fan gave a snort and continued, "As a matter of fact, brawls among powerful sects help talented Qi warriors grow and stand out. Furthermore, as wars break out between realms, their sects will also develop and grow.

"The Heaven Palace Sect hasn't always been the most powerful

sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars. We fought our way up through countless battles and wars, and gradually grew into the formidable force we are today.

“The sects in the Realm of Flame Heaven also need to go through similar challenges in order to grow and expand at a fast rate.”

Nie Tian listened attentively and mulled over Huang Fan’s words.

Huang Fan suddenly waved his large hand, yelling, “Will you leave us alone?!”

Emanating large amounts of blinding golden light, a gigantic banner flew into the air and wrapped the Thunder Beast inside of it.

The Thunder Beast let out a begrudging screech as it madly twisted its body, hoping to struggle free from the banner’s constraint. Yet, all of its efforts were in vain.

Huang Fan shot a cold glance at Nie Tian, saying, “I’m only not killing it because I want to give you face, so I’ll only imprison it for the time being. Meanwhile, you stay here and don’t go anywhere. I doubt that the hidden spirit beast will give up so easily. I have a feeling that it will think of other ways to kill you.”

“Okay.” Nie Tian sat down on stone ground.

He quietly sent out his seven Heaven Eyes and spread them out to scan the vicinity, hoping to try his luck at finding that mysterious spirit beast.

However, even powerful experts like Huang Fan and Chang Sen had failed to locate that mutant spirit beast; how would his Heaven Eyes would be any different? As expected, he failed.

Even though he failed to find that mutant spirit beast, while his seven Heaven Eyes had floated about and searched for suspicious auras, they accidentally picked up a wisp of soul will from Hua Mu.

The moment Hua Mu's soul will quietly flew into one of Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes, Hua Mu's soul consciousness started to communicate with Nie Tian via that Heaven Eye.

“Those roars are coming from an actual Demon that's hiding in the spatial rift.

“Considering that the strong restrictive spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace has already sealed a good portion of the spatial rift, and the formidable might of the pouring rivers of starlight, it can't come through the spatial rift.

“Therefore, it can only use its demonsounds to bewitch those mutant spirit beasts that carry Demon bloodlines and mutated under the demon Qi's influence.”

Hua Mu's message was rapidly passed on to Nie Tian's mind via that floating Heaven Eye.

Eyes narrowed, Nie Tian pondered Hua Mu's words for a while before turning to Huang Fan and saying, “Senior Huang, it's an actual Demon that's been hiding in the spatial rift and bewitching the mutant spirit beasts in the Realm of Flame Heaven with its roars.”

Surprised and suspicious, Huang Fan asked, “How do you know that?”

“I refined one of the fragmentary star marks, remember?” Nie Tian said. “And I activated the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.”

“Oh, right...” Huang Fan assumed that Nie Tian had derived such conclusions from the profound knowledge recorded in the fragmentary star mark he had refined. Hence, he asked, “So what should we do?”

“Well, my job is finished here,” Nie Tian said, looking down at the spatial rift. “Let's go down there and take a closer look at the spatial rift.”

Huang Fan followed Nie Tian's gaze and looked down at the spatial rift. After a moment of hesitation, he nodded slightly and said, "Alright, I'll take you down."

With these words, he reached out and grabbed Nie Tian's shoulder before diving down towards the valley in between the three majestic mountain peaks like a falcon swooping down on its prey.

Only when he was flying down did he remember Su Lin and thus remind her casually, "Su Lin, you're not those mutant spirit beasts' target, so just be careful and you'll probably be fine."

"Okay, I will," Su Lin replied with a sour taste in her mouth.

She had long since felt that, after she had lost her fragmentary star mark to Nie Tian in the Lesser Heaven stage battleground during the Heaven Gate trial, her status in the Heaven Palace Sect had dropped significantly.

The fact that she had returned empty-handed disappointed many seniors in the Heaven Palace Sect who had once placed high hopes in her, Huang Fan being one of them.

Now, Huang Fan spent all of his effort and wit on protecting Nie Tian and drawing Nie Tian to his side. It seemed that, by hook or by crook, he was determined to bring Nie Tian back to the Heaven Palace Sect and admit him as a disciple.

However, when it came to her, Huang Fan only told her to be careful, at this perilous time where mutant spirit beasts might appear and attack her at every turn she took.

Deeply disheartened, Su Lin gradually realized that if Nie Tian ever joined the Heaven Palace Sect, he would definitely soon become the one that attracted the most attention and was favored by all the seniors in the Heaven Palace Sect.

Meanwhile, with Ning Yang, the brightest future star of the Heaven Palace Sect, dead, she would also be outshone by Nie Tian

and live in his shadow.

“I never imagined that a boy, whose name I didn’t even know when we encountered each other in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, would rise above me and Ning Yang, and become the brightest star in the Heaven Palace Sect.”

Mixed emotions rose in Su Lin’s heart.

Chapter 363: Fall

Standing atop another extremely high mountain peak, Pei Qiqi looked down towards the central valley. She couldn't help but exclaim, "Nie Tian just went down!"

She had been observing and trying to derive enlightenment from the spatial rift and the grand spell formation, so she rapidly noticed that Huang Fan had taken Nie Tian and plunged towards the central valley.

With a calm tone, Hua Mu said, "He wants to prompt Huang Fan to probe into the Demon hiding within that spatial rift."

Pei Qiqi seemed to have realized something and thus asked, "Did you somehow inform him about that Demon?"

Hua Mu nodded and said, "My identity is a bit tricky. It's better that I stay out of this. Of all the experts, Huang Fan and Chang Sen are the only ones who are capable of teaching that Demon a lesson and stopping it from issuing commands in the dark.

"Even though the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's grand spell formation is preventing Demons from entering the Realm of Flame Heaven, it has no effect on humans.

"If Huang Fan has the audacity to seek that Demon out in the spatial rift and fight it, it might solve the problem at the source."

With a shocked expression on her face, Pei Qiqi asked, "Do you mean that Demons won't be able to enter the Realm of Flame Heaven, but we will be able to enter that spatial rift?"

"Exactly, but not only that, even if the spatial rift is fully sealed by the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, the sealing will only be one-way," Hua Mu explained in a slow and calm fashion. "The spell formation won't allow Demons to set foot in the Realm of Flame Heaven. But human Qi warriors won't be bound by it at all, so we'll be able to enter that spatial rift,

or even follow it into the Demons' realms.

“That’s why the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace only sealed that spatial rift, but didn’t destroy it, and also what’s truly fascinating about this grand spell formation.

“It will allow us to go into the Demons’ realms, but it won’t allow Demons to set foot in the Domain of the Falling Stars.”

After a moment of silent pondering, Pei Qiqi seemed enlightened and thus said, “The reason why the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace made such arrangements was that they hoped, one day, human Qi warriors in the Domain of the Falling Stars would be powerful and courageous enough to go on punitive expeditions to the Demons’ realms. They did it to leave us a tunnel, through which our armies would be able to march into the Demons’ realms, right?”

“That’s right!” Hua Mu confirmed strongly. Then, his tone weakened as he said with a sigh, “However, until this day, powerful experts from the major sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars haven’t accumulated enough strength and courage to march into those three spatial rifts and wage war on Demons’ realms. On the contrary, it has always been Demons or other outsider races that repeatedly attempted to swarm into the Domain of the Falling Stars.”

“Will Huang Fan have the courage to enter and explore that spatial rift?” Pei Qiqi asked.

“I don’t know,” Hua Mu said, his eyes glittering with a concerned light.

At that moment, Nie Tian and Huang Fan were already standing by the edge of the huge, unfathomable black hole.

The black hole looked like the opened mouth of an enormous, man-eating Demon that kept unleashing blackish-violet demon Qi.

Covering the black hole was a network of rivers of starlight,

which flowed continuously and formed numerous detailed and exquisite patterns.

An ancient, remote aura suddenly blew out of the black hole into Nie Tian's face, which, to his surprise, made him feel secure.

ROOOAARRRR!!

Another heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar rang out. It seemed to have come from all directions, and it was so powerful that Nie Tian's eardrums hurt.

Huang Fan's eyes lit up as he saw strong turbulences spread out on the network of countless rivers of starlight when the fierce roar echoed out.

Even standing by the edge of the spatial rift, he still couldn't be sure that the demonsound was coming from within the spatial rift.

However, one thing he could be sure of: the impact he experience standing here was much stronger than when he had stood atop the mountain peak.

Therefore, he assumed that Nie Tian was right, that what he had thought to be a formidable mutant spirit beast was actually a Demon that was hiding inside the spatial rift.

With a complicated expression on his face, he looked down at the mysterious, bottomless spatial rift and frowned in hesitation.

As a senior member of the Heaven Palace Sect, he knew the special mechanism of the spatial rift every bit as well as Hua Mu.

Pointing down at the spatial rift, Nie Tian said with a soft voice, "That Demon is in there right now, held off by the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, so it can't enter our world. But the spell formation can't stop its demonsounds from spreading through the spatial rift. After all, the spell formation hasn't been fully activated, and the sealing process isn't complete."

Huang Fan nodded. "I see."

He was still hesitant to step into the spatial rift, since he didn't know what he would face once he entered.

Perhaps more formidable Demons were waiting for him inside the spatial rift.

The more he thought about it, the more worried he became, making him increasingly indecisive.

After watching Huang Fan hesitate for a long time, Hua Mu shook his head and said, "He doesn't have the courage after all..."

"Then again, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find truly courageous men would daringly march into the Demons' realms, knowing it would mean their certain deaths..." Reminiscence filled Hua Mu's eyes.

Pei Qiqi's heart was shaken. "Mr. Hua, have you ever been to Demons' realms?"

A sad smile appeared on Hua Mu's face. "Yeah, I have. But almost everyone who went with me died there."

SHEW! SHEW! SHEW!

Dazzling starlight was still pouring down from the heavens towards the spatial rift.

Seeing that Huang Fan had stood still for quite some time and still hadn't made up his mind, Nie Tian lost his patience and said, "Senior Huang, now that you know where that Demon is, do you have any idea how we might be able to kill it?"

"If it doesn't come out of there, my hands are tied." Huang Fan cleared his throat and commanded some of his banners to fly into the spatial rift, saying, "I'll try my best to search for it inside the spatial rift, and see if I can determine its exact location."

He infused each of those banners with a wisp of his soul power and sent them into the spatial rift.

Just as Nie Tian was about to say something, another thunderous

roar rang out.

At the same time, he glanced around and noticed that numerous scattered mutant spirit beasts had started to converge on him.

Then, it suddenly became clear to him that the Demon in the spatial rift had locked onto him and had summoned mutant spirit beasts to kill him.

“More low-grade beasts are being sent to their doom.” Huang Fan snorted coldly as he formed exquisite hand seals to command the remaining banners to shoot towards the incoming mutant spirit beasts.

The banners seemed to turn into life-reaping scythes.

As they flew and rotated in the air, one spirit beast after another was slashed into pieces.

ROOOAARRRR!!

Another demonsound suddenly burst forth, causing the stone Nie Tian was standing on to shatter.

Mad and with no regard for their own lives, a few mutant spirit beasts charged through the defensive line formed by Huang Fan’s banners. As Nie Tian leapt into the air, one of them rammed into him and knocked him into the spatial rift.

Nie Tian felt as if he was suddenly pulled by a strong gravitational force, and he rapidly fell into the unfathomable darkness.

“Damn!”

Huang Fan and Hua Mu’s expressions flickered simultaneously.

Chapter 364: Rotspirit Ox

Huang Fan had never imagined that his indecision would cause Nie Tian to fall into that bottomless spatial rift.

PHOOH! PHOOH! PHOOH!

Huang Fan's banners moved in midair as if they were scythes swung by Death, slicing numerous incoming mutant spirit beasts into pieces.

Upon seeing such a brutal scene, many of the mutant spirit beasts seemed frightened. Adding in the fact that the demonsound from within the spatial rift had ceased, they gradually stopped.

One after another, they started to back away with their fearful gazes fixed on Huang Fan.

Huang Fan didn't have time to deal with them. He anxiously turned around and looked into the spatial rift.

It had been just a moment, but Nie Tian had already disappeared into the endless darkness.

Mixed emotions flashed across his face before he finally gritted his teeth and jumped into the unfathomable spatial rift.

Almost simultaneously, Hua Mu flew down from the mountaintop after saying to Pei Qiqi, "You stay here and don't go anywhere!"

Eyes wide, Pei Qiqi watched Hua Mu blur into a streak of gray smoke and fly away from her side. In the blink of an eye, he disappeared into the spatial rift.

Su Lin, who had been carefully guarding herself against mutant spirit beasts, also turned her head and looked over to see what was happening in the valley, whispering to herself, "W-what happened just now?"

She saw Huang Fan dive into the spatial rift after a moment of

hesitation, and Nie Tian was already nowhere to be found.

What confused her even more was that, immediately afterward, a streak of gray smoke followed Huang Fan into the spatial rift.

Before Hua Mu had shown up, she had no idea there were any powerful experts in the vicinity.

WHOOSH!

The figure of a woman appeared at the edge of one of the mountaintops.

Pei Qiqi, who had intentionally hidden her aura, revealed herself to Su Lin, wearing a mask that made her look plain.

Looking down at her from a significant distance, she shouted, “Nie Tian fell into that spatial rift. You should inform the experts from the Realm of Flame Heaven as quickly as you can, so that they can get in there and give him a hand.”

Startled, Su Lin asked, “Who are you?! That man who dove into the spatial rift after Huang Fan, are you with him?”

Pei Qiqi lost her patience and said with an indifferent tone. “Yeah, we’re humans, not Demons. We’re not here to help Demons, believe me. We’re friends with Nie Tian.”

“Nie Tian’s friends...” Su Lin searched in her mind for a moment before nodding and saying, “I see. I’ll inform those experts now.”

Afterwards, she took out a Sound Stone and started communicating with the powerful experts who were now engaged in fierce battles with the Earth Flame Beast, the Ice Liger, and the numerous mutant spirit beasts that had converged on this area.

...

Inside the spatial rift was a dark, endless tunnel that looked very strange and spacious.

One after another, streaks of light would flash past from time to time, lighting up the dim tunnel briefly.

Numerous pitch-black, drifting vortexes could be seen here and there.

Judging from the foul auras that came out of those pitch-black vortexes, they seemed to lead to realms where no lives could ever survive.

Dazzling, bright spots, which seemed to carry extremely violent and explosive power, flew around in the tunnel in a disorderly fashion.

Meanwhile, the tunnel was filled with rocks of various sizes and shapes, some of which glittered with bright starlight, while others burned with black flames.

Numerous misty, blackish-violet rivers of pure demon Qi flowed inside the dim tunnel.

All of a sudden, Nie Tian appeared in the tunnel. Overwhelmed by the strange and creepy surroundings, he went blank.

WHOOSH!

The Flame Dragon Armor, which had been sleeping in Nie Tian's bracelet of holding, seemed to have sensed the dangerous situation and thus took the initiative to fly out and descend from over his head, forcing itself on his body.

Afterwards, the Flame Dragon Armor started to draw flame power from his spiritual sea automatically.

As it was infused with more and more flame power from Nie Tian, it burst into flames, turning Nie Tian into a ball of fire and lighting up the dim spatial tunnel.

"I-is this the spatial tunnel that leads to Demons' realms?" Glancing around carefully, Nie Tian's face was rapidly filled with astonishment.

FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ!

Behind him, an enormous gray vortex, laced with bits of

glittering starlight, was floating and fluctuating.

He had come in through that gray vortex!

This was completely different from what he had pictured in his mind.

Originally , he was under the impression that, after being sucked into the spatial rift, he would keep falling, like falling down an endless well, and the huge spatial rift would be like the mouth of the well.

However, after his entrance, he realized that, if he compared the spatial tunnel to the Demons' realms to be a horizontal well, the vortex he had just entered through would be somewhere in the middle of the well, and the vortex would be size of a grain.

Standing in front of that vortex, he saw the same things looking forward or backward.

With another look at the gray vortex laced with bits of starlight, he sensed strong fluctuations of spatial energy, so he was convinced that he would be able to pass through it into the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Meanwhile, numerous misty rivers of rich demon Qi were converging and attempting to flow into it.

However, in the heart of the vortex, the spell formation formed by bits of starlight prevented them from infiltrating.

As a thought appeared in his mind, he floated up the rivers of demon Qi to search for their source.

It wasn't long before he discovered that a giant Demon was coming towards him by following the current of one of the demon Qi rivers at a fast speed.

ROOOAARRRR!!

The Demon let out a frenzied roar in the spatial tunnel.

Strangely, even though the previous roars had sounded so loud in

the Realm of Flame Heaven that it caused Heaven and Earth to shake, this roar sounded very muffled and weak to Nie Tian, now that he was inside the spatial tunnel.

The Demon looked like a tremendous bull that was almost a hundred meters long. It was black from head to tail, and it had curved horns growing out of its head.

Its dark-purple eyes emanated a suffocating light, making them look like two purple suns in the dim spatial tunnel.

It seemed as if the gray vortex that led to the Realm of Flame Heaven had been its destination. However, as it caught sight of Nie Tian and charged towards him, it seemed very cautious, as if it feared something.

SHEW!

A streak of dazzlingly bright starlight suddenly whizzed out of the dusty-gray vortex like a shooting star.

In the next moment, the light pierced into the Demon's flesh like a sharp arrow.

The Demon let out pained howls as it began to stagger its way towards Nie Tian.

Meanwhile, sparkling, bright spots made contact with its enormous body and exploded, creating extremely terrifying explosive power, inflicting serious pain and damage on the Demon.

Upon seeing such a scene, Nie Tian immediately realized that the Demon must have already made numerous attempts to approach the dusty-gray vortex, in order to charge through the spatial rift and enter the Realm of Flame Heaven.

However, the powerful restrictive spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had played an important role. Not only had it repeatedly stopped the demon from approaching, but it had also injured it a few times.

Not only did Nie Tian discover many wounds on the Demon's huge body, which had apparently been caused by the flashes of starlight, but he also noticed that the solid scales on its broad, mountain-like back were still sputtering sparks and arcs of starlight.

“Ah... No wonder it's been using its roars to bewitch the mutant spirit beasts in the Realm of Flame Heaven. It's because it can't get close to the vortex.” With a quick glance at the Demon, Nie Tian managed to figure out the situation.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

At that moment, two figures flew out of the gray vortex, one after the other.

Floating quietly within the vast spatial tunnel, Nie Tian couldn't help but exclaim, “Senior Huang! Mr. Hua!”

“Are you okay, Nie Tian?” Wearing an exquisite set of spiritual armor, Huang Fan descended in the spatial tunnel, surrounded by his floating banners. Armed to the teeth, he glanced around vigilantly, looking especially grim and nervous.

“Demon!!” He suddenly caught sight of the Demon, which was staggering, yet still marching towards them.

With a single glance at the excessively large Demon, Hua Mu called out its name. “Rotspirit Ox!”

“Nie Tian! Come back here now! Go back to the Realm of Flame Heaven with me!” He urged with an anxious expression on his face.

Chapter 365: The Sixth Demon Realm

“It’s a Rotspirit Ox!” Hua Mu called out the Demon’s name after a brief glance at it. Apparently, he was familiar with this particular Demon’s origin, as well as its most formidable features.

On the other hand, Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect stared at the Demon, which Hua Mu referred to as the Rotspirit Ox, his eyes wide and his face filled with confusion. “A Rotspirit Ox? What’s that?”

Shortly thereafter, Huang Fan seemed to have realized something. Staring at Hua Mu in a vigilant fashion, he asked, “Who are you?”

Hua Mu ignored him.

Upon hearing Hua Mu’s exclamation, Nie Tian realized that he should return to Hua Mu and Huang Fan’s side.

As soon as that thought appeared in his mind, the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to receive the message, and thus responded accordingly.

Wreathed in raging flames, the Flame Dragon Armor drew some more flame power from Nie Tian’s vortex of flame power, and carried the floating Nie Tian towards Hua Mu and Huang Fan
CRACKLE! CRACKLE!

Meanwhile, strange, matter-burning crackles echoed out around Nie Tian. He examined his surroundings with rapt attention, and discovered that there were substantial amounts of unknown impurities floating within the spatial tunnel.

From the look of it, those impurities would be very harmful to humans. Lucky for him, the Flame Dragon Armor had formed a ward of blazing flames around him, burning away the impurities and keeping him safe.

ROOOAARRRR!!

The Rotspirit Ox, which had left the misty river of demon Qi and was now lunging directly towards Nie Tian, once again roared and opened its huge, bottomless mouth.

As it did, its mouth seemed to instantly turn into an unfathomable abyss, attracting everything, including the flickering bright spots, streaking lights, and unknown impurities, towards it.

Nie Tian, who was still quiet some distance from the Rotspirit Ox, felt that an irresistible force was pulling him towards the Rotspirit Ox. The same went for Hua Mu and Huang Fan, who had just entered the spatial tunnel.

In spite of their own efforts, the three of them uncontrollably flew closer and closer towards the Rotspirit Ox's huge mouth.

The Rotspirit Ox's eyes, which looked like two purple suns, glittered with the light of brutality as broken, almost inarticulate words slowly came out from its wide-open mouth.

"I'm from the Astarte Clan in the Sixth Demon Realm. The Realm of Flame Heaven had been one of the Astarte Clan's rangelands for centuries.

"I'm here upon the clan's request to take it back from you human insects!

"You and every human in the Realm of Flame Heaven will die!"

As the Rotspirit Ox sucked everything in its surroundings towards its huge mouth, it unexpectedly spoke in an awkward-sounding human language.

"You're nothing but a pet reared by the dark lords of the Astarte Clan. Don't tell me that you actually want to take the Realm of Flame Heaven back by yourself! Wishful thinking!" Hua Mu let out a sarcastic harrumph. "If the Astarte Clan truly wants to seize the Realm of Flame Heaven from us, they should at least show their respect by sending some high-tier Demons.

“Even though you’re a Rotspirit Ox and you’re at the peak of the sixth grade, you’re still only a sixth grade pet monster!

“Does your dark master really think that there are no Soul realm Qi warriors in the Realm of Flame Heaven, and that a sixth grade Rotspirit Ox will be able to do whatever it wants? Simply laughable!!”

With these words, Hua Mu stopped resisting the attractive force and let himself drift towards the Rotspirit Ox’s huge, gloomy mouth like a leaf drifting in a creek. As he did, he even had the energy to rant against it.

“Who are you exactly? Why do you know so much about the Demons?” Huang Fan asked again, shock and confusion filling his eyes.

He constantly drew power from his rotating banners to stop himself from being pulled toward the Rotspirit Ox.

He was barely able to neutralize the Rotspirit Ox’s attractive force and remain in his original location.

Hua Mu, however, floated towards the Rotspirit Ox’s foul mouth in a seemingly uncontrollable fashion, just as Nie Tian did.

What Hua Mu had just said and his surprising familiarity with the Demons’ realms deeply shocked Huang Fan.

After all, as a senior member of the Heaven Palace Sect, Huang Fan should be considered well-informed, yet he hadn’t known anything that Hua Mu had just said about Demons.

“How come you know so much about our race and our clan?” Even the Rotspirit Ox was taken aback.

The same went for Nie Tian.

He had an increasingly strong feeling that the more he came to know about Hua Mu, the more mysterious Hua Mu seemed to become.

All of a sudden, Hua Mu said, “Remember what this Rotspirit Ox looks like, Nie Tian.”

While flying towards the Rotspirit Ox uncontrollably, Nie Tian widened his eyes and observed it closely, imprinting its deformed and sinister appearance in his mind.

“This Rotspirit Ox is only a low-tier Demon,” Hua Mu explained calmly. “In those high-tier Demons’ eyes, low-tier Demons like this Rotspirit Ox are no more than beasts they rear as pets.

“Rotspirit Oxes can rot the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth we rely on, assimilate it using their bizarre bloodline power, and gradually turn it into demon Qi.

“The Astarte Clan must be unhappy with the speed at which the demon Qi is filling the Realm of Flame Heaven, and thus secretly sent it here before the main force to accelerate the process.

“Fortunately, you came back in time, activated the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and stopped it from entering the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“If it did enter the Realm of Flame Heaven and we failed to discover it at the first moment, it would greatly increase the speed at which the demon Qi rotted and transformed the spiritual Qi in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“Perhaps it would have only needed six months for the entire Realm of Flame Heaven to be drowned in demon Qi.

“As for Rotspirit Oxes, when they fight human Qi warriors, their most commonly attack technique is to open their mouths wide and pull us towards them.

“Once we’re within a certain distance from it, its bizarre bloodline power will take effect and secretly alter the attributes of our spiritual power without us knowing.

“This is their most commonly-seen battle technique.”

As Hua Mu kept floating towards the Rotspirit Ox, he went on to explain to Nie Tian the kind of damage the Rotspirit Ox would have inflicted upon the Realm of Flame Heaven, along with its fighting techniques.

It seemed as if he had fought Rotspirit Oxes many years ago.

Huang Fan and Nie Tian listened to his narration about the Rotspirit Ox attentively, their faces filled with astonishment.

The Rotspirit Ox seemed to have sensed danger as it asked, “Who the hell are you?!”

SHEW!

All of a sudden, Hua Mu accelerated, raising the speed at which he flew by ten times!

He blurred into a streak of light and shot towards the Rotspirit Ox’s wide-open mouth.

In a split second, he arrived by Nie Tian’s side.

“You go back with Huang Fan first!” With these words, he pressed his hand on Nie Tian’s back and unleashed a gentle yet vigorous thrust, which caused Nie Tian to fly directly towards Huang Fan.

“Take him back to the Realm of Flame Heaven!” Hua Mu exclaimed.

After receiving Hua Mu’s incredibly strong push, Nie Tian felt as if he was no longer affected by the Rotspirit Ox’s attraction, and arrived by Huang Fan’s side in the blink of an eye.

As Huang Fan grabbed Nie Tian with a vigorous move, he witnessed Hua Mu let out a snort and burst into a cluster of ghostly, green fire.

In the next moment, he shot straight towards the Rotspirit Ox’s enormous, wide-open mouth.

Surprised, the Rotspirit Ox hastily closed its mouth.

That was when Huang Fan and Nie Tian discovered that they were no longer affected by its attractive force.

“Have him finish the sealing process in the Realm of Flame Heaven as quickly as possible. Then, you need to hurry to the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations and use the same method to seal their spatial rifts!” Hua Mu shouted at the top of his lungs.

“Got it!!” Huang Fan shouted back.

Chapter 366: Grand Star Formation

Although Huang Fan didn't know who Hua Mu was, he could sense that he cared about Nie Tian a great deal.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have cast every scruple aside and dove into the spatial rift right after Nie Tian had fallen in.

After realizing that, Huang Fan understood that, whoever Hua Mu was, he must be on the same side as them, so he grew relieved.

“Let's go!” Without waiting for Nie Tian to speak, he grabbed Nie Tian and dragged him towards the dusty-gray vortex.

Nie Tian didn't struggle, and let himself be dragged away.

However, as they moved closer towards the vortex, he couldn't help but turn back to check on Hua Mu with a concerned look in his eyes.

He noticed that looming, ancient symbols could be seen inside each of the ghostly, green flames that Hua Mu had wreathed himself with.

Even though he didn't know what they meant, he had a feeling that they carried the profound mysteries of heaven and earth.

He didn't know what was special about those blazing, green flames, yet as Hua Mu shot towards the Rotspirit Ox, he could tell that the Rotspirit Ox was truly scared.

Not only did it immediately close its mouth and stop pulling everything in the vicinity towards itself, but its enormous body also began to shrink at a fast rate.

Its pitch-black scales that looked like metal plates also started to emanate a fierce, purple light.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

One after another, numerous clusters of green flames of an unknown attribute left Hua Mu and shot into the Rotspirit Ox's

enormous body.

Almost immediately, the Rotspirit Ox let out miserable screams as if it was being hurt to the point where it wanted to die.

Its mountain-like body trembled, oozing ink-black demon Qi through the wounds.

With its bloodcurdling screams, the misty rivers of demon Qi that were flowing towards the Realm of Flame Heaven instantly changed directions and converged on it.

In a flash, it was submerged in rich, misty demon Qi.

Afterwards, the Rotspirit Ox's pain seemed to be relieved, and its agonized shrieks gradually died out.

However, at that moment, Hua Mu let out a cold harrumph, blurred into a flash of green light, and pierced into the dense, sight-blocking demon Qi.

ROOOAARRRR!!

The moment Hua Mu flew in, the Rotspirit Ox's pained shrieks echoed out again.

With a complicated expression on his face, Huang Fan dragged Nie Tian towards the gray floating vortex and asked, "Who is that person?"

In the eye of the rotating vortex, tiny dots of bright starlight were connecting and forming detailed and sophisticated patterns.

Just as Nie Tian was about to answer Huang Fan, a handful of people suddenly flew out of the vortex.

Li Jing from the Blood Sect, Ghost Eye from the Ghost Sect, and Fang Hui from the Spiritual Treasure Sect rushed out of the vortex that was glittering with starlight, their faces filled with anxiety.

As soon as they saw Huang Fan and Nie Tian, they let out sighs of relief.

Standing on her Blood Lotus, Li Jing waved at Nie Tian and said, “It’s nice to see that you’re okay. Come here.”

Not only did Huang Fan not try to stop Nie Tian, but he even gave him a hand and pushed him towards Li Jing.

After assuming a foothold on the Blood Lotus, Nie Tian asked Li Jing, “How come you’re all here?”

“Why do you think? You fell in here. We were worried about your safety, so we came here to help you.” With these words, Li Jing threw a hard glare towards Huang Fan, berating, “I told you to keep an eye on him when I left. How could you let him fall in here?”

“Umm... It was just an accident,” Huang Fan said embarrassedly.

Ghost Eye and Fang Hui saw that Nie Tian had gotten on Li Jing’s Blood Lotus, and thus put their minds at ease.

Then, they glanced around curiously, the same way Nie Tian had when he first came.

In the next moment, they caught sight of the huge swirling cluster of demon Qi. They noticed that rivers of dark-purple demon Qi were still rushing into it, and the enormous Rotspirit Ox could be vaguely seen within it.

“Is that Demon the one that has been bewitching all the mutant spirit beasts in the Realm of Flame Heaven?” Fang Hui asked.

At that very moment, Hua Mu’s voice suddenly rang out from within the swirling demon Qi, “Return to the Realm of Flame Heaven now! This Rotspirit Ox is only an expendable weapon that’s being used to wear us down. Now that it has run into obstacles here, the Astarte Clan will soon learn about it and send their powerful experts to this place! Remember, seal the spatial rifts as soon as possible! Not only the one in the Realm of Flame Heaven, but you’ve got to quickly seal the other two in the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations too!

“Demons will soon learn about Nie Tian’s reappearance, and that he possesses all three fragmentary star marks, so they will be forced to launch full-blown wars against the three realms ahead of schedule!

“Tell the Heaven Palace Sect to make preparations!”

Hua Mu’s anxious voice echoed out, each and every word carrying a heavy weight and pounding in everyone’s hearts.

“Let’s go!”

Huang Fan finally realized the urgency of the matter, and thus rushed into the gray vortex right after shooting an urging glance at Li Jing.

Li Jing, who had just come along and wished to have a thorough observation of this mysterious place, received Huang Fan’s message, and thus didn’t dare to waste time here.

WHOOSH!

Her Blood Lotus charged into the middle of the gray vortex with her on top.

The others also rapidly turned around and flew into the vortex through which they had just come moments ago.

In the Realm of Flame Heaven...

The Blood Lotus shot out of the pitch-black hole in the valley surrounded by the three extremely lofty mountain peaks. At the mouth of the black hole, numerous sophisticated patterns formed by glittering starlight seemed to have made the judgment in a flash that what was coming through were humans, not Demons.

Therefore, the grand spell formation that possessed massive destructive force remained settled and didn’t display its lethal might.

Before long, everyone who had entered the spatial rift had returned, except Hua Mu.

Pei Qiqi, who was supposed to be hiding on top of the mountain peak, was already standing by the edge of the spatial rift.

Seeing that Nie Tian had flown out riding Li Jing's Blood Lotus along with the other experts from the Realm of the Flame Heaven, but Hua Mu hadn't shown up after them, she hastily asked, "Nie Tian, where's Mr. Hua?"

"He's in there, fighting a Demon called a Rotspirit Ox," Nie Tian explained. "He told us to come back first."

"Is he going to be okay?" Pei Qiqi asked with a deeply concerned tone.

Nie Tian shook his head. "I don't know."

SHEW!

At that moment, a small cluster of starlight suddenly rose up from the ground underneath Nie Tian's feet.

In a split second, it rushed into Nie Tian's chest and disappeared into his flesh.

With a thought, Nie Tian examined himself, and discovered that it was the first fragmentary star mark, which he had already refined.

SHEW! SHEW!

Moments later, the other two unrefined fragmentary star marks flew out of the bellies of the other two mountain peaks and rapidly merged into his body as well.

After all three fragmentary star marks returned, Nie Tian examined himself thoroughly with his psychic awareness. Then, his eyes snapped open and shone with bright light.

To his surprise, he discovered that the refined fragmentary star mark seemed to have turned into a replica of the glorious grand formation of starlight covering the mouth of the spatial rift.

As his psychic awareness entered that star formation, he was

struck by a feeling that he might be able to change it with his thoughts.

Therefore, he made an attempt.

In the next moment, the glorious, complicated grand star formation covering the mouth of the spatial rift began to shine with blindingly bright light.

Chapter 367: A Large Demon Army

Standing next to Nie Tian, Pei Qiqi noticed that there seemed to be something wrong with him, and thus asked concernedly, “What’s wrong, Nie Tian?”

Nie Tian shook his head. “No, I’m fine. Don’t worry. I just need to check something.”

His psychic awareness swam inside that refined fragmentary star mark, through which he discovered that he could actually control the grand star formation over the mouth of the spatial rift.

As a thought appeared in his mind, the grand star formation formed by countless detailed patterns started to shine with dazzling, bright starlight.

An ancient, boundless aura was gradually unleashed from within the grand star formation.

Then, Nie Tian discovered that his seven Heaven Eyes, which he had scattered in the vicinity, rapidly converged on the spatial rift and flew into it in the next moment.

SHEW! SHEW! SHEW!

As they did, a streak of glorious starlight flew into each of his seven Heaven Eyes.

After being infused with starlight, the Heaven Eyes, which could only detect living beings with the puny amounts of soul power in them, suddenly turned into dazzling stars.

They shone brightly and became visible to the naked eye.

Now, floating in the dim spatial tunnel, Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes morphed into seven shining fragmented stars, through which, he noticed that the battle between Hua Mu and the Rotspirit Ox was still going on.

The Rotspirit Ox’s howls echoed out from within the dense

swirling demon Qi from time to time.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian noticed that his Heaven Eyes seemed to have been infused with a mysterious power when they passed through the grand star formation at the mouth of the spatial rift, enhancing their perception by dozens of times.

However, he realized that the substantialization of his Heaven Eyes and the sudden boost in their perception must only be temporary.

Even still, he was deeply shocked by the monstrous enhancement.

It wasn't long before he sensed danger via those Heaven Eyes.

He sensed that a few vigorous auras that terrified his very soul were coming at extremely fast speeds from a very distant location in the spatial tunnel, following the misty rivers of demon Qi.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

He could even vaguely hear their rapid panting.

All of a sudden, he was struck by a mysterious feeling.

As a thought appeared in his mind, he discovered that the wisp of his soul power within one of his Heaven Eyes had begun to expand and morph.

Immediately afterwards, Nie Tian's soul shadow appeared within that glittering Heaven Eye.

Hua Mu, who was fighting the Rotspirit Ox, detected the strange cluster of bright starlight, and thus asked tentatively, "Nie Tian??"

The cry of Nie Tian's soul echoed out from within that glittering Heaven Eye, mixed with a buzzing sound, "Uncle Hua! Stop fighting that Rotspirit Ox! Many more powerful Demons are coming at us now!"

"Exactly as I expected! This Rotspirit Ox is only a bait! High-tier Demons must have learned about what happened in the Realm of

Flame Heaven, and they are now marching here!” Hua Mu didn’t doubt the authenticity of Nie Tian’s words in the slightest. Submerged in the misty dense demon Qi, he let out a cold harrumph as he turned into a cluster of green flames and shot out of there.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

As he did, some of the green flames sputtered and fell on the Rotspirit Ox’s body.

The Rotspirit Ox let out agonized wails as its enormous figure could be vaguely seen twitching within the raging demon Qi.

At that moment, with a thought, Nie Tian established a subtle connection with the grand star formation.

In the next moment, beams of dazzling starlight shot out from the brilliant star formation within the rotating gray vortex and shone upon the swirling demon Qi.

The rich, swirling demon Qi rapidly dissipated like a snowball being melted by heat.

As that happened, the enormous Rotspirit Ox gradually appeared in front of Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes.

The battle between it and Hua Mu hadn’t gone on very long, yet the Demon was already covered in wounds.

Via his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian observed it closely and discovered that its metal-solid scales had fallen off many parts of its body.

Demonic blood kept flowing out of the messy, exposed flesh and staggering gashes.

Fuming with wrath, the Rotspirit Ox roared unceasingly. However, deep fear could be seen in its glittering eyes.

Apparently, this sixth grade Demon, whose strength matched up to that of a late Worldly realm human Qi warrior, was no match for Hua Mu.

The reason why Hua Mu had dared to stay and fight it single-handedly was that he had enough confidence in his own battle prowess.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Beams of starlight continued to scatter and dissipate the demon Qi around the Rotspirit Ox.

Seeing the incoming beams of starlight, the Rotspirit Ox's enormous body squirmed about as it seemed more scared now than when it had faced Hua Mu.

It appeared to know how powerful those beams of starlight were, and thus hastily backed away, leaving the demon Qi, which could heal its wounds and recover its strength.

The rivers of demon Qi also seemed to rapidly unravel after being illuminated by the starlight.

...

On the other end of the rivers of demon Qi, a few blurry figures were quickly approaching.

Due to the exceedingly long distance, even Hua Mu wasn't able to detect them.

However, Nie Tian managed to sense their aura and images via his seven Heaven Eyes.

After a while, the rivers of demon Qi that the figures had been traveling along suddenly came to an end.

A large part of the rivers of demon Qi, which had originated from the Sixth Demon Realm, had been burnt away by the starlight.

The few figures stopped and stood at the point where the rivers of demon Qi ended.

Nie Tian managed to obtain a clear view of the figures via his strengthened Heaven Eyes.

“Caro! Zelia!” Nie Tian recognized two of them. They were the two high-tier Demons who had led the invasion of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Caro was the one who had single-handedly dealt with Chang Sen, the most powerful Qi warrior in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

At this moment, however, Caro was whispering something to another tall Demon in a very respectful manner.

Standing behind the handful of noble high-tier Demons were hundreds of other high-tier Demons, and standing behind them was an army of low-tier Demons that stretched as far as Nie Tian could see, looking like an endless swarm of flies.

Due to the excessively long distance, this was all Nie Tian could see via his Heaven Eyes.

“A large Demon army is coming!” Nie Tian’s muffled voice rang out from one of his Heaven Eyes.

“You can see them?!” Hua Mu exclaimed.

“Yeah, a very large Demon army is gathered at the point where the rivers of demon Qi end,” Nie Tian replied. At the same time, Nie Tian noticed via his Heaven Eyes that the rivers of demon Qi were extending as they were infused with torrential demon Qi pouring from the Demon’s realm.

“Return to the Realm of Flame Heaven with me!” Hua Mu said. “The restrictive spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace should be able to stop them!”

With these words, Hua Mu turned around and flew into the gray vortex like a flash.

Immediately afterwards, Nie Tian retracted his Heaven Eyes from the spatial tunnel.

He let out a long sigh and opened his eyes. Standing by the edge of the spatial rift, he said, “A large Demon army is coming our way.

I hope the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace will be able to block them off.”

At that moment, Hua Mu appeared by his side and asked hastily, “Have those three fragmentary star marks returned to you, Nie Tian?”

“Yeah, they came back and merged with my body again,” Nie Tian said.

“Okay, that means the grand spell formation is already fully activated. Even without the fragmentary star marks, it will be able to operate fine on its own.” After a moment of silent pondering, Hua Mu added, “That being the case, your job is finished here in the Realm of Flame Heaven. Huang Fan, you should take him to the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations now. They need him more than we do.”

Surprised, Huang Fan said, “Alright.”

For some reason, he subconsciously obeyed Hua Mu, even though he still couldn't figure out who Hua Mu really was.

Hua Mu waved his hand at Nie Tian and beckoned for him to leave. “You go first. I'll stay and look after things in the Realm of Flame Heaven. Rest assured. Now that the fragmentary star marks have returned to you, it means your job here is finished. Don't you worry about a thing in the Realm of Flame Heaven. The Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations now need you more than ever.”

“I see.”

Chapter 368: The Realm of Mystic Heaven

Inside the dim spatial tunnel...

As endless, pure demon Qi was continuously infused into the rivers of demon Qi, they gradually extended towards the gray vortex that led to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Zelia and Caro from the Astarte Clan were both standing behind another high-tier Demon.

That high-tier Demon had a slender physique and an unearthly, elegant appearance. He wearing tasteful, well-designed dark-purple garments with beautiful golden patterns embroidered on the cuffs and collar.

Upon a closer look, those high-tier Demons were all standing on the back of an enormous low-tier Demon, which looked like a huge lizard.

The low-tier Demon flew along the torrential rivers of demon Qi.

“Uncle Nolante, the most powerful human in the Realm of Flame Heaven is only at the Profound realm,” Zelia said, looking up at the tall high-tier Demon, her slender eyebrows deeply furrowed. “Considering the strength of our clan, we didn’t have to wait for demon Qi to fill the Realm of Flame Heaven for us to take it, did we? Now you see. Since we waited too long, the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace has been activated again...”

Eyes deep and mysterious, the finely-dressed Nolante explained, “The Realm of Flame Heaven was only one of our rangelands. At first, we only used it to rear our pet beasts. It was actually of very little value, since we can use it for other purposes.

“Otherwise, we would have rallied our best troops and taken it back right after the human Qi warriors of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace took it from us when we were vulnerable.

“After they took it, they destroyed all the inter-spatial teleportation portals we set up there, but they left that spatial rift.

“Since they were so complacent, they only sealed it one-way, stopping us from entering the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“I bet they hoped that one day, human Qi warriors there would become powerful enough that they would daringly enter our realm through that spatial rift.

“Unfortunately, till this day, only a handful of humans throughout the entire Domain of the Falling Stars have had the audacity to enter our realm and survive.”

With these words, the Demon who seemed to be a senior leader of the Astarte Clan fell silent.

A moment later, Nolante continued, “But admittedly, after centuries of development, the strength of the human Qi warriors in the Domain of the Falling Stars has indeed improved.”

“However, their battle prowess will drop significantly when they are submerged in demon Qi, so if they ever dare to set foot in our realm, they will be digging their own graves.

“Similarly, if we march rashly into the Realm of Flame Heaven or the other realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars, where we will be surrounded with the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, we’ll put ourselves in an unfavorable position.

“In addition, we weren’t sure if the humans were trying to set us up by reopening that spatial rift.

“Part of the reason why we didn’t rush through that spatial rift the moment it reopened was that we were worried that the spatial rift would close up as soon as our army marched through it.

“If that actually happened, our forces that marched into the Realm of Flame Heaven would have become isolated.”

With a sigh, Nolante continued, “Humans are very deceitful, and

we've been tricked quite a few times already, so we need to be extra careful.”

OWWW! ROAAAR!

At that moment, the Rotspirit Ox, which had been badly injured by Hua Mu, flew back to them.

As soon as it saw Nolante, its eyes blossomed with the light of excitement. Without any delay, it approached him and explained what had happened in the demon language, not leaving out any details.

Nolante listened attentively, his eyebrows furrowing and straightening every now and then.

After a long time, he nodded gently and said, “From the look of it, the reopening of the three spatial rifts in the Domain of the Falling Stars is not a conspiracy. It's probably just an accident caused by the appearance of the Heaven Gates. The man with all the fragmentary star marks has already showed up and has set about sealing the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven...”

After a moment of hesitation, he ordered, “Let's go. Abort the mission of attacking the Realm of Flame Heaven. We'll figure out another direction.”

“Shouldn't we at least have a try, Uncle?” Zelia said, her face filled with reluctance.

Nolante shook his head, saying, “Even though the ancient spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace isn't impregnable, we'll have to pay a huge price if we want to deactivate it. The price itself will far exceed the value of the Realm of Flame Heaven, so it won't be a good choice. Furthermore, I'm not one of the few who are capable of breaking the restrictive spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.”

“... So where do we go now?” Zelia asked.

“We need to inform the other clans of the situation, and let them

decide whether or not they want to launch their operations ahead of schedule and march their armies into the Realm of Mystic Heaven and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations now.” Nolante said.

Immediately afterwards, the huge Astarte army turned around and ended their invasion of the Realm of Flame Heaven prematurely.

...

A number of large-scale, inter-spatial teleportation portals were scattered in a corner of a magnificent, towering palace that looked like a mountain.

Heaven Palace Sect Qi warriors went in and came out of them every now and then.

As the most powerful Qi warrior sect in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars, the Heaven Palace Sect had more inter-spatial teleportation portals than any other sect.

All of a sudden, Huang Fan, Nie Tian, and Su Lin appeared in one of the portals.

As soon as they walked out of it, every Heaven Palace Sect disciple in the vicinity turned to greet Huang Fan and Su Lin.

“Senior Huang, Senior Martial Sister Su.”

“Greetings, Senior Huang.”

“Greetings, Senior Martial Sister Su.”

With a grim expression on his face, Huang Fan didn't say anything back, but rather said loudly and urgently, “Go ready the Golden Chariot for me! Also, inform the sectmaster that I've retrieved Nie Tian. He's already gathered all three fragmentary star marks, and we are going to the spatial rift now!”

An uproar instantly burst out amongst the crowd of Heaven Palace Sect disciples. One after another, they cast their curious and

impressed gazes towards Nie Tian.

“Nie Tian!”

“He’s that Nie Tian from the Realm of Flame Heaven?!”

“Is he the one who snatched two fragmentary star marks from our senior martial sister and Dong Baijie?!”

At that moment, a man scurried over from another corner of the palace and said, “Senior Huang, the Golden Chariot is ready for you at the front gate.”

“Good!” Huang Fan nodded gently as he turned to Su Lin and said with a casual tone. “What’s next doesn’t really concern you anymore, so you can just stay in the sect while I take Nie Tian to that spatial rift.”

“Sure.” Su Lin nodded, frustration filling her face.

“Let’s go, Nie Tian.” Huang Fan strode in front, and Nie Tian followed him.

As he did, Nie Tian glanced around curiously and discovered that the palace was incomparably large.

They seemed to be on the first floor of the palace, yet the size of it could already match up to half of Shatter City.

Numerous Heaven Palace Sect Qi warriors were walking around. Some were discussing the art of equipment forging with each other, some were seeking advice regarding cultivation methods from others, while others were competing in combat.

With a quick glance at his surroundings, Nie Tian discovered that almost all of the Heaven Palace Sect disciples he could see were at the Greater Heaven stage or the Worldly realm.

As soon as they learned that he was Nie Tian, each and every one of them put their business on hold and cast their amazed gazes towards him.

Glad expressions could be seen on their faces, as if they had been

waiting for him to show up for a long time.

Soon, he and Huang Fan walked out of the palace.

A golden, floating war chariot was already waiting for them at the front gate of the palace.

The moment he walked out of the palace, he understood why those Heaven Palace Sect disciples had all looked at him with expectant faces.

Raging demon Qi had already spread to a place seemingly less than 50 kilometers from the palace's front gate.

Considering the speed at which the demon Qi expanded, it wouldn't be very long before the Heaven Palace Sect, the most powerful Qi warrior sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars, would be forced to move out of their headquarters.

“That explains it. The situation here isn't any better than over at the Hell Sect.” Nie Tian muttered to himself.

One man rushed through the sect gate after them and said urgently, “Senior Huang, the sectmaster and the elders are gathered at the spatial rift. Supposedly, something huge has happened there, and they want you and Nie Tian to get over there as quickly as possible.”

“I see.” With a grim face, Huang Fan grabbed Nie Tian and pulled him into the Golden Chariot.

Immediately afterwards, the Golden Chariot flew towards the heart of the raging demon Qi, every bit as fast as the Lightning Shuttle.

Chapter 369 The Heaven Palace Sect

While they were flying away towards the spatial rift in the Golden Chariot, Nie Tian turned around to look at the increasingly distant palace. He was overwhelmed by its grandeur.

The magnificent palace seemed like a towering mountain that sat on a sea of clouds.

Just now, since they were in a hurry, he hadn't gotten a chance to have a good look at it. But right now, standing in the Golden Chariot, he could take his time to observe this majestic establishment.

This most powerful sect throughout the nine realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars sat in a boundless plain.

It was so high that it rose above the clouds. Even now, as he was observing from afar, he could see that the enormous palace was wreathed in glittering, brilliant light, making it look like a precious gem.

His eyes seized by it, Nie Tian was hit by a strong sense of respect.

Standing next to him in the Golden Chariot, Huang Fan said with a sincere tone, "As long as you nod your head, you'll become a part of it. Now that Ning Yang is dead, we need to establish a brighter and more promising star. As the young man who obtained the fragmentary star marks, you are a perfect candidate.

"Once you join our sect, you'll be revered in every realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

"Considering your outstanding talent and the devoted care you'll receive from the sect, the sky will be your limit.

"Our sect needs you every bit as much as you need our sect. With the strong support you'll receive from our sect, you won't need to worry about anything else. You'll be able to focus all of your

energy on your cultivation.

“Whatever cultivation resources you need, our sect will take care of it for you.

“Actually, you should have joined the Heaven Palace Sect long ago, Nie Tian.”

Huang Fan used his powerful and exaggerated words to play up to the benefits of joining the Heaven Palace Sect.

For a moment, Nie Tian’s mind was carried away. As he looked at the magnificent palace, a desire for a transcendent status in the Domain of the Falling Stars rose in his heart.

However, while his mind was perturbed, Huang Fan suddenly called out, “Be careful!”

The Golden Chariot unleashed a layer of misty, golden light and enveloped itself within it.

WHOOSH!

Only then did Nie Tian realize that the Golden Chariot had carried them into the area filled with raging demon Qi.

The moment they did, Nie Tian’s vision, hearing, and perception were all greatly compromised.

That was when he snapped back to reality.

Even though the Heaven Palace Sect was the most powerful Qi warrior sect throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars, they were rendered helpless when the spatial rift appeared and demon Qi started pouring into their realm.

They could only rely on Nie Tian to seal the spatial rift with the fragmentary star marks he had obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

The Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, on the other hand, was the ancient Qi warrior sect that had captured the Domain of the Falling Stars from many outsider races.

Even though it had long since left the Domain of the Falling Stars, the spell formations and restrictive spells it had left behind were still guarding the Domain of the Falling Stars against outsider invasions.

Furthermore, even though the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had been already gone for thousands of years, the appearance of the Heaven Gates, which happened every few hundred years, still seemed to be according to their arrangement.

As the man who had collected all three fragmentary star marks, Nie Tian was the one who had proven himself to be the inheritor of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's legacies.

This meant that he had already been recognized by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Compared to the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, the Heaven Palace Sect seemed far inferior. The gap between their reserve powers, history, and strengths was so significant that they weren't even on the same level.

“If I can find the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and be admitted as their successor, that would work out the best for me.” He weighed his choices over in his heart for a while, and gradually walked out of the pretty picture Huang Fan had painted for him. Resuming a composed expression, he turned to Huang Fan and said, “Joining your sect is a huge matter. I think I need to spend more time thinking about it. But right now, we need to focus on sealing that spatial rift.”

“Okay, sure.” Huang Fan didn't insist on getting an answer right away.

The way he saw it, as long as Nie Tian wasn't able to explore outside of the Domain of the Falling Stars, it would still be the wisest choice for him to join the Heaven Palace Sect as its chosen one, and rise to prominence from there.

He believed that Nie Tian wasn't a fool. Even though he didn't agree to it today, he would come around one day.

...

In the land covered in rich demon Qi.

Surrounded by numerous mountains of various heights was an enormous, unfathomable black hole in the ground, which looked exactly like the one in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Torrential demon Qi was flowing out of it unceasingly.

Roughly a dozen powerful experts were scattered on top of the surrounding mountain peaks. Some were standing and some were sitting, but every one of them had their eyes fixed on the spatial rift.

ROOOAARRRR!! ROOOAARRRR!!

Every once in a while, loud roars would echo out from within that bottomless hole in the ground.

Unlike the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven hadn't been one of the Demons' rangelands. Therefore, the spirit beasts that lived in the Realm of Mystic Heaven didn't carry Demon bloodlines.

That was why when demonsounds came through the spatial rift, they didn't attract any mutant spirit beasts.

All they had attracted were the most powerful experts from around the realm, most of whom were at the Profound realm.

“Before, only demon Qi dispersed through the spatial rift into our realm and we never heard any demon roars.” An elder named Ling Dong muttered to himself, his long beard fluttering gently against the wind. “However, over the past two days, the roars have become louder each time. Can it be that the Demons have decided to invade us ahead of schedule?”

Wherever his pale-gray pupils looked, the land would instantly be overtaken by frigid coldness.

He was the grand elder of the Heaven Palace Sect, ranked number

one among all of the elders. He practiced ice and frost incantations, and his cultivation base was at the early Soul realm!

Considering Ling Dong's strength and cultivation base, he would be able to sweep across the Realm of Flame Heaven if he wanted to.

Even though Chang Sen from the Hell Sect was at the late Profound realm, there was still a noticeable gap between their cultivation bases, and he wouldn't stand a chance fighting him.

Normally, Ling Dong wouldn't pay any attention to worldly affairs, but would instead practice secluded cultivation all year round, and pursue advancement in his cultivation.

If he hadn't been faced with such an urgent situation, where the Heaven Palace Sect might be forced to move out of their headquarters and become a laughingstock of the whole Domain of the Falling Stars, he wouldn't have come out of his secluded cultivation.

"Sectmaster, grand elder, Huang Fan has returned from the Realm of Flame Heaven, and he has brought Nie Tian back with him," One of the experts said.

The sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect, Zhao Luofeng, stood atop another mountain. He was dressed in plain-looking gray garments and wearing a green jade ring on the ring finger of his left hand.

He was a slender man with milky-white skin. From the look of it, he was only in his thirties. At that moment, he stood there silently with an expressionless face.

"Sectmaster, the fragmentary star mark that used to belong to Ning Yang is now in Nie Tian's possession," Ling Dong said with a grim expression. "Since Nie Tian possesses all the fragmentary star marks, whether he can seal the spatial rift or not, he must join us and become a disciple of our sect."

Zhao Luofeng nodded briefly. "So he must."

ROOOOAR!

Another heaven-shaking, earth-shattering demon roar rang out from the depths of the black hole.

Every expert in the vicinity fixed their gazes on the mouth of the unfathomable hole, yet none of them had fear in their eyes.

It seemed as if they were expecting something.

A while passed...

A giant, cyan claw suddenly reached out from within the black hole. Immediately afterwards, a hairy, low-tier Demon that had the appearance of an ape crawled out of the enormous hole in the ground.

Ling Dong, the grand elder, let out a cold harrumph as he fixed his gray pupils on the sixth grade Demon. “A sixth grade Demon! You must have a death wish!”

As soon as his gaze landed on the 30-meter-tall, ape-like Demon, it started to freeze at a rate that was visible to the naked eye.

A moment later, Ling Dong gently closed his eyes.

CRUNCH!

The frozen, sixth grade, low-tier Demon cracked and exploded.

The Demon was instantly reduced to countless pieces of frozen flesh. No life could be brought back from that.

WHOOSH!

At that moment, Nie Tian and Huang Fan’s Golden Chariot arrived.

Chapter 370: Itching Desires

Hard like rocks, pieces of the Demon's broken body were scattered on the frozen ground.

As soon as Nie Tian's Golden Chariot got close enough, he caught sight of the Demon that looked like a giant ape, and that the moment it crawled out of the spatial rift, Ling Dong froze it and broke it into pieces with his frost power.

Gradually, a misty frost aura pervaded the area around the spatial rift where rich demon Qi filled the air.

Like a thick mist, it spread in the air. Wherever it reached, everything was instantly overtaken by frigid coldness, and the mountains looked as if they had turned into glaciers.

Nie Tian's heart shook as he subconsciously looked at Ling Dong.

Standing atop a mountain peak, his beard fluttered against the wind. Numerous complicated, fine lines seemed to be wiggling in a special way in the depths of his pale-gray pupils.

As he briefly swayed his head from side to side, great changes happened to the heaven and earth his eyes covered.

It wasn't long before the valley where the spatial rift was located and the average-sized mountain peaks in its surroundings were enveloped in his frigid frost power and took on a cloak of white.

The only things that remained unaffected were the three exceptionally high mountain peaks that formed a perfect triangle around the spatial rift, which, with all the other mountain peaks in the background, looked like three grown men standing in a crowd of children.

While Nie Tian glanced around curiously, his three fragmentary star marks suddenly became scalding hot.

ROOOOAR!

Another blood-chilling roar rang out from within the spatial rift.

Ling Dong's face was calm as ever as he looked towards the spatial rift with his eyes narrowed.

Zhao Luofeng, the sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect, also remained expressionless, as if the Demon's roars didn't cause even the slightest waves in his heart.

The faces of the other scattered Heaven Palace Sect experts looked every bit as calm as Zhao Luofeng. They didn't even pay much attention to Nie Tian when he arrived with Huang Fan.

The Golden Chariot floated in midair as Huang Fan bowed towards Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong. "Sectmaster, grand elder, I have brought Nie Tian."

Only then did Ling Dong finally lay his eyes on Nie Tian.

Nie Tian met his gaze, but a mere glance at his pale-gray pupils made Nie Tian's blood run cold.

Under Ling Dong's piercing gaze, Nie Tian had a strong feeling that he had nowhere to hide, as if he could see through all of his secrets.

"Those three high mountain peaks that remain unfrozen are the ones that form the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's special spell formation. You can go ahead and do what you need to do." After uttering these words with an indifferent tone, Ling Dong turned around and refocused his gaze on the spatial rift.

Then, with an expressionless face, Zhao Luofeng cast a glance at Nie Tian without the slightest fluctuation in his eyes.

After the wordless glance, he also turned around and concentrated his attention on the spatial rift.

None of the other Heaven Palace Sect experts even spared Nie Tian a glance, but instead, they had focused all of their attention on the spatial rift, as if they were anticipating the Demons' arrival.

A confused expression stretched across Nie Tian's face.

Before coming to the Realm of Mystic Heaven, he had been under the impression that the Qi warriors of the Heaven Palace Sect must be as anxious as their counterparts in the Realm of Flame Heaven, consumed with finding methods to seal the spatial rift and stop Demons from coming through it.

Through Hua Mu and word from the Spirit Condor, he had learned that the Heaven Palace Sect had already started to panic and thus planned to force Ning Yang to give up his fragmentary star mark.

He had assumed that as soon as he arrived, people from the Heaven Palace Sect would urge him to seal that spatial rift as quickly as possible.

However, from the look of it, that wasn't the case at all.

Neither Zhao Luofeng, Ling Dong, nor any of the other Profound realm experts from the Heaven Palace Sect showed any fear or tension on their faces.

Instead, what Nie Tian saw from their stances were itching desires and high ambitions.

A terrifying speculation appeared in his head: these experts from the Heaven Palace Sect were actually waiting for the Demons' arrival!

Immediately afterwards, Zhao Luofeng's statement confirmed his speculation.

“Now that Nie Tian is here along with all three fragmentary star marks, we can do this without any scruples,” Zhao Luofeng said with a very subtle smile. “Grand elder, you go ahead and do what needs to be done. If things get out of hand, we'll have Nie Tian seal the spatial rift with the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.”

Upon hearing these words, the face of every Heaven Palace Sect

expert in the vicinity grew very grim.

“W-what’s...” Huang Fan, however, looked deeply confused, as if he was completely clueless about what was happening.

“Got it!” Ling Dong called out with a deep and powerful voice.

As he did, the frozen mountain peaks surrounding the spatial rift seemed to suddenly turn into a multitude of enormous prisms.

Numerous beams of blindingly bright light shot out of them and met right above the spatial rift.

Ling Dong splayed his hands. One sparkling ice pearl after another flew out of his palms and shot into the prism-like frozen mountain peaks, each of which carried a bone-piercing cold aura. After receiving a strong bolstering effect from the ice pearls, the frosty light that shot out of those mountain peaks became increasingly frigid and powerful.

ROOOAARRRR!!

Another Demon flew out of the bottomless spatial rift.

This one had large, purple, feathered wings. The moment it appeared, it fluttered its wings against the demon Qi, sending out thick lightning bolts.

Nie Tian felt secretly amazed by the scene.

From what he could tell, his master’s Thunder Beast must have some kind of bloodline bond with this Demon, since it looked very similar to the Thunder Beast. The only difference between them was that the Thunder Beast was smaller in size.

“Another beast sent to its doom...” As soon as Ling Dong let out a cold harrumph, a few beams of blindingly bright light shot out from their intersection point above the spatial rift.

As the beams of light swept across the Demon, it was instantly cut into pieces by numerous razor-sharp blades, its flesh falling apart and scattering on the ground.

Shortly afterwards, many more Demons flew out of the spatial rift.

However, each and every one of them was a low-tier Demon, and as soon as they emerged, they were rapidly sliced into pieces by the icy light beams that shot out of the spell formation deployed by Ling Dong.

Zhao Luofeng and the other powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect remained composed and silent, as if they were still waiting for something.

The slaughtering went on for a while before a pitch-black battle steed suddenly charged out of the spatial rift.

The steed was wearing iron armor that had magical patterns engraved on it. Sharp horns jutted out from its forehead, and its eyes shone with brutal and bloodthirsty light.

Mounting the steed was a high-tier male Demon wearing pitch-black, full-body, heavy armor and a sinister mask with a black, long spear in his hand.

The only thing unprotected by his armor and mask were his dark-purple eyes.

Upon seeing the Demon rider, Zhao Luofeng's expression flickered. The same went for Ling Dong and the other powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Numerous beams of frigid cold light suddenly shot down from the intersection point above the spatial rift.

Adorned in heavy armor, the high-tier Demon grinned and said in perfectly clear human language, "Humans! You are indeed good at playing tricks. From the look of it, you've been waiting for me for quite some time."

"Who are you?" Ling Dong asked in a loud voice.

“Auden from the Fourth Demon Realm!”

Chapter 371: Mass Invasion **festival feature included**

One beam of frigid cold light after another shot down from above the mountain valley.

As Ling Dong's eyes were tightly locked onto the high-tier Demon who referred to himself as Auden, a world of ice and snow seemed to be rapidly forming in the depths of his pale-gray pupils.

As Auden sat on his tall steed, clad in heavy armor, strange crackling sounds rang out around him.

It was as if the space around him was being frozen under Ling Dong's gaze.

However, the beams of frigid cold light that were shooting down from above Auden's head couldn't get anywhere close to him.

With a soft voice, Auden asked in impeccable human language, "Is this the full extent of your battle prowess, humans of the Domain of the Falling Stars?"

In the next moment, he raised his black spear.

WHOOSH!

The incomparably pure, blackish-violet demon Qi, which had filled this entire region, swirled down from the sky.

All of a sudden, the spatial rift beside Auden seemed to sink slightly.

RUUUUMBLE!

The surrounding mountain peaks, which Ling Dong had turned into ice prisms using frost magics, began to tremble violently.

Standing in the Golden Chariot, Nie Tian examined his surroundings with his Heaven Eyes and discovered that the region of heaven and earth they were in seemed to be collapsing towards

the spatial rift.

Under his Heaven Eyes' perception, he had a feeling that the frozen mountain peaks, which were dwarfed by the three exceptionally high ones, were becoming less straight.

Therefore, he closed his eyes and observed the vicinity relying solely on his Heaven Eyes.

Then, he discovered that, in the vision acquired via his seven Heaven Eyes, everything in the vicinity seemed to be bending towards the dark, bottomless hole in the ground.

Meanwhile, the black spear that Auden had raised into the air seemed to be extending into the heavens and channeling power from the raging demon Qi.

One after another, complicated, mysterious magical patterns flew out from the tip of the black spear, which morphed into devilishly beautiful, blossoming flowers.

In the next moment, an enormous demonic shadow gradually appeared in the air above the Demon rider.

Floating in midair, the shadow, which was hundreds of meters tall, started to breathe in the demon Qi that was constantly converging from the vicinity.

Ling Dong's frigid cold spell formation seemed to have turned into a huge cage that was trying to imprison the enormous demonic shadow.

Innumerable talismans appeared on the smooth faces of the prism-like surrounding mountain peaks.

Each and every one of them was silver-white and branded with the profound truths of frigid power.

The enormous demonic shadow threw its head back and roared as it raised its giant arms into the heavens and channeled the torrential demon Qi towards the surrounding mountain peaks.

At the same time, Nie Tian sensed that the lower part of the enormous shadow seemed to be gradually sinking into the spatial rift.

As it did, it seemed to be pulling everything in the vicinity down with it, including the surrounding mountains, huge rocks, frigid-cold lights, whirling gales, and even the raging demon Qi.

While Nie Tian was wrapped up in how the world looked through his Heaven Eyes, Zhao Luofeng, the sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect, suddenly exclaimed, “Seventh grade bloodline power!”

Nie Tian’s eyes snapped open.

The first thing he saw was that the surrounding mountain peaks, which Ling Dong had frozen and turned into huge prisms with frost power, exploded one after another.

Huge pieces of hard ice fell from them, restoring their original appearances.

At that moment, Auden’s raised black spear blossomed with bright, purple light, which shone upon the surrounding landscape, destroying the frigid spell formation Ling Dong had deployed.

At the same time, the spatial rift was gradually sucking everything in the vicinity into it, along with the demon Qi it had released.

ROOOAARRRR!!

A thunderous roar suddenly echoed out from within the spatial rift.

In the next moment, a gigantic, black, two-headed python emerged from the spatial rift with slight difficulties, its eyes glittering with dazzling, purple light.

As soon as it surfaced, its two heads started to spew purple and black flames respectively into its surroundings.

Numerous clusters of flames flew towards the Profound realm

experts from the Heaven Palace Sect like burning purple and black suns.

“A Demon that possesses seventh grade bloodline power!” Zhao Luofeng said, shock filling his face.

ROOOAARRRR!! ROOOAARRRR!!

Constant, blood-chilling roars echoed out from the depths of the unfathomable spatial rift.

With an increasingly grim expression, Zhao Luofeng turned to look at Huang Fan from afar, and then nodded briefly.

Huang Fan immediately understood and hastily said to Nie Tian, “Alright! It’s time for you to use those three fragmentary star marks to activate the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and seal that spatial rift!”

The Golden Chariot shot forward like a flash and arrived on top of one of the three enormous mountain peaks in the blink of an eye, where two Profound realm experts from the Heaven Palace Sect were standing.

Upon seeing that Huang Fan and Nie Tian’s Golden Chariot was descending next to them, they only greeted Huang Fan briefly before refocusing their attention on the battle between Ling Dong and Auden again.

After jumping off the chariot, Huang Fan asked them in a soft voice, “What in the world is going on here?”

“The sectmaster and grand elder intend to take this opportunity to kill some truly powerful Demons and also get a deeper understanding of the Demons’ actual strength, so that we can be better prepared for our future invasion of their realms,” One of them answered.

“Is that all?” Huang Fan asked with a frown.

“Of course, they have other plans.” The man’s eyes flickered as

he cast a glance at Nie Tian and stopped talking.

Apparently, he still considered Nie Tian as an outsider, and thus would rather not reveal the Heaven Palace Sect's confidential plans to him.

Huang Fan soon realized his scruples, so he nodded back and didn't pursue a clear answer. Rather, he turned to Nie Tian and urged him to get started.

Deeply confused, Nie Tian wondered what the Heaven Palace Sect was up to. However, since he didn't have the time to solve that mystery right now, he sat down on the mountaintop and activated his fragmentary star marks according to the method he had recently acquired.

One after another, the three fragmentary star marks flew out of his chest.

The first refined fragmentary star mark shot straight down into the mountain peak he was sitting on, while the other two flickered as they shot into the bellies of the other two exceedingly high mountain peaks.

Nie Tian sensed with rapt attention and discovered that those three mountain peaks had the same structure as the ones in the Realm of Flame Heaven; they also had vast hollow spaces inside of them, and their insides were also carved with countless complicated spell formations.

As soon as the fragmentary star marks flew into the pagodas in the mountains' bellies, the pagodas lit up, and the mysterious spell formations filling their insides started to emanate dazzling starlight.

In a moment, the three enormous mountain peaks seemed to turn into three giant magnets that drew stars towards them.

As the innumerable stars in the sky suddenly became dazzlingly bright, starlight rapidly gathered and formed numerous bright

rivers, pouring down from the highest heavens.

“It’s activated!”

Seeing that the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had started to take effect, Zhao Luofeng felt greatly relieved.

SHEW!

At that very moment, a handful of figures flew out of the spatial rift.

They were Nolante, Caro, and Zelia from the Astarte Clan. Even the Rotspirit Ox, which had recently been injured by Hua Mu, emerged from the spatial rift after them.

Chapter 372: Secret

As one fragmentary star mark after another flew into the pagodas within the bellies of the three lofty mountain peaks, the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace was finally activated.

As the initiator, Nie Tian actually didn't need to do much. After he sent out the fragmentary star marks, the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's profound spell formation started to activate on its own.

Sitting on the mountaintop, he reopened his eyes to observe the battle between Ling Dong and Auden.

However, he discovered that the battle scene he saw with his naked eyes varied greatly from the battle scene he had seen with his soul power via his seven Heaven Eyes.

After thinking for a brief moment, he suddenly came to a realization.

The battle between Ling Dong and Auden was not only a tangle between their spiritual power, but their souls were also contending against each other in mysterious ways.

As he closed his eyes again to observe with his Heaven Eyes that contained soul power, he was convinced that the terrifying demonic shadow he was seeing was none other than the incarnation of Auden's soul!

The cage-like spell formation formed by numerous frozen, prism-like mountain peaks was the crystallization of the profound combination of Ling Dong's frost power and soul power.

Their battle on the soul level seemed far fiercer and more critical than their battle on the spiritual power level.

Only extremely powerful beings like Ling Dong and Auden could battle on such an advanced and profound level, which Nie Tian

could only observe via his Heaven Eyes.

“The incarnations of their souls are fighting at close quarters!” Nie Tian grew excited inwardly.

With a deep breath, he continued to observe the battle between Ling Dong and Auden with immense interest.

It wasn't long before he noticed that wherever the gigantic, two-headed python's black and purple flames covered, everything would immediately burst into flames, including the surrounding mountain peaks, the earth, and even the air.

Furthermore, Nie Tian sensed the changes in the vicinity with rapt attention, and discovered that the two kinds of flames were rapidly burning the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth which Ling Dong had released into the air away, giving rise to loud crackles.

Wherever the purple and black flames spread to, everything would soon be reduced to ashes.

As the flames set everything in the vicinity ablaze, the originally diluted demon Qi once again became rich and thick.

In the meantime, the arrival of the few members of the Astarte Clan caught Nie Tian's attention. With a confused expression on his face, he looked at the few figures who had previously been forced to stop their army in the spatial tunnel due to the interdiction of the demon Qi rivers. “Caro, Zelia...”

Huang Fan snorted disdainfully. “More high-tier Demons.”

“They should have appeared in the Realm of Flame Heaven,” Nie Tian said in a soft voice. “They are from the Astarte Clan. You've met the Rotspirit Ox. These high-tier Demons almost marched their army into the Realm of Flame Heaven. If I hadn't sealed the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven, they would have succeeded already.”

“You've seen them before?” Huang Fan asked, greatly surprised.

“Yeah, I sensed their actions through the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace,” Nie Tian explained. “But the weird part is why they would come here.”

FIZZ! FIZZ!

One after another, clusters of blazing purple flames shot out of the two-headed python’s foul mouth and flew towards Nie Tian.

Eyebrows furrowed, a Profound realm expert from the Heaven Palace Sect, who was standing next to Huang Fan, waved his hand disgustedly, sending out gusts of fierce wind through his cuff.

As they traveled at an extremely fast speed in the air, ear-piercingly sharp sounds were created. In the next moment, they crushed the clusters of demonic flames and reduced them to tiny, scattered purple sparks.

“You brought Nie Tian here from the Realm of Flame Heaven, you keep him safe.”

After saying these words to Huang Fan, the man rose to his feet from his previous lotus position and flew down the mountaintop towards the central valley.

It was also at that moment that all the other Heaven Palace Sect experts that had been scattered on top of the surrounding mountain peaks flew down, including Zhao Luofeng.

Moments later, the most powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect arrived by the spatial rift, with Zhao Luofeng standing in the middle.

In front of them was Auden from the Fourth Demon Realm, who was sitting on his black warhorse and holding his long spear up high.

Next to him stood Nolante, Caro, Zelia, and the Rotspirit Ox from the Astarte Clan.

SHEW! SHEW! SHEW!

Beams of dazzling starlight penetrated the thick, almost-black demon Qi as they poured down from the highest heavens after being attracted by the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

As the rivers of starlight continued to purge the heaven-blocking demon Qi, the vast, starry sky could be seen again, which had never seemed more mysterious.

Countless stars shone brightly and mystically.

“The Astarte Clan.” Auden retracted his black spear, ending his battle against Ling Dong. Then, he glanced at Nolante and said, “Wasn’t the Realm of Flame Heaven one of your rangelands?” Confusion could be seen in his purple eyes, the only things revealed by his mask.

“The spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven has already been sealed.” Nolante said.

“Why did you come here?” Auden asked, his voice deep and profound.

“I’m here to help you,” Nolante replied.

Adorned in heavy armor, Auden let out a cold harrumph and turned his eyes away. His gaze shifted back and forth between Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong, who had flown down after their battle had come to a stalemate.

Nie Tian, who remained on the mountaintop with Huang Fan, felt that the atmosphere was growing increasingly strange.

The arrival of Nolante and the other members of the Astarte Clan didn’t seem to be pleasing to Auden in the slightest. On the contrary, he seemed a bit disgusted by it.

Zhao Luofeng, Ling Dong, and all the other powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect descended and stood face to face with Auden and the other Demons after the confrontation between Ling Dong and Auden came to a standstill. From their stance, Nie Tian

could tell that they had things to discuss.

“Senior Huang, what in the world is your sect up to?” Eyebrows knitted, Nie Tian couldn’t make heads or tails of the current situation, since he hadn’t expected any of what was happening.

“Well...” Huang Fan wished to speak, but stopped on second thought.

“People from the Astarte Clan are here, but why doesn’t Auden seem happy about that at all?” Nie Tian asked another question.

Huang Fan sighed. “Well... Have you noticed anything special here, that makes this place different from the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

“No, nothing unusual,” Nie Tian said, shaking his head. “My perception will grow keener after the grand spell formation is fully activated and the three fragmentary star marks return to me.”

“Something is sealed in this realm,” Huang Fan said after a moment of hesitation, “Something very important to the Demons in the Fourth Demon Realm. I guess the reason why they chose our realm to invade was that they wanted to get that thing back.”

“What is it!?” Nie Tian was taken aback.

Huang Fan shook his head slightly. “I don’t know for sure. It could be a magical item or maybe even a powerful Demon that has been imprisoned here by the restrictive spell left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace for many, many years. There are three Soul realm experts in the Heaven Palace Sect. As you know, after the Soul realm are the three domains, starting with the Void domain.

“In order to break through into the Void domain, one needs to collect some extremely precious and rare materials, many of which can’t be found throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars.

“However, the Demons have rare resources in their realms which can be very useful for those Soul realm experts who wish to build

their inner domains.

“I’m guessing the sectmaster and grand elder are going to trade whatever has been sealed here by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace for those precious materials with the Demons.”

“What?!” Nie Tian’s expression flickered dramatically. “They want to work a deal with the Demons?!”

Huang Fan smiled bitterly. “In order to enter the Void domain, they have no choice but to collect those rare materials. They can either go to the Demons’ realms and get them personally, or they can make a deal with them. There is no other way. After all, only Demons have the things they need.”

Chapter 373: A Deal with The Demons

What the experts from the Heaven Palace Sect did next proved Huang Fan's speculation to be correct.

Surrounded by Ling Dong and other Heaven Palace Sect experts, Zhao Luofeng stood face to face with Auden and the gigantic, two-headed python.

“Once the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace is started, it can't be stopped,” Zhao Luofeng said with an expressionless face, his tone so calm and peaceful that it was as if he was only stating a fact. “I guess you didn't expect us to obtain all three fragmentary star marks during the Heaven Gate trial and unite them within such a short time.

“As you know, once a person successfully merges the three fragmentary star marks with their body, they will be able to seal the spatial rift with the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.”

As Zhao Luofeng spoke, dazzling starlight continued to pour down from the highest heavens.

As rivers of starlight infused into the spatial rift, brilliant starlight seemed to turn into winding brooks that flowed over the mouth of the bottomless hole and formed complicated, mysterious patterns.

“This spatial rift is destined to be sealed again. Once the sealing process is finished, you and your kind won't be able to go through the spatial rift anymore.

“So that means even if you send in your entire Demon army, the moment the spatial rift is sealed, their connection with your realm will be cut off.

“Once that happens, your troops will be trapped in the Domain of the Falling Stars and surrounded by us.”

Eyes narrowed, Zhao Luofeng looked at Auden with a composed expression on his face as he continued, “I figure that you understand that the odds will be against you if you have to face all of the powerful human experts in the Domain of the Falling Stars, right? Perhaps that’s why you didn’t bring your entire army through this spatial rift. Instead, it’s just you and that thing...”

Then, Zhao Luofeng laid his eyes on the two-headed python and added, “You’re just here to check things out, aren’t you?”

ROOOAARRRR!!

Eyes glittering with the light of brutality, the two-headed python let out a beastly bellow, as if it wasn’t happy with Zhao Luofeng’s statement.

Sitting on his warhorse and adorned in heavy armor, Auden waved his hand at it, signaling it to settle down.

Meanwhile, every expert from the Heaven Palace Sect remained silent after Zhao Luofeng finished talking.

Ling Dong, who had fought a brief but intense battle against Auden, also stayed silent, but he fixed his ice-cold gaze on the seemingly restless, two-headed python, as if he was preparing for what was to come.

After a moment of silence, Auden turned to Nolante from the Astarte Clan and said in the Demon language, “This has nothing to do with you. I can take it from here. You may leave.”

A hint of grimness appeared on Nolante’s unearthly handsome face as he replied in the Demon language, “Auden, don’t tell me that you actually want to make a deal with these despicable humans!? Don’t you think you should take that thing back from them with the most brutal means possible and kill every human in this place to wash off the disgrace they brought you?”

“I said it’s our business and it has nothing to do with the Astarte Clan!” Auden raised his voice.

“Uncle, as slowly as it is, this spatial rift is being sealed,” Zelia reminded Nolante in a soft voice.

Nolante nodded at her before he turned to look coldly at Auden’s masked face and said, “Alright, you take care then.”

With these words, he and the others from the Astarte Clan turned around and disappeared into the spatial rift, which was glittering with increasingly bright starlight.

After they were gone, Auden and the two-headed python became the only Demons in the valley.

“So what do you want?” Auden asked in fluent human language.

Upon hearing these words, Nie Tian noticed that the eyes of Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong lit up simultaneously.

“This is a list of the things we want.”

Zhao Luofeng waved his hand, and a piece of yellow oiled paper that had crooked Demon language written on it flew towards Auden.

Auden grabbed it with his empty hand and started reading.

Sitting on the mountaintop, Nie Tian could hear vague, intermittent panting sounds from within the starlight-glittering spatial rift.

Then, he realized that a terrifying Demon army must be gathered in the dim, spooky spatial tunnel.

All kinds of low-tier Demons, as well as powerful high-tier Demons from the Fourth Demon Realm, must be waiting for Auden’s orders in there.

Auden’s original plan had probably been to launch a massive invasion right away, sweep across the Realm of Mystic Heaven within the least possible time, and take the thing he had set his mind on.

However, the timely arrival of Nie Tian and Huang Fan and the

fact that he had already activated the grand spell formation using the fragmentary star marks seemed to have changed Auden's mind.

That was probably why Auden and the two-headed python were the only ones that had come out of that spatial rift.

“Making a deal with the Demons...”

With a grim expression on his face, Nie Tian suddenly turned to Huang Fan and asked, “Something that belonged to the Demons is being sealed in the Realm of Mystic Heaven. What about the Realm of Flame Heaven? Is something being sealed in the Realm of Flame Heaven that the Astarte Clan from the Sixth Demon Realm wants?”

“No,” Huang Fan said, shaking his head. “Not that I know of.”

“What about in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations?” Nie Tian asked.

“It appears not,” Huang Fan answered.

At that moment, Auden finished reading the list of things that Zhao Luofeng was demanding. His exposed eyes were filled with edginess as he said, “It's just as hard for us to get all of these things! Furthermore, it won't be long before the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace seals the spatial rift completely!

“We can't possibly collect all these many things and bring them to the Realm of Mystic Heaven within such a short time!”

A subtle smile appeared at the corner of Zhao Luofeng's mouth for the first time as he said, “It's alright. As long as you agree to honor this deal, we can finish the transaction inside the spatial tunnel. As you know, even if the spatial rift is fully sealed, we still will be able to go through it unaffected.”

After a brief pause, he added, “Back when the spatial rift first appeared, experts from our sect and I used our divine abilities to

temporarily deactivate the restrictive spell deployed by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and forcibly took the thing you need.

“I’ll allow you some time to gather all the items on that list. Then, we’ll meet in the spatial tunnel and finish the transaction.

“What do you think?”

ROOOAARRRR!!

As soon as the two-headed python heard that Zhao Luofeng and the other human experts had already obtained that thing they wanted, it grew restless again.

Its two sets of eyes instantly shone with suffocating light as it unleashed an earth-shaking, thrumming aura into the surroundings.

It seemed to be doing this to urge Auden to summon the army they had brought from the Fourth Demon Realm that was waiting within the spatial tunnel, massacre these Heaven Palace Sect humans in the most brutal way possible, and snatch what they were after.

A tempted look appeared in Auden’s eyes, as if he were torn with indecision.

Ling Dong suddenly let out a cold harrumph.

Upon hearing Ling Dong’s harrumph, Auden snapped out of his thoughts. He shot a glance at the surprisingly poised Zhao Luofeng, and then swept his gaze over the Heaven Palace Sect experts that had been gathered in this place.

Then, he turned his head back to take a look at the gradually sealing spatial rift.

“Alright, I agree.” He said with a deep, penetrating voice.

Both Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong’s faces twitched slightly after hearing Auden’s consent, as if they were struggling to mask their

excitement.

After all, they were both at the Soul realm. In order to advance into the Void domain, they would need certain rare cultivation materials.

The Domain of the Falling Stars was already drained of some of the materials, while the Demons' realms still had some reserves.

Only if they could obtain all those rare materials by the time they reached the late Soul realm would they have the qualifications and courage to make attempts to advance into the Void domain.

“Seven days!” Zhao Luofeng said. “We’ll finish the transaction inside the spatial tunnel in seven days!”

“I hope you’ll keep your word,” Auden said with a nod. Then, he signaled the two-headed python before leaping into the spatial rift on his pitch-black warhorse.

The two-headed python shot a fierce look at Ling Dong before following Auden into the spatial rift.

The moment they left, Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong exchanged a glance and secretly let out a sigh of relief.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Dazzling starlight was still pouring down from the highest heavens, gradually washing away the demon Qi in this area.

Looking down, Nie Tian discovered that the numerous streams of starlight flowing at the mouth of the spatial rift were glittering increasingly brightly. As they did, a mysterious spell formation became increasingly clear, which gave Nie Tian a sense of eternity and boundlessness.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

One after another, the three fragmentary star marks flew back into Nie Tian's body.

Afterwards, as Nie Tian used his seven Heaven Eyes to scan this

special region, he discovered that his perception had improved by dozens of times.

Chapter 374: Turbulences in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations

One of Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes flew through the glittering formation of starlight and disappeared into the spatial tunnel.

As it did, it seemed to absorb rich and pure star power from the enormous, gradually-forming pattern of starlight, turning the originally intangible Heaven Eye into a bright star that was every bit as real as the stars in the sky.

In a split second, that Heaven Eye extended Nie Tian's vision and perception to the depths of the entire spatial tunnel.

He immediately discovered that tens of thousands of Demons were gathered in front of a rotating, gray vortex like a large swarm of flies.

Numerous heavily-armored black riders that looked exactly like Auden were waiting, each of which looked solemn and was wreathed in strong killing intent.

Behind them were innumerable substantial low-tier Demons that had bizarre appearances. Floating in a wide river of raging demon Qi, they let out angry roars from time to time.

In front of the entire army, Auden, who had just returned from the Realm of Mystic Heaven, seemed to be having an intense argument with Nolante from the Astarte Clan in the Demon language.

Meanwhile, the two-headed python and the Astarte Clan's Rotspirit Ox were staring into each other's eyes, as if a fierce battle could break out at any moment.

The Demon army gathered by the misty, gray vortex was so substantial that if they had swarmed into the Realm of Mystic Heaven, the consequences would have been catastrophic.

While he observed the situation within the spatial tunnel via that Heaven Eye, he suddenly heard Huang Fan's distant-sounding call and snapped back to reality.

Looking at Huang Fan with a confused expression on his face, he asked, "What's wrong?"

"The Sectmaster has commanded me to take you to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations." Huang Fan seemed rather composed, as if he wasn't deeply shaken by the deal between Auden, Zhao Luofeng, and Ling Dong. "Of all three spatial rifts, the one in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations is the only one that still needs to be sealed. They need you there."

Eyebrows furrowed, Nie Tian nodded, saying, "Alright."

In the mountain valley, Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong were looking down at the grand star formation covering the mouth of the spatial rift as they whispered something to each other.

It seemed that, as soon as they saw the grand star formation appear over the mouth of the spatial rift, they knew that the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had been activated.

Therefore, they no longer felt the need to talk to Nie Tian.

It was as if all that Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong cared about were the items on the list they had given to Auden.

Now that Nie Tian had successfully activated the grand spell formation, he didn't have much value for the time being.

"Let's go." With these words, Huang Fan and Nie Tian boarded the Golden Chariot, and Huang Fan steered it towards the Heaven Palace Sect. "The Sectmaster commanded that I bring you back to the Heaven Palace Sect when you finish sealing the spatial rift in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. He'll have a detailed discussion with you then."

"I see." Nie Tian's tone was indifferent.

For some reason, after personally witnessing Zhao Luofeng proposing a deal and reaching a mutual understanding with Auden from the Fourth Demon Realm, his impression of the Heaven Palace Sect had changed.

Originally, he had looked up to the Heaven Palace Sect, which was the most powerful sect throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars.

For a long time, he had believed that the Heaven Palace Sect would be the main fighting force if the day came when full-scale war broke out between the Demons and the Qi warriors in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

Now that he had seen that the Heaven Palace Sect, which enjoyed a long history, possessed formidable strength, and had raised countless powerful Qi warriors, had actually proposed a deal to the Demons, its majestic image in his mind totally collapsed.

He hadn't been so sure about joining the Heaven Palace Sect before, but now that he had heard the conversation between Zhao Luofeng and Auden, he felt that becoming a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect had lost its appeal.

However, he didn't mention any of this to Huang Fan.

Now that the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had been activated and was taking effect, the rich demon Qi that had reigned in that vast area was rapidly scattering and disappearing.

Steered by Huang Fan, the Golden Chariot soon arrived in the Heaven Palace Sect.

After Huang Fan returned the Golden Chariot, he took Nie Tian to the corner of the palace where numerous inter-spatial teleportation portals were located.

“Send us to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations!” Huang Fan said.

As a disciple of the Heaven Palace Sect turned the switches on a portal to set up the coordinates for the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, the portal, which was paved with numerous spirit stones, started to shine with dazzling light.

Under the amazed gazes of the crowd of Heaven Palace Sect disciples, Huang Fan and Nie Tian walked into the teleportation portal.

In the next moment, the portal was activated.

Meanwhile, the crowd of Heaven Palace Sect disciples whispered to one another in the immeasurably wide palace.

“Has he sealed the spatial rift already? That was fast.”

“It appears so. I checked, and it seems that not only has the prevailing demon Qi stopped spreading, but it’s even scattering and vanishing.”

“So does that mean this kid from the Realm of Flame Heaven actually gathered all three fragmentary star marks? And he’s the reason why our life-threatening problem was solved?”

“I suppose so.”

“Where’s senior martial brother Ning Yang? Didn’t he have the third fragmentary star mark? Now that Nie Tian has all three fragmentary star marks, what happened to him?”

“I’ve no idea. Senior martial brother Ning Yang seems to have disappeared for a long time.”

“Nie Tian obviously took his fragmentary star mark. Even if he’s still alive, considering his high self-esteem, I’m afraid that he’s living in hell now.”

Among the crowd of Heaven Palace Sect disciples, a handful shot gazes filled with killing intent towards Nie Tian when people brought up Ning Yang’s name.

Standing in the middle of the teleportation portal and wreathed

in dazzling bright light, Nie Tian sensed their burning gazes as he was about to be teleported to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

He followed those gazes and discovered a shocking fact: there were even Worldly realm experts among those who were staring at him with deep hostility.

WHOOSH!

The teleportation portal activated.

After a moment of intense dizziness, Nie Tian and Huang Fan appeared in the middle of a square paved with gray stone.

“Guests from the Heaven Palace Sect are here!” A graceful, beautiful woman hurried over the moment Nie Tian and Huang Fan appeared, as if she had been waiting for a long time. Her long dress fluttered as she rushed over. “Big Brother Huang, is this Nie Tian from the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

“Yeah, he is.” Huang Fan nodded before asking, “How’s the situation in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations?”

Burning with anxiety, the beautiful woman, who was at the early Profound realm, said, “Really bad. It’s spiraling out of control. We need to go to the spatial rift now and seal it as quickly as possible. That’s the only way to stop more Demons from swarming into our realm!”

A shocked expression spread across Huang Fan’s face. “Demons are swarming into the Realm of a Thousand Devastations already?!”

The woman nodded, a bitter smile filling her face. “Two days ago, large amounts of low-tier and high-tier Demons started flowing into our realm through that spatial rift. Every powerful Qi warrior from a variety of sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations is gathered at the spatial rift, where they have been fighting those Demons with their lives.”

Huang Fan felt the urgency as he said, “So we’d better go now! Time is of the essence here!”

Before Nie Tian had a chance to glance around, Huang Fan dragged him along and followed that woman into a shiny, silver war chariot.

With a loud whoosh, the war chariot rose high above the gray stone square and a forest of elegant pavilions, and shot towards the distant horizon.

OWWW! ROAAAR!

Blood-chilling roars echoed out one after another from the direction the Silver Chariot was heading, where heaven and earth were completely submerged in raging demon Qi.

Within the torrential demon Qi, many human Qi warriors were enveloped by multi-colored spiritual power shields as they wielded their spiritual tools and unleashed exquisite magics to fight the Demons in close quarters.

“Nie Tian, right?” The woman took a deep look at Nie Tian and reminded him solemnly, “One thing to remember: never ever reveal the fluctuations of your star power, at least not before we arrive at the spatial rift. Try your best to cover them. Otherwise, the Demons will come after you madly.”

“Got it,” Nie Tian replied.

Chapter 375: The Yin Sect and the Yang Sect

Rolling mountain ranges, towering mountain peaks, and steep cliffs could be seen everywhere in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Steered by the beautiful woman, the Silver Chariot traveled at full speed under the night sky.

Nie Tian leaned against the metal edge of the war chariot as he glanced around while listening to the conversation between Huang Fan and the woman.

Soon, he learned that the woman's name was Liu Ling, who was a member of the Yin Sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

There were plenty of Qi warrior sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, but the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect were the only ones that were truly powerful, and the other sects took orders from them.

As a matter of fact, in the beginning, the Yin Sect and Yang Sect had been one sect: the Yin-Yang Sect.

It had been the most powerful sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations for hundreds of years. However, for some reason, the Yin-Yang Sect split and became the Yin Sect and Yang Sect that ruled the Realm of a Thousand Devastations today.

After that, the two sects that shared the same root drifted apart and grew as incompatible as fire and water. Conflicts constantly broke out between them.

However, now that the spatial rift had appeared and Demons were pouring into their realm, the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had cast aside their petty differences and united as one to defend against the Demon invaders together.

Two days ago, restless Demons had finally started marching through the spatial rift and into the Realm of a Thousand

Devastations. The Yin Sect and the Yang Sect immediately joined together and called upon every Qi warrior sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations to send their most powerful experts to fight the Demons in the area filled with demon Qi.

However, since the spatial rift remained open, more and more Demons kept swarming into their realm.

After receiving word that Nie Tian had already sealed the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had immediately contacted the Heaven Palace Sect and then waited for Nie Tian's arrival.

Both the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had been expecting Nie Tian's timely arrival so that he could seal the spatial rift with the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace as early as possible.

It wasn't long before the Silver Chariot flew into the mountain range covered in raging demon Qi.

"Be careful. The Demons might attempt to intercept us on our way to the spatial rift." Liu Ling frowned as she warned Nie Tian again, "Remember, never expose your star power aura, lest the high-tier Demons find out that you are the key to activating the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace."

Nie Tian nodded. "Noted."

As the Silver Chariot charged into the dense demon Qi, Nie Tian intentionally masked the rotating wisps of star power within his vortex of star power. He even used his bloodline talent, Life Stealth, to reduce the fluctuations of his flesh power and spiritual power.

As the war chariot shuttled through the mountain range that had been drowned by demon Qi, Nie Tian observed with rapt attention and discovered that Qi warriors could be seen fighting low-tier and high-tier Demons in every corner of the mountain range.

When they caught sight of the passing war chariot, along with Huang Fan and Nie Tian on it, their expressions flickered and their fighting spirit was greatly aroused.

Apparently, they had heard about Huang Fan and Nie Tian's arrival, and that they were coming to help them seal the spatial rift.

Now that they knew why Nie Tian was here, none of them were stupid enough to say anything about it.

They didn't wave at Liu Ling when they saw the war chariot fly by, but rather, they threw themselves at the Demons that showed any hint of intentions to stop Nie Tian's war chariot and attacked them with everything they had so that Nie Tian didn't get delayed.

A substantial amount of low-tier Demons roared as they met the powerful experts from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations in fierce battles.

Some high-tier Demons could also be seen among the low-tier Demons. Adorned in exquisite armor, they issued commands to the low-tier Demons while fighting human Qi warriors with their strange-looking weapons.

No matter whether they were low-tier Demons or high-tier Demons, they all fought within the demon-Qi-wreathed area, the reason being that the demon Qi could enhance the Demons' perception, as well as their battle prowess.

However, it was the opposite for human Qi warriors.

Fighting in the raging demon Qi, humans' perception, vision, and hearing would be compromised. Not only that, but they would also have to spare some of their spiritual power to fend off the demon Qi. Therefore, their battle prowess would be reduced.

WHOOSH!

As the Silver Chariot emerged from behind a high mountain peak, Nie Tian saw two Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors split

apart.

However, as they did, not a single drop of blood splattered out.

Their bodies seemed like two pieces of tofu being sliced up by numerous sharp blades.

After the shattered bodies fell on the ground, numerous fine, glittering, purple strings flew out of the chunks of flesh. Without any delay, they flew towards a high-tier Demon, glittering with bright, purple light.

That high-tier Demon was a tall, curvaceous, scantily-clad female, with exquisite purple armor covering only her vital parts.

On her tan skin, her long, purple hair fluttered against the wind as her slender legs were wrapped around the neck of a ten-meter-tall low-tier Demon.

Holding a broad greatsword in her right hand, she reached out with her left hand. In the next moment, the purple strings disappeared into her palm, as if they had instantly merged with her flesh and blood.

She was wearing a sinister mask that made her look like a evil spirit. Her exposed purple pupils were wreathed in frigid killing intent.

She was about to leave to find new targets on her mount after killing the two Greater Heaven stage human Qi warriors when she caught sight of the Silver Chariot that had just appeared from behind a mountain peak, along with Nie Tian, Huang Fan, and Liu Ling standing in it.

Her purple pupils instantly shone with suffocating light, and then a mysterious soul fluctuation seemed to reach Nie Tian and the others through nothing but her gaze.

As soon as his gaze met hers, Nie Tian experienced a sudden stabbing pain in his chest, as well as difficulty breathing.

Without any control of his own, the vortexes of spiritual power within his spiritual sea started to accelerate and infuse pure spiritual power into his body to defend against the attack of the light that had shot out from the Demon's eyes.

Meanwhile, seven tiny stars appeared in the depths of Nie Tian's pupils.

They were the seven fragmentary stars in Nie Tian's soul. They must have sensed danger, and thus revealed themselves.

Upon seeing the abnormal change in Nie Tian's pupils, the high-tier Demon with a steaming body instantly came to a realization, and exclaimed in perfect human language, "You're the one who obtained the legacies from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace!"

Liu Ling's expression flickered as she shouted, "Oh no!"

In the next moment, the female high-tier Demon let out a long, penetrating roar.

Upon hearing her roar, the low-tier and high-tier Demons that had been fighting Qi warriors of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations started converging on Nie Tian from every direction, as if they had just received her command.

Chapter 376: The Bloodline of An Ancient Magical Beast

The female Demon's name was Yrie, and she was from the Barten Clan in the Fifth Demon Realm.

It was none other than the Barten Clan that had led the invasion of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations through that spatial rift.

Even though Yrie, who possessed sixth grade bloodline power, wasn't the highest commander of this massive invasion, she was an immediate member of the Barten Clan. Thanks to her noble bloodline, almost all the Demons in the vicinity had heeded her summons.

Before she had entered the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, Yrie had received word that some human youngster had already gathered all three fragmentary star marks, because of which, the Astarte Clan from the Sixth Demon Realm had been forced to terminate their invasion of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

However, Yrie and the Barten Clan behind her didn't call off their invasion of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations accordingly.

Since she knew that a human had gathered all three fragmentary star marks, she had anticipated Nie Tian's arrival and paid extra attention.

When Liu Ling's shiny, silver war chariot appeared in her sight, she unleashed her secret bloodline magic and rapidly drew the conclusion that Nie Tian was the successor that had gathered all the fragmentary star marks.

Hence, she summoned every Demon in the vicinity with her sharp roar, commanding them to leave their current opponents and converge on Nie Tian from every direction.

"Liu Ling, you take Nie Tian and leave!" With these words,

Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect took the initiative to jump out of the shiny, silver war chariot. He summoned his banners as he did.

As soon as the banners spiraled out, they formed a special spiritual power field around Huang Fan.

After all, Huang Fan was at the late Profound realm, much more powerful than Liu Ling, who was only at the early Profound realm. He realized how formidable Yrie was, and thus wanted to stall her with his own strength.

The flying banners made rustling sounds as the spiritual power field rippled outward, enveloping an increasingly large area. From the look of it, it wouldn't be long before Yrie was enveloped by it.

Upon hearing Huang Fan's words, Liu Ling responded with great decisiveness. Eyes filled with gratefulness, she blurted, "Every sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations will forever remember your heroic act!"

With these words, a blindingly bright ball of spiritual power shot of her hand and infused into the bottom of the war chariot.

In a split second, the innumerable spirit stones that had been laid on the bottom of the war chariot seemed to be instantly stimulated and began to use all of their energy.

With a speed that was three times faster than before, the war chariot shot towards the depths of the demon Qi-covered region like flashing lightning.

As two winged Demons swooped towards them, reaching out with their sharp, black claws in the hopes of grabbing the war chariot, dazzling spiritual light shot out from Liu Ling's fingertips.

PHOOH! PHOOH! PHOOH!

The Demons' splayed claws were instantly reduced to a bloody mess, as if they had been penetrated by numerous sharp weapons.

Nie Tian's keen perception made him aware that as Liu Ling used her exquisite magic to shoot spiritual light towards the two winged Demons, the crescent moon high in the sky seemed to have brightened temporarily.

A fierce and chilly aura that seemed to originate from the moon suddenly burst forth from Liu Ling's body.

"She must be from the Yin Sect!" Nie Tian raised his chin to look at the crescent moon and had a somewhat mysterious feeling that Liu Ling was receiving energy from the moon and infusing it into her own spiritual power.

Then, he looked around with focused attention, and immediately discovered that every Qi warrior in the vicinity had crescent-moon-shaped marks on their collars and cuffs.

Meanwhile, Liu Ling was wearing a crystal-like, crescent-moon-shaped pendant on her snow-white neck, which seemed to have been carved out of some kind of special crystal.

Misty moonlight circulated within it unceasingly.

Nie Tian's eyes widened as he suddenly came to realize that the mysterious incantation the Yin Sect disciples practiced probably had some kind of close connection with the moon.

He couldn't help but inwardly marvel at his new discoveries.

Furthermore, the crescent-moon-shaped pendant on her neck seemed to be helping her channel the chilly moonlight into her body, and thus enhance her battle prowess.

For some reason, as Liu Ling cast the Yin Sect's secret magics and beams of moonlight poured down from the heavens, Nie Tian was struck by a feeling that his mind had become clear, and his heart was put at ease.

In such a state, Nie Tian's mind drifted away. "Disciples of the Yin Sect can draw power from the moonlight. From the look of it, the Yang Sect, the other powerful sect in the Realm of a Thousand

Devastations, should be able to make use of the strength in the sunlight?”

“Can it be that the incantations the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect practice are respectively related to the moon and the sun?”

“Based on common sense, the sun and the moon are stars with unique features. Meanwhile, the Fragmentary Star Incantation allows its user to channel star power from the countless stars in the vast heavens to launch attacks.”

“In this way, sunlight and moonlight should also carry star power.”

“If that’s the case, does that mean that the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect have something to do with the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace?”

Shocked by his own speculation, Nie Tian had a complicated expression on his face as he attempted to examine the spiritual power fluctuations within Liu Ling’s body.

ROOOAARRRR!!

The fierce roars of Demons woke Nie Tian from his thoughts. He turned around and saw that Huang Fan was commanding his flying banners to trap numerous Demons that were charging towards Nie Tian.

However, the curvaceous high-tier Demon had already broken free from the spiritual power field created by Huang Fan’s banners, and was rapidly gaining on him.

The greatsword in her hand shone with bright light as she stated her name, “I’m Yrie, a member of the Barten Clan from the Fifth Demon Realm. The Realm of a Thousand Devastations is destined to fall. You can stop your meaningless struggle now. Now that the main force of our clan has come, don’t expect us to retreat!”

FIZZ!

As soon as she uttered these words, the numerous glittering, purple strings that had previously merged with her flesh suddenly shot out of her palm.

“Stop her!” Liu Ling called out loudly.

A few Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors from the Yin Sect brandished their spiritual tools, sending out dazzlingly bright moonlight. Beams of moonlight interwove with each other, forming a spell formation as they shot towards Yrie.

Yrie let out a cold harrumph as she gently patted her mount.

The winged beast immediately let out an ear-piercing shriek as light appeared and interwove into a bright grid in the depths of its devilish pupils, activating its mysterious bloodline talent.

In the next moment, rich demon Qi madly converged and spiraled towards the beast as it seemed to be refining on its own.

Then, the highly refined, raging demon Qi seemed to be activated by the beast’s bloodline talent, and escalated into a devastating storm, giving rise to loud crackles.

Many Qi warriors from the Yin Sect, who were fighting Demons with their spiritual tools in the vicinity, were pulled into the eye of the pitch-black demon Qi storm one by one.

Yrie’s mount let out blood-chilling howls as it fixed its eyes, deep inside of which a bright network of mysterious light could be seen, on Liu Ling.

Standing in the war chariot, Liu Ling was looking back to check the situation when her eyes met the beast’s. In the next moment, her soft, womanly body suddenly grew stiff.

Nie Tian was shocked by the scene, and thus immediately unleashed his Heaven Eyes to examine her. Then, he discovered that numerous fine strands of mysterious light, which were invisible to the naked eye, had already covered Liu Ling’s entire body.

They were the most densely packed on Liu Ling's hands and arms.

A thin layer of grayish-brown rock seemed to be quickly forming on them.

“Petrification?!” A shudder ran through Nie Tian's body.

Fright could be seen in Liu Ling's eyes as she blurted, “That beast actually carries the bloodline of an ancient magical beast, the Purple Glede (see note 1)!”

Even the crescent-moon-shaped crystal pendant on her neck was now covered by countless strands of demonlight. In the meantime, the demonlight on her body kept interweaving and forming some kind of magical pattern, as if it harbored the intention to infiltrate into her spiritual sea and petrify her completely.

“You're smarter than I thought.” Yrie said coldly, as if she was surprised that Liu Ling actually recognized her beast's bloodline origin.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

As she spoke, the purple, glittering strings she had unleashed earlier finally reached the Silver Chariot.

“Dammit!” Liu Ling cursed inwardly, her face looking grim and frustrated.

At this moment, the truly powerful experts from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect were gathered at the spatial rift. She hadn't expected that they would actually encounter powerful Demons like Yrie and her mount that carried the Purple Glede's bloodline so soon after entering the demon-Qi-filled area.

Even though Liu Ling saw that the purple strings were piercing towards Nie Tian, since her body was being petrified, she could no longer move her hands to protect him.

Nie Tian's eyes flickered slightly before he summoned the Spirit

Channeling grade treasure decisively. “Flame Dragon Armor!”

Note:

1. A Purple Glede is a divine beast from ancient Chinese folk tales. They are purple-and-white, bird-like creatures that are large and fierce.

Chapter 377: Enlightenment Derived from a Tool

Yrie from the Barten Clan possessed sixth grade bloodline power, which meant her battle prowess was roughly equal to that of a Profound realm human Qi warrior.

The beast she was riding carried a Purple Glede's bloodline. Mere eye contact with it stiffened Liu Ling's body and made her show signs of petrification.

Facing such formidable enemies, the only thing that Nie Tian could think of was the Flame Dragon Armor.

The Flame Dragon Armor flew out with a loud whoosh, and like a blazing bell, it descended from above Nie Tian's head and forced itself on him.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The Flame Dragon Armor's fierce flames scorched Liu Ling, who was standing within arm's reach of Nie Tian, to the point where her face was soon covered in sweat.

However, the extremely fierce aura released by the Flame Dragon Armor pervaded Liu Ling's body and surprisingly helped her reverse her petrification, which was caused by the magical beast's bloodline talent.

Almost immediately, Liu Ling felt her blood recovering its surging vigor.

WHOOSH!

Bright moonlight burst forth from within the crescent-moon-shaped pendant on her neck. In merely a flash, the moonlight spread out and enveloped the entire Silver Chariot.

The substantial amount of spirit stones that covered the bottom of the war chariot suddenly shattered.

Liu Ling let out a snort as her hands formed a magical seal. Immediately afterwards, dazzling moonlight shot out from her hands, forming a crescent-moon-shaped, silver plate, which rotated as it rammed towards the fine, purple strings Yrie had unleashed.

Upon impact, brilliant sparks blossomed from the contact points.

Liu Ling seized the opportunity to adjust the direction of the war chariot, and eventually lost the pursuing purple strings.

“Let’s go!” Once again, they flew straight towards the area where the demon Qi was the densest.

The bizarre, purple light deep within the eyes of the beast, which had remained still to cast its bloodline magic, suddenly dimmed.

With its eyes fixed on the Silver Chariot and Nie Tian, who was wearing the Flame Dragon Armor, the beast let out a series of bellows.

Watching Nie Tian’s war chariot flying further and further away, Yrie spoke to her mount in the Demon language with a deep frown. “A flame dragon? Do you mean that that man’s armor is made from a flame dragon’s heart?!”

“The power originating from the flame dragon’s heart stopped your bloodline magic from petrifying that woman?!”

The beast replied with a sharp screech, confirming her speculation.

Frigid coldness could be seen in Yrie’s eyes as she said, “Humans are indeed the most vicious race. I can’t believe they would actually forge spiritual tools with a flame dragon’s heart!”

“You carry the Purple Glede’s ancient bloodline. If those despicable humans ever capture you, you will probably suffer the same fate.”

The beast let out an angry roar.

Yrie breathed out a laugh as she consoled the beast, “Rest assured. As long as I’m still alive, I won’t allow you to become some material humans use to forge spiritual tools.”

Then, she added, “The humans in the Domain of the Falling Stars are still far from strong enough. As far as I know, they don’t even have a single Void domain expert.

“Compared to the major human domains dominated by truly powerful Qi warrior sects, the Domain of the Falling Stars is just a forgotten place in a remote corner.

“For some reason, the connection between those major human domains and the Domain of the Falling Stars has been cut off. This is why we can go ahead and march into realms like the Realm of a Thousand Devastations without worrying about being surprised by powerful Qi warriors from those major human domains.

“What I can’t figure out is why Heaven Gates still appeared in the Domain of the Falling Stars while their connection with the other major domains is cut off.

“Not only that, but that young man with an unimpressive cultivation base even received the acknowledgment of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and united all three legacy marks.

“Can this whole thing be a plan of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace?”

Yrie muttered to herself for a while, as if she wasn’t in a hurry to command her mount to chase after Nie Tian and Liu Ling.

Moments later, Yrie shook her head as she cast her various speculations out of her mind and chased after Nie Tian and Liu Ling.

As she did, she kept letting out short but sharp screeches, which seemed to be the Demons’ unique communication method.

By doing that, she was actually informing every Demon in a 50-kilometer radius that Nie Tian had become their primary target.

As the war chariot continued to fly towards the spatial rift at full speed, every Demon they encountered seemed to be able to rapidly learn of their importance before charging madly at them, no matter whether they were low-tier or high-tier Demons.

Liu Ling kept casting the Yin Sect's secret magics to shield off the pursuing Demons' attacks, leaving a trail of blood.

Even though only a quarter-hour had passed, Liu Ling was already soaked in sweat, and her consumption of spiritual power had been significant.

As Nie Tian stood unscathed in the war chariot, the flames unleashed by the Flame Dragon Armor on him gradually went out.

The dark-red suit of armor stuck to the shape of his body perfectly, so much so that it seemed to have become a part of him. Other than the exceedingly heavy weight it put on him, Nie Tian didn't feel any discomfort.

While Liu Ling fought the pursuing Demons, every now and then, Nie Tian would summon strength from the Flame Dragon Armor to assist her.

After getting into the right mindset, Nie Tian lifted his arm and pointed at a low-tier Demon.

At that moment, it had just been hit by Liu Ling's crescent-moon-shaped plate, which she had condensed with moonlight. A huge, bloody wound was created on its gigantic body, causing it to wobble in midair.

WHOOSH!

A beam of blazing flames shot out of Nie Tian's leveled arm.

He could sense with great clarity that, in a split second, his own flame power, the fierce flame power from the Flame Dragon Armor, and flesh power from his blood had joined together and formed an incredibly fierce and violent force.

As the beam of flames bombarded the heavily-injured Demon, it immediately created a huge bloody hole in its abdomen.

Flames could be seen burning within the bloody wound, as if the power from the Flame Dragon Armor and Nie Tian had already effortlessly followed that wound into the Demon's core.

As the Demon let out miserable screams, its strong meridians and veins seemed to be burned by wisps of mixed flame power. Even its tough bones gradually became charred.

Nie Tian's eyes were filled with amazement as he watched the gigantic Demon wail in agony and slowly fall towards a mountain valley while shaking his arm.

Eyes narrowed, he mulled over what had just happened.

Soon, he realized that it was the Flame Dragon Armor's indescribable energy that had raised the might of his beam of flames to a whole new level, and enabled him to inflict so much damage on that low-tier Demon.

He recalled that, when he had formed that beam of flames, fierce and violent flame power had rushed out of the Flame Dragon Armor's Blood Core.

That flame power seemed unique and mysterious, as if it contained the heaven-burning might of a flame dragon's bloodline power. His own flame power that he had drawn from his spiritual sea didn't seem to have made much of a difference in the beam's power.

On the contrary, his flesh power that he had drawn from his flesh and blood seemed to have greatly boosted the might of the flames when infused into the mixed beam of fiery power.

“Does this mean that I can use my flesh power to strengthen the violent flame power the Blood Core unleashes? Is this another use of my bloodline power?”

Nie Tian was deeply fascinated by his speculations. Wearing the

Flame Dragon Armor, he once again summoned his flesh power.

One wisp of his pure flesh power after another gradually dispersed and merged into the Flame Dragon Armor.

He observed with rapt attention and discovered that, as those wisps of flesh and blood essence flowed into the Flame Dragon Armor, the complicated and detailed fiery patterns on the armor's surface suddenly became enlivened and lifelike.

He continued to trace the flow of his flesh power...

All of a sudden, his eyes widened and shone with the light of excitement.

To his surprise, he discovered that there seemed to be translucent crimson strings inside of the Flame Dragon Armor, which were so small that they were almost imperceptible!

The wisps of flesh power were being collected into the incomparably fine crimson strings, which they followed to rush towards the Flame Dragon Armor's Blood Core at an astoundingly fast speed.

At that moment, Nie Tian was struck by a feeling that the Flame Dragon Armor was no longer a spiritual tool, but rather a living being that had flesh and blood!

It seemed as if the crimson strings were the Flame Dragon Armor's veins, while the Blood Core was its heart.

Nie Tian's expression flickered dramatically. "Who forged this Flame Dragon Armor? How come it's so unfathomable and miraculous?"

As he uncovered more of the Flame Dragon Armor's incredible features, he had an increasingly strong feeling that this so-called Spirit Channeling grade treasure was simply a miracle!

How in the world could anyone forge a spiritual tool that not only had flesh and blood, but also possessed its own soul? If

anything, it was the work of the gods, which went far beyond Nie Tian's imagination.

While he was seized with shock, Liu Ling, who was standing next to him looked him up and down with a similar look in her eyes.

The enormous Demon had just been hit by Nie Tian's beam of flames and was plummeting towards the mountain valley below.

For the time being, no other Demons had come anywhere near them.

Slightly relieved, Liu Ling took out a few medicinal pills and stuffed them down her throat. Meanwhile, her amazed gaze landed on Nie Tian. "He's only at the Heaven stage, but he has already received the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and owns a Spirit Channeling grade treasure. Such a figure will definitely rise up to become the brightest star throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars."

Chapter 378: Bloody Battles Between Humans and Demons!

BANG!

The Silver Chariot, which was traveling at full speed, suddenly rammed into an invisible ward, and the war chariot's dashing momentum was instantly stopped.

Liu Ling's expression flickered as she noticed that, within the raging demon Qi in front of her, dark-purple light was gradually spreading out like water ripples.

Underneath the water-like light, a male high-tier Demon was standing atop a small mountain peak, looking up at her with cold eyes.

The high-tier Demon let out a cold harrumph as he reached out with his hand and made a yanking motion in the air. "Get down here!"

In the next moment, the war chariot lost control and plummeted towards him like a loose cannonball.

Nie Tian looked down and discovered that the mutilated bodies of six human Qi warriors were scattered in a disorderly manner on the mountaintop.

Severed limbs could be seen everywhere. Apparently, it was the work of this Demon.

"Another high-tier Demon with sixth grade bloodline power!" With a single glance at him, Liu Ling was able to tell the grade of his bloodline power from the aura he released.

At that moment, Nie Tian noticed that three formidable low-tier Demons had also rushed out from behind the nearby mountains.

It seemed that they had been lurking in the dark and masking their auras so that neither Liu Ling nor Nie Tian had been able to

perceive their existence.

Now, they suddenly appeared and rushed towards the falling war chariot, baring their fangs and brandishing their claws, as if they wished to rip the war chariot and Nie Tian into pieces.

With a grim expression, Nie Tian suddenly experienced a burning sensation from the three fragmentary star marks on his chest.

Then, he sent a wisp of thought into the refined fragmentary star mark. After a brief scan, he learned that he was already very close to the pagodas the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had deployed in the three high mountain peaks.

That was when he realized that, after a period of dashing, they were almost at the spatial rift.

This was probably why they had encountered another formidable high-tier Demon.

He also realized that Yrie had probably informed all the other Demons of Liu Ling and her features and whereabouts via her unique demon magics.

As long as they continued to travel in the Silver Chariot, he and Liu Ling would be every Demon's primary target.

“Am I close enough to the spatial rift?” After a moment of pondering, Nie Tian took a deep breath as he turned to Liu Ling and said, “I won't be needing your escort from here on. I've already grasped the direction of the spatial rift. I'll get over there by myself.”

“A-are you sure that you can do this?” Liu Ling asked concernedly.

Nie Tian's eyes shone brightly, as if there were tiny stars in the depths of his pupils.

He grinned and said, “I managed to obtain the legacy marks from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Trust me. I know what I'm

doing. I'll leave that sixth grade Demon underneath us to you. I believe you'll manage. Good luck!"

With these words, he stimulated the vortex of star power in his spiritual sea and infused his entire body with refined star power.

"Starshift!"

Standing in the war chariot, Nie Tian seemed to have instantly turned into a bright star, but in the next moment, he disappeared into thin air.

Liu Ling's jaw dropped as she watched Nie Tian vanish into thin air. Eyes wide, she was shocked into a loss for words.

ROOOOAR! After realizing that Nie Tian was gone, the sixth grade high-tier Demon let out an angry roar before giving an order to the three low-tier Demons in the Demon language, "Tear that woman to shreds!"

He, on the other hand, shot directly towards the spatial rift like a whizzing arrow.

In a location where the demon Qi was the densest, space suddenly grew distorted on top of a lofty mountain peak.

SHEW!

A cluster of bright starlight appeared out of nowhere.

As the starlight faded, Nie Tian's somewhat bedraggled figure appeared.

He casually wiped the blood off the corner of his mouth. Without making a sound, he sat down in the lotus position and cast his bloodline talent, Life Stealth, at the first possible moment.

Immediately afterwards, his life aura and the fluctuations of his flesh and blood vanished, along with his somewhat disordered spiritual power.

Sitting behind a huge rock, he quietly stuck out his head and cautiously glanced at his surroundings and the valley underneath.

Similar to what he had seen in the Realm of Flame Heaven and the Realm of Mystic Heaven, it was an incomparably vast valley surrounded by numerous mountain peaks of various heights.

In the center of the valley was a huge spatial rift, which was releasing raging demon Qi unceasingly.

By the spatial rift, about a hundred human Qi warriors were unleashing all kinds of secret magics and wielding their spiritual tools to fight their Demon enemies.

Submerged in dense demon Qi, the vast mountain valley was originally pitch-black. However, the multi-colored light from the spiritual tools, as well as the lightning and flames created by different incantations, lit up the valley.

What rapidly seized Nie Tian's eyes were the giant Moon Wheel and Sun Wheel that hung high above the valley, which were the most powerful and valuable sect treasures of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect respectively.

The crescent-moon-shaped Moon Wheel and the blazing Sun Wheel were like a moon and a sun in the night sky that both shone with glorious and mysterious light.

Only then did he realize that it was the Sun Wheel and the Moon Wheel that had illuminated the valley, as if it were in broad daylight.

Bathed in the light of the two Spirit Channeling grade treasures, the battle prowess of the Qi warriors from the Yang Sect and the Yin Sect seemed to be greatly lifted.

Nie Tian gazed down and noticed that the eyes of those Qi warriors had already turned red from all the killing.

Dozens of high-tier Demons were either floating in midair or riding low-tier Demons as they brandished their weapons and gave full vent to their demonic power.

Corpses of human Qi warriors and Demons could be seen

everywhere in the valley.

Meanwhile, more Demons were still rushing out of the spatial rift.

As soon as they emerged, they would charge onto the battlefield, letting out fierce roars.

Nie Tian glanced around and discovered that the majority of the human Qi warriors and Demons were fighting by the perimeter of the valley.

Some powerful Profound realm experts were fighting mighty high-tier Demons in midair.

A large number of lightning bolts and spatial energy blades flashed across the sky, while thunderous energy fluctuations and enormous, sharp Demonic claws interwove in midair. The Heavens were shaking, and the Earth was being toppled.

Some of the energy forms sputtered and shot into the surrounding mountain peaks, causing them to shatter.

Many mountain peaks split apart after being hit by stray spiritual power attacks, while others collapsed like stone pavilions in an earthquake after being rammed by gigantic Demons.

After a careful scan, he discovered that the three highest mountain peaks that dwarfed all others were the only ones that remained unwavering, no matter how hard they were bombarded.

How ever strong the impacts were, they would only leave shallow scratches, but the mountain peaks wouldn't move in the slightest.

The mountain peak he was sitting on was one of them.

“Only the mountain peaks that contain star pagodas within them are able to withstand such strong impacts and still remain intact. Only the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace can make them impregnable like that.” After muttering these things to himself, Nie Tian no longer paid attention to the bloody battles that were

taking place in every corner of the valley.

Instead, he took advantage of the fact that he was undercover to summon and infuse the three fragmentary star marks into the lofty mountain peaks with the secret magic, which he had already become fluent with.

As the fragmentary star marks fell into and lit up the pagodas within the bellies of the mountain peaks, every human Qi warrior and Demon sensed the anomaly.

The three mountain peaks were originally grayish-brown and sparsely vegetated.

However, all of a sudden, they began to emanate bright starlight.

Immediately afterwards, the stars in the night sky became incomparably bright, as if they were shone upon by some kind of torch.

Not only that, but starlight began pouring down from the heavens like creeks and waterfalls. One after another, they converged on the spatial rift with great precision, like a giant curtain of pearls rolling down from the sky.

Seeing that the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had been activated, Nie Tian finally let out a sigh of relief.

Only then did he feel slightly relaxed, and get into the mood to focus on the bloody battles between the human Qi warriors and the Demons.

The Qi warriors of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations noticed the favorable changes. Therefore, they all glanced around with thrilled expressions on their faces as they fought the Demons.

“The grand spell formation has been activated!”

“The grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace has finally started operating!”

“Where is that Nie Tian kid?”

“Here comes our chance to turn the situation around!”

Each and every one of them was full of gratitude towards Nie Tian.

As more Demons continued to swarm in through the spatial rift, they had already started to feel helpless, since it seemed impossible to kill them all.

If they couldn't seal the spatial rift, it would have been only a matter of time before the Realm of a Thousand Devastations fell into the Demons' hands.

Nie Tian's secret arrival and activation of the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace had made them see a silver lining!

Chapter 379: Key Figure

No matter whether it was the human experts of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations or the invading Demons, they all noticed that the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace was already changing the situation.

Unlike the humans' ecstasy, the Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm sensed a threat the moment they discovered that rivers of starlight were starting to pour down from the heavens.

Numerous low-tier Demons started to let out restless roars and charge into the three lofty mountain peaks that emanated misty starlight.

BANG! BANG!

They rammed their enormous bodies into the mountain peaks, hoping to shatter them with their brutal force in order to stop the grand spell formation deployed by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

However, the grand spell formation continued to make its impact from within the bellies of those mountain peaks.

Apparently, they had already changed when they started to unleash starlight. At present, not only were they impregnable, but the starlight they emanated seemed to turn into sharp blades of light.

As one low-tier Demon after another madly threw themselves at the lofty mountain peaks, bright starlight would shine upon them, instantly cutting open countless wounds all over their enormous bodies.

The low-tier Demons let out agonizing wails, yet they didn't want to give up.

They kept ramming into the three lofty mountain peaks without any regard for their own lives, even though their repeated efforts

turned out to be fruitless.

SHEW!

Yrie, who had been roaming the perimeter of the mountain range, along with the male high-tier Demon that Nie Tian had encountered earlier, arrived in the mountain valley successively.

Sitting on her mount which carried the Purple Glede's bloodline and wearing her sinister mask, Yrie stared at the male high-tier Demon next to him and said, "Tark?! You failed to intercept that human kid too?!"

With a grim look in his eyes, the high-tier Demon who Yrie referred to as 'Tark' replied, "Yeah, he cast an Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's escape magic and got away. It shouldn't have been long since he obtained those fragmentary star marks. I didn't expect that he would actually master the secret magics recorded in them within such a short time and use it to escape from me."

"We need to find him!" A cold and fierce light could be seen in Yrie's eyes. "He's the successor who has gathered the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's legacy marks. If we let him build up his strength, he will become a major threat to all of our Demon realms one day! Even if we can't sack the Realm of a Thousand Devastations this time, we need to kill him before we retreat!"

"Those from the Fourth Demon Realm and the Sixth Demon Realm have already failed to kill him, so we must do everything within our power to eliminate him! Otherwise, he will become like a major disease in our vital organs!"

"I know." Tark nodded vigorously, fine, purple light flying out of his deep devilish eyes.

At that moment, a very profound bloodline talent seemed to be born within him, which would allow him to detect signs of life.

Waves of purple energy, which were invisible to the naked eye,

began to quietly ripple towards the lofty mountain peak Nie Tian was on.

Simultaneously, Yrie let out a cold harrumph as she commanded her mount to charge towards another lofty mountain peak.

They both suspected that Nie Tian was hiding on one of the lofty mountain peaks.

Hiding behind a huge rock, Nie Tian had long since activated his bloodline talent, Life Stealth, and covered up all of his life signs.

Even still, he was worried.

He could see via his seven Heaven Eyes that the mysterious purple ripples were spreading closer and closer to him.

A human expert who was fighting multiple Demons in the valley suddenly yelled at the top of his lungs, “Keep Nie Tian safe!”

The arrival and actions of Yrie and Tark seemed to have enlightened the Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm.

A few high-tier Demons with formidable bloodline power also unleashed bizarre purple light from within their purple pupils.

Each of them stimulated their bloodline talent and formed a strange magnetic field that rapidly extended towards the three lofty mountain peaks, which were glittering with starlight.

Having hidden every sign of his life, Nie Tian seemed to have become a part of the huge rock he was sitting behind.

However, facing the joint search of so many formidable Demons, he still felt a sense of crisis.

After all, Life Stealth only allowed him to mask his physical movements, the fluctuations of his spiritual power, and the aura of his flesh and blood, but not his soul fluctuations.

People’s souls had unique, very subtle fluctuations. The reason why he had succeeded in sneaking up on targets repeatedly when he had been in the Realm of Split Void was that they had been at

the Greater Heaven stage, or even lower.

At such stages, their psychic power hadn't transcended into soul power, so they hadn't been able to detect the most trivial fluctuations of people's souls.

However, Nie Tian was now facing Demons with sixth grade bloodline power, which meant their strengths matched that of Profound realm human Qi warriors.

Demons at such a high grade were skilled in soul-related magics. Adding in the fact that they possessed profound bloodline power, it would be very likely that they could perceive even the slightest movement of people's souls.

Just as Nie Tian felt nervous about exposing his whereabouts, the Sun Wheel and Moon Wheel in midair suddenly started to shine with blindingly bright light!

Nie Tian's eyes were immediately seized by them.

To his surprise, he found that, of all the rivers of starlight that poured down from the heavens, two were actually falling into the Sun Wheel and the Moon Wheel.

After being infused by the two rivers of starlight, the might of those two signature treasures of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect seemed to have skyrocketed.

Hanging high in the murky, purple sky, they seemed no different from an actual sun and an actual moon that were showing at the same time!

In the valley below, two powerful experts from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect seemed deeply astonished as they looked up and sensed the changes happening to the Sun Wheel and the Moon Wheel. "What's going on?!"

Those two Soul realm experts were the masters of the Sun Wheel and the Moon Wheel.

However, even they hadn't expected that their Sun Wheel and Moon Wheel would be favored by two rivers of starlight.

They immediately sensed that the might of their treasures had been bolstered by the star power.

Almost simultaneously, the detection waves Tark had sent out in Nie Tian's direction captured the subtle movements of Nie Tian's soul. "Gotcha!"

Without any hesitation, he charged towards Nie Tian.

Immediately afterwards, Yrie turned her mount around and also dashed towards the lofty mountain peak Nie Tian was on.

Seeing that he had been discovered, Nie Tian's expression flickered slightly. He subconsciously summoned his star power, hoping to escape again with a Starshift.

He knew perfectly clearly that Tark and Yrie weren't beings he could handle.

Those two were high-tier, sixth grade Demons from the Barten Clan, a noble clan with a long history in the Fifth Demon Realm. Therefore, they probably not only possessed formidable bloodline power, but also carried powerful tools that weren't any bit inferior to humans' spiritual tools.

SHEW!

Just when he was ready to cast the spell, a man appeared in front of him out of thin air.

"You're Nie Tian, right?" The man smiled and nodded at him. "Rest assured. We won't allow anything or anyone to hurt you here. Any of us will gladly give our life to save yours."

As the man spoke, the Sun Wheel rapidly floated to a spot dozens of meters above him.

Staring at the approaching Tark and Yrie, the man said with a cold snort, "Get the hell out of here!"

He reached out with one finger, and in the next moment, dazzlingly bright light that resembled sunlight rushed towards Tark and Yrie like a torrential sea wave.

Chapter 380: Sectmaster of the Yang Sect

Both Yrie and Tark's expressions flickered as they saw the man mysteriously appear in front of them and point his finger at them.

In the next moment, bright light rushed towards them like ocean waves.

As fierce as sunlight in the desert, it instantly engulfed the energy waves which Tark had unleashed to detect Nie Tian's soul fluctuations.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Tark let out a muffled groan as a drop of blood dripped down the corners of his eyes.

Seeing the incoming overwhelming light, Yrie's mount instantly let out a screech as it changed direction and flew away at full speed.

A few low-tier Demons had followed Yrie and Tark as they charged towards Nie Tian together.

However, it seemed that their intelligence didn't allow them to sense how dangerous the light was. Thus, they swooped towards Nie Tian regardless of the potential threat.

Immediately afterwards, the fierce ocean of spiritual light swallowed their enormous bodies.

AWWW! ROAAAR!

The low-tier Demons' agonizing screams rang out one after another, filling the air.

Nie Tian looked over with narrowed eyes and discovered that those low-tier Demons' skin and flesh were vaporizing within the sea of spiritual light.

Nie Tian turned his head back to look at the man who had just saved him. "You are?"

It was a man in his fifties, dressed in simple, classical garments. His hair was rolled up in a bun on top of his head, and his grizzled beard fluttered against the wind.

The man laughed in an unconstrained fashion before saying, “I’m Li Muyang, the sectmaster of the Yang Sect. Now that you’ve come to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations to help us activate the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, you are a friend to every Qi warrior sect in our realm. Whatever it takes, we will make sure no Demon will touch you or harm you in any way.”

“You’re being too kind, Senior Li,” Nie Tian said respectfully.

He didn’t know much about the Realm of a Thousand Devastations or the history between the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect. However, for some reason, he had a sense of intimacy when he talked to Li Muyang. He secretly examined Li Muyang and everything about him, and discovered that the sense of intimacy he had towards him might have something to do with his Sun Wheel.

The Sun Wheel was the the Yang Sect’s most precious treasure, which seemed to be of a similar attribute as the Flame Dragon Armor.

“Can it be because I am the Flame Dragon Armor’s master?” Nie Tian thought to himself subconsciously.

While Nie Tian’s mind wandered, a tall, beefy high-tier Demon suddenly thundered at them from beside the spatial rift, “Li Muyang!! How dare you make a move against our young lord Yrie?!”

Immediately after blurting these words, he summoned a dense amount of demon Qi and formed two pitch-black dragons, which flew directly towards Nie Tian.

The burly high-tier Demon was Anguz, the highest commander of the Demon army from the Fifth Demon Realm. His bloodline

power had reached the seventh grade.

It was him who had fought Li MUYANG earlier.

Li MUYANG didn't show any attention to that Demon, but instead, he continued to talk to Nie Tian in a unconcerned manner. "Before you came along, the situation had been kind of critical. I even worried that we might not be able to defend our realm against such a large number of Demons. But now that you've activated the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and the spatial rift is gradually sealing, I no longer fear for the safety of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations."

With a chuckle, he suddenly turned to gaze at his Sun Wheel.

Hanging high in the heavens, the sizable Sun Wheel looked like a fierce sun in the middle of the day. As his gaze landed on Anguz in the next moment, the Sun Wheel rushed towards him with a loud whoosh.

As it did, increasingly dazzling and fierce light burst out from within the Sun Wheel.

At this moment, the darkness within a 50-kilometer radius rapidly scattered and dissipated, like ice and snow melting under fierce sunlight.

The heaven and earth submerged in dense demon Qi was instantly lit up as brightly as if it were in broad daylight.

With a shocked look in his eyes, Nie Tian gazed at the Sun Wheel and discovered that, bathed in its light, his vortex of star power started to accelerate, which was very unusual.

As the Sun Wheel's fierce light shone on him, he felt an ineffable warmth and comfort.

Smiling, Li MUYANG said placidly, "Now that the spatial rift is being sealed, the Demons are getting more and more anxious. Once the spatial rift is fully sealed, these Demon invaders won't be able to return to their realm ever again. Don't be fooled by their

ferocious roars and aggressive demeanor. They've already started to panic."

Li Muiyang's gentle voice spread out far and wide. He seemed to be speaking to Nie Tian. However, when the Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations heard him, they all seemed greatly relieved, and their furrowed eyebrows relaxed.

He pointed at a few Qi warriors dressed in Yang Sect garments and ordered, "You! Come here and protect Nie Tian!"

Then, he turned to Nie Tian and said with an apologetic smile, "That Anguz is pretty difficult to deal with. I need to handle him myself."

With these words, he dashed away after his Sun Wheel.

Simultaneously, standing underneath the Moon Wheel, a graceful woman issued an order to every Yin Sect disciple in the vicinity in a soft and gentle voice. "Disciples of the Yin Sect, we need to pay extra attention to the lofty mountain peak Nie Tian is on as well. Don't let the Demons hurt him!"

Upon hearing Li Muiyang's and her command, many powerful experts from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations automatically gathered towards the mountain peak Nie Tian was on.

Seeing that more and more human experts were appearing around him, Nie Tian gradually put his heart at ease, and sat down in the lotus position.

Relying on the mysterious connection between the fragmentary star marks and himself, he closed his eyes to sense their movements.

As he did, the fragmentary star marks seemed to turn into three Heaven Eyes.

The spacious insides of the three lofty mountain peaks and the star pagodas within them were reflected in his mind with great clarity, like an unfurling painting.

“Hmm?!” With a soft exclamation, he took note that there was something within these mountain peaks that he hadn’t seen before in the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace’s spell formations in the Realm of Flame Heaven and the Realm of Mystic Heaven.

Chapter 381: Relics within the Bellies of the Mountain Peaks

No matter whether it was the lofty mountain peaks in the Realm of Flame Heaven or in the Realm of Mystic Heaven, they all had vast hollow spaces inside of them.

Countless mysterious patterns were carved on the inner walls of those mountain peaks, and in the middle of their internal spaces, there was always a pagoda, which had profound connections with the stars in the heavens.

Other than that, the vast internal space of those mountain peaks had always been empty.

However, this wasn't the case for the three mountain peaks in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Relying on the connection between the first fragmentary star mark and his soul, Nie Tian examined the inside of the first mountain peak and discovered that, other than the numerous glittering patterns carved on its internal walls and the lit-up pagoda in the middle, a seven-meter-long air-transportation spiritual tool was parked beside the pagoda.

It looked like a small, silver boat forged from some kind of special metal, making it appear very exquisite and elegant.

The prow and stern of the boat were both shuttle-shaped. Illuminated by the pagoda next to it, it glittered with an ice-cold, metallic luster, giving it a very sharp look.

The entire boat was covered in mysterious patterns that contained the profound truths of star power.

Thanks to the connection between the fragmentary star mark and his soul, Nie Tian felt like he had been carried inside the belly of the mountain peak by that fragmentary star mark.

Nie Tian felt as if a shadow of his soul that looked exactly like him was floating quietly within the belly of the mountain peak.

Then, he discovered that he could manipulate his soul shadow to go wherever he wanted. Under his control, his soul shadow slowly arrived above the small boat, where it floated and observed the boat closely.

He discovered that the stones that covered the bottom of the boat weren't spirit stones that could be found anywhere, but rather Star Stones, which he normally used to practice the Fragmentary Star Incantation.

Like transparent gems, the Star Stones filled the grooves in the bottom of the boat, one Star Stone for each groove.

With everything around him illuminated by the pagoda, Nie Tian could see dazzling starlight constantly falling from the ceiling of the inside of the mountain belly.

Some of the starlight streaked and infused into the patterns on the inner walls, while others flew into that small parked boat.

Bathed in bright starlight, the boat seemed to be absorbing starlight silently.

Nie Tian was secretly shocked. "An air-transportation spiritual tool forged by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace?!"

He had learned from Hua Mu that air-transportation spiritual tools were very hard to find. Even throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars, only the truly powerful sects with deep-rooted strength would have enough resources and reputation to get brilliant equipment forgers to build this kind of spiritual tool that could soar across the sky.

Hua Mu's Lightning Shuttle, the Heaven Palace Sect's Golden Chariot, and the Yin Sect's Silver Chariot were all air-transportation spiritual tools.

They could allow Qi warriors who hadn't reached the Profound

realm to cover more than 5,000 kilometers through the air within a day.

Before, Hua Mu had taken him to the remote isle on his Lightning Shuttle, where they teleported to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Huang Fan and Liu Ling had also successively carried him into demon Qi-wreathed areas on their air-transportation spiritual tools.

Having witnessed the wonder of air-transportation spiritual tools, Nie Tian had imagined when he could get one of his own and speed across the heavens on it.

Since it was the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace that had left that silver boat there, did it mean that it was meant for him, the successor of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's legacies?

After all, throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars, he was now the only one who had received legacy marks from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

Doing his best to calm his excited heart, he switched his mind to the second fragmentary star mark, which had entered the belly of another lofty mountain peak.

The layout within the belly of the second lofty mountain peak was similar to the first one. The only difference was that there wasn't a boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool parked in the middle.

Instead, there was something else.

It was a crescent-moon-shaped crystal that was very similar to the pendant on Liu Ling's neck, but only bigger.

Even though the crystal wasn't emanating much light while it floated beside the pagoda, a scroll could be seen sealed within it.

At first glance, Nie Tian knew that the scroll must have

something to do with the Yin Sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Then, he commanded his soul shadow to roam the inside of the mountain peak, but didn't come to any more discoveries.

That was when he switched to the third fragmentary star mark in the third mountain peak.

It was almost identical to the layout within the second mountain peak, but something could be seen floating next to the pagoda.

It was a ball-shaped crystal, inside of which was also a scroll.

After a mere glance at the crystal and the scroll inside of it, Nie Tian came to a realization. "A relic for the Yang Sect?!"

The series of shocks eventually kept his mind from concentrating, and the wisp of his soul instantly returned to him.

Mad Demonic roars entered his ears, along with the sounds of the Qi warriors who had been protecting him fighting and cursing the Demons.

He didn't open his eyes immediately, but rather contemplated silently.

"Why would there be relics for the Yin Sect and Yang Sect within those mountain peaks? What in the world is recorded in those two scrolls that have been sealed in those crystals?"

"Is there some kind of connection between the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace and the Yin Sect and Yang Sect?"

"Is there a way that I can get those crystals and the air-transportation spiritual tool out of the bellies of the mountain peaks?"

Eyes closed, numerous thoughts flashed across Nie Tian's mind. Meanwhile, he felt increasingly amazed by his discoveries inside of those mountain peaks.

At that moment, the loud exclamation of a Yang Sect expert

suddenly rang out by his ear, “It carries the bloodline of a Purple Glede!”

He opened his eye and saw six human Qi warriors scattered on the mountaintop.

The light shields enveloping them suddenly went out.

Their exposed faces, necks, and arms seemed to become rapidly smeared with a layer of pale-gray, stone powder. Not only did they start to move slower, but fear and panic could be seen on their faces.

Yrie from the Barten Clan was staring at them, her eyes as cold as frozen blades.

In the depths of the gruesome eyes of her mount, which carried the bloodline of Purple Glede, purple light interwove as it once again activated its mysterious bloodline talent.

Now that Li Muyang, a Soul realm expert and the sectmaster of the Yang Sect, had left, Yrie and Tark, who possessed sixth grade bloodline power, had the audacity to attack him again.

Through screeching and shouting in the Demon language, they summoned a dozen high-tier Demons and many winged low-tier Demons to the lofty mountain peak where Nie Tian was. They hovered around and fought the Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

From the look of it, Yrie and Tark wanted to kill Nie Tian to spare all future trouble before they pulled out of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Li Muyang from the Yang Sect and the graceful woman from the Yin Sect seemed to be busy dealing with their own enemies, and thus wouldn't be able to help protect Nie Tian.

Even though the brilliant light from the Sun Wheel and the Moon Wheel had dispelled the dense demon Qi, it seemed far from enough to help their owners overtake their two formidable Demon

enemies with seventh grade bloodline power.

WHOOSH!

A pitch-black low-tier Demon swooped down from the sky and grabbed towards a Worldly realm Qi warrior with sharp claws that looked like iron anchors.

As its huge claws whizzed down, a gravity-related bloodline talent suddenly burst forth from within the Demon's body.

The Qi warrior's protective spiritual power shield instantly grew distorted and shattered.

CRUNCH!

Under Nie Tian's gaze, the Demon's claws descended upon the Worldly realm Qi warrior, breaking his bones and killing him instantly.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Like blades that were as fine as hair, the purple strings unleashed by Yrie caught another Yin Sect expert by surprise and severed his neck.

“Go to hell!” With these words, a powerful Profound realm expert who practiced thunder power threw numerous explosive thunderballs towards the enormous low-tier Demon with anchor-like claws, and bombarded it into falling towards the valley.

Nie Tian glanced around and saw that Demons and human Qi warriors were fighting madly. Casualties occurred at every moment.

However, most of those that had been killed by human experts from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations were large, low-tier Demons.

As for high-tier Demons like Yrie and Tark, whenever they encountered imminent danger, they would always call out. Upon hearing them, low-tier Demons would rush to their aid, giving

their own lives to make sure they were unharmed.

According to his understanding, Nie Tian knew that low-tier Demons were referred to as magical beasts in Demon realms.

They were usually used as expendable weapons, and since there were a large number of them, their casualties wouldn't concern their commanders at all.

Only the deaths of the high-tier Demons, who possessed powerful bloodline power, outstanding intelligence, and unlimited potential, would hurt their commanders.

Apparently, it was Yrie and Tark's plan to motivate the low-tier Demons and trade their lives for the lives of the human experts from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Sitting on the mountaintop, Nie Tian gradually found it unbearable to watch more and more powerful experts from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations die while protecting him from the hideous beasts.

At that moment, he suddenly remembered the dark side of human nature he had witnessed in Black Cloud City when he had returned to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

His experience in Black Cloud City had once filled his heart with negative emotions and made him feel desperate.

Those emotions had been haunting and suppressing him ever since then. Even his cultivation base had reached a standstill because of that.

However, now that he watched the brave Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations fight Demons with their lives in order to protect him, he was finally freed from his long-standing, pent-up emotions.

This made him feel that a crack had opened in this obstacle that had been impeding his cultivation.

Even though none of his spiritual power, flame power, wood power, or star power hadn't reached their breakthrough point, he had a feeling that what he had experienced and learned recently had helped him take the most important step forward.

After this, once he had accumulated enough strength, he would be able to make his next breakthrough smoothly.

Just as he felt that his mind had been opened up, a shudder ran through him as he then discovered that his three fragmentary star marks had returned to his body.

Then, with the help of the fragmentary star marks, the perception of his seven Heaven Eyes once again soared through the ceiling.

Not only that, but he also felt a miraculous connection between himself and the unfinished star formation covering the mouth of the spatial rift.

With a cold smile, his eyes shone with a fierce, murderous light.

Chapter 382: Son of the Starry Sky

Back when he had sealed the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven, Nie Tian had realized that once the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace was activated and the three fragmentary star marks returned to him, he would be able to borrow strength from the gradually-forming formation of starlight at the mouth of the spatial rift.

The perception of his seven Heaven Eyes would improve significantly because of this.

Before the fragmentary star marks returned to him, he was nothing but a Heaven stage Qi warrior. If he were to face those formidable Demons alone, he wouldn't even be able to protect himself, not to mention fighting back.

Only when the fragmentary star marks had returned to him would he be able to make an impact on the overall situation with his borrowed strength.

Sitting on the mountaintop and watching the Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations get killed one after another while protecting him, he had long since become enraged.

With a deep breath, he commanded his seven Heaven Eyes to shoot into the mysterious formation of starlight at the mouth of the spatial rift.

Originally, the enormous pattern of glittering starlight had just been strengthening its restrictive force.

However, as the seven Heaven Eyes fell into it one after another, it seemed to be vested with life, with Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes becoming its soul!

Nie Tian was struck by a feeling that he could control this mysterious starlight formation now.

An intense killing intent rose from the bottom of Nie Tian's

heart.

In the next moment, the grand starlight formation began to change.

Like a vortex of stars in the depths of the universe, it started to rotate.

As an ancient and boundless aura gradually dispersed through it, it began to shine unprecedentedly brightly.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

One after another, numerous beams of incomparably pure starlight suddenly shot out of the formation.

Like shooting stars and streaks of silk, they followed Nie Tian's will and shot towards the Demons that had been hovering around the mountaintop.

Towering into the heavens, the lofty mountain peak Nie Tian was on seemed to echo his will, and emanated increasingly bright starlight.

PHOOH! PHOOH!

Carrying the profound truths of star power and a fierce aura that seemed as if it could annihilate all living beings in this heaven and earth, two streaks of starlight cut two several-dozen-meter-long low-tier Demons in half!

Like a flash, another streak of starlight slashed down towards a nobly-dressed high-tier Demon's head with irresistible might.

The high-tier Demon shrieked as he made a desperate effort to shield himself from the light with a pitch-black pearl, which madly attracted demon Qi from its surroundings.

Upon contact with the streak of starlight, numerous fine fissures instantly appeared on the pearl.

As the fissures grew larger and larger, the pearl eventually failed to withstand the pressure and exploded.

A substantial amount of purple and black light burst forth and shot in every direction, along with drops of demon blood.

The Demon wailed as he looked up at the descending starlight. In the next moment, his slender, perfectly-proportioned body cracked and exploded like a piece of broken ice, creating a mist of demon blood.

Deeply stunned, a Qi warrior from the Yang Sect exclaimed, “The grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace can actually be used to kill Demons?!”

He had been fighting that high-tier Demon right before he was killed in such a violent way.

Moments ago, he had been struggling to defend against that Demon’s mad attacks. However, the streak of starlight had killed him almost instantly, despite his full-force resistance.

The Qi warrior turned to look at Nie Tian.

The other Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations were also astonished. With flickering expressions, they all shot their gazes towards Nie Tian.

Nie Tian slowly rose to his feet.

Like an incomparably sharp sword, he stood straight and unwavering, unleashing an imposing aura.

With a composed expression, he said, “I was deeply ashamed that I had to watch many seniors die because of me. Since I have received the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, I suspected that I could summon power from the grand spell formation and use it to help you, and so I did.”

Enlivened, the Qi warrior from the Yang Sect nodded repeatedly as he marveled, “As I expected, it was you who is using the mighty spell formation to assist us! Great! Let’s work together and kick these damn Demons out of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations forever! We’ll use their dead bodies to deter those who dare to

invade us again!”

Many members of the Yin Sect were women, some pretty and innocent, while others were gorgeous and alluring.

At that moment, their bright eyes were all fixed on Nie Tian.

In their eyes, now bathed in brilliant starlight, Nie Tian seemed like a son of the starry sky who could control the innumerable stars that filled the sky.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The enormous starlight pattern at the mouth of the spatial rift once again evolved, giving rise to new and wondrous changes.

The rivers of glorious starlight, which should have fallen into the spatial rift, suddenly changed directions as they pierced through the clouds and shot toward the roaring Demons gathered around the mountaintop.

The rivers of starlight pouring down from the depths of the vast sky seemed to have a natural overpowering effect on the Demons.

As they shone upon the raging demon Qi that the Demons used to wreath themselves, the demon Qi rapidly dissipated like snow being vaporized by fierce flames.

Originally, the Demons had been using the demon Qi as their natural protective barrier. However, it was proven to be completely useless under the dazzling starlight.

As the rivers of starlight destroyed the demon Qi and shone on the Demons' bodies, they seemed to have a burning effect on them.

Exposed to the bright starlight, every Demon began to let out miserable wails as they all seemed to be in a lot of pain.

They immediately came to the terrifying discovery that there was a fundamental difference between the starlight summoned from the heavens by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace's grand spell formation and the starlight in their own realms.

The starlight here contained a mysterious power that was sacred and pure, so for them who lived on demon Qi, it was none other than a deadly poison.

Even Yrie, an immediate member of the Barten Clan, and her mount, which carried the bloodline of a Purple Glede, couldn't withstand the starlight.

In the fierce starlight, Yrie saw smoke rising from her mount's enormous body.

Even though her exquisite suit of armor was helping her defend against the starlight, many parts of her body were exposed to the starlight, causing her to suffer from bone-piercing pain.

Shock and fear could be seen in her eyes as she looked down and discovered that her smooth skin was already covered in visible, fine veins, as if her blood was seething.

Tark from the Fifth Demon Realm also let out agonizing screams in the starlight that contained some kind of mysterious power. "Yrie!" he called out. "Let's get out of here! We need to return to our realm as quickly as possible!"

Afterwards, he let out a few commanding roars.

Upon hearing his roars, the other Demons seemed as if they had been pardoned and relieved from their death penalty.

None of them dared to hover around the mountaintop anymore. Instead, they all rushed back towards the spatial rift with fear on their faces, while doing their best to avoid being hit by the rivers of starlight.

SHEW! SHEW! SHEW!

However, the rivers of starlight kept pouring down from the sky. No matter whether they were high-tier or low-tier Demons, those who were struck by the starlight fell straight into the mountain valley one after another, like birds that had lost their wings.

As they plummeted towards the ground, purple smoke kept coming out of their bodies, as if their blood was boiling.

Seeing that the situation had been turned around and the Demons were struggling for their lives, the Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations all seemed wild with joy.

They brandished their spiritual tools and cast their exquisite magics to take the opportunity to kill the Demons that were scrambling for their lives.

A large number of low-tier Demons were chased down and slaughtered as they rushed towards the spatial rift.

RUUUUMBLE!

The heavy sounds of low-tier Demons' enormous bodies crashing into the mountain valley echoed out from time to time.

The high-tier Demon who had been fighting the sectmaster of the Yin Sect noticed the unfavorable situation and rapidly called out to Anguz, "Anguz! The situation is getting out of hand! We need to pull out now!"

ROOOOAR!

Anguz, who was fighting Li MUYANG with his double-edged battle-axe, threw his head back and let out an enraged roar.

Immediately afterwards, not only did all the Demons around the mountain valley begin swarming towards the spatial rift, but even Demons from hundreds of kilometers away seemed to have also received his order, and thus instantly left their human opponents and converged on the spatial rift.

A handful of powerful experts from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect didn't chase after the fleeing Demons.

Instead, they held fast to their duty and guarded Nie Tian.

At this moment, they were all gazing at Nie Tian, their eyes filled with shock and awe.

Each and every one of them had a cultivation base higher than Nie Tian's, and they were all well-aware that the young man in front of them was only at the Heaven stage.

However, it was this seemingly unimpressive young man from the Realm of Flame Heaven, whose name they had never even heard of until recent years, who had just turned the situation around and saved the Realm of a Thousand Devastations from falling!

They were also convinced that if Nie Tian hadn't come and activated the grand spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, endless Demons would have rushed through the spatial rift into their realm.

The Demons would have never retreated before they finished slaughtering every living being in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, not even sparing a chicken or a dog. (see note 1) Nie Tian's arrival saved the sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, as well as everyone and everything that lived on this land.

Note:

1. Here, the author used a very commonly-used Chinese proverb: 鸡犬不留, which literally means not sparing a chicken or a dog, so in other words: kill everyone.

This got me thinking that it would be fun if I introduce you to some Chinese Idioms that have something to do with animals, so my plan is to do one idiom a day below my releases for the next weeks or so. I hope you'll like them.

Chapter 383: Refusing the Heaven Palace Sects Handsome Offer

One of the guards, Kong Hong from the Yang Sect, solemnly expressed his gratitude towards Nie Tian. “Nie Tian, we’ll forever remember what you’ve done for the Realm of a Thousand Devastations!”

The two members of the Yin Sect who had stayed and guarded him were both female, one enchantingly gorgeous, and the other charming in an elegant way.

Tunic-clad, they were both smiling heartily as they nodded gently towards Nie Tian, brilliant light flowing within their charming eyes.

“Since I was blessed with the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace during the Heaven Gate trial, it was my responsibility to seal the spatial rifts while facing the Demons’ massive invasion,” Nie Tian said modestly.

After a brief pause, he sighed softly and added, a hint of bitterness appearing at the corner of his mouth, “If people from the Realm of Flame Heaven shared the same thoughts as you, I would have felt more comforted.”

Since he had come from the Realm of Flame Heaven, after he had come out from the Heaven Gate trial, he had exerted all his efforts to help the Blood Sect, Ghost Sect, and other sects defend against the Demons.

In order to do that, he had even awakened the Blood Sect’s Bone Blood Demon with his pure bloodline power.

He had thought that, considering he had done so much for the Realm of Flame Heaven, when he had been in hiding, the sects in the Realm of Flame Heaven would have remembered all that and taken good care of his family.

However, when he had returned to the Realm of Flame Heaven, he had found out that his grandfather and aunt had been forced to take shelter in the Realm of a Hundred Battles because many people in the Cloudsoaring Sect had detested them.

What he had witnessed and heard about himself in Black Cloud City had also been mostly negative.

Due to the speedy spread of the demon Qi, people had been submerged in a desperate atmosphere, and thus made him their vent.

Many people even blamed him for the calamity that had devastated the Realm of Flame Heaven.

His experience in the Realm of Flame Heaven had deeply disheartened him. He even had even once lost hope in people.

However, he had never imagined that people from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, who he had absolutely no connection with, would risk their own lives to protect him while he was activating the spell formation left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

The Yin Sect and the Yang Sect, who had never been fond of each other, had no divergence of opinion when it came to protecting him.

In the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, Nie Tian felt a long-lost warmth in his heart.

“The Realm of Flame Heaven?” Fan Shanshan from the Yin Sect asked curiously, her slender eyebrows furrowed. “Don’t tell me that people in the Realm of Flame Heaven treated you differently. If it weren’t for you, the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven wouldn’t have been sealed. Compared to our realm, their strength is far inferior. They wouldn’t have stood a chance if they had been forced to contend against the Astarte Clan.”

The other female member of the Yin Sect, named Tian Xue, also

seemed surprised as she said, “They should have been proud of you and the fact that you’re from the Realm of Flame Heaven.”

Nie Tian shook his head and didn’t want to continue that topic.

AWWW! ROOAR!

At that moment, low-tier Demons’ miserable screams and wails suddenly rang out from the spatial rift.

The handful of people on the mountaintop looked down and discovered that, since all the enormous low-tier Demons were eager to return to the Fifth Demon Realm, as they scrambled through the spatial rift, many of them were pushed into the formation of starlight.

Upon contact, their bodies instantly became badly mangled. Some even had their wings sliced off.

Considering that the high-tier Demons were only slightly bigger than humans, they didn’t encounter much difficulty when they flew through the spatial rift.

Anguz and a few other high-tier Demons from the Barten Clan shouted at the top of their lungs.

From the look of it, they were trying to tell those low-tier Demons to calm down and avoid the formation of starlight, which was gradually forming at the mouth of the spatial rift, as much as they could.

However, Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations were attacking and killing the fleeing Demons that lagged behind, which contributed to their eagerness to return to their home realm, and made their retreat disorderly and congested.

After observing for a short while, Nie Tian’s eyes flickered as he stopped summoning power from the formation of starlight.

As soon as he stopped, not another stream of starlight flew out of

the formation of starlight at the mouth of the spatial rift again.

The extremely large formation of starlight gradually stabilized and quietly reaped the low-tier Demons' lives as they scrambled through the spatial rift, which was wide enough for several of them to pass simultaneously.

As rivers of starlight continued to pour down from the heavens and infuse into the formation of starlight, it expanded rapidly.

As it covered an increasingly large area, the Demons came under increasingly heavy pressure as they squeezed through the spatial rift, which resulted in more casualties.

WHOOSH!

Liu Ling from the Yin Sect appeared in the distant sky, steering her Silver Chariot and approaching Nie Tian at a fast speed.

The chariot wobbled in the air, as it had clearly been damaged. Huang Fan from the Heaven Palace Sect, who had escorted him to this place, was also standing in it.

Both Fan Shanshan and Tian Xue from the Yin Sect greeted Liu Ling as the Silver Chariot descended. "Senior martial sister."

Seeing that Nie Tian was unharmed and that the Demons were scrambling through the spatial rift, which had now become a meat grinder, Liu Ling let out a sigh of relief before jumping down from her Silver Chariot and smiling broadly at Nie Tian. "Thank you for what you've done."

"I'm glad that you are fine," Nie Tian replied.

Liu Ling sighed again and said with an exhausted expression on her face, "You've turned the situation around and saved us. Originally, Huang Fan and I were surrounded by many Demons. Our lives were hanging by a thread. However, as a roar suddenly rang out from this location, the Demons that were attacking us quickly scattered and fled."

“Only because of this were we able to come here in one piece.”

With the expression of a man who had just escaped death, Huang Fan nodded and smiled gratefully at Nie Tian, saying, “Thank you.”

“It’s good as long as everyone is fine,” Nie Tian said, smiling.

At this moment, none of them needed to do anything anymore. As Anguz roared furiously, the Demons lost all will to fight as they madly converged on the spatial rift.

The Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, on the other hand, were maximizing their victory by cutting down the fleeing Demons.

None of the Demons dared to stay and make a move against Nie Tian.

Not to mention that a handful of powerful experts from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had been guarding Nie Tian with great commitment this whole time.

“It seems to me that the threat in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations has been lifted.” The tip of Huang Fan’s eyebrow rose as he turned to Nie Tian and said, “Your business is finished here. Let’s go back to the Realm of Mystic Heaven.”

Nie Tian frowned in silence.

“What’s wrong?” Huang Fan asked.

“I don’t plan on going to the Realm of Mystic Heaven right now.” Nie Tian gave voice to his stance.

Upon hearing these words, the members from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect looked deeply shocked.

Huang Fan seemed somewhat confused and displeased as he said, “Our sectmaster demanded to see you.”

Before their trip to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, Zhao Luofeng had instructed him in private that he should bring Nie

Tian back to the Heaven Palace Sect as soon as the spatial rift here was sealed.

The deal between the Heaven Palace Sect and Auden from the Fourth Demon Realm was a secret of paramount importance.

Now that Nie Tian had obviously learned about it, the only way to make him keep that secret was if the Heaven Palace Sect took Nie Tian in as their disciple.

Both Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong had taken it for granted that Nie Tian would agree to become a disciple of their sect.

After all, as the Qi warrior sect with the most deep-rooted strength, the Heaven Palace Sect ranked first in battle power throughout the entire Domain of the Falling Stars.

Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong had even made preparations for a grand sect-entrance ceremony when Nie Tian joined the sect. Not only that, but they were also ready to cultivate Nie Tian with everything they had and make him their sect's brightest future star, now that Ning Yang was in the past.

Zhao Luofeng had told Huang Fan about their plans for Nie Tian.

Huang Fan couldn't think of any reason that might keep Nie Tian from accepting their handsome offer.

Thus, upon learning that Nie Tian didn't want to return to the Heaven Palace Sect after the situation of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations was stabilized, Huang Fan was truly upset.

Seeing that Huang Fan's expression had grown grim, the experts from the Yin Sect and Yang Sect stood quietly in front of Nie Tian with their eyes narrowed.

Huang Fan let out a cold harrumph and said with a displeased expression, "Kong Hong! Liu Ling! What are you doing? You should know that if I didn't bring Nie Tian here, the Realm of a Thousand Devastations would still be deep in trouble! You should be grateful to our sect!"

Kong Kong shook his head firmly and said with a calm tone, “You’ve got it wrong, Brother Huang. We are grateful, but not to the Heaven Palace Sect.”

He turned around to glance at Nie Tian as he continued, “He is the man who has saved every man and woman in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations!”

Liu Ling and the other two female members from the Yin Sect nodded as Liu Ling said, “Brother Huang, we’re grateful that you brought Nie Tian here safely. However, compared to what Nie Tian has done, your contribution seemed barely noticeable.

“If you intend to force Nie Tian to do things against his will, we won’t just sit back and watch.”

After she uttered these words, Fan Shanshan and Tian Xue, who were standing behind her, nodded along.

These Qi warriors from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had just been through a nightmare. It was Nie Tian who had given them hope when they were the most devastated.

Therefore, they all considered Nie Tian as their savior.

Even if Huang Fan, a member of the Heaven Palace Sect, wanted to make a move against Nie Tian, they wouldn’t allow it.

Huang Fan’s expression was very sullen as he silently gazed back and forth between Nie Tian and the others, a meaningful look filling his eyes.

Chapter 384: Breaking Up!

As the night gradually lifted, the dense demon Qi that had submerged the entire mountain range for two years finally dissipated completely.

Soon after, a silver lining appeared in the distant sky, which was adorned by a few clouds. Day broke.

However, the atmosphere among Nie Tian and the others on the mountaintop didn't lighten up as the crisis ended.

The air became still as the two sides reached a standoff.

Huang Fan stared silently at Nie Tian and the others for a while before he took a deep breath and said to Nie Tian with a somewhat relaxed tone, "Before I escorted you to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, our sectmaster told me that as long as you agreed to join the Heaven Palace Sect, you'd become its chosen one.

"You'll have unconditional and unlimited access to all the valuable and unique treasures you need.

"Whenever you come to problems you can't solve in your cultivation, the sectmaster and grand elder will do whatever it takes to straighten things out for you.

"Not only that, but you'll even have the opportunity to learn from the most powerful expert in our sect. He'll also help you with problems that you run into on your cultivation path.

"Your grandfather and aunt will be taken to the Heaven Palace Sect, where they'll live the rest of their lives in comfort and affluence.

"Furthermore, we'll also make sure that you get to keep the Spirit Channeling grade treasure that you obtained from the Flame God Sect. We'll communicate and make arrangements with the Flame God Sect so as to eliminate their idea of getting it back from you.

“If you join the Heaven Palace Sect, perhaps you’ll get to control the future of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

“There’s a good chance that, in several hundred years, you’ll take the position of sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect, and become the most powerful figure in the Domain of the Falling Stars.”

Seeing that using force wouldn’t work, Huang Fan immediately changed his tactics, and attempted to lure Nie Tian in with tremendous benefits, hoping that he would open his eyes to what he would get after joining the Heaven Palace Sect.

Upon hearing Huang Fan’s promises, the members of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect were all secretly shocked.

As powerful as they were, they didn’t think they would be able to turn down such a handsome offer if they were in Nie Tian’s shoes.

He would get everything he needed as he pursued his cultivation; Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong would help him with any difficulties he ran into; formidable experts would teach him without holding anything back; he might even be given the position of sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect in the foreseeable future, and become the most powerful person in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

Being offered everything a Qi warrior would ever want at such a young age, would this young man from the Realm of Flame Heaven actually be able to refuse?

Kong Hong, Liu Ling, and the others all gazed at Nie Tian with incomparably complicated looks in their eyes, waiting for him to give his answer.

Even they believed that the best choice for Nie Tian would be to accept the offer and go back to the Heaven Palace Sect with Huang Fan.

However, Nie Tian was still frowning, as if he were still weighing things over.

“The Heaven Palace Sect...” Nie Tian muttered inwardly.

He recalled his experience in the Heaven Palace Sect. When he had followed Huang Fan to the Realm of Mystic Heaven and seen the Heaven Palace Sect for the first time, he had been shocked by its incredible magnificence, and thus convinced that it lived up to its name as the most powerful sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

When facing the invasion of the Astarte Clan from the Sixth Demon Realm, the entire Realm of Flame Heaven hadn't been able to stop it. All they had done was wallow in desperation.

The situation had also been very dangerous and critical when the Realm of a Thousand Devastations had defended against the Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm.

He could sense that the strengths of the different demon realms also varied.

The Fourth Demon Realm seemed much more powerful than the Fifth Demon Realm and the Sixth Demon Realm.

When the Heaven Palace Sect had waited for the Demon invaders from the Fourth Demon Realm alone, not only hadn't their members shown the slightest fear under Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong's leadership, but they had even looked forward to the Demons' appearance.

Eventually, they had forced Auden to agree to their proposal.

With this alone, Nie Tian saw how powerful the Heaven Palace Sect was.

However, when he had arrived at the spatial rift, Zhao Luofeng, Ling Dong, and the other Heaven Palace Sect members' attitudes towards him didn't make him feel the slightest bit of warmth, as if they hadn't attached any importance to him.

Aside from that, he had been deeply disgusted by their secret deal with the Demons.

On the other hand, the way the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect in the

Realm of a Thousand Devastations treated him made him very comfortable.

Furthermore, he had a feeling that these two sects had some kind of connection with the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and he was the only living successor of the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars.

Hidden within those three lofty mountain peaks were one boat and two scrolls that seemed to be somehow related to the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect.

After weighing the pros against the cons in his head, Nie Tian became increasingly determined. Thus, he turned to Huang Fan and said apologetically, “I’m very sorry, Senior Huang, but I have no intentions of becoming a member of the Heaven Palace Sect. If Sectmaster Zhao wants to ask me about other matters, I’ll be happy to go the Heaven Palace Sect another time. I still have some unfinished business in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. I can’t go to the Heaven Palace Sect with you now.”

Huang Fan suddenly let out a cold harrumph and raised his voice. “Nie Tian! You’re being a fool for not appreciating our kindness!”

Nie Tian’s eyebrows furrowed as he didn’t say a word.

“Brother Huang,” Kong Hong said, looking displeased. “If you have to use force to break a melon off the vine, it won’t taste sweet. (see note 1) I think it’s time that you went back to the Heaven Palace Sect yourself.”

Liu Ling’s bright eyes were also filled with a fierce look as she said, “Brother Huang, if you need our assistance in any other matter, we’ll surely exert all our power to help you. But if you want to force Nie Tian to go back to the Heaven Palace Sect with you, we regret that we cannot comply with your wish!”

“I demand to speak to your sectmasters!” Huang Fan sounded furious.

“I’m here.” Li MUYANG from the Yang Sect seemed to have heard Huang Fan’s words and thus instantly appeared in front of him. He smiled in an unrestrained way as he said, “I’ve heard your conversation. I can tell you right now that Kong Hong’s attitude on this coincides with mine.”

Shock could be seen on Huang Fan’s face.

Apparently, he didn’t dare to adopt an imposing manner in Li MUYANG’s presence, and thus seemed somewhat overshadowed.

His cultivation base was only at the late Profound realm, while Li MUYANG, who was standing in front of him, was an expert at the middle Soul realm, one of the few experts in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars to reach such a realm.

He knew perfectly well that Li MUYANG was even more powerful than Ling Dong, the grand elder of the Heaven Palace Sect.

Zhao Luofeng was the only person throughout the Heaven Palace Sect whose strength matched Li MUYANG’s.

Perhaps the old man who practiced secluded cultivation year-round, and exhausted all means to gather enough unique materials to break through into the Void domain, was the only one in the Heaven Palace Sect who could overtake Li MUYANG.

“It’s our sectmaster’s will that Nie Tian joins the Heaven Palace Sect!” Huang Fan made his stance clear.

Li MUYANG’s expression didn’t change a bit as he said with narrowed eyes, “I won’t stand in the way if Nie Tian is willing to go with you. However, if he isn’t, I won’t allow you to take him to the Heaven Palace Sect by force.”

Huang Fan was going to say something when Li MUYANG stopped him with a wave of his hand and continued, “I’m not after the legacies Nie Tian obtained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and I don’t intend to force him to stay in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. If he wants to leave, he can go whenever

he wants. I won't try to stop him. Of course, I also don't want you or anyone else to stop him from going where he wants to go!

“You can go back and tell Zhao Luofeng that this is my stance on this matter!”

After making sure that Anguz had disappeared into the spatial rift, Xing Huanyue, the sectmaster of the Yin Sect, put away her Moon Wheel and said from afar, “My stance is the same!”

Huang Fan's expression flickered dramatically.

As every powerful expert in the Domain of the Falling Stars knew, Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue didn't get along.

Their cultivation bases were equally matched, and as the heads of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect, they had been struggling in secret for years.

Almost every ten years, the two of them would find a secluded place to start a fierce battle, where killing would be allowed, under the name of learning from each other by exchanging moves.

Sometimes, their battles would last months.

Conflicts also often broke out between disciples of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect. People would be wounded or killed all the time.

The two of them could almost never reach a mutual understanding on any matter. There were very few cases where they didn't have any friction.

However, their opinions were surprisingly unified on this matter.

Considering the Heaven Palace Sect's strength, either the Yin Sect or the Yang Sect would be at an overwhelming disadvantage if they were to face the Heaven Palace Sect alone.

However, if the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect teamed up, as powerful as the Heaven Palace Sect was, they would have to pay a significant price to gain a final victory.

Huang Fan weighed over his choice of words before he dropped his imposing manner and said, “Alright. I’ll go back to the Heaven Palace Sect and relay your stance on this matter.”

“I’ll take you to the teleportation portal, Brother Huang,” Liu Ling said without any hesitation.

“There’s no need!” Huang Fan waved his hand, declining her good intention of giving him a ride on the Silver Chariot. Instead, since he had reached the Profound realm, he exploded into the air and shot into the distance.

Right before he disappeared into the distant sky, he jerked his head back and shot a cold look at Nie Tian.

Under his ice-cold gaze, Nie Tian’s body stiffened as a surge of coldness ran through him.

At that moment, he realized that his refusal might have provoked Huang Fan’s killing intent.

The fragile friendship between them, which had been built since they had met in the Realm of Flame Heaven, had officially come to an end.

From now on, in the eyes of Huang Fan and the Heaven Palace Sect, he might no longer be the promising seed they would cultivate with their heart and soul, but rather an insult they would exert all means to erase.

“Kid, I’m very curious why you would turn down the Heaven Palace Sect’s handsome offer,” Li Muyang said, intrigued.

The others also had confused expressions on their faces, as if they all found it hard to understand.

Even Xing Huanyue, the sectmaster of the Yin Sect, quietly descended and examined him with a strange look in her eyes.

Note:

1. The literal translation of the saying is: a forcibly picked melon

is not sweet. So it basically means if something is not meant to be, there's no use forcing it. This saying is also very commonly-used.

Chapter 385: Promise

As the sectmasters of the Yang Sect and Yin Sect, Li MUYANG and XING HUANYUE, were also deeply surprised by Nie Tian's choice.

Even they felt that it wasn't the wisest choice to turn down the Heaven Palace Sect's offer.

The Heaven Palace Sect was generally acknowledged as the most powerful Qi warrior sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars. Countless talented youngsters would exert every possible means to join it.

Huang Fan had already put it clearly that as long as Nie Tian agreed to join the Heaven Palace Sect, they would spare no resource or effort to help him grow.

From the look of it, if Nie Tian became fully qualified, Zhao Luofeng might even let him take his place as the sectmaster of the Heaven Palace Sect some day.

It seemed that Nie Tian was a fool to have refused such a tempting offer.

Under the gazes of the numerous powerful experts from the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect, Nie Tian remained silent for a while before saying, "I already have a master."

He only said he had a master, yet he didn't mention his sect, which was mainly because, after experiencing so much, he no longer had a sense of belonging with the Cloudsoaring Sect.

The only person in the entire Cloudsoaring Sect he approved of now was Wu Ji, and he could only remember how kind Wu Ji had been to him.

He knew perfectly well that aside from Wu Ji, there was another reason why he had turned the Heaven Palace Sect down, which was that he had been disgusted by the secret transaction between Zhao Luofeng, Ling Dong and the Demons.

However, he wasn't a fool. He was well-aware that if he ever dared to reveal the secret transaction between the Heaven Palace Sect and the Demons, the Heaven Palace Sect would hunt him down and kill him at all costs.

They might not even give Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue face.

“Is your master Wu Ji from the Cloudsoaring Sect?” Li Muiyang asked.

Nie Tian nodded briefly.

“Oh...” Li Muiyang said. “Wu Ji is for sure a great mentor. However, the Cloudsoaring Sect is nowhere near the top on the list of powerful sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars.”

Nie Tian smiled wryly without saying a word.

“Alright...” Li Muiyang changed the subject by saying with a hearty smile, “I admire your choice, even though I don't understand why you refused to join the Heaven Palace Sect. You should know that very few people would have the courage to resist such a strong temptation and turn the Heaven Palace Sect down. But you can rest assured. I'll communicate with the Heaven Palace Sect. I believe Zhao Luofeng will give me some face.”

“Many thanks, Senior Li,” Nie Tian said solemnly.

Li Muiyang shook his head repeatedly as he said with a solemn expression on his face, “No, no. Every Qi warrior in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, including me, should be thanking you. If you hadn't come to our realm and sealed the spatial rift, we couldn't possibly have stopped the Demons from swarming into our realm, relying only on our own power.”

He sounded very serious and sincere. “Nie Tian, we Qi warriors of the Realm of a Thousand Devastations owe you a big favor. And we'll keep everything you've done for us at heart. If you ever run into trouble with your cultivation or any other matter, you're welcome to come and look for me in the Realm of a Thousand

Devastations.”

Xing Huanyue from the Yin Sect nodded, indicating she shared the same attitude.

After pondering silently for a while, Nie Tian suddenly said, “Senior Li, Senior Xing, I have something I’d like to speak with you about in private.”

A surprised expression appeared on Li Muyang’s face.

The eyebrows of Xing Huanyue, who was standing in a graceful manner, flickered as she cast a look at Liu Ling and the others.

Then, the disciples of the Yin Sect got the message and flew away like weightless feathers under Liu Ling’s leadership.

Kong Hong and the other Yang Sect disciples also sensibly turned around and left the mountaintop without uttering a single word.

Afterwards, Li Muyang said in a soft voice, “Now you can go ahead and say what you need to say. I’ve given you my word; whatever you need, I’ll do everything within my power to help you. Just name it.”

Xing Huanyue nodded gently again.

Nie Tian’s expression grew serious as he weighed his choice of words. Then, he said, “Just now, the three marks I gained from the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace flew into the bellies of these three lofty mountain peaks. Through my connection with the fragmentary star marks, I saw a boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool in one of the mountain peaks.”

Taken aback, Li Muyang said, “Air-transportation spiritual tools are very precious and rare. Since it seems to have been put there by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, it is even rarer. Considering that you’ve collected all the fragmentary star marks, you are the successor chosen by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace. Therefore, that boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool should belong to you. We have no intention of taking it.”

Xing Huanyue, who seemed to be a woman of few words, once again nodded to show her stance.

“I see. But that boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool was only one of the things I discovered.” With these words, Nie Tian lowered his voice as he discretely glanced around, as if he was afraid that Qi warriors from the other sects from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations would overhear what he was about to say.

That was when he noticed that most of the Demons had already gone through the spatial rift and disappeared.

Many Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, including the disciples of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect, were still chasing after and attacking stray low-tier Demons.

Upon hearing his words, Li Muyuang’s expression flickered as he said, “Don’t worry. With me here, no one will be able to overhear our conversation.”

“Great.” Nie Tian put his heart at ease, and after a deep breath, he said with an increasingly serious expression, “I saw a crescent-moon-shaped crystal and a sun-shaped crystal in the bellies of the other two lofty mountain peaks. Within those two crystals were two scrolls, which I believe have some kind of connection with the Yin Sect and Yang Sect.”

Upon hearing these words, both Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue’s eyes instantly shone with the light of astonishment.

It seemed as if their eyes had become two chilly moons and two blazing suns at this moment.

Xing Huanyue, who hadn’t said a single word since she had descended in front of Nie Tian, started to breathe rapidly, as she was apparently deeply shaken.

“Wait, wait, allow me a moment,” Li Muyang said waving his hand. Then, under Nie Tian’s gaze, he took out a jar of hard liquor and gulped down the whole jar within seconds.

CLANK!

After he was finished, he cast the earthen jar aside, which shattered against a large rock.

With slightly flushed cheeks, Li Muiyang spoke while his eyes flickered with the light of excitement, and his breath stank of alcohol, "Alright, go on."

Xing Huanyue gazed at him with eyes that were as bright as the chilly moon.

"I'm positive that the scrolls within those two crystals have something to do with the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect. However, with the wisp of my soul that I sent into the bellies of the mountain peaks, I could only vaguely sense the aura of the moon and the sun from the crystals." Nie Tian's eyebrows furrowed. "I'm not sure how I can get them out of there for you."

Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue exchanged a glance.

The two of them didn't exchange a single word, but they seemed to understand what the other person was thinking through nothing but eye contact.

Xing Huanyue remained silent as Li Muiyang said, "Nie Tian, the scrolls within those two crystals are very important to our sects and the two of us. We'd really appreciate it if you could help us get them out of there.

"If you can do that, I promise you that if things between you and the Heaven Palace Sect ever get ugly, both our sects will go all-out to fight the Heaven Palace Sect for you!"

Xing Huanyue nodded vigorously.

"The reason why I'm telling you this is that I also want to help you get those crystals out of there," Nie Tian replied.

"That's great! Many thanks!" Li Muiyang said solemnly.

With a bitter smile, Nie Tian continued, "However, even though

I'm blessed with the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace, and I have three fragmentary star marks, I don't know how to do that. For some reason, I have a feeling that there might be some kind of connection between your sects and the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace."

Upon hearing these words, a surprised look appeared in both Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue's eyes.

It seemed that even they didn't know what kind of connection that might be.

"If you're not in a hurry to leave, why don't you stay in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations and make some attempts?" Li Muiyang requested sincerely. "Please try every possible method and see if you can get those crystals out of there, since they are simply too important for us."

"I will." Nie Tian gave his word. "I also intend to get that air-transportation spiritual tool left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace out of there."

"Okay, in the meantime, we'll both stay here with you for as long as you need," Li Muiyang said.

"Please do whatever you can," Xing Huanyue finally said softly.

It wasn't very long before all the stray low-tier Demons were slaughtered by the Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Afterwards, all the sectmasters of the other sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations came to express their gratitude towards Nie Tian. Then, after having a brief discussion with Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue about their upcoming plans, they all left.

Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue discussed a few things with their sect members before sending them away as well.

Meanwhile, the two of them stayed and waited for Nie Tian to solve the mysteries of those three lofty mountain peaks and fish the

crystals out.

Chapter 386: At Wits End

In the Realm of Mystic Heaven...

Zhao Luofeng, Ling Dong, and about ten powerful experts from the Heaven Palace Sect were gathered in the mountain valley where the spatial rift was. They all sat in silence, as if they were waiting for something.

The time they had set with Auden hadn't come yet.

Apparently, they were waiting for Auden to gather all the items they had demanded from him from the Fourth Demon Realm.

When the time came, they would march through the spatial rift into the mysterious spatial tunnel and finish the transaction with Auden.

All of a sudden, the Golden Chariot flew over at an extremely fast speed and stopped in front of them with Huang Fan standing in it.

In the dead-silent mountain valley, Zhao Luofeng and the others, who hadn't said a word in days, raised their chins and looked at Huang Fan with narrowed eyes.

Ling Dong frowned and asked, a displeased expression filling his face, "What are you doing here, Huang Fan? Why did you come back by yourself? Where's Nie Tian?"

Zhao Luofeng also seemed displeased as he said, "You shouldn't have returned by yourself."

Huang Fan stepped forward, bowed towards Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong, and said, "Nie Tian refused to come back with me."

Ling Dong burst into a flaming rage and shouted, "What good are you then? Your only job was to bring him back to us!"

Huang Fan forced a bitter smile. "Sorry for my incompetence."

Zhao Luofeng waved his hand, beckoning for Ling Dong to keep calm, before he said, "What happened exactly? Did the Realm of a

Thousand Devastations fall? Even though the Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm are by no means weak, they are no match for Auden and the Demons from the Fourth Demon Realm.

“I’m familiar with Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue’s strength. If they were willing to join hands and summon the other few sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, they should have been able to hold for some time.”

With these words, the tips of Zhao Luofeng’s eyebrows rose as he asked, “Did something happen to Nie Tian?”

“No.” A frustrated expression spread across Huang Fan’s face. “Nie Tian successfully sealed the spatial rift in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations before I left. The Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm suffered great casualties and retreated.”

He went on and explained the whole story to Zhao Luofeng and Ling Dong in great detail, not leaving out anything.

“What?!” Ling Dong let out a cold harrumph. “Nie Tian simply didn’t want to return to the Realm of Mystic Heaven with you?! What the hell was the kid thinking? As the most powerful sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars, we’ve already agreed to help him with everything once he joins us. What else could he possibly want?”

Suspicious clouding his mind, Zhao Luofeng asked, “Did you make yourself clear that, as long as he agrees to join us, we’ll spare no effort or resource to cultivate him?”

“I did. I said everything I was supposed to say.” Huang Fan sighed. “But he simply refused to join the Heaven Palace Sect. On the other hand, Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue were surprisingly unified on supporting Nie Tian. Since I didn’t think I would be able to forcibly take Nie Tian from them and bring him back to the Realm of Mystic Heaven, I could only come back by myself.”

Ling Dong grew furious as he said, “That kid witnessed our secret

deal with the Fourth Demon Realm! It's not exactly honorable. Once he reveals it, the entire Heaven Palace Sect will lose face! No matter what, we need to take him back and make him join our sect! Also, one of his three fragmentary star marks belonged to Ning Yang and the Heaven Palace Sect.

“Even though Ning Yang is dead now, we've got to take it back now that the three major spatial rifts are sealed!”

“But Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue took a very tough stance on the matter,” Huang Fan said in a soft voice.

Ling Dong snorted coldly as he inwardly marked the two of them as his enemies. “The Yin Sect and the Yang Sect! I can't believe that they would actually dare to oppose us because of Nie Tian! Ungrateful bastards! If we didn't arrange for Nie Tian to go to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, their people would have been living in misery and suffering right now!”

Zhao Luofeng remained silent for a while before turning to Ling Dong and saying, “Don't get so worked up yet. Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue aren't that easy to deal with, especially if they've teamed up.”

After taking a moment to calm himself, Ling Dong said, with strong killing intent in his eyes, “We can wait until we finish our transaction and get those crucial spiritual materials from the Demons from the Fourth Demon Realm. After that person in our sect finishes building his inner domain with those spiritual materials and enters the Void domain, I seriously doubt that Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue will still dare to shelter Nie Tian!”

Zhao Luofeng nodded. “That's exactly what I'm thinking.”

“Let them have their moment for now,” Ling Dong said with a cold snort.

...

In the mountain valley of the spatial rift in the Realm of a

Thousand Devastations.

An incomparably large formation of starlight was shining brightly, fully covering the mouth of the spatial rift.

At this moment, rivers of starlight had already stopped pouring down from the heavens.

Thanks to Nie Tian, the spatial rift which had ripped open because of the appearance of the Heaven Gate was finally completely sealed.

The Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm were no longer able to go through it and descend upon the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

The Qi warriors from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, on the other hand, would have no problem going through it into the Demons' realm, as long as they were confident in their strength.

However, the truth was, for thousands of years, only a handful of Qi warriors had dared to challenge the formidable Demons in their realms.

Most of those who had gone died miserable deaths there. Those who had come back alive were as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns. Furthermore, they all kept their mouths shut about what they had encountered in the Demon realms.

Nie Tian sat silently in the lotus position atop one of the extremely high mountain peaks. Due to the complete activation of the grand spell formation, his substantialized seven Heaven Eyes had once again become intangible.

The miraculous feeling of his perception improved by dozens of times was also gone. Like before, his seven Heaven Eyes recovered their original features.

With a thought, Nie Tian commanded them to fly towards the bellies of the lofty mountain peaks.

Meanwhile...

As Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue condensed their pure and refined soul power, two vague shadows flew out from the top of their heads.

These shadows were the embodiment of their soul consciousness, which seemed to have fascinating uses.

The shadows flew towards the two mountain peaks where the scrolls were hidden.

However, as soon as they made contact with the mountain peaks, a shudder ran through Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue's true forms.

As they went deeper inside, they could feel with great clarity that there were incomparably exquisite restrictive spells in the bellies of the mountain peaks.

Even though they were powerful middle Soul realm Qi warriors, their soul shadows couldn't penetrate the profound restrictive spells powered by star power.

The two of them made repeated attempts and exhausted all sorts of exquisite soul magics.

However, the restrictive spells within those mountain peaks continued to hold. No matter how hard they tried, they still couldn't send their soul shadows into the bellies of the mountain peaks.

After a long time, Li Muiyang and Xing Huanyue exchanged a glance as they reluctantly retracted their soul shadows.

"Whoever set up this grand spell formation must have been formidable, with a cultivation base among the three domains." Li Muiyang sighed with a frustrated expression on his face. "Considering our current cultivation bases, I'm afraid we won't be able to break those restrictive spells."

Xing Huanyue nodded silently.

At that moment, they noticed that Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes had also reached the mountain peaks.

Even though the Heaven Eyes were invisible to the naked eye, they were able to capture them with great clarity with their soul power.

They felt that Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes didn't seem to encounter any obstruction from the restrictive spells as they scattered and flew into the bellies of the three lofty mountain peaks.

Nie Tian's expression was as calm and peaceful as ever, as he didn't seem to experience any difficulty.

Li MUYANG smiled bitterly. "From the look of it, only those who receive the legacies of the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace will be able to probe into the bellies of those mountain peaks. Even though he is far from entering the Worldly realm, and his psychic power hasn't transcended into soul power, his awareness has no problem going into and out of the bellies of those mountain peaks."

XING HUANYUE didn't utter a word and let him mutter to himself.

Inside the bellies of those mountain peaks, Nie Tian's seven Heaven Eyes floated about like intangible oil lamps.

Through them, Nie Tian saw that the pagodas in the middle had already stopped glittering due to the fact that the spatial rift had already been fully sealed.

Only the innumerable complicated patterns carved into the internal walls would flicker with starlight every once in a while.

The boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool was still parked where he had found it, and the two crystals with two scrolls inside of them were still floating in their original places.

Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes hovered around the air-transportation spiritual tool and the two crystals, yet he didn't know where to

even begin.

Via his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian thoroughly examined the spacious insides of the mountain peaks, and discovered that they were tightly sealed, and he couldn't find a single rift that would allow any tangible items to go through.

That meant his Heaven Eyes could go in and out freely, but not the air-transportation spiritual tool, or the crystals, which were physical objects.

If he wanted to get them out of the bellies of the mountain peaks, he would have to either break the internal walls and create a tunnel that led to the outside world, or set up a teleportation portal within the bellies of the mountain peaks.

As for breaking the internal walls, he didn't have the ability to do that. Plus, he knew perfectly well that the insides of the mountain peaks were critical to keeping the spatial rift sealed. Once they were broken, there would be a possibility that the spatial rift would open again. Therefore, he would never do that.

As for setting up a teleportation portal, he didn't know anything about spatial energy and magics. Even if he were an expert in that area, there weren't any materials available in the bellies of the mountain peaks.

Just like that, his seven Heaven Eyes roamed about as Nie Tian wracked his brains for an answer. However, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't come up with a method to get those three items out of the bellies of the mountain peaks.

Chapter 387: Breakthrough

Time passed quickly and quietly like a running creek.

The raging demon Qi that had covered the mountain ranges in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations had already scattered and dissipated thanks to the sealing of the spatial rift and the purging of the starlight.

Nie Tian had already spent half a month sitting atop that mountain peak.

During this time, as the sectmasters of the Yang Sect and the Yin Sect, Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue never left Nie Tian's side, but rather guarded him silently.

However, even though Nie Tian had exhausted all methods, he hadn't been able to get the scrolls they desired out of the bellies of the mountain peaks.

Later, he had suspected that it might be his poor cultivation base that was stopping him from succeeding, so he refocused on practicing cultivation and tempering his spiritual sea with all kinds of materials.

About ten days passed. Practicing silently, he suddenly had a feeling that the vortexes of spiritual power within his spiritual sea had all reached their breakthrough points.

Then, as soon as he sensed that his spiritual power had built up to the critical point, he made the breakthrough smoothly with the help of his spirit jades, not encountering any obstacles in the process.

With Li Muyang and Xing Huanyue there, he couldn't find a safer location.

Therefore, with a peaceful mind, Nie Tian successfully entered the late Heaven stage two days later, and another vortex of spiritual power appeared in his spiritual sea, making the total rise

to six.

After making a minor breakthrough in his cultivation, he could feel that subtle but noticeable changes had happened to his spiritual sea, soul, and fleshy body.

Shortly thereafter, he once again sent his seven Heaven Eyes into the bellies of the mountain peaks, hoping to find a way to get them out of there.

However, he soon discovered that even though he had entered the late Heaven stage, there was still nothing he could do to secure the three items left there by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace.

Therefore, he went back to building up his strength.

During this period of time, people from the Yin Sect and Yang Sect would come and meet Xing Huanyue and Li Muyuang from time to time to discuss important matters regarding their sects.

The two of them would usually have brief discussions with them before urging them to leave, fearing that they might affect Nie Tian's cultivation.

These two Soul realm experts, who were among the top Qi warriors throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars, showed great patience. It seemed as if they were even willing to wait there for decades for Nie Tian to secure those two scrolls.

Two more months passed.

Nie Tian was still cultivating devotedly. Whenever an idea popped up in his head, he would try it out without any hesitation.

He no longer hung onto the profound use of the Fragmentary Star Incantation and star power.

Rather, he tried to derive enlightenment from the Flame Spirit Incantation and contemplate the possible use of his flame power, flesh power, and wood power. He even attempted to infuse these types of power into his Heaven Eyes in order to find a viable way

out of the bellies of the mountain peaks.

However, the numerous attempts he made only allowed him to gain deeper understandings of those different types of power.

The three miraculous items still didn't move a bit, or show any changes because of his efforts.

Even still, Li MUYANG and XING HUANYUE seemed patient enough to keep waiting.

After all, those two scrolls were simply too important for them.

The two of them already had a good idea of what those scrolls were. Before, they had assumed that their predecessors had lost them long ago, and they never thought that they had actually been in the bellies of those mountain peaks this whole time.

The discovery of the scrolls made them so wild with joy that they were willing to put many important matters on hold just to wait for Nie Tian to solve the mystery and get the scrolls out.

Even though they still had plenty of time and patience, Nie Tian's patience gradually wore out as he failed over and over again.

One day...

Nie Tian smiled bitterly after failing another time. He turned to the two and said, "Senior Li, Senior Xing, I'm afraid... I won't be able to get those scrolls out of there any time soon... Well, my grandfather and aunt are currently taking shelter in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. I haven't seen them for a long time, and I miss them quite a bit."

Li MUYANG didn't try to mask his disappointment as he said, "Yeah, I've figured that."

"I'm guessing only when I've refined the second fragmentary star mark, entered the Worldly realm, and transcended my psychic power into soul power, will I be able to solve the mysteries within these mountain peaks." Nie Tian pointed at his only chest and

continued, "I've only refined one of the fragmentary star marks. The second and third are branded on my chest, but I've still got to merge them with my flesh and blood. Perhaps that's why I can't figure out a way to fulfill your hopes now."

"We don't blame you for it." Li MUYANG nodded with an understanding expression on his face. "If you want to go to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, I'll arrange for someone to take you there. As for your family, if you want, you're welcome to bring them back to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. Both the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect will be happy to take them in."

"I think I'll make a decision after I meet with them," Nie Tian replied.

"Okay." Li MUYANG rose to his feet. "Not a word has come from the Heaven Palace Sect. I don't know what their plans are, and I didn't take the initiative to approach them. But considering you've turned them down, you'd better be careful. I'm afraid..."

"I understand," Nie Tian replied before Li MUYANG could finish.

The short-spoken Xing Huanyue looked deeply at him as she said, "Is there anything else we can do for you? Any special spiritual materials that you'll need for your future cultivation? Or medicinal pills?"

Li MUYANG smiled unrestrainedly. "She's right. Those are some practical things. Considering your current cultivation base, whatever you need, we'd probably be able to get them for you."

Nie Tian pondered for a moment before shaking his head and saying, "Nothing I can think of."

"Alright." Li MUYANG seemed a bit disappointed. "I'll arrange for your trip to the Realm of a Hundred Battles. Would you like a few people to escort you there? The Realm of a Hundred Battles is such a godforsaken place. Too many forces with complicated relations and wars lasting year-round, I'm afraid that you won't be able to

handle all that, considering your current cultivation base and strength.”

Nie Tian waved his hand. “It won’t be necessary. But thank you for your kind offer. I understand that I’ve already become a thorn in the flesh of the Heaven Palace Sect and that I need to be cautious. I’ll take on a different identity after I arrive in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. If members of your sect go with me, those who are trying to catch me will easily figure out who I am.”

“But I’m worried that something might happen to you.” Li MUYANG let out a sigh. “I guess I won’t be able to stop worrying about your safety before you enter the Profound realm.”

Deep down, he was also worried that, if Nie Tian got killed before he could help them secure those scrolls, he and Xing Huanyue would lose their hope of obtaining them.

In fact, the two of them had placed all their hopes in Nie Tian. They wished they could keep Nie Tian in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations forever.

Only by doing that would they be assured of his safety. However, since they both knew that would be against Nie Tian’s will, they were torn inwardly.

“Ever since I obtained those fragmentary star marks, every major sect, including the Heaven Palace Sect and your sects, have been searching for me, but I lived through that, didn’t I?” Nie Tian smiled with pretended ease.

“Alright then, I’ll make the arrangements.” Li MUYANG didn’t insist.

“I’ll arrange for him to go to the Realm of a Hundred Battles via one of our teleportation portals,” Xing Huanyue said with a plain tone.

Surprised, Li MUYANG shot a look at her before saying, “Okay.”

Immediately afterwards, Xing Huanyue summoned a Silver

Chariot that looked exactly the same as the one in Liu Ling's possession. She took Nie Tian on board and flew the chariot directly towards the Yin Sect.

When the war chariot was about 100 kilometers from the spatial rift, Xing Huanyue, who had been standing in front with her back facing Nie Tian, suddenly opened her mouth. "I heard that you were hiding in the Realm of Split Void, right?"

"Yeah." Confusion could be seen on Nie Tian's face.

"The Land of the Abandoned, Ash City, Shatter City, which one of those did you stay in?" Xing Huanyue asked softly.

"Shatter City," Nie Tian replied.

Xing Huanyue fell silent, gazing forward as she always had. A while later, she asked, "If you don't mind me asking, was the Hua Tian, who created a major stir in Shatter City not long ago, you?"

A shock ran through Nie Tian's body as she asked her question. He looked at her from behind and asked, "How do you so much about what happens in Shatter City?"

"Someone very important to me lives there," Xing Huanyue said with a plain tone.

However, in Nie Tian's eyes, she seemed somehow saddened.

"You're right, that was me," Nie Tian said.

Xing Huanyue's shoulders trembled slightly, as if she were being hit by huge waves of emotion. A complicated expression appeared on her front-facing face.

It seemed that she had questions to ask, but she was struggling to keep them in, an agonizing look filling her eyes.

A while later, she killed the silence. "If you don't mind, can you tell me about your encounters there?" She changed the direction of the conversation. Instead of asking about the things she wanted to know, she asked for Nie Tian to describe his encounters in Shatter

City.

“Oh, okay.” Then Nie Tian went on and explained how he had lived with Pei Qiqi and Li Ye after arriving in Shatter City, how he had worked for Li Ye, as well as his dangerous trips to the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Xing Huanyue kept silent with her back facing him the entire time.

By the time they were about to arrive in the Yin Sect’s spacious square, Nie Tian had finished telling Xing Huanyue about his encounters in the Realm of Split Void.

Apparently, something he had described or someone he had mentioned made Xing Huanyue quite emotional.

After some time, she turned around. With a expressionless face, she said, “The leader of the Fang, that Hunter organization you encountered outside Shatter City, her real name isn’t Song Li, but rather Dong Li. She’s a member of the Dong Clan in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

“Dong Baijie, who gave you the Star Stones and the mask, is her older brother.

“Dong Li has already returned to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, and so has Dong Baijie.

“It’s very likely that you’ll run into them on your trip to the Realm of a Hundred Battles. The way they treated you seemed rather strange. You’d better think about how you want to deal with them.

“Alright, it’s about time I sent you to the Realm of a Hundred Battles.”

Chapter 388: The Realm of a Hundred Battles

The Realm of a Hundred Battles was different from the other eight realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

In the other eight realms, human Qi warriors were the overlords. Their sects sat in different parts of the realm, and they took in disciples from all over the realm.

That wasn't the case in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

The Realm of a Hundred Battles was every bit as vast as the others, but it wasn't ruled by humans.

Rather, it was a paradise for spirit beasts.

It was said that the humans' territory only took up one tenth of the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

All the rest was roamed by all kinds of spirit beasts. If humans dared to enter those areas, they would often fall prey to spirit beasts.

There were only a handful of truly powerful spirit beasts in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars that possessed seventh grade bloodline power, making them as powerful as Soul realm human Qi warriors. However, most of them lived in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

The number of spirit beasts in the Realm of a Hundred Battles was almost as many as the number of the spirit beasts in the other eight realms combined!

Perhaps this was the reason why many areas of this vast realm were still waiting to be explored.

However, it would be extremely difficult for humans to take land from such a large number of formidable spirit beasts.

Up until this day, only four powers had dared to explore the lands of the Realm of a Hundred Battles and succeeded, which were the Dong Clan, the Cao Clan, the Gu Clan, and the Pill Pavilion Sect.

No one knew exactly when those four powers had been established in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, but through what must have been thousands of years of hard work, they only managed to explore and rule one tenth of the realm.

This was also why, when the Realm of Flame Heaven had faced the possibility of being stormed by the Demons, the sects in the Realm of Flame Heaven had all secretly transferred their core disciples to the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

After all, the other eight realms had long since been carved up and dominated by powerful sects with long histories like the Heaven Palace Sect, Ice Pavilion sect, Yin Sect, Yang Sect, and Flame God Sect.

If sects in the Realm of Flame Heaven dared to march over to their territories, it would be like taking prey out of tigers' mouths. One could imagine the results.

Therefore, when the entire Realm of Flame Heaven had wallowed in desperation, the only realm they had thought of had been the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

Since most of the boundless land in the Realm of a Hundred Battles had been inhabited by spirit beasts, if it had come down to the point where they had to flee the Realm of Flame Heaven, they would have been able to fight and take land from the spirit beasts as the Dong Clan, Cao Clan, Gu Clan, and Pill Pavilion Sect had done.

In Water Moon City in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

In a magnificent palace made of white jade, two people appeared in the center of an inter-realm teleportation portal.

One of them was Nie Tian, who was wearing the mask gifted to him by Dong Baijie, and the other was Liu Ling from the Yin Sect.

Water Moon City sat in the heart of the Realm of a Hundred Battles, and it had been built by the Dong Clan, Cao Clan, Gu Clan, Pill Pavilion Sect, and the fifth force in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce.

The Water Moon Chamber of Commerce had moved to the Realm of a Hundred Battles many years after the other four forces.

Furthermore, unlike the other four forces, the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce wasn't interested in exploring and expanding. They made their living by organizing trades and transactions.

It was under the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce's proposition that the five forces had joined hands and built Water Moon City from scratch.

Since the Realm of a Hundred Battles was rich in natural resources and spirit beasts, large numbers of Qi warriors from the other realms would come and explore it.

Those who could make it back to Water Moon City from the areas roamed by dangerous spirit beasts would usually gain huge fortunes from their trips.

Through the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce, they could trade in the spiritual materials they had looted for spirit stones, medicinal pills, spiritual tools, and cultivation incantations.

The Water Moon Chamber of Commerce, however, would accumulate fortune from those trades.

It had business relations with many major Qi warrior sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

Many precious materials unearthed in the Realm of a Hundred Battles were so rare that Qi warriors from the other realms would often have to resort to the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce

when they wanted to purchase cultivation or equipment forging materials that suited their special needs.

A girl in her twenties approached and greeted Liu Ling with a broad smile on her face the moment she saw Liu Ling walk out of the portal. “It’s been a while since you’ve come here, Aunt Liu.”

From the look of it, she was at the late Greater Heaven stage.

“Yeah, it’s been a while.” Liu Ling pursed her lips into a smile. “You’re always so pretty, Qin Yan.”

“How can I be when I’m in your presence?” After exchanging pleasantries, Qin Yan looked Nie Tian up and down with a measuring gaze before asking curiously, “Is he also from the Yin Sect?”

Wearing the mask Dong Baijie had gifted him, Nie Tian’s appearance looked unimpressive.

With a brief examination, Qin Yan reached the conclusion that Nie Tian was only at the late Heaven stage.

Qi warriors at his cultivation stage could be found everywhere, so he didn’t attract her attention in the slightest.

The only thing made her curious was that she knew that the Yin Sect seldom took in male disciples.

All of the Yin Sect disciples that had ever come to the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce were female like Liu Ling. Never had she ever met a male disciple of the Yin Sect.

“Wu Tian here isn’t a disciple from my sect.” Liu Ling smiled and avoided explaining Nie Tian’s identity in detail. Then, she asked, “I heard that, over the past year, many sects in the Realm of Flame Heaven have arranged for their disciples to move to Water Moon City, is that right?”

Qin Yan nodded. “That’s right. But now that the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven is sealed, many of them have already

moved back to the Realm of Flame Heaven.”

“Does the Cloudsoaring Sect still have people in Water Moon City?” Liu Ling asked.

“Cloudsoaring Sect?” Qin Yan’s eyebrows furrowed. “Wait a second. I’ll check for you.”

With these words, she took out a thick book and started searching in it under Liu Ling and Nie Tian’s gazes.

At that moment, after having glanced around briefly, Nie Tian’s eyes were caught by this pretty girl with a quiet quality, who was wearing a light-green dress.

Compared to Pei Qiqi’s beauty, which could overthrow cities, Qin Yan seemed slightly inferior.

However, she was still among the few females who Nie Tian had ever considered outstandingly beautiful. In his eyes, her beauty matched An Shiyi’s.

After some time, Qin Yan put the book away and raised her chin. “Yeah, some members of the Cloudsoaring Sect are still in Water Moon City.”

With these words, she noticed that Nie Tian, who was standing next to Liu Ling, was staring blankly at her.

Qin Yan frowned slightly, as she felt somewhat offended. However, she didn’t say anything in Liu Ling’s presence.

“Qin Yan, would you do me a favor and take Wu Tian to the Cloudsoaring Sect members’ residence?” As she spoke, she took out an exquisitely carved green jade pendant.

Since no spiritual power fluctuations could be detected from the fine pendant, it seemed to be an ordinary accessory.

Qin Yan smiled broadly as she straightforwardly accepted the pendant and put it away. “No problem,” she said.

“Thank you.” Liu Ling turned around and walked back into the

teleportation portal. “As you know, we just went through a bloody war against the Demons from the Fifth Demon Realm. Many troublesome matters still require my attention in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, so I’d better return now.”

“Sure, I understand,” Qin Yan said.

After Liu Ling disappeared from the teleportation portal and returned to the Yin Sect in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, the smile filling Qin Yan’s face gradually faded away.

Her attitude suddenly took a turn for the indifferent as she said, “Your name is Wu Tian, right? Come with me. I’ll take you to the residence of those people from the Cloudsoaring Sect.”

Nie Tian nodded silently before following her out of the grand palace made of white jade.

As soon as they stepped outside the palace, Nie Tian was drowned by all kinds of noise and people that stretched as far as his eyes could see.

He found himself standing in a square, where four teleportation portals were set up for people to teleport between different locations within the realm.

Many Qi warriors came and went through them, but Nie Tian didn’t know which part of the Realm of a Hundred Battles they led to.

Numerous lofty stone pavilions were scattered around the square, with Qi warriors entering and exiting all the time.

They walked through the square and followed a wide and deep street out of the headquarters of the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce.

Qi warriors of various cultivation bases could be seen sitting by both sides of the street. Apparently, they weren’t members of the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce.

Placed in front of them were all sorts of cultivation materials, medicinal pills, spiritual tools of various grades, and scrolls about spell formations.

Nie Tian found that the buildings on both sides of the street were much lower than the stone pavilions in the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce. Each of them had a banner hanging at their gate, stating their name and the scope of their business.

Some people would shop in stores, while others would stop by the curbside and choose materials and tools that suited their needs from the vendors' collections.

Compared to Shatter City, this city was much larger, freer, and more prosperous.

Before he could get a good look at everything, Qin Yan urged him to pick up the pace from ahead.

Nie Tian could only catch up.

About two hours later, Qin Yan led him to what seemed to be the end of the street. She pointed at a courtyard with a handful of low buildings and said, "People from the Cloudsoaring Sect live here. Help yourself."

With these words, she turned around and left.

Chapter 389: Water Moon Chamber of Commerce

Standing in front of the gate, Nie Tian glanced around.

He gazed back where he had come from, and saw that the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce was located at the center of Water Moon City. Even though he was observing it from a significant distance away, he could still see the towering stone pavilions and hear the hustling people.

From there to where he was standing, the buildings on either side of the street gradually became lower and shabbier.

Looking in the opposite direction, he found that the street ended a few courtyards down, leading to a boundless forest.

Unlike Shatter City, there were no solid city walls surrounding Water Moon City. Because of this, Qi warriors could come and go freely, without having to pay spirit stones.

However, people still had to pay a certain number of spirit stones to rent the stone pavilions in the city.

The closer the stone pavilions were to the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce, and the loftier they were, the higher the rent would be.

That meant the courtyards and houses that were the furthest from the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce, and sat on the perimeter of the city, would be the cheapest.

This courtyard sat right on the perimeter of the city, making it not only in poor condition, but also very unsafe for those from the Cloudsoaring Sect who lived in it.

On his way over, Liu Ling had briefly told him about the situation in Water Moon City.

He learned that since there weren't any defenses at the perimeter

of the city, every once in a while, spirit beasts would wander into the city.

Naturally, the courtyards and pavilions that sat on the edges were most likely to be attacked by those spirit beasts.

Eyebrows furrowed, Nie Tian muttered in a low voice before he knocked on the closely-shut wooden gate, “From the look of it, my grandfather and aunt’s condition in the Realm of a Hundred Battles isn’t as good as I thought.”

KREEEN!

The gate opened. Li Fan stuck his head out. Looking at Nie Tian with a vigilant expression on his face, he asked, “Who are you?”

Upon seeing that it was Li Fan, Nie Tian instantly felt relieved. He said, smiling, “Long time no see, Uncle Li!”

Even though he had altered his appearance, he hadn’t changed his voice.

Li Fan went blank for a few seconds. After spending some time to get a good look at him, he snapped to his senses.

“Get in, quickly!”

Shocked and elated, Li Fan immediately ushered him in and shut the gate.

A few disciples of the Cloudsoaring Sect were sitting in the middle of the courtyard, chattering with each other.

Luo Xin, Wu Xing’s disciple, was among them. Seeing that Li Fan had ushered a stranger into the courtyard, she hastily asked with a surprised expression on her face, “Who is he, Li Fan?”

Li Fan winked at her, saying, “Why don’t you come with me, Luo Xin? You guys mind your own business.”

Deeply confused, Luo Xin followed Li Fan and Nie Tian into a small room, where a number of prayer mats were placed on the floor.

After entering the room, Luo Xin snapped at Li Fan while looking Nie Tian up and down with a suspicious gaze, “What the hell are you doing?”

“Shh, keep it down.” Li Fan lowered his voice, beckoning for her not to attract the others’ attention. Then, he pointed at Nie Tian and said with his eyes filled with excitement, “Guess who this is.”

Luo Xin glared at Li Fan. “How should I know!?”

Nie Tian bowed briefly and said, “Long time no see, Big Sister Xin.”

Luo Xin instantly recognized his voice. “Nie Tian! You’re Nie Tian!?” Her face turned pale with shock as she asked, “How come you’re here?!”

“Shh! Be quiet!” Great concern could be seen on Li Fan’s face.

“Why? Am I not welcome here?” Nie Tian said softly with a smile.

Both Luo Xin and Li Fan suddenly fell silent.

Only after a few moments did Luo Xin say, “We heard that you went to the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. And we’re very grateful for what you’ve done for us. But word came from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations that... you turned down the Heaven Palace Sect’s offer and refused to join them. Is that right?”

After the spatial rift in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations had been sealed, Nie Tian had stayed there for about half a year, trying to figure out a way to secure those two scrolls for Li MUYANG and XING HUANYUE.

During that period, he had also successfully broken through into the late Heaven stage.

In the meantime, word of his deeds had also spread. Now every major sect in the Domain of the Falling Stars knew that he had

refused to become a member of the Heaven Palace Sect, as well as the fact that the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect had stuck their necks out protecting him.

From what Luo Xin and Li Fan could tell, now that Nie Tian had so daringly refused the Heaven Palace Sect, he'd better not leave the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. At least, with the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect there, the Heaven Palace Sect wouldn't have the audacity to march over there and act without scruples.

However if he left the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, once the Heaven Palace Sect learned of it, he would probably get into trouble.

Therefore, both of them were deeply surprised to see him.

"That's right," Nie Tian said, nodding. "I refused to join the Heaven Palace Sect... Anyhow, it's been more than two years since I saw my grandfather and aunt last time, so I've decided to come to see them."

"Oh, so that's how it is." Luo Xin sighed as her expression suddenly grew somewhat embarrassed. "But they're not here."

Nie Tian was taken aback. "Did they return to the Realm of Flame Heaven?"

Thanks to him, the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven had been sealed, and the Demons had been warded off.

After the desperate atmosphere that had pervaded the Realm of Flame Heaven for two years was finally relieved, most of the sects had already summoned their core disciples back.

Therefore, he assumed that Nie Donghai and Nie Qian had also returned to the Realm of Flame Heaven.

"Umm... No." Luo Xin said with a bitter expression.

Eyes narrowed, Nie Tian asked, "Then, what is it?"

"The thing is..." Li Fan started to explain.

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian had been taken to Water Moon City about a year ago when Nie Tian had still been in the Realm of Split Void.

Back then, the raging demon Qi had still devastated the Realm of Flame Heaven. Every sect had felt desperate, including the Cloudsoaring Sect.

Many disciples of the Cloudsoaring Sect had assumed that it would only be a matter of time before the Realm of Flame Heaven fell, and that it would be their responsibility to explore new land in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

Hence, soon after their arrival, they had started exploring the parts of the Realm of a Hundred Battles that teemed with spirit beasts. Technically, Nie Donghai and Nie Qian weren't members of the Cloudsoaring Sect, and thus they hadn't been obligated to join their operations.

Furthermore, Wu Ji had reminded them that they should just stay in Water Moon City and practice cultivation, and not be concerned with anything else.

However, since Nie Donghai's spiritual sea had been repaired, he had started to pursue a higher cultivation base again. Meanwhile, he was reluctant to practice cultivation with the resources Wu Ji had granted them, so he, Nie Qian, and a few other members of the Cloudsoaring Sect had gone on exploration trips to areas roamed by dangerous spirit beasts, hoping to loot valuables from the spirit beasts and trade them for spirit stones and cultivation materials.

In their first two trips, they had returned according to the plan, and their gains had been substantial.

Therefore, they had embarked upon a third trip with Jiang Lingzhu and a handful of others.

However, this time, they had been gone for a long time, and there was still no sign of their return.

Originally, considering that the crisis that hung over the Realm of Flame Heaven had already lifted, Luo Xin and Li Fan had prepared to gather the other disciples and return to the Cloudsoaring Sect.

However, since some of the disciples hadn't returned from their exploration trip, the two of them could only sit tight and wait for them to come back.

When they returned, they would gather everyone and return to the Realm of Flame Heaven via the inter-realm teleportation portal in Water Moon City.

Nie Tian's eyebrows knitted. "So you're saying that my grandfather and aunt are on an over-extended exploration trip? And Jiang Lingzhu is with them?"

"I'm afraid so." An apologetic expression filled Li Fan's face. "Nothing went wrong during their first two trips. Plus, your grandfather was very stubborn. I tried to persuade them not to go, but he just wouldn't listen."

"Do you have an idea of where they might be?" Nie Tian asked.

"Yeah, I do." Li Fan nodded before suddenly realizing Nie Tian's intention. "What? You want to go there?"

"Yeah, I fear for their safety. I've got to go check on them," Nie Tian said.

Li Fan and Luo Xin didn't speak for a moment. Instead, they gazed deeply at him.

They had heard that Nie Tian had killed the head of the Yuan Clan in Black Cloud City, who had been at the Greater Heaven stage, the same as them.

Complicated emotions rose in their hearts.

They knew that Nie Tian had only been at the Lesser Heaven stage when he had disappeared from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

However, two years later, when he had returned, he had actually managed to kill the Greater Heaven stage Yuan Fengchun. Both of them had been flabbergasted upon hearing this news.

After a moment of silence, Li Fan nodded, saying, “Luo Xin, you’d better go with Nie Tian. Lingzhu is also on the exploration team. My master is probably also worried about her safety. Bring them back as soon as you find them.”

“Sure, keep an eye on the disciples here, will you?” Luo Xin said.

“Don’t worry,” Li Fan replied. “Water Moon City is fairly safe. I’ll make sure nothing happens to them.”

“Thank you, Big Sister Xin,” said Nie Tian.

“Don’t mention it,” said Luo Xin.

Chapter 390: Gift

After stepping out of the shabby courtyard, Luo Xin led Nie Tian down the extended street.

The end of the street connected to a craggy stone path. Towering, ancient trees could be seen on both sides of the path.

Nie Tian noticed that there were indeed no walls surrounding Water Moon City. Anyone would be free to enter and exit the city.

He asked Luo Xin about the city, and she told him that people didn't need to pay a single spirit stone to enter Water Moon City.

Almost every pavilion and building in Water Moon City was for lease. The Water Moon Chamber of Commerce would take more than half of the rental income.

The rest would be split equally between the Dong Clan, Cao Clan, Gu Clan, and Pill Pavilion Sect. Every ten years, the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce would distribute their shares to them.

The headquarters of the Dong Clan, Cao Clan, Gu Clan, and Pill Pavilion Sect all sat in areas roamed by powerful spirit beasts.

Ever since they had assumed their foothold in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, they had never stopped exploring and expanding.

Of course, the four powers each had their own industries in Water Moon City, which was considered one of the most important trading centers in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

The four teleportation portals in the square in the center of the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce led to the Dong Clan, Cao Clan, Gu Clan, and Pill Pavilion Sect.

Any Qi warrior would be allowed to use those teleportation portals as long as they paid the required amount of spirit stones, so that they could explore or hunt in those regions.

Only members of the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce and

the four powers would be able to use the teleportation portals free of charge.

The destination of Nie Donghai's exploration team was in the Dong Clan's territory. The fastest and most convenient way to get there would be to pay the price and teleport to the Dong Clan via the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce's teleportation portal.

However, in Luo Xin's opinion, the price was too high, and the path to the Dong Clan's territory was fairly safe, so she chose to march there on foot.

By the time Nie Tian learned that they could have saved time and trouble by teleporting directly to the Dong Clan from the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce, and all it would cost were spirit stones, they were already far down the road.

Therefore, Nie Tian, who had abundant spirit stones in his possession, gave up on the idea of returning to Water Moon City to use their portals.

Along the way, they ran into quite a few Qi warriors.

Those who were returning from their trip with substantial gains would usually talk to each other with faces filled with smiles.

Those who hadn't gained anything valuable from their trip would usually seem rather crestfallen.

Nie Tian noticed that, either way, those Qi warriors were in a light mood, which was completely different from what he had seen in the Realm of Split Void.

Each and every Qi warrior who had come and gone between Shatter City and the Void Illusion Mountain Range traveled with great caution, as if they had been traveling on thin ice.

Part of the reason had been that numerous vicious outlaws and Hunters had been wandering outside Shatter City.

On the other hand, if the explorers came across others with

inferior cultivation bases along the way, they wouldn't mind killing and robbing them.

In general, after his experience in the Realm of Split Void, Nie Tian found the atmosphere in the Realm of a Hundred Battles to be very friendly. "Is my master in the Realm of a Hundred Battles?" Nie Tian asked.

"Martial granduncle rushed back as soon as he heard that you'd returned to the Realm of Flame Heaven." Luo Xin seemed surprised as she asked, "What? Didn't you see him in the Realm of Flame Heaven?"

Nie Tian seemed rather disappointed. "I see, so he's gone back."

Apart from his desire to see Nie Donghai and Nie Qian, the other reason why he had come to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, regardless of the threat from the Heaven Palace Sect and Li MUYANG and XING HUANYUE's desire for him to stay, was that he also wanted to visit Wu Ji.

He hadn't expected that Wu Ji had actually returned to the Realm of Flame Heaven upon learning about his return.

However, he had spent too short a time in the Realm of Flame Heaven. Even before the spatial rift had been fully sealed, Hua Mu had urged Huang Fan to take him to the Realm of Mystic Heaven.

"Where have you been over the past two years, Nie Tian?" Luo Xin asked curiously.

"I had to hole up somewhere after obtaining those fragmentary star marks." Nie Tian gave an secretive answer.

Luo Xin nodded and didn't pursue the answer, knowing that the topic was a bit sensitive. "You've become more and more mysterious over the years. There are only so many inter-realm teleportation portals in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven. After you left, those who owned them all said that you hadn't left via their teleportation portals.

“The seven sects helped the Heaven Palace Sect search through the entire Realm of Flame Heaven, but they still failed to find you.

“Then, people suspected that you had already left the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“After that, all the powerful sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars joined the search for you, yet none of them had any clue about your whereabouts.

“I simply can’t imagine what kind of method you used to hide from so many people.”

Luo Xin sighed, her heart filled with mixed emotions.

In her eyes, Nie Tian had already worked miracles by obtaining two fragmentary star marks from numerous talented young disciples from powerful sects during the Heaven Gate trial.

What amazed her even more was that he had actually managed to leap from the Lesser Heaven stage to the late Heaven stage in only two years’ time.

On top of that, he had also killed Yuan Fengchun, relieved the crises in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, and even turned down the Heaven Palace Sect’s handsome offer.

Now, she had an increasingly strong feeling that she couldn’t see through this young man, who was simply from an insignificant clan in Black Cloud City.

It would take about ten days for them to arrive in the Dong Clan’s territory. During this period of time, Nie Tian would take out and fondle the Flame Star, which Li Ye had custom-made for him, whenever he found a chance.

One day, the two of them grew tired, so they stopped and rested by the craggy stone path in the dense forest.

As Nie Tian once again took out his Flame Star and was about to

refine it with his spiritual power, he noticed that Luo Xin was going to recuperate with a few spirit stones she had taken out of her bracelet of holding.

When he had first met Luo Xin, she had been at the Heaven stage, but after the upheaval in the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range and the adversities in the Heaven Gate, she had advanced to the Greater Heaven stage.

However, she was still wearing a bracelet of holding, not a ring of holding.

The tip of Nie Tian's eyebrow rose as he handed a ring made of white jade to her. With a smile, he said, "Consider this ring of holding a gift from me, Big Sister Xin."

Since he had killed and looted a number of Greater Heaven stage experts in the Realm of Split Void, he had quite a few rings of holding in his possession, and thus he didn't even blink as he spared one for Luo Xin.

The value of one ring of holding equaled that of ten bracelets of holding. Even though Luo Xin was one of Wu Xing's disciples, she hadn't gathered enough fortune to switch her bracelet of holding for a ring of holding when she had entered the Greater Heaven stage.

"A ring of holding!" Luo Xin's eyes suddenly lit up right before she examined Nie Tian's wrist. With a surprised expression, she said, "You're still wearing a bracelet of holding yourself."

Nie Tian smiled, beckoning for her to come closer, before he opened the leather pouch on his waist.

Luo Xin looked down into it, and found to her astonishment that there were still a number of rings of holding inside.

"How come you have so many of them?" She grew even more astonished and confused.

"Well, that's not important," Nie Tian said.

Seeing that Nie Tian possessed so many rings of holding, Luo Xin accepted it straightforwardly. With a hearty smile on her face, she said, “From the look of it, you’ve gained quite some fortune over these years when you were gone. That being the case, I won’t stand on ceremony. Many thanks.”

After a brief rest, the two of them marched onward again.

It wasn’t long before they encountered two chattering and laughing Qi warriors.

They were heading towards Water Moon City. From the way they looked, they must have gained quite some fortune.

“Stop!” Luo Xin, who was walking normally, suddenly shouted, staring at a golden bracelet on one of the men’s arms, her expression turning very grim.

“What?” One of them answered.

Nie Tian wondered for a moment before he rapidly formed a Heaven Eye and used it to examine the men’s cultivation bases. One of them was at the early Greater Heaven stage, while the other was at the late Heaven stage.

The one Luo Xin had fixed her gaze on was at the late Heaven stage, and he seemed to practice metal power.

“Where did you get that golden bracelet?” Luo Xin asked with an ice-cold look in her eyes.

“Why do you ask?” The man seemed unable to make heads or tails of the situation.

The other man let out a cold harrumph and said, “It’s none of your business.”

“That bracelet belongs to a member of my sect,” Luo Xin blurted, staring at him. “I picked it out for him. Why is it on your wrist?”

Upon hearing these words, Nie Tian frowned.

The Greater Heaven stage man kept his chin high as he said with

a disdainful expression, “Even if it belonged to your friend, so what? Now that it’s in my brother’s possession, it’s ours now. What are you going to do about it?”

Without uttering a word, Nie Tian summoned his Flame Star. He blurred into a flash, and appeared in front of the Heaven stage man in the next moment.

Before he could react, the Flame Star swished down and tapped on the man’s left shoulder.

Flesh power and spiritual power of various attributes rushed out of Nie Tian and infused into the Flame Star.

In a split second, the Flame Star became as heavy as a thousand pounds. The man’s face flickered as he summoned all of his strength to withstand the terrifying pressure from the Flame Star.

BOOM!

With a loud crash, the man’s knees suddenly dropped to the ground, and he was kneeling in front of Nie Tian.

Without sparing the other man a glance, Nie Tian fixed his murderous gaze on the man. His eyes glittered like frigid stars as he said with an indifferent tone, “Tell us how you got the bracelet. Otherwise, neither of you shall leave.”

Chapter 391: Spirit Plant Mountain

As soon as Nie Tian heard that the golden bracelet belonged to a disciple of the Cloudsoaring Sect, his heart was clouded by a haze.

Even though Luo Xin didn't say it, he guessed that his grandfather had traveled with that disciple.

Seeing that disciple's important belonging in another's possession was enough evidence that something had happened to him. The same thing could have happened to Nie Donghai.

Therefore, he instantly grew furious.

As he infused the Flame Star with his flame power, it gradually became as hot as a heated iron.

Kneeling on the ground, the man experienced a scalding pain in his left shoulder, as if his shoulder were burning up.

He looked up at Nie Tian's face, and discovered that he was looking down at him like a bloodthirsty beast. Intense killing intent was on the verge of bursting out of his eyes.

His heart shivered as he was completely overwhelmed by Nie Tian's imposing manner. He hastily said, "I found it. That's all. I didn't know who it belonged to!"

The other man, who was at the early Greater Heaven stage, wanted to come to his brother's aid. However, Luo Xin was already standing in front of him.

After a brief examination, the man learned that Luo Xin was at the same cultivation stage as him, and Nie Tian, who was overtaking his brother, was at the late Heaven stage.

However, the intense, murderous aura unleashed by Nie Tian deeply shocked him, making him not dare to act rashly.

After the bloodbaths he had experienced in the Realm of Split Void, Nie Tian had long since grown numb when it came to killing

people.

Numerous bloody battles had made Nie Tian develop a fierce aura, which only those who lived their lives on the edge of life and death would have developed through reaping countless lives.

“Let’s talk it out!” The Greater Heaven stage man also grew weak. “We found that golden bracelet. That’s the truth. I swear to god that we didn’t kill the owner of that bracelet. If I lied about that, may I be struck dead by lightning!”

Seeing his yielding attitude, Luo Xin relaxed her tightened nerves.

She turned her head to check on Nie Tian, and she was somewhat chilled by his fierce killing intent.

She didn’t know what Nie Tian had gone through during the past two years, but Nie Tian’s current state really scared her.

“Nie... Umm... Wu Tian.” Luo Xin cleared her throat and continued, “They probably didn’t do anything. Let’s hear them out first.”

Nie Tian saw nothing but fear in his opponent’s eyes, so after a moment of silence, he slowly withdrew his Flame Star.

It had only been a few seconds, but the man’s garments had already been burnt off around his left shoulder.

Underneath the damaged garment, the flesh on his shoulder had already blackened. Grimacing, he hastily put a sizable distance between Nie Tian and himself, whereupon he took out a bottle of green liquid and applied it to his wound.

After a deep breath, he said with a bitter expression, “We found this golden bracelet in a forest of stone needles in the Dong Clan’s territory that we had visited to hunt spirit beasts...”

The two of them went on and explained the whole thing in great detail.

Afterwards, Luo Xin asked them a few questions and gained a rough idea of the location where they had found the bracelet. Then, she nodded, giving them permission to leave.

However, they didn't dare to move their legs even though Luo Xing had given consent. Instead, they looked at Nie Tian, their expressions insecure and uneasy.

For some reason, they felt a much stronger threat from Nie Tian than Luo Xin, even though they could tell that Nie Tian's cultivation base was clearly lower than Luo Xin's.

They didn't dare to move unless Nie Tian gave his consent.

"Alright, you can go now." Nie Tian said with a grim expression.

Only then did the two of them feel like they had been absolved of the death penalty. After intentionally circling around Nie Tian, they picked up their pace and ran at full speed towards Water Moon City.

"I fear for my grandfather and aunt's safety." Nie Tian's voice was full of concern.

"Let's get over there as quickly as possible then," Luo Xin replied.

"Let's go."

The two of them didn't dare to waste any time, and sprinted towards the location given by the two men at their fastest possible speed.

At that moment, Nie Tian was beating himself up for failing to get the boat-shaped air-transportation spiritual tool left by the Ancient Fragmentary Star Palace out of the mountain peak in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

If he had secured it, even if they didn't use the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce's teleportation portals, they would have been able to ride it to the forest of stone needles within a much shorter time.

...

After marching around the clock for seven days straight, they finally arrived in the Dong Clan's territory.

It was sundown. The foot of a magnificent mountain peak was lush with ancient trees. A number of lofty pavilions made of gray stone were well-spaced among them.

A clear creek threaded through the stone pavilions.

All sorts of rare spirit plants could be seen on the mountain peak behind the stone pavilions, along with the tiny figures of people who were cultivating and harvesting the spirit plants.

Luo Xin and Nie Tian stopped on a wide stone pavement which led to the front gate of the Dong Clan.

“The Dong Clan was the first of the four powers to move to the Realm of a Hundred Battles. They established their headquarters by this mountain peak, which they named Spirit Plant Mountain, for it's very well-suited for spirit plant cultivation. When the Dong Clan first arrived, there were only about a hundred kinds of rare spirit plants on Spirit Plant Mountain, and the mountain peak and its adjacent areas were roamed by herds of spirit beasts.

“Rumor had it that Spirit Plant Mountain was originally the habitat of a fierce sixth grade spirit beast. After the Dong Clan's arrival, they slaughtered the sixth grade spirit beast along with all the other spirit beasts in the vicinity, and took Spirit Plant Mountain for their own.

“Afterwards, they brought in many valuable and rare spirit plants from the other realms in the Domain of the Falling Stars and grew them on Spirit Plant Mountain. Gradually, the mountain became the Dong Clan's source of income.

“The annual revenue created by the spirit plants on Spirit Plant Mountain alone is easily over a million spirit stones.

“The Pill Pavilion Sect and many other alchemy sects in the

Domain of the Falling Stars come to purchase all sorts of rare spirit plants from the Dong Clan year-round.”

Standing in front of the Dong Clan, Luo Xin introduced the Dong Clan to Nie Tian, whose eyes were seized by the lofty stone pavilions.

From time to time, Qi warriors would walk past them on their way into or out of the Dong Clan.

Most of those who were going towards the Dong Clan seemed rather bedraggled, as if they had just survived bloody battles, and were hoping to return to Water Moon City via the Dong Clan’s teleportation portal.

However, those who were coming out of the Dong Clan’s front gate were usually in high spirits. They seemed to be exploration teams from Water Moon City who were planning to hunt spirit beasts in the area.

“The Dong Clan...” Nie Tian muttered to himself as he thought of Dong Baijie and Dong Li.

In the Realm of Split Void, he had deeply humiliated Dong Li by ruining her plan and killing many of her men.

However, later when Dong Baijie had sought him out in Shatter City, not only had he not held him accountable for his deeds, but he had even given him Star Stones and a mask as gifts, which confused him deeply.

Was it possible that Dong Baijie hadn’t had a chance to meet with Dong Li and learn about the friction between them before his encounter with him?

Furthermore, since Dong Li was an important member of the Dong Clan, why in the world did she take on a fake name and lead a group of powerful experts to the Realm of Split Void, where they had conducted degrading Hunters’ business?

“How powerful is the Dong Clan?” Nie Tian asked.

“Very powerful!” Luo Xin seemed to feel deep veneration. “It’s said that the patriarch of the Dong Clan has already stepped into the Soul realm. Even in the entire Domain of the Falling Stars, he’s among the most powerful experts. However, supposedly, he practices secluded cultivation in the mountains all year-round, and seldom returns to the Dong Clan.”

“Soul realm!” A shudder ran through Nie Tian’s body.

No wonder Dong Li and her Fang members had dared to do whatever they liked near Shatter City without showing the slightest fear towards the Blood Skull.

Based on what Nie Tian knew, Cai Lan, the head of the Blood Skull, was only at the Profound realm, inferior to the Dong Clan’s patriarch’s cultivation base.

Dong Li’s daring actions in the Realm of Split Void all made sense now. Dong Li was backed by a Soul realm patriarch and a powerful clan, and her sect’s Spirit Plant Mountain was a well-known treasured land in the Domain of the Falling Stars.

With these thoughts, Nie Tian muttered to himself, “Hopefully, we won’t run into Dong Li.”

“Do you know each other?” Luo Xin seemed surprised. “She is the precious daughter of the Dong Clan’s clanmaster. I’ve heard that she has recently returned from her tempering trip to another realm, and she has just broken through to the Greater Heaven stage. If you know her, maybe you can talk to her. It would be a lot easier if she agrees to help us search for your grandfather and aunt.”

Nie Tian’s face turned grim as he shook his head and said, “No, I don’t know her.”

If he wasn’t aware of the relationship between Dong Baijie and Dong Li, Nie Tian might have put every scruple aside and gone to ask Dong Baijie for help, since this concerned his grandfather and

aunt's safety.

However, Dong Baijie was Dong Li's older brother...

“Oh, okay, never mind.” Disappointment could be seen on Luo Xin's face. “So, there's no need to go to the Dong Clan now. I know the location. Let's go there directly.”

“Sure, let's go.” With these words, Nie Tian and Luo Xin turned around and walked away.

At that moment, a Qi warrior walked past them. As he did, he took a few glances at Nie Tian. A surprised look could be seen in his eyes.

The man picked up his pace and scurried into the Dong Clan. He asked for Dong Baijie, but was told that he had gone to the Pill Pavilion Sect. Then, he went to visit Dong Li without any delay.

In a luxurious side-room, Dong Li and her loyal subordinate, Han Mu, were having a discussion.

“What's the matter?” Dong Li asked the man as she stretched her curvaceous waist, a listless expression filling her gorgeous face, which was completely different from the one Nie Tian had seen in the Realm of Split Void.

Apparently, Dong Li had changed her appearance when she had been in the Realm of Split Void.

This was how she really looked.

“Miss, I just saw a man wearing one of our young master's masks,” The man said very respectfully. “I've seen young master wear that mask before, so I recognized it at first sight.”

“Nie Tian!”

Dong Li and Han Mu called out simultaneously.

Chapter 392: Spirit Beasts Feeding Area

Dong Li, who had been curled up in a fancy chair, suddenly sprang to her feet.

In the somewhat dimly-lit room, her eyes gradually lit up like two gems under a harsh light.

She hadn't put on any makeup, yet she still looked radiant and charming.

“Where did he go?” Han Mu asked with a grim expression.

“He went towards the east with a young woman just now,” The man answered respectfully.

After a moment of pondering, Dong Li waved her hand, gesturing for the man to leave.

The man bowed again and rapidly backed out of the room.

“Miss, young master seems to attach great importance to Nie Tian. He not only gave him those Star Stones, but also a mask which had been in his collection for years.” Han Mu weighed over his selection of words as he continued, “I know he ruined your plans in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, but young master made it clear that we should not seek trouble with him...”

Dong Li let out a cold snort and blurted coldly, “These are different times! Back when we were in the Realm of Split Void, the three major spatial rifts were still yet to be sealed. He was the key to that. Every sect in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations had placed all of their hopes in him, since he was the one with all the fragmentary star marks.

“But the spatial rifts are all sealed now. He's not as valuable as he was before.

“Furthermore, no one has seen Ning Yang anywhere, yet Ning

Yang's fragmentary star mark ended up in Nie Tian's hands. He might have killed Ning Yang for it, who knows?

“Originally, if he behaved obediently and joined the Heaven Palace Sect, he would have been under the Heaven Palace Sect's protection. Even if he came to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, our clan would have to give face to the Heaven Palace Sect and keep our hands off him.

“However, he happened to turn the Heaven Palace Sect down!”

After a brief pause, Dong Li raised her voice. “Now that he doesn't have the Heaven Palace Sect to back him, why should we be afraid of him or the puny Cloudsoaring Sect?!”

“Sure, he might have already merged those three fragmentary star marks with his flesh and blood, and we won't be able to strip them away from him. But if we can capture him alive and imprison him in the Dong Clan, I'm sure we'll come up with ways to force him to write down the profound knowledge recorded in them for us.

“Secret powerful magics are recorded in those fragmentary star marks. If our clan can gain those legacies secretly, given a little time, we might soon rise to prominence, and become the most powerful Qi warrior force in the Domain of the Falling Stars. We may even stand up to the Heaven Palace Sect as equals!”

Upon hearing her words, Han Mu was slightly swayed.

“Aside from all that, he dared to sabotage my operations in the Realm of Split Void. Now that he's come to my turf, how can I let him off so easy?” The thought of how Nie Tian had humiliated her in the Realm of Split Void made Dong Li fume with anger.

As a member of the Dong Clan, she couldn't do whatever she liked in the Dong Clan's territory. Therefore, she could only go to the Realm of Split Void, where the environment was much more violent and unruly, so that she could temper herself with an

identity as a Hunter.

Every senior in the Dong Clan had secretly kept close watch on her behavior in the Realm of Split Void.

Whether or not she could rise to a lofty position in the Dong Clan in the future had depended on her resourcefulness.

At first, she had done well in the Realm of Split Void. She had continuously accumulated fame and fortune. Even the subordinates she had brought with her had become stronger and stronger.

Then, Nie Tian had come along, ruined her operations in the dense forest in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, and made her suffer great losses.

Later, as she had mobilized the other Hunter organizations to hunt Nie Tian down, she had suffered more defeats. Word of her repeated failures soon found its way to the seniors in her clan. Those who had placed huge hopes in her had felt deeply disappointed.

Even her own father came to talk to her in private, blaming her for not handling the situation well.

In her eyes, this was all because of Nie Tian!

Now that Nie Tian actually dared to come to the Realm of a Hundred Battles, and even appear in the Dong Clan's territory, she would never let the opportunity slip away.

“What's your plan, Miss?” Han Mu asked.

“I've just entered the Greater Heaven stage and obtained a spiritual tool that suits me. It's about time I stretched my legs.” Dong Li stepped towards a desk and started making adjustments to her appearance under Han Mu's gaze.

Moments later, she turned around with an ordinary-looking face, as if she had become someone else.

“We witnessed what Nie Tian was capable of in the Realm of Split Void.” Han Mu said with a prudent attitude. “I don’t think you should go by yourself. It won’t be safe.”

“This is the Dong Clan. I have all the resources I need,” Dong Li said confidently. “As long as I can find him and get close to him, I will be able to capture him alive without attracting others’ attention.”

Nie Tian had no idea that the mask he had received as a gift from Dong Baijie had already exposed his identity, let alone the fact that Dong Li had already locked onto him.

Since he and Luo Xin left the Dong Clan, the two of them had been marching at a fast pace.

Considering there was a large amount of human activity within a 50 kilometer radius around the Dong Clan, not many spirit beasts could be seen in the area.

However, as they marched out of that safe circle into the boundless heaven and earth, they went deeper and deeper into the spirit beasts’ feeding area.

They would constantly come across bloodstained skeletons along their way, which had apparently belonged to humans. Dried blood could also be seen on the ground every now and then.

When spirit beasts attacked and killed human Qi warriors, they would usually eat all of their flesh and pick the bones clean.

However, when humans slaughtered spirit beasts, they would gather everything, including the spirit beasts’ flesh, bones and even internal organs, because every part of the powerful spirit beasts in this region could be used as rare spiritual materials.

As they marched deeper into the wild, Nie Tian finally understood why people said the Realm of a Hundred Battles was a paradise for spirit beasts, and that the four forces, including the Dong Clan, had only explored one tenth of the total land.

The reason was that there were simply too many spirit beasts in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, and a large proportion of them were high grade, powerful ones.

They encountered several groups of human Qi warriors along their way. What they saw and heard were usually the images and sounds of Qi warriors being slaughtered by spirit beasts.

They seldom witnessed humans killing spirit beasts.

Bent on getting to the forest of stone needles as soon as possible, Nie Tian unleashed his seven Heaven Eyes and used them to scan his surroundings.

Every one or two kilometers, they would capture images of spirit beasts. However, those spirit beasts were very different from the ones in the Realm of Split Void.

The majority of the spirit beasts in the Realm of Split Void had died after their spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth had been tainted. Those that had survived had preferred to travel alone, rather than in herds.

However, most of the time, Nie Tian discovered here via his Heaven Eyes that spirit beasts of the same species tended to travel in groups.

Since they foraged together, once they encountered human Qi warriors, they would usually outnumber them, and thus have upper hand from the beginning. Humans usually ended up being the losing and fleeing side.

Fortunately, thanks to his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian was able to avoid them.

Therefore, Luo Xin followed him, and their journey turned out to be rather smooth and peaceful. They managed to arrive in the forest of stone needles without running into any powerful spirit beast herds.

Upon their arrival, Nie Tian scanned the vicinity via his Heaven

Eyes, and noticed that the so-called forest of stone needles was located in a mountain valley.

The strangely-shaped stone needles were actually huge rocks that had fallen from the lofty mountain peaks on the perimeter of the valley due to frequent earthquakes.

Stone needles that were easily dozens of meters high almost filled the entire mountain valley. Noticeable bloodstains could be seen on some of them.

Nie Tian scanned the vicinity via his Heaven Eyes, and soon noticed that a team of Qi warriors was in a corner of the mountain valley.

They seemed to have just survived a fierce battle against a powerful spirit beast, and luckily, they turned out to be the winning side.

At this moment, they were cutting the spirit beast's corpse up with sharp knives.

However, not much excitement and elation could be seen on their faces.

Someone was even sobbing, standing next to the body of a man who seemed to have been on their team.

“I've detected a group of people. Let's go and ask them.” With these words, Nie Tian led Luo Xin directly towards the group's location.

Having traveled together for so long, Luo Xin had long since gotten used to Nie Tian issuing orders.

The fact that they hadn't encountered any herds of powerful spirit beasts under Nie Tian's guidance made Luo Xin realize that Nie Tian must have some unique way of steering clear of them.

She was curious about his method, yet she enjoyed having Nie Tian make the decisions so that she wouldn't need to worry about

it.

It wasn't long before the two of them arrived at the group's location.

Upon seeing Nie Tian and Luo Xin's sudden appearance from behind huge, pointy stones, the six survivors were instantly alarmed.

The four of them who had been harvesting parts from the spirit beast also stopped their work, and quietly turned the knives they were using to cut the spirit beast towards Luo Xin and Nie Tian.

A tall, middle Greater Heaven stage Qi warrior let out a cold harrumph as he berated the sobbing young woman, "Would you stop already?! You knew very well that any of us could die out here. I made sure you knew that before you came on board! Now Little Yi died today. I might die tomorrow. The same goes for you!

"We're not from those powerful Qi warrior sects with long histories. Since we chose the path of cultivation, we have no one but ourselves to depend on!"

From the look of it, the pitiful young woman and the passed Little Yi had been a couple.

After being berated by the man, she struggled to hold her tears back, but her shoulders couldn't stop trembling.

"How can we help you?" The middle Greater Heaven stage man took a glance at Nie Tian and Luo Xin. Seeing that Luo Xin, the stronger of the two, was only at the early Greater Heaven stage, he put his mind at ease and said with a slow pace, "Spirit beasts can be found everywhere in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. Anyone is welcome to hunt and kill them, as long as they can.

"However, if you two want to snatch the spoils from our hands, you don't seem to be strong enough."

The atmosphere in the Realm of a Hundred Battles was much friendlier than the Realm of Split Void.

That was because spirit beasts were the overlords here.

Once human Qi warriors left the Dong Clan's, Gu Clan's, Cao Clan's, and Pill Pavilion Sect's territories, they would instantly become the weaker side.

For this reason, most of the exploration teams that came out into the wild wouldn't start fighting each other the moment they met like in the Realm of Split Void.

On the contrary, most teams would be friendly with each other when they met in dangerous regions dominated by powerful spirit beasts. On many occasions, they would even join hands and deal with spirit beasts together.

Of course, nothing was for sure.

Sometime, people who had high opinions of their own strength would lay murderous hands on their own kind in desolate and uninhabited regions.

Luo Xin took one step forward and said sincerely, "Don't get us wrong. We can see that you lost a friend to kill this spirit beast. We don't intend to take your spoils. We only came because we heard your battle and wanted to see if you needed help. We didn't expect that your battle would already be over when we got here."

Upon hearing her words, the man who seemed to be the leader eased his tension and said with a sad look in his eyes, "That's very kind of you. But thanks. Our battle is finished."

Luo Xin continued with a bitter expression, "We are from the Cloudsoaring Sect in the Realm of Flame Heaven. Some of our members marched to this area several months ago. They were seen in this forest about two weeks ago. One of them might have already been killed by spirit beasts. Someone found his most important spiritual tool. Have you seen them in the vicinity?"

"A team from the Cloudsoaring Sect, from the Realm of Flame Heaven?" The man thought for a moment. "Was a girl named

Jiang Lingzhu on the team?”

Luo Xin’s eyes lit up. “Yeah, she was! Did you meet them?”

The man nodded. “As a matter of fact, we did. What a coincidence!”

Chapter 393: Good Will Be Rewarded with Good

Upon hearing that Nie Tian and Luo Xin were from the Cloudsoaring Sect, the man's attitude turned even friendlier. "The Cloudsoaring Sect... That Nie Tian is a disciple of your sect, right?"

Luo Xin went blank for a moment before she turned to shoot Nie Tian a glance, then nodded at the man. "You're right, Nie Tian is a disciple of our sect."

"Hahaha." Nie Tian laughed broadly.

For some reason, the gazes of the few Qi warriors standing by the man's side also grew significantly warmer.

The man seemed increasingly relaxed as he said, "My name is Xu Shan, and I'm from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations. The situation in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations was terrible when we left for the Realm of a Hundred Battles. Many of us have families in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, and we've been worried about their safety since the day we left.

"Only recently did we learn from other explorers who had come here to hunt spirit beasts that, thanks to Nie Tian, the spatial rift in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations has been sealed.

"By doing that, Nie Tian has saved our family and friends in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations from destruction.

"Even though we haven't had a chance to return to the Realm of a Thousand Devastations and meet him in person, we're all very grateful to him inwardly. This was why when we met those from the Cloudsoaring Sect not long ago, we got along very well. We even helped them."

As Xu Shan spoke, Luo Xin constantly turned her eyes to look at Nie Tian with a faint smile at the corner of her mouth.

Nie Tian also inwardly marveled at the coincidence, but he quickly changed the subject by asking, “Where did you meet them? And when?”

Xu Shan did the math in his mind before saying, “About seven or eight days ago, I’d say. When we discovered them, they were engaged in a fierce fight with spirit beasts. The situation wasn’t in their favor. Originally, we didn’t want to get into trouble ourselves. Only when we overheard that they were from the Cloudsoaring Sect did we rush to their aid.”

Upon hearing these words, both Nie Tian and Luo Xin secretly let out a sigh of relief.

According to the information from the brothers they had encountered earlier, something must have happened to Jiang Lingzhu, Nie Donghai, and the others in this forest of stone needles.

At first, they had thought the whole team might have died.

After hearing Xu Shan’s words, they realized that even though someone on the team might have died, their casualties shouldn’t have been that great.

“Was there an old man on the team? In the Greater Heaven stage...?” Nie Tian tried his best to describe Nie Donghai.

Xu Shan nodded saying, “Yeah, there was. He left me a deep impression. I’m sure he was there.”

Realizing that Nie Donghai was still alive, Nie Tian put his heart at ease.

Then, Luo Xin asked him some more questions, and found out where Nie Donghai, Jiang Lingzhu and the others had last been seen.

Afterwards, she asked, “So, are you going back to your realm?”

Xu Shan answered with a smile, “Yeah, we’ve spent too much

time in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. Although we've lost people, we've also gained a lot in many aspects. But now that the Realm of a Thousand Devastations is safe again, we're ready to go back."

"Thank you for giving a hand to our friends from the Cloudsoaring Sect, and for telling us so much." Luo Xin expressed her sincere gratitude.

Xu Shan waved his hand repeatedly as he said, "Don't mention it. We only did what we were supposed to do. If you see Nie Tian in your sect later, please thank him for us. He was the reason why the crisis that loomed over the Realm of a Thousand Devastations was finally relieved. Our friends and family are alive because of him. We're very grateful to him."

"I will!" Luo Xin said solemnly.

"Alright, good luck finding your friends. We've got to get back to this spirit beast." Xu Shan said with a smile.

"See you!" Luo Xin said, waving her hand.

After they were a sizable distance away from Xu Shan and his team, Luo Xin turned to Nie Tian and said with a hearty smile, "Good is always rewarded with good. If you hadn't saved the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, Xu Shan and his team probably wouldn't have lent Lingzhu and the others a hand when they were attacked by spirit beasts."

Nie Tian nodded. "I admit it, the sects in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations aren't bad. They were grateful for what I've done, and left me with a good impression."

The images of Li Muyang, Xing Huanyue, and the members of the Yin Sect and the Yang Sect defending him against the low-tier Demons with their own lives were still fresh in Nie Tian's memory.

The other sects had also come to thank him properly before withdrawing from the spatial rift.

Li MUYANG and XING HUANYUE had even stood up against the Heaven Palace Sect for him.

All those things had given him a good impression of the Qi warriors in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

Now, Xu Shan and his team, who were also from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations, had reached out to Jiang Lingzhu, Nie Donghai, and the others after learning that they were from the Cloudsoaring Sect.

This made him sigh over how devoted and loyal the people from the Realm of a Thousand Devastations were.

“Who was the leader of the team?” Nie Tian asked.

“Li Fan’s junior martial brother, Zhan Yuan, who is at the middle Greater Heaven stage,” Luo Xin said without holding anything back. “In the Cloudsoaring Sect, elder Feng He, elder Zhao Tong, elder Chen Musheng, and their respective disciples were the ones who weren’t very happy about your grandfather.

“As you know, my second senior martial brother, Shi Yi, was killed by people from the Ghost Sect during the upheaval in the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range. Actually, back then, my master’s attitude towards you had already changed, and he had already untied the knot in his heart about your mother’s death.

“Shortly after that, my eldest martial brother, Liu Yan, was killed by Tang Yang from the Flame God Sect during the Heaven Gate trial...”

Luo Xin’s expression became saddened. “Now, I’m his only living disciple. He has long since stopped blaming the Nie Clan and your grandfather for what happened to your mother. Your grandfather will tell you about it after we find them.”

Nie Tian nodded briefly.

Luo Xin’s master was Wu Xing, who had also been his mother’s master. He had learned about it from Nie Donghai and Liu Yan,

who had been very kind to him since he had been little.

The thought of Liu Yan and Shi Yi's deaths, and that Luo Xin was Wu Xing's only living disciple now, saddened Nie Tian as well.

However, Liu Yan's death saddened him the most. It had been Liu Yan who had brought that dragon bone to the Nie Clan, which had later completed the Flame Dragon Armor and saved his life over and over again.

"When I'm strong enough, no matter where Tang Yang hides, I'll hunt him down and kill him myself!" He vowed in a low voice.

Luo Xin nodded. "I believe that day will come. Zhan Yuan is one of our sectmaster's disciples, so she naturally went with him on this exploration trip. Disciples of elder Feng He, elder Zhao Tong, and elder Chen Musheng went to the Gu Clan, the Cao Clan, and the Pill Pavilion Sect respectively. Their mission was to find an ideal location for our sect to rebuild.

"They also had people killed by spirit beasts. Some of them have returned to Water Moon City after learning that the spatial rift in the Realm of Flame Heaven was sealed. Some haven't.

"The Realm of a Hundred Battles is a paradise for spirit beasts. Everyone understands what they will face on missions here.

"I believe your grandfather is fine. All we need to do is to find him as soon as possible and inform him of the current situation, and then we'll return to the Realm of Flame Heaven together."

Luo Xin tried to stop him from worrying too much as she pointed out the directions and Nie Tian led the way.

As they marched deeper into the wild, Nie Tian noticed more and more encounters between spirit beasts and Qi warriors via his Heaven Eyes.

He found that humans only won an average of four out of ten encounters at the most.

Most of the time, humans would suffer miserable losses. Facing herds of powerful spirit beasts, many human exploration teams would scatter and flee.

Many of them had come for spiritual materials, while others had come for spirit beasts. However, a large number of them ended up in the spirit beasts' bellies.

Nie Tian didn't interfere with any of their battles, regardless of which side was winning. He chose to steer clear of them in order to focus all of his time and energy on finding his grandfather and aunt.

The strong preyed on the weak. He had already grown used to it. Compared to these battles, the ones in the Realm of Split Void had been far crueler and nastier, yet he had managed to pull through.

...

One night, right before they were about to arrive at the location given by Xu Shan, Nie Tian noticed via one of his Heaven Eyes that three spirit beasts were attacking a handful of humans.

The humans all practiced the same sword incantation, and the strongest of them was only at the early Greater Heaven stage.

Originally, Nie Tian planned to stay out of it. However, he suddenly noticed that the sword incantation they practiced was very similar to Xue Long's.

"Hmm?!" After observing for a little longer, he was convinced that the sword incantation they practiced was identical to Xue Long's.

Therefore, he led Luo Xin to the location where the battle was taking place, and joined the battle without any hesitation.

With their help, the humans soon slaughtered the two third grade Gold Horn Beasts and one fourth grade Golden Stone Rhino.

"Thank you very much." The early Greater Heaven stage man

expressed his gratitude immediately after the battle ended. “You can have the fourth grade Golden Stone Rhino. We’ll just take these two Gold Horn Beasts.”

Nie Tian shook his head. “That won’t be necessary... What’s your relationship with Xue Long?”

Chapter 394: Rule Breakers

“Xue Long? I don’t know such a man.” The early Greater Heaven stage man said with a face filled with confusion, as if he had never heard that name before.

Nie Tian hesitated for a moment and suddenly realized that Xue Long must have been a fake name, but he didn’t know his real name.

However, he was one hundred percent sure that the man in front of him was somehow related to Xue Long, for they practiced the same sword incantation.

Looking at the man, Nie Tian explained, “I know a man. He’s at the late Greater Heaven stage. The sword incantation he practices is exactly like yours. And he told me that his name was Xue Long. I only helped you for his sake. He did me a big favor once.”

“My name is Xu Hu, and we’re from the Xu Clan. Back in the day, our clan served the Cao Clan. However, due to various reasons, our clan declined, and now only it exists in name.” The Greater Heaven stage man fell silent for a while before continuing, “If my speculations are correct, the person you were talking about is not Xue Long, but rather Xu Long. He’s... my eldest brother.”

“That’s probably it,” Nie Tian said, nodding.

“Where did you meet my eldest brother?” Xu Hu asked.

“Umm... not in the Realm of a Hundred Battles,” Nie Tian replied.

Xu Hu smiled bitterly. “That’s about right. He has long since left the Realm of a Hundred Battles after certain things happened.”

Nie Tian didn’t show much interest in what had happened to the Xu Clan. He had only helped them because he thought he owed it to Xue Long. “Well, have you seen a group of people from the Cloudsoaring Sect in the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

“No, we haven’t,” Xu Hu shook his head.

“We were told about a place...” Luo Xin jumped in and described the location Xu Shan had told them about to Xu Hu. Afterwards, she asked, “Have you been to that area?”

Xu Hu’s expression suddenly flickered. He glanced around somewhat cautiously, then said in a low voice, “The place you are talking about is called Black Water Lake. There aren’t many spirit beasts in that area, but recently a bunch of cruel and merciless foreign Qi warriors have appeared and killed many fellow explorers there.”

Luo Xin’s expression flickered. “How do you know that?”

Fear could be seen in Xu Hu’s eyes as he explained, “We just came back from there. We saw quite a few corpses of exploration teams just like ours. As you know, if people are attacked and killed by spirit beasts, their bodies are picked clean with no flesh left behind. The bodies of those who were killed by humans and those who were killed by spirit beasts are completely different, with the biting wounds and all...

“We didn’t actually meet that group of killers, but we knew they were in that area, and that they were very powerful.

“The spirit beasts around Black Water Lake alone were already hard enough to deal with. Adding in a group of bloodthirsty killers, we realized we weren’t strong enough, and thus withdrew from that area.

“However, we didn’t expect that we would encounter this herd of spirit beasts while we were leaving.”

“Oh, so that’s how it is.” Nie Tian nodded gently and said without any hesitation, “Good luck to you. We’ve got to go now.”

“Thank you.” Xu Hu expressed his gratitude.

“You’re welcome.” With these words, Nie Tian and Luo Xin hastened on towards Black Water Lake.

After bidding farewell to Nie Tian and Luo Xin, Xu Hu and his team processed the spirit beast's body and headed back towards the Dong Clan.

It wasn't long before they ran into Dong Li, who had disguised herself.

From time to time, she would hold her milky-white arm close to her mouth and whisper into a bracelet, as if she were communicating with others.

Upon seeing Xu Hu and his team, she took the initiative to approach them. Her strange gaze ran up and down him before she asked, "Did you meet a young man and woman?" She described Nie Tian's appearance.

With a vigilant expression, Xu Hu shook his head and said, "No."

"I'm their friend. I have urgent business to discuss with them." Dong Li put on a charming smile as she pulled out a medallion from her waist pocket and showed it to Xu Hu.

Even though Xu Hu didn't recognize the disguised Dong Li, he felt deep veneration upon seeing that medallion. "Miss Dong!"

When the Xu Clan had struggled in despair, the Dong Clan had reached out to them, which was why, when Xue Long had recognized Dong Li and Han Mu in the Realm of Split Void, he had changed his target and chased after Li Langfeng instead.

"I have things I need to discuss with them," Dong Li repeated.

After learning that it was Dong Li, Xu Hu brought out every detail about his encounter with Nie Tian and Luo Xin, as well as the group of strangers who were killing other explorers.

"Alright, thank you. You can go now." Dong Li waved her hand, giving them permission to leave. After they left, the look in her eyes turned grim as she muttered, "I can't believe those bastards actually dare to dishonor our rules in our clan's territory!"

She had never been known as a kind person. However, as the Dong Clan's representative who was in charge of the adjacent areas of the Dong Clan, even though she was full of evil tricks, she had never acted against the rules in her own dominion.

This was why she had taken her lackeys to the Realm of Split Void, where they had fed the evil and bloodthirsty side of their nature under the mask of the Fang.

Upon hearing that a group of strangers dared to kill whoever they wanted to and disrespected the rules set by the Dong Clan, she instantly grew furious.

She held her bracelet close to her mouth and whispered orders into it. "Those who are currently on the east side, march towards Black Water Lake as soon as you receive this message. A group of foreign rats are acting recklessly on our turf. Ferret them out!"

According to the rules, the Dong Clan would allow foreigners to gather spirit plants and hunt spirit beasts in open areas.

Thanks to their rules, the safe zone around the Dong Clan grew larger and larger, and people discovered more and more spirit plants and medicinal ingredients.

Since there were simply too many spirit beasts in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, even the Dong Clan wouldn't be able to kill them all.

Having people from the other realms kill spirit beasts in areas near the Dong Clan would not only reduce the number of spirit beasts, but it would also clear out more usable space for the Dong Clan.

Other than Spirit Plant Mountain, which was the largest spirit plant growing region, the Dong Clan had opened up many other growing regions within a 50 kilometer radius from their headquarters.

Most of the growing regions were guarded by powerful Dong

Clan members, in case spirit beasts would come to ravish them.

The primary reason why the Realm of a Hundred Battles allowed foreign Qi warriors to explore their land was that they could wear down the number of the spirit beasts.

If the Qi warriors only entered their realm to fight each other, instead of slaughtering spirit beasts, the unattended spirit beasts would accumulate enough energy and numbers to attack their growing regions, which would negate their original purpose.

Therefore, Qi warriors from the Dong Clan would patrol the nearby areas on a regular basis to prevent Qi warriors from fighting each other.

It was because the Dong Clan had been secretly maintaining order in their territory that Nie Tian and Luo Xin hadn't encountered any fierce battles between human Qi warriors along their way. All they had witnessed were bloody fights between spirit beasts and human Qi warriors.

The foreign Qi warriors were in violation of the Dong Clan's rules by killing other Qi warriors in the Dong Clan's territory.

...

In a location close to Black Water Lake.

Eight people from the Cloudsoaring Sect, including Zhan Yuan, Jiang Lingzhu, Ye Gumo, Nie Donghai, and Nie Qian, were scattered in the shadow of a mountain peak, shock and fear filling their faces.

Under the fierce midday sun, none of them complained about the scorching heat. All they could feel was the frigid coldness in their hearts.

At the beginning, there had been a total of 17 people on their team, but now they only had 8 left.

They had been surprised by spirit beasts, and 9 of their members

had lost their lives by spirit beasts' mouths.

However, right now, they weren't afraid of those spirit beasts around Black Water Lake, but rather a group of human Qi warriors.

Not long ago, when they had been exploring around Black Water Lake, they had seen a group of Qi warriors that was larger and more powerful than them being rounded up and attacked by another group of Qi warriors.

The attackers only shot brief, meaningful gazes at them before going back to attacking and killing their opponents.

Even though Nie Donghai and his team had left in time, their minds had been clouded by a thick haze.

As those men saw them hurry away, the look in their eyes had been more terrifying than the spirit beasts'.

They knew perfectly clearly that when those men were finished with those explorers, they would view them as their new target and start chasing them down.

“Should we go back now?” Jiang Lingzhu asked.

Zhan Yuan sighed and said, “Yeah, it's about time we went back, but I'm just afraid that we might run into them again on our way back.”

Chapter 395: Black Water Lake

By the time Nie Tian and Luo Xin reached Black Water Lake, it had started to drizzle.

As raindrops fell into Black Water Lake and created tiny splashes, a dark-gray mist gradually rose above the lake surface, emitting a foul smell.

“Is this Black Water Lake?” With a thought, Nie Tian commanded his seven Heaven Eyes to fly high above Black Water Lake and its vicinity, where they learned the terrain and kept a close watch on everything.

A large amount of surprisingly tall plants could be seen around Black Water Lake, while many logs covered in moss floated in the dark water.

There were three small islands at the center of the lake, where plants were flourishing more exuberantly than any other place nearby.

By nightfall, Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes had finished scanning the area around Black Water Lake, and discovered several dozen human corpses.

Just as Xu Hu had said, those humans clearly hadn’t been killed by spirit beasts. Some of the corpses were highly rotten, as if they had died from deadly toxins.

Even if spirit beasts discovered those toxic bodies, they wouldn’t show any interest in them.

Nie Tian also discovered a few severed limbs, which had obviously been chopped off with sharp blades.

There was a limit to the coverage of Nie Tian’s Heaven Eyes. After roaming about for a while, they still failed to detect any signs of life.

Thus, Nie Tian was prepared to move to another location.

That was when he discovered via one of his Heaven Eyes that a perfectly-proportioned young woman was rapidly approaching his current location.

Even though the woman's face didn't look familiar at all, Nie Tian had a strange sense of familiarity towards her.

After searching in his mind briefly, his expression flickered. He exclaimed, looking shocked, "I can't believe it's her..."

"What?" Luo Xin was puzzled.

"The daughter of the Dong Clan's clanmaster," Nie Tian said, his eyebrows furrowed.

"Dong Li?" Luo Xin was taken aback. "Where? How are you seeing her? Also, even if you can somehow see her, how can you tell it's her? I thought you didn't know her."

"I've met her before," Nie Tian gave a dissembling answer.

Luo Xin's expression grew strange as she said, "I've been here in the Realm of a Hundred Battles for quite some time now. It's said that Dong Li is a woman of singular beauty. I've heard that she went on tempering trips to other realms, and she didn't return to the Realm of a Hundred Battles until recently. Where did you meet her?"

"A woman of singular beauty?" Nie Tian went blank as he searched through his encounters with Dong Li in his head. However, he couldn't connect Luo Xin's description of her with the image of Dong Li in his head.

In his memories, Dong Li was a very curvaceous woman, but her appearance was far from outstanding.

However, as he gave it more thought, he realized that considering Dong Baijie, Dong Li's older brother, had given him a mask as a gift, Dong Li probably possessed similar masks as well.

She might have changed her appearance with a mask so that she wouldn't be identified when she ran amuck in the Void Illusion Mountain Range.

Nie Tian drew this conclusion rapidly.

“Is Dong Li coming at us? How many people does she have with her? Also, is she friendly or hostile?” Luo Xin suddenly grew anxious. “If you've offended her before, we'd better avoid contact with her! I've heard that woman is an absolutely vicious beauty! She has the fame of a thorny rose in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. God knows how many young men who admired her have died at her hands!”

Luo Xin and Li Fan were the ones in charge of the Cloudsoaring Sect's affairs in the Realm of a Hundred Battles, and it was Luo Xin's duty to gather information.

Dong Li, as the daughter of the Dong Clan's clanmaster, had been a key target. What she had heard about his young woman had made her raise her guard against her.

According to what she had learned, the competition among members of the Dong Clan had always been intense and cruel, even for the younger generations.

Only by making outstanding achievements would members of the Dong Clan attract more resources to themselves, so that they would be able to build up their strength, progress in their cultivation bases, and acquire spiritual tools and incantations of higher grades.

Dong Li had been a very strong performer.

When it came to schemes and maneuvering people, she had been much more skilled than her older brother.

This was why many senior members of the Dong Clan had believed that she would have a promising future in the clan. For the same reason, many people volunteered to become her

subordinates.

“Hostile, I’m afraid,” Nie Tian said honestly.

“Then we need to get away from her now!” Anxiety could be seen in Luo Xin’s eyes.

“She’s coming by herself. There’s no reason for us to be afraid of her.” Nie Tian grinned as he continued, “I fought her once when I was at the early Heaven stage and she was at the late Heaven stage. I couldn’t say that I was impressed by her strength. Even though she’s entered the Greater Heaven stage now, I’ve also advanced to the late Heaven stage. It’s hard to say who’s going to cower.”

“But we’re in the Dong Clan’s territory!” Luo Xin reminded Nie Tian solemnly.

“You’re right. That makes it a bit tricky.” Nie Tian said, nodding.

He had come to Black Water Lake to find his grandfather and aunt, and that was his primary goal.

Once they encountered Dong Li, they would inevitably get into trouble, which would definitely have a toll on the efficiency of his search.

“Alright. We’ll steer clear of her.” In order to find the Cloudsoaring Sect’s exploration group as soon as possible, he compromised. Pinning one of his Heaven Eyes on Dong Li, he and Luo Xin managed to avoid contact with her.

Afterwards, the two of them followed the edge of Black Water Lake to the other side.

About a quarter hour later...

He suddenly caught sight of five black-robed Qi warriors jumping out of a thick bush and landing on logs covered in moss that were floating in the dark water.

Each and every one of them was at the early Greater Heaven stage, and they seemed to be fairly acquainted with each other.

Standing on the logs, they propelled them forwards with their spiritual power. Like canoes, the pieces of ancient wood gradually sailed towards the three small islands at the center of Black Water Lake.

They all had sullen expressions on their faces and ice-cold looks in their eyes. Each of them seemed to unleash an aura that agreed with the foul-smelling mist above Black Water Lake.

With furrowed brows, Nie Tian gradually determined with the help of his Heaven Eyes that they were Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh!

The only Qi warrior from the Realm of Black Marsh he had ever met was Miao Chen, who he had met during the Heaven Gate trial.

Aside from him, Li Langfeng, who he had met in the Realm of Split Void, had once told him that although he was from the Realm of Dark Underworld, he had switched to his current toxic incantations due to some reason, which had originated from the Realm of Black Marsh.

According to Li Langfeng, the Realm of Black Marsh had once been home to the Fiends, whose bloodline power would allow them to strengthen themselves with toxins.

Ever since the Fiends had disappeared from the Realm of Black Marsh, its unique climate and environment hadn't gone through much change. Therefore, most of the Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh were experts in toxic incantations, making them a group of Qi warriors that were very difficult to deal with throughout the Domain of the Falling Stars.

Now, a handful of them had somehow appeared in the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

From the look of it, they were none other than the team that had slaughtered many other Qi warriors by Black Water Lake.

Standing on floating logs, the five of them gradually split apart

and drifted towards the three islands at the center of the lake.

At that moment, Dong Li arrived by Black Water Lake. Standing on the bank, she shouted at the five Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh, “Hey! Get the hell away from there!”

Dong Li figured out what they were after as soon as she saw the five of them approaching the islands at the center of the lake.

On those three small islands grew about a dozen extremely precious spirit plants, which the Dong Clan had long since claimed ownership to.

Several of the plants were extremely toxic. The Dong Clan had planned to sell them to Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh when they reached maturity.

However, considering that the water in Black Water Lake contained deadly toxins, that those plants hadn't reached maturity, and that they had long since announced a ban on any Qi warrior setting foot on the three small islands at the center of Black Water Lake, Dong Li had never expected that Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh would actually violate the rules by secretly approaching the plants.

Since they had made plans to secretly harvest those spirit plants, it made sense that they had deliberately cleaned up every Qi warrior that had come close to this area. They had probably done it to silence those explorers and hide their traces and identities, so that the Dong Clan wouldn't come for them.

A few other Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh secretly stuck their heads out from behind the bush where the first five had jumped out. “A member of the Dong Clan!”

“That seems to be a girl from the Dong Clan, senior martial brother. What should we do?”

“What are you afraid of? She's only at the early Greater Heaven stage. Since I had the courage to come here, I took into account

that we might run into people from the Dong Clan. As long as we can get the stuff and return to the Realm of Black Marsh in time, what can they do? Ignore her. We stick to our plan. If she dares to interfere, we'll go teach her a lesson!"

"Do we strike to kill?"

"That won't be necessary. We just need to stop her and make sure she doesn't jeopardize our operation."

"Got it."

Chapter 396: A Vicious Beauty

Originally, only five Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh were drifting towards the central islands on floating logs.

However, as Dong Li appeared and threatened them, some other Qi warriors who had been hiding in the dark realized that they had been exposed, and thus stopped sneaking around.

SHEW! SHEW!

Two black-robed men jumped out from behind a dense bush and lightly landed on two more floating logs covered in moss.

The two of them were at the middle Greater Heaven stage, slightly stronger than the first five.

In the same way, they propelled the logs with their spiritual power, and like arrows leaving bowstrings, they shot towards the small islands at the center of Black Water Lake.

They had visited the islands a few times before Dong Li's arrival, and thus knew that the spirit plants on them hadn't reached maturity yet.

The purpose of the five going there had been to check on them and see how much longer it would take for them to reach maturity.

However, Dong Li's appearance made them realize that it was no longer an option for them to harvest the spirit plants after they reached maturity.

Even though they understood that the medicinal efficacy of the spirit plants would be compromised if they picked them before they reached maturity, they couldn't afford to worry about that now.

Therefore, they were bent on snatching the spirit plants, evacuating from Black Water Lake, and returning to the Realm of Black Marsh as quickly as possible so that they wouldn't be

surrounded and killed by powerful reinforcements from the Dong Clan.

Standing by the edge of Black Water Lake, Dong Li's bright eyes shone with a vicious light as she watched the two Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh jump out from the dark and rush towards the central islands.

Dong Li snorted a cold laugh. "A bunch of stupid morons. You really think people can just come and pick the spirit plants in Black Water Lake as they please?"

It seemed that the purpose of her revealing herself and crying out to them was to spur the Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh and make them anxious.

The two middle Greater Heaven stage experts emerging and rushing towards the central islands was exactly what she had anticipated.

WHOOSH!

Another middle Greater Heaven stage expert from the Realm of Black Marsh secretly dashed towards Dong Li along the edge of Black Water Lake.

Instructed by his senior martial brother, the man had come to intercept her in case she wanted to tamper with their operation.

Dong Li seemed to have noticed his movements and recognized his intentions. Her expression didn't flicker a bit as she continued to fix her glittering eyes on the seven Qi warriors who were approaching the center of Black Water Lake.

She seemed to be waiting for something.

When the two middle Greater Heaven stage experts were a significant distance away from the shore, and there was no way they could jump back, Dong Li suddenly sneered out loud.

At the same time, a green, glowing sphere whizzed out from her

palm and stopped above Black Water Lake in the blink of an eye.

Rain was still drizzling down from the sky.

Nie Tian and Luo Xin also noticed the green glowing sphere that had shot out from Dong Li's location.

"What's that?" Luo Xin asked in a low voice.

"I have no idea." Nie Tian shook his head, puzzled.

In the next moment, the green, glowing sphere suddenly exploded in midair, sending out a substantial amount of fine drops of green liquid in every direction. Mixed with raindrops, they fell into the lake, carrying a strange smell that was both sweet and bloody.

As they made contact with the lake's surface, tiny green splashes were created.

Keeping a close watch with his Heaven Eyes, Nie Tian had a feeling that the green liquid seemed to contain something that was bizarre and deadly.

Soon, the green liquid spread out on the lake surface as the water rippled.

The grayish-black lake surface seemed to be rapidly painted green. Not only did the green liquid quickly spread out on the surface, but it also spread down towards the depths of the lake.

Nie Tian couldn't help but exclaim, "What?!"

"What's going on?" Luo Xin wasn't aware of what was happening.

Nie Tian didn't respond, but instead closed his eyes under her gaze.

By doing that, he concentrated all of his attention on his Heaven Eyes, and the connection between him and his Heaven Eyes grew stronger.

Now, he was able to detect the increasingly noticeable fluctuations of flesh and blood from the depths of the unfathomable lake.

When they had first arrived by Black Water Lake, he had scanned the lake water with his Heaven Eyes.

However, back then, he had only felt that Black Water Lake was unfathomably deep, and that the lake water seemed somewhat strange. When he had commanded his Heaven Eyes to probe into the depths of the lake, it had been very consuming.

As hard as he had tried, the perception of his Heaven Eyes had only been able to reach about ten meters below the lake surface, not any further, and he hadn't detected any signs of life.

However, as the green, glowing sphere cast by Dong Li exploded, and countless drops of green liquid spread to the depths of the lake, lives seemed to be awakened and become active.

After a brief pondering, Nie Tian instantly realized that some kind of living being must have been lying dormant in the deepest parts of the lake.

It was just that they had been sleeping in places so deep under the lake's surface that they had been out of his Heaven Eyes' reach.

Since Nie Tian was only barely able to detect what was happening in the lake via his Heaven Eyes, it was almost impossible for those conspiring Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh to discover anything.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Huge waves suddenly rose next to one of the floating logs. In the next moment, the mouth of a gigantic, thoroughly-black Blood Eye Crocodile pierced out of the lake surface.

A bloodthirsty and merciless look filled the Blood Eye Crocodile's bloodshot eyes.

With a violent roar, it lifted one of its huge claws and slammed it down towards the Qi warrior who was the closest to the central islands.

Flabbergasted, the Qi warrior, who was one of the first five early Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors to enter Black Water Lake, exclaimed, “A fourth grade Blood Eye Crocodile!”

He was still about fifty meters from his target island, which was not a distance he could cover with a single leap.

Only Qi warriors who had reached the Profound realm would be able to soar through the air, but his cultivation base wasn't even close to that.

WHOOSH!

A gruesome, white bone staff flew out of the Qi warrior's hand and emanated dazzling light to resist the crocodile's slamming palm.

BOOM!

The light unleashed by the bone staff warded off the slam. However, the piece of ancient wood he was standing on couldn't withstand the heavy burden, and thus sank into the water along with him.

Upon seeing this, the enormous Blood Eye Crocodile also dove into the water.

One huge wave after another was created in that part of the lake, as apparently, a fierce battle was taking place beneath the surface.

It wasn't long before the log returned to the lake's surface.

However, the early Greater Heaven stage Qi warrior from the Realm of Black Marsh didn't surface with it.

Instead, scarlet blood bubbled up next to the log and gradually scattered.

At the same time, the other few Qi warriors that were rushing

towards the central islands let out blood-curdling screams, “Spirit beasts!

“Spirit beasts have been lying dormant in the depths of Black Water Lake!”

A ten-meter-long, white python emerged from the deepest parts of the lake.

Simultaneously, a Tiger Head Shark charged to the lake’s surface. Baring sharp teeth that looked like two rows of sharp blades, it swam towards one of the Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh.

Two other Blood Eye Crocodiles also floated to the surface, each setting their eyes on a target.

Without exception, those Qi warriors were all sizable distances away from the central islands.

Under the joint attacks of the spirit beasts, whose fierce nature seemed to have been stimulated by Dong Li’s green glowing sphere, the logs they stood on soon fell apart.

Without anything to support themselves, they fell into the water one after another, and ended up in the spirit beasts’ bellies.

Nie Tian’s seven Heaven Eyes floated quietly above the lake, where they watched the spirit beasts tearing apart and swallowing those black-robed Qi warriors.

The scene was so bloody and brutal that Nie Tian felt a numbness in his scalp.

All seven of the Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh had been at the Greater Heaven stage. However, under those spirit beasts’ ferocious attacks, they failed to even survive for even five minutes. With agonized shrieks, they were all quickly eaten alive.

Standing on the shore, Dong Li looked very calm, her eyes shining with joyful light.

The Qi warrior who had come towards her seemed to have been shocked by the sudden changes in Black Water Lake. Having long since stopped charging, he stared blankly towards the bloody scene in the lake, eyes wide and filled with fury.

“Did you eat a bear heart or a leopard gallbladder? (see note 1) You actually dared to attempt to snatch things from our clan. A bunch of ignorant fools!” Dong Li said coldly.

Note:

1. Eat a bear heart or a leopard gallbladder: become blindingly daring (and do something stupid).

Chapter 397: Dong Li's Threat

The waves on Black Water Lake gradually subsided.

After devouring those black-robed Qi warriors, the spirit beasts circled around in the lake to absorb the green water, and then descended back to the depths of the lake.

With fine rain drizzling down from the sky, Black Water Lake became peaceful and quiet again, as if nothing had happened.

Standing by the shore, Luo Xin said in a low voice, her heart filled with frigid coldness, "What a cunning and vicious woman!"

Not having her own Heaven Eyes, she wasn't able to get every detail of what had happened in the lake as Nie Tian did.

However, she was able to tell that those seven Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh were eaten alive by the spirit beasts due to Dong Li's appearance.

Dong Li had warned those black-robed Qi warriors to come back ashore in a loud voice, while knowing perfectly well that ferocious spirit beasts were residing in the depths of the lake.

Obviously, it hadn't been her intention to let those Qi warriors realize the consequences and thus return to the shore.

By threatening and warning them, she had actually intended to make them feel a sense of urgency, so that they would rush towards the spirit plants on the central islands.

As it turned out, her scheme worked. Two other middle Greater Heaven stage Qi warriors had joined the plan and rushed towards the small islands, and as the result, none of the seven black-robed Qi warriors had survived those spirit beasts' sharp teeth.

The mere thought of Dong Li's trickery made Luo Xin's blood run cold. She couldn't help but turn to Nie Tian ask, "How in the world did you manage to survive till now after offending that woman?"

Nie Tian also seemed in awe after witnessing such a brutal scene. He smiled without saying a word.

Deep down, he knew that if he hadn't caught a whiff of Dong Li's scheme in the dense forest with the help of his Heaven Eyes, he might have been killed by Dong Li already, like Shen Wei and the others.

At this moment, he suddenly remembered how he had pretended to like her and then humiliated her in the dense forest.

He understood how much Dong Li must hate him. Now that they were in the Dong Clan's territory, Dong Li had access to all the resources she needed. Once she discovered his whereabouts, it would be hard to say if he would be able to leave the Realm of a Hundred Battles in one piece.

Seeing that Nie Tian had fallen silent, Luo Xin smiled bitterly and suggested, "We'd better get away from that woman as soon as possible. The way I see it, there might be other people from the Realm of Black Marsh in this area, and they are probably coming for her. But even so, I doubt that they will be able to hurt that woman. We'd better get out of here while the thing between them isn't over."

Nie Tian nodded as he commanded his Heaven Eyes, which he had previously summoned to float right above Black Water Lake, to spread out.

That was when he noticed that the brawling and struggling in Black Water Lake had attracted three teams of human Qi warriors that had been exploring in the vicinity. Driven by curiosity, they were rapidly converging on the lake from different directions.

Nie Tian could tell from the way they were dressed that none of the groups were from the Realm of Black Marsh.

But unfortunately, the group of Cloudsoaring Sect members wasn't among them.

He also sensed that the brawling seemed to have attracted the attention of spirit beasts that were foraging in further areas. He could tell that a few surges of vigorous life fluctuations were growing clearer and clearer, which meant a number of spirit beasts were also approaching Black Water Lake.

Considering that the situation was getting increasingly complicated, Nie Tian didn't intend to stay any longer, lest he and Luo Xin get into trouble.

Just as he was about to leave, Dong Li, who was standing a significant distance away from him, suddenly chuckled and called out into the air, "Hua Tian! I know you're here, and I know you can hear me! Listen! I want you to come out and help me annihilate all the rats from the Realm of Black Marsh in this area!"

Luo Xin was confused. "Hua Tian...? Who's Hua Tian?"

However, Nie Tian's expression flickered as his momentum came to a stop.

"The woman is crazy," Nie Tian whispered. "Only a fool would answer her calls."

"Hua Tian!" Dong Li called out again. "I know why you're here. I know some of your family and friends are currently in my clan's territory. Perhaps they're not far from here. I hope you understand that this is my turf.

"If you dare to ignore me, I can assure you that, even if those friends and family of yours are still alive, there's no way that you'll get them out of the Realm of a Hundred Battles alive!

"You'd better believe that I'm capable of making good on my word!"

"Bitch!!" Nie Tian burst into a flaming rage.

At first, Luo Xin didn't know what was going on. However, seeing that Dong Li's words seemed to have hit Nie Tian in his weak spot, she suddenly came to her senses. "The Hua Tian she

talked about is you, right?”

Nie Tian nodded with a furious, yet somewhat embarrassed, expression on his face.

“She’s threatening you, isn’t she?” Luo Xin asked anxiously. “Does she mean that if you don’t agree to her terms, she will mobilize the Dong Clan’s resources to hunt down our exploration team, including your grandfather and Nie Qian?”

“Yeah! That’s exactly what she meant!” Nie Tian said, his voice filled with fury.

With a bitter expression, Luo Xin said softly, “Well, after all, this is the Dong Clan’s territory. As the clanmaster’s daughter, she does have access to all the Dong Clan’s resources. If she really wants to capture them, I doubt that your grandfather and their team will be able to escape.

“Furthermore, the Dong Clan has a lot of pull in the Realm of a Hundred Battles. They have a significant share of everything within Water Moon City.

“Even the Water Moon Chamber of Commerce would have to give them face. If the Dong Clan gives the order, I’m afraid we will have no hope of returning to the Realm of Flame Heaven through the teleportation portals in Water Moon City.”

Upon hearing Luo Xin’s words, Nie Tian had a even worse headache over the situation. “Dammit! How did that woman know I was here?”

At the same time...

A band of Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh jumped out from behind a bush. Not only did they reveal themselves, but they also started charging directly towards Dong Li.

Nie Tian examined them with his Heaven Eyes, and discovered that there were about ten of them, and that they were all at the Greater Heaven stage, with two of them at the late Greater Heaven

stage.

The deaths of their seven companions must have stimulated their killing nature. Their original plan had just been to stop Dong Li. After all, they didn't want to kill her and start an unforgivable feud with the Dong Clan. But from the look of it, they had changed their mind. The leader of the band, a black-robed man with a hawkish nose, ordered with a grim expression, "Kill that bitch! As long as she lives, she'll be able to summon spirit beasts from the depths of Black Water Lake again. With those spirit beasts there, none of us will be able to get through them to the three central islands."

According to his assessment, Dong Li was the one who could ruin their entire plan. As for the Hua Tian she had just called out to, he didn't know anything about him, and thus didn't attach much importance to him.

The man, who had been shocked by his friends' deaths on his way to attack Dong Li and thus stopped midway, heard their leader's order. With an angry roar, he unleashed numerous streaks of toxic, dark-green smoke, which shot towards Dong Li like slithering snakes.

Without the slightest fear on her face, Dong Li took out the cyan awl she had once used to fight Nie Tian.

A layer of misty, cyan light suddenly spread out and wreathed the cyan awl. The vague figure of a beast could be seen inside the light.

"Do you really imagine that you can kill me on your own?" Dong Li sneered, not fearing the approaching dark-green smoke in the least. Then, with a fling of her hand, the cyan awl exploded towards the Qi warrior from the Realm of Black Marsh, the vague beast within the cyan light roaring silently.

Dong Li, however, rapidly stepped backwards after casting her cyan awl.

Judging by her stance, she seemed to be very eager to put a

sizable distance between her enemy and herself, as if she weren't good at fighting in close quarters.

Upon seeing this, her attacker's eyes lit up as he started to use every possible means to get close to her.

Standing on the shore, Nie Tian quietly observed the battle between them, his face turning increasingly grim. "The woman is indeed full of vicious tricks!"

Back when they had encountered a powerful Golden Stone Rhino in the dense forest in the Void Illusion Mountain Range, Dong Li had tangled with it for a long time. She hadn't seemed to have had any problem fighting it up close.

She was one of the few people he knew that was very good at fighting in close quarters.

However, she deliberately acted as if she was afraid of getting into close-up combat with her opponent, so that her opponent would get the wrong message and thus try every possible method to get close to her.

Her stunning cunningness made Nie Tian increasingly vigilant.

"Hua Tian!" Dong Li shouted as she stepped backwards, a panicked expression stretching across her face. "I'll count to three. If you still don't show up and help me after I'm finished, you can prepare coffins for your friends and family!"

As her opponent pressed closer to her, the terrified and panicked expression on her face seemed to become increasingly heartfelt.

The way she called out to Hua Tian also sounded very desperate and helpless.

However, Nie Tian knew that the man, who thought he had gained the upper-hand, was going to suffer a deadly defeat.

Anxious and uneasy, Luo Xin asked, "What should we do? That woman is clearly taking advantage of the situation to force you to

come out. What do you think we should do?”

“I have no choice but to show myself and help her,” Nie Tian said reluctantly.

Chapter 398: Killing with One Strike!

The black-robed Qi warrior smiled sinisterly as he gradually closed in on Dong Li.

As his hands constantly wove in the air, numerous streaks of dark-green smoke rapidly flew towards Dong Li, along with a foul smell.

Meanwhile, Dong Li's cyan awl spun as it sailed through the air, creating streams of cyan light around it.

Within the cyan light, the shadows of spirit beasts would flash into appearance every now and then, letting out angry roars.

As the cyan light and the dark-green smoke clashed repeatedly, a large amount of sparks sputtered out.

Dong Li looked panicked as she yelled non-stop, as if she were waiting for a miracle to happen.

Since she called out the name Hua Tian over and over again, it was obvious that she was hoping Hua Tian would swoop in and "save her life". However, Hua Tian still hadn't showed up.

"Bitch! You got seven of my martial brothers killed! Even if you're a member of the Dong Clan, I'm going to tear you apart!" With these words, two clusters of green flames suddenly blossomed in the black-robed man's grayish-brown palms.

In the next moment, they threaded through the air and shot directly towards Dong Li's face.

Panic and fear appeared on Dong Li's masked face as she twisted her curvaceous body to avoid contact with the two clusters of green flames.

"Die!" The black-robed man sneered as two swords wreathed in green flames suddenly flew out of his cuffs.

Meanwhile, a shield made from beast bones flew out upon Dong

Li's summons.

BANG! BANG!

The two clusters of flames slammed heavily into the bone shield, sending out green sparks in every direction.

The strong impact from the bone shield made Dong Li trudge backwards.

Not only that, but the tremor created by the impact seemed to spread from the bone shield to her arms, and even her entire body.

Her plain-looking face started to crack and fall off like a crushed turtle shell.

A moment later, her mask broke off completely, revealing her singular beauty.

Her red lips trembled as she begged the dumbstruck black-robed man, looking as if she were going to weep, "Please don't..."

The Qi warrior from the Realm of Black Marsh was bewildered, since he had never expected that his opponent's face would change upon taking his strike.

Right now, her face was so city-fellingly gorgeous that he couldn't even bear to launch another attack.

"Please let me go. I promise I'll stay out of your way. Please!" Dong Li said in a very soft voice. Even her bone shield gradually sagged, as if its weight had become unbearable to her.

"W-who are you exactly?" The black-robed man asked in a smitten state.

"I'm... the one who kills you!" With these words, Dong Li suddenly lifted her bone shield, a circle of bones as sharp as blades sticking out the edge of the shield.

With a turn of the bone shield, the sticking-out bones suddenly left the shield and shot towards the man's chest.

POOH! POOH! POOH!

In the blink of an eye, the bones pierced into the man's chest.

At that moment, the delicate look Dong Li had put on was already gone. Her gorgeous face now looked cold and cruel.

She turned her bone shield again and slammed the bones that had pierced into the man's chest with the shield's surface.

POOH!

Upon impact, the tips of the bones pierced out of the black-robed man's back, like steel nails being hammered into wood.

“Who do you think you are...? A toad lusting after a swan's flesh!” A cold smile appeared at the corner of Dong Li's mouth.

Then, she reached out her splayed hand, and the cyan awl flew into her palm.

As she grabbed it and planted into the man's neck effortlessly, the light in the man's eyes went dim.

With a disgusted expression, she spit towards the man.

Then, she pulled each and every bone out of the man's chest, and reloaded them into the bone shield.

Seeing that the man didn't collapse to the ground after he died, she let out a cold harrumph as she took out her cyan awl and stabbed him a few more times in the chest.

BANG!

The black-robed Qi warrior, whose cultivation base had been at the middle Greater Heaven stage, slightly higher than hers, finally collapsed to the ground with a loud crash.

With her cyan awl in one hand and her bone shield in the other hand, Dong Li didn't spare the man's corpse another glance. Instead, she looked coldly at the other Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh, who were still dashing towards her.

“Hua Tian!” She yelled at the top of her lungs. “If you don’t show yourself now, none of those who have the faintest relationship with you will be able to leave the Realm of a Hundred Battles alive!”

“God damn it!” Nie Tian’s voice suddenly rang out. “Didn’t you say you would count to three? I was waiting for you to count!”

“Ah, as I expected, you are here!” Upon hearing Nie Tian’s response, Dong Li rapidly began counting with a broad smile, “One, two, three! Okay, done!”

SHEW!

All of a sudden, a beam of dazzling starlight shot out of a tall bush by the lakeshore, where Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh were rushing towards Dong Li.

An early Greater Heaven stage Qi warrior noticed the anomaly, and jerked his head back to see what was going on.

Nie Tian, who had approached them by casting a short-range Starshift, unleashed his vigorous fluctuations of life, which he had been suppressing with his bloodline talent.

A thick blade blast, mixed with flames and starlight, suddenly slashed out from behind the sight-blocking plants. Like a shooting star, it reached the man’s face within a breath’s time.

CRUNCH!

The man’s head was split in half by the Flame Star’s blade blast.

The other Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh instantly stopped their dashing momentum.

That was when Nie Tian walked out from behind the plants that were as tall as two men, with the Flame Star in his hand.

The Flame Star shone with bright light while emanating an extremely fierce aura.

After Nie Tian killed the man with one strike, his Flame Star-

bearing hand relaxed slightly before gripping it tightly again. Simultaneously, his spiritual power of various attributes suddenly rushed out of their respective vortexes and madly infused into the Flame Star.

He could sense with great clarity that there were a number of exquisite spell formations inside the Flame Star.

Each spell formation was separated from the others. Like independent formations of channels, they allowed flame power, wood power, and star power to flow inside of them.

As his different spiritual powers flowed within those unique spell formations, they seemed to be strengthened.

The blade of the 1.5-meter-long Flame Star was thoroughly dark-red. Its handle was made from a rare type of wood. Holding it in his hand, Nie Tian felt a mysterious connection between it and the vortexes within his spiritual sea.

No matter how he wielded it, it felt right, as if it was an extension of his arm.

“Li Ye does have some real talent in equipment forging!” He marveled inwardly.

As he lifted and pointed the Flame Star at the other Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh, an extremely strong aura burst forth from the tip of the blade. He said, “I’m the Hua Tian she’s been calling out to.”

The leader with a hawk nose took a deep look at Nie Tian and said with a grim expression, “A Heaven stage clown actually snuck up on Guan Jing and killed him with one strike. What are you waiting for, Guan Yue?”

The face of the middle Greater Heaven stage Guan Yue had long since grown distorted.

The man who Nie Tian had just killed was none other than his younger brother.

Without uttering a word, Guan Yue leapt three meters into the air before swooping down at Nie Tian like a eagle attacking its prey.

At the same time, a vague bellow came out of his throat. His eyes turned bloodshot as his claw-wearing hand grabbed down towards Nie Tian.

A large number of claw-shaped shadows suddenly appeared in midair, along with a pervasive foul smell. A mere whiff of it made Nie Tian want to throw up.

“Let them fight. Guan Yue alone is enough to kill a clown with such a low cultivation base.” The leader turned around and charged on towards Dong Li upon seeing that Guan Yue had made a move. “We’ve got to kill that woman as soon as we can! We’ll wash off the humiliation she’s brought to us with her life!”

Even though Dong Li knew she had been considered the primary target, she still remained calm and composed as she observed the battle between Guan Yue and Nie Tian. Not the slightest fear could be seen on her singularly beautiful face.

In the meantime, she lifted her milky-white wrist and whispered something into her bracelet.

At that moment, the other three groups of human Qi warriors, who had been attracted by the brawls and screams, marched through the tall plants and appeared on Black Water Lake’s shore.

Some among them recognized Dong Li and exclaimed, “Miss Dong!”

Dong Li reached out with one hand and pointed at the three exploration teams from afar as she ordered with a domineering tone, “You! You! And you! Work together and kill those bastards from the Realm of Black Marsh! That lot violated my clan’s rules and butchered many fellow explorers in this region!”

The three groups of explorers had heard something about what

those men from the Realm of Black Marsh had done and what they were after.

Therefore, they made up their mind soon after hearing Dong Li's order.

After exchanging a glance with each other, they summoned their spiritual tools and rapidly converged on Dong Li's location.

Seeing that they had all moved out, Dong Li smiled increasingly brightly. Then, she whispered into her bracelet, "Stay at the perimeter and wait for my orders. Don't come close unless I tell you to."

Chapter 399: Sustaining Injuries

At the foot of a short mountain peak far from Black Water Lake...

Zhan Yuan, Nie Donghai, and others from the Cloudsoaring Sect had recovered their strength with spirit stones.

Zhan Yuan, the one with the highest cultivation base among them, asked with furrowed eyebrows. “Did you hear that? Brawling sounds from Black Water Lake. It seems that people are battling over there.”

Fear appeared in Jiang Lingzhu’s face as she said, “Those bad men must have laid their murderous hands on another exploration team!”

Nie Donghai, whose cultivation base was slightly lower than Zhan Yuan’s, smiled with a hint of sadness on his face as he said, “I must miss Little Tian too much for not being able to see him for so long. I thought I heard his voice just now.”

Being at the Greater Heaven stage, he and Zhan Yuan could hear things from a farther distance than the others, so he also heard the sounds from Black Water Lake.

It was just that they were quite far from Black Water Lake, so he couldn’t make out what people were saying over there. He could only tell that there were men and women’s voices, one of which sounded very similar to Nie Tian’s, who he had worried about day and night for the past few years.

However, he suspected that it had been an illusion caused by his excessive desire to see Nie Tian.

After all, this was the Realm of a Hundred Battles. How would Nie Tian suddenly show up here?

“Father, it must be that you’re missing Little Tian too much.” With a sigh, Nie Qian continued, “It’s said that he’s sealed the spatial rifts in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic

Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations successively. However, for some reason, he turned down the Heaven Palace Sect's offer. Now that he's refused to go to the Heaven Palace Sect, he must plan to stay in the Realm of a Thousand Devastations for some time. It doesn't make sense that he would suddenly show up in the Realm of a Hundred Battles."

News from other realms had spread to this place, and they had learned about Nie Tian's recent actions from Xu Shan when they had met not long ago.

Both Nie Donghai and Nie Qian felt very proud of Nie Tian, but they had never imagined that he would actually come to the Realm of a Hundred Battles.

"It's about time we went back," Zhan Yuan said after a moment of pondering. "However, we'll need to pass Black Water Lake if we want to return to Water Moon City. The way I see it, it won't be easy to avoid those murderers by Black Water Lake. So we might as well take advantage of this opportunity, when they are engaged in battle with others, and march past Black Water Lake as quickly as we can."

"That sounds like a good plan," Nie Donghai said.

Upon receiving his support, Zhan Yuan sprung to his feet and appealed to the team, "That settles it then. Let's move out! We'll try our best to stay away from those men and pass Black Water Lake with our fastest speed possible! Considering that we've gained quite a fortune from this trip of ours, we'll teleport back to Water Moon City via one of the Dong Clan's teleportation portals!"

"Let's go!" The team agreed.

Therefore, everyone rose to their feet, took out their spiritual tools, and marched towards Black Water Lake.

...

On the shore of Black Water Lake.

CLANK!

Nie Tian brandished the Flame Star, which constantly met Guan Yue's sharp metal claws.

Every contact created enormous impacts, causing Nie Tian to shudder slightly and experience numbness in the web between his thumb and forefinger.

After all, Guan Yue was at the middle Greater Heaven stage. His internal spiritual power was rich and pure, and the spiritual power he had infused into his claws was also shockingly strong.

The fact that Nie Tian had been able to contend against him was, on one hand, thanks to the various types of power in his spiritual sea.

On the other hand, Nie Tian's incomparably tough physique allowed him to withstand impacts that most others at his level couldn't.

On top of that, he didn't go all-out to battle Guan Yue.

He didn't form a chaotic magnetic field, use the secret magics from the Fragmentary Star Incantation, or unleash his mighty Rage Punch.

The reason why he had been holding back was because he didn't really want to work for Dong Li. He was only fighting the man because Dong Li had forced him to do so.

From what he could tell, as long as he came out and got into an extended fight with a Qi warrior from the Realm of Black Marsh, he could be considered to have given Dong Li what she wanted.

HUFF! HUFF! HUFF!

However, even though Nie Tian only wanted to pass the time, he found that more and more claw-shaped shadows had appeared in the air.

Like an eagle, Guan Yue repeatedly leapt into the air and

swooped down at him.

The claw-shaped shadows created by the claws he wore hung in the air, strong spiritual power fluctuations emanating from each and every one of them.

Before long, Nie Tian found himself surrounded by hundreds of them.

It seemed that they had even formed some kind of spell formation, and the space between them was shrinking by the second.

Meanwhile, the claw-shaped shadows released a lingering foul smell that pervaded the ten meter radius around Nie Tian.

Knowing the foul smell contained toxins, Nie Tian held his breath, so that he wouldn't inhale the toxins into his internal organs.

“Hey, brat! You killed my little brother! Now prepare to die!” Guan Yue said as he stopped in midair. The razor-sharp claws he was wearing started to shine with green, frigid light.

Numerous fine strings that were only visible to Nie Tian's Heaven Eyes shot out of Guan Yue's claws, connecting the hundreds of floating, claw-shaped shadows with his metal claws.

Then, he yanked his extended hands down.

The sky-filling, claw-shaped shadows whizzed down from midair like a large shoal of fish being caught by a huge net.

Enormous amounts of spiritual power burst forth from the hundreds of claw-shaped shadows, which came together and formed shockwaves more formidable than he had ever imagined.

RUUUUMBLE!

Meanwhile, claw-shaped shadows appeared on the ground around Nie Tian. As they exploded one after another, the earth trembled non-stop.

The shock waves resonated with one another as they bombarded Nie Tian from above and under simultaneously.

It was at that moment that claw-shaped shadows started raining on Nie Tian.

As they fell on Nie Tian's body, his body shook violently, feeling as if he was being hit by iron hammers.

PUFF!

As tough as his body was, he coughed up a mouthful of blood after taking repeated blows from the large number of claw-shaped shadows.

Guan Yue's secret magic eventually inflicted severe injuries on him, which was a price he paid for not going all-out in the battle.

In a distant location.

Dong Li, who had instructed the other three groups of explorers to go after the people from the Realm of Black Marsh, seemed relaxed and carefree.

Her bright eyes spent most of their time fixated on Nie Tian, as if she were paying close attention to every move Nie Tian made.

Back when they had been in the Realm of Split Void, she had fought Nie Tian and lost. Then, she had summoned a massive number of forces to search for him in the wasteland outside of Shatter City and failed. Therefore, she knew better than anyone what Nie Tian's battle prowess was really like.

She had long since realized that Nie Tian's actual battle prowess was far beyond his cultivation base.

After all, Nie Tian was the freak who had risen up from a large number of the most talented disciples from the most powerful sects in the Domain of the Falling Stars, and obtained two fragmentary star marks during the Heaven Gate trial.

Not long after she had returned to the Realm of a Hundred

Battles, she had suspected that Ning Yang, the most talented Heaven Palace Sect disciple of his generation, had died at his hands. Back then, Nie Tian had been busy sealing spatial rifts in the Realm of Flame Heaven, the Realm of Mystic Heaven, and the Realm of a Thousand Devastations.

She was well-aware that Nie Tian's cultivation base didn't do justice to his actual strength.

This could be proven by the fact that Nie Tian had appeared out of nowhere and killed an early Greater Heaven stage cultivator with a single strike.

Therefore, she had long since seen through what Nie Tian was trying to do with that middle Greater Heaven stage cultivator from the Realm of Black Marsh.

At this moment, seeing that Nie Tian had paid a price for reserving his strength, she couldn't help but chuckle.

Enjoyment filled her gorgeous face as she called out to Nie Tian, "Hua Tian, I never imagined that you would end up in such sore traits!"

Seeing Nie Tian being injured, she remembered how Nie Tian had approached her posing as a man madly in love with her after she had secretly killed Shen Wei, locked her down from behind, teased her verbally, and disrespected her physically.

Over the past half a year, whenever she was not practicing cultivation and had time to spare, images of her encounters with Nie Tian would repeatedly appear in her mind.

As the precious daughter of the Dong Clan's clanmaster, she had been taken care of by everyone in the clan, like the moon being surrounded by countless stars. She had managed to kill everyone who had drooled over her beauty without drawing attention.

Never had she ever been so humiliated by a man, not before she had met Nie Tian.

In her eyes, Nie Tian had already become her internal demon, who she couldn't wait to get rid of.

This was why she seemed rather happy seeing Nie Tian suffer injuries in battle, so much so that she couldn't help but call out to him.

As for those Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh and the three groups of explorers, none of them really mattered to her.

Nie Tian was what she had come for. Other than him, nobody and nothing would really provoke her interest.

“Asshole!” After hearing her chuckles, Nie Tian cursed inwardly.

Chapter 400: Standoff

With a delighted expression on her face, Dong Li circled around the area where the three groups of explorers were battling the people from the Realm of Black Marsh, and slowly approached Nie Tian's location.

As she did, she would hold her jade-like wrist to her red lips and whisper orders into her bracelet every now and then.

After joining up, the three groups of explorers had the advantage in both numbers and strength.

Since they recognized Dong Li and knew she was the daughter of the Dong Clan's clanmaster, when they had been asked to deal with the Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh, they could only do as they were bid.

After all, they all understood very well what would happen to them if they dared to disobey her in the Dong Clan's territory.

Furthermore, they had recently heard about the intolerable deeds of those Qi warriors from the Realm of Black Marsh.

Even though Dong Li had played a trick and gotten seven of the people from the Realm of Black Marsh killed, none of the three groups of explorers would have the strength to contend against the rest of them alone.

If Dong Li hadn't called upon them, it wouldn't have occurred to them to unite against those murderers.

But now that they had come together upon hearing Dong Li's call, and their collective strength exceeded that of the people from the Realm of Black Marsh, they weren't afraid of them anymore.

Not to mention that they also had the Dong Clan backing them.

Dong Li sneered. "A bunch of fools."

The reason why she hadn't been so eager to summon members of

the Dong Clan to this place was that she knew she could use these outsiders to wear down or annihilate those from the Realm of Black Marsh.

In her eyes, no matter whether it was the people from the Realm of Black Marsh or the explorers that had come upon her summons, they were all chess pieces, subject to her manipulation.

She didn't care about their lives, not in the least.

What she really wanted was to see Nie Tian suffer and sustain injuries, so that she could find a vent for her anger towards him.

BANG! BANG!

As countless claw-shaped shadows continued to rain on Nie Tian, blood flowed out of the corner of his mouth, and his face turned pale.

Upon seeing Nie Tian's condition, Guan Yue, who had infused every one of those claw-shaped shadows with his own spiritual power, smiled brutally.

“You killed my little brother. No matter who you are, you will have to die here today!” With these words, he wove his metal claws in the air and once again channeled the power within the floating, claw-shaped shadows.

In the next moment, torrential spiritual power fluctuations burst forth from within each and every claw-shaped shadow and spread towards Nie Tian.

Experiencing soreness all over, Nie Tian took a deep breath and forced himself to calm down.

Wood power suddenly rushed out of the vortex of wood power in his spiritual sea, and with a strong nourishing aura, it poured into his meridians, muscles, and internal organs.

Wherever his wood power flowed, the intense soreness disappeared, making him so comfortable that he felt as if he was

having a bath in a hot spring.

Instantly, his meridians and muscles recovered their vigor.

As a thought appeared in Nie Tian's mind, the green aura that was coiled in his heart also unleashed a surge of life energy, which morphed into a streak of green light that rushed into his internal organs.

The streak of green light seemed to suddenly stimulate the flesh power within Nie Tian's internal organs and tap into his potential.

In the next moment, Nie Tian discovered that his badly-injured body had suddenly recovered to its peak state.

He threw his head back and let loose a long roar.

As he did, spiritual power of various attributes, flesh power, and psychic power, as well as soul power from the seven fragmentary star in his soul, rapidly rushed out and formed a chaotic magnetic field around him.

Distorting and chaotic fluctuations spread out into the space around Nie Tian, causing the claw-shaped shadows that fell into it to shake violently.

Not only that, but the spiritual power that Guan Yue had vested them with was instantly distorted.

Many of the invisible strings that connected the floating claw-shaped shadows with Guan Yue suddenly snapped.

Immediately afterwards, the claw-shaped shadows that had fallen into Nie Tian's chaotic magnetic field started to explode one after another.

The suffocating spiritual power fluctuations that weighed down on Nie Tian like mountains vanished along with them.

At that moment, eyes narrowed, Nie Tian began to swing the Flame Star in his hand.

Blade blasts sent out by the Flame Star snapped the remaining

intact strings with great precision.

Guan Yue's face turned pale with fright. Dark-green smoke rose from the bottom of his feet as he swiftly jumped backwards.

Nie Tian let out a cold harrumph as he fixed his frigid gaze on him.

Guan Yue met Nie Tian's gaze and felt very uneasy, as if he knew something bad was about to happen.

In the next moment, he found that Nie Tian, who was staring at him holding his Flame Star, suddenly became blurry.

WHOOSH!

Sensing a booming life aura in the tall bush behind his back, he turned around as quickly as he could.

A two-meter-long blade blast, mixed with flames and starlight, had already been launched at him.

At the same time, he was enveloped by the strange magnetic field.

As he attempted to draw on his spiritual power, he discovered that it had become unprecedentedly difficult. Even his originally peaceful soul, which was like an undisturbed lake, experienced enormous amounts of turbulence, as well as a stabbing pain.

With great difficulty, he raised his metal claws to defend himself.

RUUUUUMBLE!

A surge of extremely explosive power, which shouldn't have belonged to a Heaven stage cultivator, slammed into the claws.

Guan Yue's arms were instantly mangled, blood spraying out of them. His body was also sent flying back by the terrifying impact.

His body made a perfect arc in the air and crashed heavily onto the ground. Guan Yue grimaced and gasped for air as he rapidly examined himself.

He discovered that spiritual power of different attributes was following his meridians up his arms as they continued to damage his arms.

Lucky for him, the strike had knocked him out of the chaotic magnetic field, and he no longer felt the terrifying feeling of his soul being twisted and ripped apart.

“Is this brat really at the Heaven stage?!” Guan Yue gnashed his teeth with frustration as he watched Nie Tian, who seemed as calm as ever, pace towards him.

Only then did he realize that his younger brother’s death hadn’t been a lucky attempt.

Although this unknown Heavens stage young man cultivated spiritual power with many different attributes, every single one of them was outstandingly pure and rich.

Furthermore, when he had taken repeated bombardment from his claw-shaped shadows, not only had he not lost his will to battle, but he even seemed to have been provoked. The strength he had later exhibited almost suffocated him.

After a brief search in his mind, he came around and realized that Nie Tian had been preserving his strength before.

Trembling with fear, Guan Yue hastily turned to look at his companions in an attempt to ask for help.

However, what he saw made his expression grow even grimmer.

Dozens of Qi warriors had already surrounded his companions. At this moment, they were madly attacking them on Dong Li’s demand.

His companions were obviously in an unfavorable situation. Even their leader’s eyes started to flicker, as he was apparently considering retreat.

After a brief pondering, Guan Yue made out the situation he was

in, and was determined to escape.

However, just as he was trying to get ahold of his bearings, a cyan awl approached without making a sound.

Guan Yue sensed the danger.

With a panicked expression, he jerked his head to his left, and discovered that the devilishly beautiful woman from the Dong Clan had already appeared from behind a tall bush.

Before he could react, the cyan awl shot into his ribs like a flash of lightning.

An intense, sore numbness, along with agonizing pain, came from the side of his ribcage. Then, that side of his body began to grow stiff and numb.

“The awl is poisonous!” Lips trembling, Guan Yue attempted to stop the spread of the toxin with his secret magics.

However, Dong Li didn’t give him the chance to do that.

Dong Li lunged forward as sharp bones stuck out of the edge of her bone shield. In the next moment, Dong Li buried them all in Guan Yue’s body.

Guan Yue’s body gradually turned cold and dropped to the ground.

Nie Tian came to a stop in a location about ten meters in front of Dong Li. Gripping the Flame Star, he said to her with furrowed eyebrows, “That was completely unnecessary. I didn’t need your help.”

“His cultivation base is much higher than yours, yet he failed to leave a noticeable wound on you,” Dong Li said with a disgusted expression. “Such a good-for-nothing is an eyesore for me.”

Nie Tian looked at her, not uttering a word.

The Dong Li he was looking at now was just as cunning and vicious as the Song Li he had dealt with in the Realm of Split Void.

The only thing that was different was her appearance.

Having resumed her actual appearance, Dong Li looked like a blossoming flower. Together with her well-built, long legs and curvaceous upper body, they made her an absolutely rare beauty.

However, he knew perfectly well that this blossoming rose was covered in sharp thorns.

Any man who dared to pick it might end up with a bloody hand.

“Hua Tian, Nie Tian, hahaha.” Dong Li chuckled as she took her time retracting her cyan awl from Guan Yue’s cold body and putting it away, along with her bone shield.

Nie Tian let out a loud harrumph.

Apparently, Dong Li had long since learned about his real identity from Dong Baijie.

Considering Dong Li’s resourcefulness, she might have already obtained a thorough knowledge of him and his relationship with the Cloudsoaring Sect.

This meant that the threat she had made before had been well-based.

“What do you want?” asked Nie Tian.

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