

Pet Store 1011

Chapter 1011: The Gala Begins

Why did she feel the need to snort when she said goodbye?

Su Ping was puzzled, but the abundant astral power around him soon made him forget about it; he devoted himself to cultivation.

He didn't even detect the unexpected arrival of the Ascendant old man. Just to be safe, he set up a barrier to protect himself before cultivating.

"You should come out too."

Su Ping summoned the chaos beast, the Dark Dragon Hound, the Inferno Dragon and the other pets. He reduced their body sizes, so that they could fit inside the astral array.

After that, it was all a pleasant experience, practicing away.

Outside of the astral array—Loulan Lin stomped in fury, seeing that Su Ping had set up a barrier that barred prying eyes. She didn't know why she was angry, but she could do nothing about it.

"Princess Lin..." someone greeted her.

"Piss off."

"Sure thing."

The hubbub on the square gradually came to an end. Everyone gradually stopped minding about Su Ping after he stepped into the main cultivation seat and secluded himself.

Jue, the previous seat owner, was amongst the crowd—he didn't know what to do.

A few young men who had followed Jue for years mumbled and complained on his behalf.

"Boss, Director Yu is truly unfair. The guy is not part of our family. Why would he deserve the main seat to cultivate? Would he even try his best if the family has problems?"

"Exactly. He's just a guest. He would definitely run away if anything happened."

"Keep your voices down," said Jue as he withdrew his gaze and glared at them, "You've followed me for a long time. Don't you already know what you should say and what you shouldn't? Did you not see how he resisted Ye Ling? He's only in the Star State right now. Ye Ling will be left far behind when this guy becomes a Star Lord!"

"Why should we piss off someone like him?"

"Well..."

His followers closed their mouths, though not entirely convinced.

Meanwhile, in the central meeting room of that planet—an old man suddenly arrived at a palace outside the meeting room, and then passed through the security check.

“Chief, please have a look at what happened in the holy land.” The old man was none other than Director Yu. He waved a hand and displayed the confrontation between Su Ping and Ye Ling.

“Huh?”

In the front of the palace—a majestic and awe inspiring middle aged man raised his eyebrows. He remarked after watching the clip, “As expected of a Celestial’s disciple. I heard that he was already admitted as a disciple in the star zone battle.”

“Indeed. He can already fight a genius such as Ye Ling, even though he’s only in the Star State. The gap between them isn’t too wide. Unbelievable!” Director Yu remarked; he never thought he would see a Star State warrior with that much potential.

Su Ping had condensed a small world in the Fate State. That was tantamount to the ceiling of that cultivation realm.

Very few people in history had achieved that. The ones who did had either died by accident later one, or reached the Celestial State!

Su Ping was currently breaking the limits yet again, of the Star State this time. His future would be unimaginable if he continued growing like this!

“Some of our people disagreed with the idea of him becoming a guest, but they probably don’t have anything to say right now.” The Loulan family chief chuckled. “Well done, director. Hopefully, we’ll have a Heavenly Lord friend in a few years.”

“Chief, I’ve given away the best training seat in the holy land to him. I think it’s a fair deal, considering that he wouldn’t visit us too often,” said Director Yu respectfully.

“It’s fine. You have my permission. Don’t worry about any disagreements,” said the family chief with a smile. He knew why Director Yu was there; the Loulan family was too big to be completely united. In any case, he was the decision maker; he wouldn’t let pointless disputes hurt his family interests—

All in all, it would be stupid for the dissenters to find trouble with Su Ping while others were trying to serve him well.

Director Yu was relieved to hear that. He turned around and left, as he had to inform the several members of his faction to make friends with Su Ping.

The gala was about to take place; all the different factions of the family were busy making preparations. The news of Su Ping and Ye Ling’s confrontation had spread rather quickly; after all, both of them were top geniuses and would always receive a lot of attention. The news had even spread beyond the planet, all across the universe.

...

This astral power density is unbelievable. I’ve been gathering one star per day! Inside the astral array— Su Ping was trying his best to condense stars. All the astral power absorbed was automatically transformed into deity aura by the vortices in his astral oceans. His body was gradually turning into that of a deity too.

He was already half a deity at the moment.

Once the transformation was complete, he would be able to transform astral power into deity aura without the use of vortices. By then he would have the ability to transmit deity aura to others and help them improve!

It's more efficient to condense stars with deity aura. If my body is transformed into that of a god, the efficiency will very likely improve even more. I'll see if I can ask Joanna to let the Superior Gods help me, next time I go to the Demigod Burial.

Su Ping was truly looking forward to it; however, he wasn't in a rush. Deity aura was eight times as effective as astral power, while divine power was tenfold; that improvement wouldn't be as significant as the one he was experiencing.

I think that gods have the best physical attributes among all species. Only some of the rare beasts can best them.

Su Ping was then reminded of his Solar Bulwark. Unfortunately—although he could transform astral power into Golden Crow power, he didn't know how to make the best use of it. He had only inherited some secret techniques of the Golden Crows, but they weren't really comprehensive. That was why Su Ping kept using astral power.

I should visit the Golden Crows' world again someday and learn more, Su Ping thought.

In the blink of an eye—Su Ping had condensed fifteen stars in that seat.

It was necessary to light up sixty-three stars to condense the seventh Astral Painting. Adding up the ones condensed earlier, he already had 28 stars; he would have enough of them if he were to cultivate for another month.

I almost feel unwilling to leave. Su Ping was truly reluctant.

However, someone was calling out to him from outside the astral array.

Su Ping could only pause his cultivation, withdraw the Dark Dragon Hound and his other pets. He checked their levels; as expected, the chaos beast had made the most progress. It was already in the Fate State, becoming much more intimidating. It was probably able to even beat normal Star Lords.

That was completely unreasonable.

The chaos beast didn't have a small world, but the chaos aura emanated by it was enough to easily knock through normal small worlds.

That is correct. It could suppress Star Lords with physical strength alone.

"You guys need to keep it up. You don't want to fall behind, do you?" Su Ping urged his other pets.

The other pets gave the young beast angry looks. Even though their training with Su Ping was cruel and harsh, they had grown used to it; that is, until this new competitor showed up.

Su Ping saw a lot of people gathered outside the array, once he got out, but not many Loulans were present. Loulan Feng, along with Director Yu, were looking at him with smiling faces; Su Ping somehow found their gestures creepy.

“Mr. Su, sorry to interrupt your cultivation, but our family’s gala is about to begin. We’re here to take you to the high platform, if you would care to join.” Loulan Feng chuckled, as he addressed Su Ping in a warm way.

The latter had already guessed the reason for their visit. He asked, “How long will the gala last? Will we go to the Sea of Illusions afterwards?”

Loulan Feng nodded. “That is correct. The gala will last three days, and friends from various star zones will come. Many of them will want to meet you.”

“I prefer cultivating over meeting them,” said Su Ping, shaking his head.

He wasn’t being particularly condescending. It was just him having more fun cultivating, just like how nerds preferred playing games, instead of socializing.

“Mr. Su, it’s never wrong to work hard, but there’s a long journey ahead of you. Many of the visitors are Ascendants. Your life will be easier if you have more friends when you roam the universe,” said Director Yu with a smile.

“Is my life not easy enough?” Su Ping was puzzled.

Director Yu found his reply amusing. He said, “Naturally, normal travel is indeed easy, but there’s good stuff to be found inside relics and treasure troves that could benefit you. Those places have been occupied; you do have an extraordinary status, and you are a guest of our family, but not all the owners of those places would be as willing to let you partake in exploring them...”

He spoke in a rather subtle way, but he believed that Su Ping would understand him.

Su Ping shook his head. “What the Loulan family offers is enough for my cultivation. My master also gives me training resources. There are many relics and treasure troves, but I don’t need all of them. Besides, I can always visit them when I reach the Ascendant State; I believe that their owners won’t refuse me by then.”

Director Yu was lost for words again, realizing that Su Ping had a point. He was only trying to persuade Su Ping for his family’s sake. It was true that the young man wasn’t short of resources, but any of Su Ping’s friends could indirectly become connections for their family. Making as many friends as possible was how the Loulan family had thrived over the years.

Loulan Feng realized what was on inside Su Ping’s mind, so he stopped Director Yu’s persuasion. He said with a smile, “Mr. Su, let’s go to the gala first. Oh, right, how do you feel about Princess Lin?”

“Princess Lin?” Su Ping was stunned. “You mean the grandma who wanted to challenge me?”

“Grandma...” Loulan Feng almost choked. He originally intended to ask Su Ping’s impression of Lin; if he liked her, he could then propose a marriage between them. However, Su Ping’s reply stopped him from uttering what he wanted to say.

Director Yu was equally stunned; he glanced at Loulan Feng, unable to believe his ears.

“Well... Mr. Su, you’re very young, but it often takes a long time to jump from the Star Lord realm to the Ascendant State. Ye Ling for instance, whom you encountered earlier, has been stuck there for more than 1,500 years, and he’s not an exception. It’s not unusual to be stuck for tens of thousands of years. You’d be considered a genius as long as you make a breakthrough before you die.”

Loulan Feng coughed and said subtly, “Although Princess Lin is a hundred years older than you, that age gap is nothing. Besides, Princess Lin has always been cultivating in the family estate, rarely going out. She’s as innocent as a child.”

Su Ping could only heave a sigh in his heart. Unable to play dumb any longer, he said, “She’s a nice person. I can make friends with her.”

Loulan Feng felt relieved. He said with a smile, “Princess Lin may throw a tantrum now and then, but she’s not a bad person in nature. I believe you’ll be good friends.”

“Let’s talk about that later. We should head to the gala.” Su Ping wanted to veer away from that topic as soon as possible.

Loulan Feng nodded and dropped a hint at Director Yu, who took the cue and quickly left after bidding Su Ping farewell.

Loulan Feng, on the other hand, took Su Ping to the gala.

“You’re asking me to spend more time with that guy?” In a corner of the square—Loulan Lin’s eyes widened with disbelief after she heard what Director Yu said. “What’s that all about? There are lots of people in our family. Can’t they keep him company?”

Director Yu said with a bitter smile, “Ms. Lin, guys can only become his brothers. You, on the other hand, are different.”

“You want me to marry him?” Her lofty upbringing shone through, as she was no stranger to arranged marriages. She became gloomy as she asked, “Have you asked my parents and Master about their opinion on the matter?”

“We’ve already discussed, and everyone thinks that he’s a great partner for you...” Director Yu paused for a moment and said, “However, we won’t force you to do anything. After all, you are also a gifted genius of ours. We simply hope for love to spark between you, but no one will force you if you find each other unsuitable.”

Relieved, Loulan Lin snorted and said, “That’s more like it. I won’t waste my time on him if that’s the case. Just like I said before, I will avoid all distractions until I become a Heavenly Lord. I admit that the guy you’re interested in is excellent, but I’m not the least inferior in comparison. I too will have a chance of becoming a Heavenly Lord when I reach the Ascendant State!”

Director Yu smiled bitterly, as the girl didn’t have enough potential to become a Heavenly Lord. Even if she did, she wouldn’t be as strong as Su Ping. After all, she had gotten to such heights after consuming a lot of resources given by the family; her potential could already be inferred from this.

Their plans to have those two marry was partly because of the potential marriage of equals if both reached the Ascendant State.

"If there's any chance for it, you should reconsider, Princess Lin. You have to marry someone eventually. You may not find a better catch if you miss this one," Director Yu persuaded her.

Loulan Lin raised her eyebrows; she was more or less tempted. To be honest, her feelings toward Su Ping were dead neutral. She only stepped forward to defend him from Ye Ling because Su Ping was one of their guests and she didn't want him to be affronted.

"Maybe later." Loulan Lin snorted and left.

Director Yu felt helpless. Those two kids were equally tricky to deal with.

Su Ping and Loulan Feng had arrived at the gala by then. It was being held in a magnificent city floating in the sky, over the planet's most prosperous area.

Hill-like stairs had been raised by special devices. Astral crystals were also falling constantly from a large cloud above them.

Dragons and phoenixes were flying around the floating city.

Hardly had Su Ping arrived when he detected the Ascendant State auras. It was obvious that many honorable guests had been invited.

Loulan Feng personally attended to Su Ping and took him into the city. They reached a platform graced by beautiful waitresses. If Su Ping watched TV more often, he would have recognized that most were top stars from a certain planet.

"Mr. Su, have some rest here. Whatever you need, just tell them," said Loulan Feng with a smile.

Su Ping nodded and sat down.

The four beautiful girls peeped at Su Ping curiously, but none dared to look him in the eye. Any friend of the Loulan family was more powerful than the lord of a galaxy!

A single hair of such figures was more important than them. However, no matter how they observed Su Ping, they only felt that he was a friendly next-door boy. He wasn't like the intimidating bigshots they would usually meet.

Someone asked as soon as Su Ping sat down, "Is he Mr. Su?"

## **Chapter 1012: Popularity**

Su Ping looked at the speaker.

It was an old man sitting next to him, with hair and eyebrows of a red color; he was leaning against a giant wine gourd that was three meters tall. He was looking at Su Ping with a smile and a bottle of purple wine, half drunk.

Sensing his non-malicious attitude, Su Ping gave him a slight nod. "That's me. Senior, are you a friend of the Loulan family too?"

"I've long heard of an unparalleled genius emerging in the recent Universe Geniuses' Contest, who condensed a small world in the Fate State. Your future is nothing but promising!"

The old man chuckled and continued, "I didn't expect you to be invited by the Loulans; they must have paid a fortune. You're calling me senior, so I'll offer you a bowl of wine as a sign of respect. Come on."

He poured wine from the massive gourd into a giant bowl, and drank it quickly.

Seeing that he had downed the whole wine serving, Su Ping could only pour himself a bowl of wine with a smile. "You're an Ascendant State expert. It's only natural to address you as a senior."

"Mr. Su, you're too kind. If you don't consider it demeaning, just call me Brother Jiu."

The old man wasn't as arrogant as normal Ascendants. He said casually, "You'll reach our level soon enough. Considering your talent and potential, maybe I'll have to ask for your help by then."

"You're too kind, sir. I'll be the one in need of your help," said Su Ping, not taking the answer as flattery.

The old man narrowed his eyes, as if observing Su Ping carefully. "Mr. Su, you're obviously very young. The cultivation journey is long and boring, and yet this world is wonderful and lovely. Are you interested in enjoying it?"

"Oh?"

"I have a junior who is stunningly beautiful. She's the most beautiful woman in our galaxy. I can arrange for her to become your mistress if you're willing to take her," said the old man with a smile.

Dazed for a moment, Su Ping immediately realized that the old man was there to play matchmaker.

"Senior, girls affect my training. I won't consider that until I reach the Ascendant State," Su Ping said to subtly decline.

The old man heaved a sigh. "You'll feel different about girls when you reach the Ascendant State; you won't be able to enjoy them by then. You'll be able to see through anyone's guise after you condense your Divine Mark, and your heart will be as tranquil as still water. It'll be practically impossible to become excited by anyone."

Su Ping was stunned by this answer. He then asked with a weird expression, "Senior, are you saying that men will suffer from erectile dysfunction when they break through to the Ascendant State?"

The beautiful waitresses serving them quickly blinked their eyes since they happened to overhear, feeling that they had heard a shocking secret. *Breaking news! All the Ascendant State experts are...*

"Cough!"

The old man almost choked. He looked around and noticed the weirdness in the waitresses' eyes. Lost for words, he said, "Of course not. What I'm saying is that certain things will feel different when you reach higher levels, compared with your current situation."

"It's just like the time when you were very weak, you could still feel the heat of the sun, but then the feeling would no longer be there as you grew stronger. Maybe you think it's great, when in fact you've been deprived of that faint sensation of heat."

“The stronger you are, the more you will lose. You will lose a lot of feelings and emotions.”

There was depression and regret in the old man’s eyes as he talked about it. “Strength is obtained by trading many valuable things. You won’t be able to feel many things when you become stronger. So... You should get married while you’re still young, or at least try to enjoy yourself. Once you reach the Ascendant State, you’ll only be able to enjoy wine and your reminiscences.”

Su Ping understood. He thought he had indeed lost certain things, especially his subtle feelings.

It was said that all experts were lonely.

Maybe loneliness wasn’t about the lack of companionship, but the loss of familiar feelings from the past.

After a lapse in deep thought, Su Ping asked, “So, senior, will we really suffer from erectile dysfunction when we reach the Ascendant State?”

“Ha!”

The old man spilled the wine in his mouth and glared at Su Ping. “What are you talking about? How could that be possible? Even the Ocean State guys can take care of such minor physical problems. You think that would be a problem for Ascendants?”

“If that’s not a problem, let’s just wait for the future then. I have to devote myself to cultivation right now,” Su Ping quickly replied.

Lost for words, the old man thought for a moment and waved his finger, projecting the image of an attractive redhead. He said, “What do you say? Are you really not going to consider her?”

Su Ping glanced at him and shook his head. “Thank you for your kindness, but I’m not interested in anyone right now.”

Su Ping had seen Joanna and Green Lady, who were both extremely beautiful. He had also seen the princesses among gods in the cultivation site, and the Deity Queen in Luofu. All of them were alluring and pretty, basically making him immune to the average beauties.

Seeing how the young man wasn’t tempted, the old man could only frown and heave a sigh. He then thought even more highly of Su Ping. Since the man could stave off boredom and the temptation of girls, it was hard to imagine what could stop him from growing.

“Never mind. Devoting yourself to cultivation is not a bad thing. I can only congratulate you in advance for reaching the Ascendant State.” The old man shook his head and downed another drink.

Su Ping also had another drink to join the old fellow.

Other Ascendants arrived at that moment; all of them seemed to be friends of the Loulans. They went to exchange a few words with the old man, seemingly being very familiar with each other.

They immediately surrounded Su Ping when they learned that he was Shen Huang’s disciple, planning to set him up with someone. Some even gifted him strange treasures.

They had to invest in him early in the game.



Considering Su Ping's popularity and potential, none of those experts acted proud before him. They wouldn't have a chance to befriend him once he reached the Ascendant State, or even further, if he became a Heavenly Lord.

Su Ping didn't expect to be as cherished. He could only look up to Ascendants in awe before winning the Universe Geniuses' Contest, but now they could even become friends.

"Mr. Su, you're truly talented. Feel free to visit the Roland Galaxy; you won't need to pay a thing while you're there. I'll ask the most beautiful girl in my family to entertain you."

"Old Bai, do you think Mr. Su is short of money? That's beneath you. It just so happens that I have an invitation to the Forbidden Space Forest. I can give it to you if you're interested, Mr. Su. I requested it for a junior from my family."

"The Forbidden Space Forest is too dangerous. Although Mr. Su is extraordinarily gifted and his master must have given him a lot of treasures for his safety, that place is too dangerous even for us if we're careless. You'd better save that invitation for your junior. While youngsters still need life-and-death training, an unparalleled genius such as Mr. Su doesn't."

"That's true. Mr. Su, what kind of girl do you like? Just tell me. I have an interstellar entertainment corporation; you may find all kinds of cute girls there."

"Are you interested in stone gambling games, Mr. Su?"

Many Ascendants went to greet and shower Su Ping with flattery. They all tried to make friends with him, as it was highly unlikely that he would have trouble reaching the Ascendant State. Such an investment would eventually bring great returns.

Su Ping was feeling at the top of the world while being surrounded and flattered by that many people. Most importantly, all those present trying to curry his favor were Ascendant bigshots. Fortunately, he had seen stronger beings in the cultivation sites, and was well aware that he had yet to touch the limits of the Star Lord State.

He was an absolute weakling compared to the Ancestral God who had managed to create seven small worlds.

He wasn't the unparalleled genius they thought he was.

After the several rounds of compliments, Su Ping gradually calmed down and politely replied to everyone present. "Some of the geniuses became famous at an early stage, but then gradually lost their brilliance. Others were distracted by self-indulging, while some became too obsessed with all the bouquets and applause to think about growing stronger."

He didn't accept any of the gifts offered.

As a matter of fact, he was barely short of anything at this moment.

Some gifts were indeed good, but he could ask his master for them. They weren't really significant to him at the moment.

All the Ascendants started to hesitate and back down after seeing how the young man was unaffected by their praises. Their goal wasn't achieved, but they respected him even more because of it.

More friends of the Loulans arrived shortly after.

Most were Ascendant experts, more than eighty in total. Only two of them were Star Lords, while Su Ping was the only Star State warrior.

Half of them went to say hello to Su Ping; the others kept their distance, and merely glanced at him. After all, not all Ascendants were willing to praise a junior.

While all the friends of the Loulans gathered, the Ascendants from other star zones also made an appearance to congratulate the hosts.

The gala began half a day later. Both the dragon and the phoenix roared, turning the entire planet into an exciting sea of splendors. The most dazzling fireworks were blossoming in the sky.

Su Ping suddenly remembered the Blue Planet while enjoying the wonderful scenery. His home planet had been badly ruined after going through a war, and it was in a poor state when he left. His current abilities and position made it easy for him to rebuild the Blue Planet, to eventually turn it into a tier-1 planet.

*Come to think of it, I'm still the Lord of the Blue Planet. It seems that I've been too irresponsible.* Su Ping's eyes glittered; he planned to modify the Blue Planet after his visit to the Loulans ended. He could also direct the Blue Planet toward the Celestial Court, or a tier-1 galaxy nearby, so that the planet's inhabitants would have true and closer connections with the Federation.

*I need to find a good school too, so that the talented people on the planet can attend for free.* Su Ping considered the Blue Planet's modification plan in silence.

Meanwhile, he also thought of his naughty yet stubborn sister. He intended to ask Elder Yan to find her for him.

*I'm already capable of providing a comfortable environment for an entire planet without even realizing it.* Su Ping looked at the distance, fascinated.

The gala became livelier as time went by; different activities were taking place.

A lot of Ascendants were merrily interacting with the Loulans.

Su Ping even saw a familiar person among them. It was Loulan Lin, who had defended him earlier; she was seated at the edge of the high platform. There was a beautiful woman at the center; she wore a purple robe with sword patterned sleeves. Astonishingly enough, the maid standing behind her was also an Ascendant.

The maid was holding a strange sword, which resembled water and clouds. It was enshrouded by brilliance, making it hard to be seen clearly.

*Is she Heavenly Lord Jian Lan of the Loulan family?* Su Ping's eyes glittered after noticing her.

The people seated around Heavenly Lord Jian Lan obviously emanated a different aura, when compared to normal Ascendants; all of them seemed to be Heavenly Lords.

Their seats were clearly more splendid in comparison to the rest.

Su Ping then felt that someone was looking at him. He turned his head, only to find Loulan Lin who was looking back at him.

Their eyes locked. Loulan Lin remembered what Director Yu had said, so she snorted and turned her head away. She later peeped at Su Ping from the corner of her eye, only to find that Su Ping had also looked away, causing another snort of hers.

Heavenly Lord Jian Lan was talking with other Heavenly Lords when she heard the snort. She lowered her head and asked with a smile. "Huh? Lin'er, what's wrong?"

Loulan Lin replied in an obedient and polite way, "It's nothing, Grandmother."

Heavenly Lord Jian Lan's eyebrows moved. Many lines suddenly appeared in her eyes, allowing her to see the events that had happened a few seconds earlier. She looked in the direction where her granddaughter was looking earlier, and soon saw a young man. She quickly realized the gist of the situation.

"I've been informed that they plan to marry you off to Mr. Su, who came to visit," said the powerful cultivator with a gentle and soothing tone, "Still, your own opinion is what really matters. Don't feel pressured. Nobody can force you if you're not interested in him. Do you understand?"

Feeling warm, Loulan Lin quickly said, "Thank you, grandmother. I'm aware of that."

"Although the guy is very talented, even as talented as Celestials when they were young, the cultivation journey is really long. Many accidents can happen along the way. Besides, not even Celestials can teach how to reach the Ascendant State. They can only offer resources to those who already have what it takes to reach the Ascendant State, all in order to expedite the process.

"So, it's your own feelings that matter," said Heavenly Lord Jian Lan softly, "You can try to get to know him better. If he is not decent enough, just forget it."

Loulan Lin nodded and said, "Got it."

Heavenly Lord Jian Lan smiled and stopped minding about the topic. She then resumed her conversation with the other Heavenly Lords about important matters.

The Loulan gala was a special event that involved a large number of plans and preparations.

### **Chapter 1013: Star Lords Battling**

The guests were sent to different areas in the gala.

Heavenly Lords were at one place, Ascendants were elsewhere, while other friends of the family like Su Ping had an independent platform of their own. The less important ones, such as the lords of certain galaxies, were entertained in other platforms.

The rest of the guests were seated in the crowded auditorium behind the platforms.

Su Ping saw Six Lives Buddha, Lilian and Dragon Shepard seated among a bunch of Star Lords. They had extraordinary backgrounds, and it wasn't exactly demeaning for them to sit with a group of Star Lords.

Su Ping saw Ye Ling—whom he had recently confronted—seated on another platform. He was merely a Star Lord, but the Loulan family was already treating him like an Ascendant. The guests around him didn't complain about this. After all, Ye Ling was indeed a genius who had a good chance to rise and break through. It wasn't demeaning for them to be seated together with him.

Exclamations were then heard, coming from the exterior.

A group of people flew over and entered the meeting place. They arrived at the Loulan's main platform. Their leader was wearing white clothes; he looked as graceful and unworldly as a deity.

Many Ascendants recognized him and immediately stood up.

The old man with red eyebrows next to Su Ping exclaimed, "It's Heavenly Lord Ye Lan! He's here too!"

"Ye Lan?" asked Su Ping curiously.

The old man glanced at Su Ping and said, "He held the top position in the Divine Lord Rank of the Crimson Shadow Star Zone five hundred years ago. He secluded himself for a long time, until he reached the Ascendant State. He had killed ten Ascendant beasts in the Crimson Shadow Star Zone. He's the newest Heavenly Lord in the last hundreds of years!"

"The newest Heavenly Lord..." Su Ping didn't expect that the Loulans would invite the newest risen Heavenly Lord. It did seem influential.

The other guests of the Loulan family were similarly astonished. The Ascendants seated close to Heavenly Lord Ye Lan could not help but rise to their feet. After all, even though they were of Ascendant level, Heavenly Lords were very close to the Celestial State!

Soon, the leader of the Loulan family invited Heavenly Lord Ye Lan to sit down and talk.

As the gala went on, the top stars invited to warm up the atmosphere went about their performances, while some of the rare pets roaming about to build up the atmosphere were still around. Many of them enjoyed the shows and thought that the trip was worth it.

Su Ping had nothing to do, so he ate ravenously. The food on the table was not only delicious; it was filled with exuberant energy. It would have worked as a great tonic for ordinary people. While eating and digesting, he asked the beautiful waitresses to eat with him.

Those waitresses were considered stars in different galaxies. They were actually battle pet warriors, but none of them were above the Ocean State. They hesitated to accept Su Ping's invitation, but a few samplings of the food left them enamored and sparkly eyed.

All the food on the table was finished, and Su Ping had new dishes served. The food was free of charge anyway.

While eating and drinking, he then heard noises from a platform down below. He looked for the source of the sound, only to see a few young men in strange clothes looking around on the platform. Many people close to Six Lives Buddha were infuriated; some even stood in anger.

“What’s going on?” Su Ping was surprised. Those young men were just Star Lords. *They dare to cause trouble here?*

“They’re kids from the Blood Charm Star Zone. They’re being arrogant, challenging other Star Lords.” The old man glanced at the high pile of empty plates on Su Ping’s table, visibly shocked. “I’ve always heard that the people of that star zone are bloodthirsty. It seems to be true.”

“Is nobody going to stop this folly?” Su Ping looked at the Loulan family found on the main platform.

The old man with red eyebrows shook his head. “The family leader has purposefully invited lots of geniuses because he wants them to show their abilities, and because he wants his juniors to beat them in front of the honorable guests of other star zones. However, those youngsters seem to be very strong. I don’t think many can beat them.”

Su Ping understood. So, everything had been planned out.

He immediately dropped the idea of intervening. He ate and watched, ready to see the expertise of other Star Lords from the Divine Lord Rank.

“Why? Is nobody here courageous enough to fight me?” The blood-robed young man in the middle looked around and flashed a smile full of disdain.

“Humph. Let me teach you the importance of respect!”

A man suddenly jumped onto the platform. He was a brawny Star Lord who wore a piece of special armor. He spoke the Common Tongue of the universe with a strong accent.

One of the Loulan’s Ascendants enclosed the platform with his power after the brawny man entered the arena.

On the platform—the bloody-robed young man’s companions backed off and stood still. A battle immediately began. The brawny fellow and the bloody-robed young man unleashed their small worlds and fought.

Their respective attacks with faith power roared like dragons. All their pets were of the rare kind, Star Lord beasts that caused the platform to shake constantly. The venue would have been destroyed if the battlefield hadn’t been enclosed.

*The Divine Lord Rank geniuses don’t seem to have Ascendant State pets.*

Su Ping watched in silence. He had realized the same issue when he challenged the Divine Lord Rank; even the top ranker was only using a Star Lord pet.

Theoretically speaking, a Star Lord could sign a contract with Ascendant pets.

*Is it because the gap between the two levels is so huge that the pet might go out of control even if contracted?* Su Ping guessed, but he didn’t think it was the real reason.

After all, pets could be ferocious, but it wasn’t hard for those top geniuses to raise loyal pets. They had enough resources and connections to ask for the help of extraordinary trainers.

Furthermore, Ascendant pets were very smart. They could have asked the bigshots behind them to help intimidate the pets. Most pets would very likely be subdued.

Su Ping thought for a moment, and directly asked the old man next to him, "You don't know why?"

The old man felt surprised. The solemnity in Su Ping's face made him realize that the young man wasn't messing with him. He replied in a weird manner, "The reason is simple. Ascendant pets have already condensed Divine Marks. Your minds would be connected if you establish a contract with one of them; the closer you are, the more influential they'll be. Their Divine Marks will affect their masters, which is a critical condition for Star Lords, since it'll prevent them from rising to the Astral Seal."

"The more talented a Star Lord is, the less likely they'll contract an Ascendant State pet. If they're too greatly influenced by another path, it would be hard for them to free themselves. Such pets would be a source of constant interference. You must not contract Ascendant pets unless you've already become an Ascendant, otherwise you will never be able to reach that level!"

Su Ping didn't expect the reason to be that. He asked curiously, "Is there no way to block the influence?"

"None has been found as of yet." The old man shook his head. "After all, the Ascendant State continues to be a mysterious level. The Federation hasn't been able to fully analyze it with the current technology. As for the Star State and even the Star Lords, the Federation has already attained a lot of research finds, having even created many artificial Star Lord creatures. However, the Ascendant State is different."

Su Ping raised his eyebrows and looked down. He suddenly thought of something and asked, "Then, if a Star Lord has no chance to rise to the Ascendant State and contracts an Ascendant State pet, wouldn't he be even more dangerous than the geniuses on the Divine Lord Rank?"

"That's true." The old man nodded. "Therefore, the Star Lord State is rather complicated. Don't easily offend Star Lords who seem unremarkable, or you might get yourself accidentally killed. However, such Star Lords are rare, because it's hard for a Star Lord to tame Ascendant State pets to begin with.

"Such pets are usually gifted by the seniors backing them. But just consider how ferocious and smart the Ascendant beasts are. Even while suppressed, they would always look for an opportunity to slay their masters and escape. Who can find them? Even Heavenly Lords might find it hard to track down an Ascendant beast when the creature doesn't want to be found."

Su Ping was enlightened. So to speak, he had to be vigilant before mediocre Star Lords. Some may be carrying a nuclear bomb if they somehow managed to obtain an Ascendant State pet!

*However, I have the Prime Sky Mirror. Not just the Ascendant State pets, I'd have a chance to escape and wait for my master's help even if I run into human Ascendants.* Su Ping's eyes glittered.

He had been carrying the Prime Sky Mirror since he acquired it in the Heavenly Star Pavilion, and had also tested its power in the cultivation sites; it had allowed him to travel in different spaces, and could even make a copy himself to deflect damage.

The battle ended while Su Ping chatted with the old man. The young man in the bloody robe won, albeit by a narrow margin. The one who lost, according to hearsay among the audience, seemed to be famous on the Divine Lord Rank. Still, he was defeated in the end.

“Who’s next?!”

The bloody-robed young man looked around on the platform, his clothes stained with his own blood and his opponent’s. He couldn’t have looked more arrogant.

“I am!”

An angry female voice came from the bottom of the platform. Then, a girl with an alluring body figure dashed over and landed on the arena. She was covered in tight armor, but that wasn’t enough to eclipse her sexiness.

“Ha. Bad choice!” The bloody-robed young man sneered. “I don’t beat women, unless they offend me. You’d better reconsider!”

“Let me see how strong the fifth place holder of the Divine Lord Rank from the Blood Charm Star Zone is!” The angry woman snorted and attacked.

“I think she is Shi Xiaofeng, the fourth place holder of the Divine Lord Rank from the Flying Cloud Star Zone!”

“One of them is fourth place of the Divine Lord Rank, while the other is in fifth place. Tsk. I bet the one with the bigger boobs will win!”

“Do you want to get killed? She would skin you alive if she heard that!”

All kinds of whispers abounded. Many people were cheering for Shi Xiaofeng; they had obviously been infuriated by the bloody-robed young man’s provocation.

The pair were fighting fiercely in the arena as the cheering went on. The power they demonstrated eventually silenced them all, as their strength was indeed shocking to behold.

They were just Star Lords, but they were much stronger than lords of planetary systems.

Up above—the Ascendants of many star zones and the Loulan family were watching too. After all, if the top geniuses on the respective Divine Lord Ranks reached the Ascendant State, they would also be tricky rivals.

“He’s so strong!”

Loulan Lin watched in a daze. The two people fought using different styles, both equally horrifying. Their small worlds were indestructible, and their power of faith was as immeasurable as a deep ocean. Their constitutions and secret techniques were also quite intimidating.

“Burn the Sky!” Shi Xiaofeng roared. Her small world instantly turned into countless flames, like an enormous burning sphere. She pushed her small world toward her opponent like a meteor.

The bloody-robed young man, however, moved like a ghost. His small world was appearing and disappearing too. He suddenly split up and showed up behind Shi Xiaofeng’s back, attacking her unpredictably.

A phoenix cry burst out behind Shi Xiaofeng’s back. Her pet had dashed out and charged at the bloody-robed young man.

“What a smart pet!”

“The secret techniques of the Blood Charm Star Zone are all about assassination. They’re so unpredictable!”

Many Ascendants nodded as they watched.

Someone exclaimed all of a sudden, as a hint of black color appeared in Shi Xiaofeng’s burning small world. Then, the black color pierced through her small world like a sharp thorn. The burning meteor fell apart, wounding Shi Xiaofeng. Meanwhile, the bloody-robed young man leaped out of the flames.

A black and intimidating dagger was stuck right next to Shi Xiaofeng’s forehead.

The battle was over, and the victor was obvious.

The audience was completely silent. Then, everyone exclaimed loudly.

None of them expected that the seemingly unstoppable Shi Xiaofeng would be defeated that quickly.

Everyone was astonished to see the burn marks on the bloody-robed young man’s body. *When did he sneak into Shi Xiaofeng’s small world? Did he purposefully launch a clone to attack her from the back?*

“The fifth place of the Flying Cloud Star Zone is just so-so!”

The bloody-robed young man withdrew his dagger and flashed a cold and disdainful smile.

Shi Xiaofeng’s face was pale. She was angrily looking at her opponent while breathing heavily, but there was nothing she could say.

The audience had nothing to say about the young man’s attitude after such an outcome. While his arrogance was annoying, he was truly worthy of such arrogance!

#### **Chapter 1014: Challenger**

“Who’s next?”

The young man wearing the bloody-colored robe looked around. He ended up covered in blood, but he looked even more ferocious than before.

The audience was silent. The Ascendant experts on the high platform were peacefully watching the scene unfold. They weren’t really affected by the young man’s arrogance. After all, they had been the same when they were young; all the top geniuses were proud.

A person had every right to be proud as long as there was the ability to back it up!

Seeing no response, the young man in the bloody robe chuckled. “It seems that I’ll have to accept the egg. I thank the Loulan family for your generosity!”

Whispers burst out after he said that.

The Bleak Candle Dragon’s egg was a prize that the Loulans had offered to attract fighters from the Divine Lord Rank. It was the egg of a precious Ascendant State dragon.

There weren’t many Ascendant State pets!



Many Ascendants had a dozen pet spaces, but only a few of them had more than five Ascendant pets!

To have all the spots filled with such beasts, Ascendants would have to be members of super forces, such as the Loulan family. Otherwise, they could only manage it after becoming Heavenly Lords.

Most Ascendant beasts were very hard to catch. Also, they were very smart, and would run off if they couldn't win. Even if they were accidentally caught, they would even kill themselves at times!

Those beasts preferred to go down together with their enemies than to be enslaved as pets. This was a clear example of the wild beasts' ferocity.

Therefore, high level pets were cherished dearly. Few adult beasts with Ascendant State bloodlines were available on the market; beast eggs or younglings often sold quickly.

For the Loulans to offer the egg of an Ascendant State dragon as prize for the junior competition was a strong indicator of their abundant resources.

"Don't you think you're too weak to claim the Bleak Candle Dragon's egg?" said a golden-robed young man on the high platform. He was dressed in a casual style, with an obedient white cat in his arms. However, upon closer look, one would notice that the white cat was unlike the normal kind. Its eyes reflected purple light, and there were two black spots on its forehead, making it seem as if it had four eyes. Its tail was as agile as a snake too.

"Oh?"

The young man in the bloody robe raised his head aggressively. "Do you want to try me?"

"I never take advantage of others," said the casual golden-robed young man as he petted his cat, "I'll give you time to heal yourself and properly open your eyes after you recover. Right. Here are some medications; they should be enough to heal you in half an hour."

He then dropped a golden vial at the bloody-robed young man.

Brutality flashed in the bloody-robed young man's eyes. He snapped his finger and bounced the vial back before he said, "Fine. Let's see what you're capable of in half an hour from now!"

After that, he left the arena to treat his wounds.

The vial flew back to the golden-robed young man; he took it back with a smile, not taking offense from this.

"He's Xuanyuan Long from the Sword Skull Star Zone!"

"Is he?"

"He isn't very famous in our star zone, but he was the most talented genius five hundred years ago over there. He even rose to second place on their Divine Lord Rank once. He later fell to third place, but everyone knows that the top three on any Divine Lord Rank are monsters!"

"Tsk. The Loulan family managed to invite such a genius? What a great lineup of guests!"

“He is nothing. Even Heavenly Lord Ye Lan made an appearance. All the Divine Lord Ranking geniuses of the twelve star zones combined are no match for Heavenly Lord Ye Lan, even if he only uses one hand!”

“That’s true. He’s already a Heavenly Lord anyway. The Loulans are becoming more influential. The corporation that did business with us earlier seems to be run by one of their members. We should keep in touch with them.”

Many people had made the trip over to that planet because of the gala. All of them were celebrities in their respective star zones; they could experience the Loulans’ influence first hand at the moment.

“Some of the geniuses listed on the Divine Lord Ranks in several star zones are here. If only we could hold a universal contest for Star Lords someday... That way the strongest Star Lord would come to light.”

On the high platform—the old man with red eyebrows smiled and drank without a care, unworried that such a contest would cause trouble.

“Unfortunately, such a contest will never take place. All the kids are trying their best to reach the Ascendant State; when they do, they may even become Heavenly Lords. So, they won’t be interested in that contest. Even we would have a hard time persuading them,” another guest remarked.

“We were all proud and confident too, back when we were on the Divine Lord Rank. I understand how they feel...”

“You were on the Divine Lord Rank. I, on the other hand, only rose higher because of luck.”

“Give me a break. You’re the one who will most likely become a Heavenly Lord from among all of us. Those rankings aren’t everything; some geniuses are not interested in competing with others. It’s too demeaning!”

“That’s called keeping a low profile.”

All the guests were talking and laughing.

Other participants fought after the bloody-robed young man got off the stage; some were in the Star State while others were Star Lords. However, all of them seemed to know that winning the Bleak Candle Dragon’s egg was too far-fetched; that was why they didn’t fight as fiercely.

Many members of the Loulan family went to the stage to spar, showing unusual talent.

Su Ping saw Hai among them. He happened to know the guy’s opponent: Dragon Shepard.

Dragon Shepard had collected a lot of dragons over the years. Given the pressure inflicted by a full dragon lineup, Hai unleashed the power of his Skeleton Demon Constitution, turning into a giant Skeleton Demon and throwing laws like chains. Still, he lost in the end.

Nevertheless, his performance received the attention of many Ascendant experts and even Heavenly Lords.

Some Heavenly Lords were discussing on the high platform. One of them summoned Hai and asked him something after the match was over.

Hai sat down next to the Heavenly Lord soon after. It was likely that he had been taken in as a disciple.

On the other hand, Dragon Shepard had astonished the audience, but he was basically the same as he had been during the Universe Geniuses' Contest, even though he was better at controlling pets. After all, it was barely possible to make drastic progress in just a couple of years.

Besides, there was probably a Heavenly Lord behind the Dragon Shepard already, so none of the Ascendants issued invitations.

Soon, two others that Su Ping was familiar with went to the stage: Six Lives Buddha and Lilian.

Su Ping was eating and drinking; he watched their battle with great interest.

To Su Ping's surprise, just like Six Lives Buddha, Lilian had condensed a small world too. Their battle was rather fierce, but it was still under control; they didn't go all out. However, they still shocked all the audience. After all, they could already fight Star Lords with their Star State cultivation.

The gap between the Star State and the Star Lord State was almost too wide to cross, but some exceptional geniuses were capable of such a feat. Undoubtedly, both players on stage were such geniuses.

*Obviously, everybody has been growing fast. I need to be faster,* Su Ping thought.

"Mr. Su, both of them were your competitors during the Universe Geniuses' Contest, right?" someone asked Su Ping at that moment.

Su Ping nodded and replied, "We became friends after the contest."

"You did?" Some people were surprised, not expecting friendship to sprout among such fierce competitors.

"Years back, you condensed a small world in the Fate State and shocked the entire universe. Right now, your friends have also condensed small worlds in the Star State, which is equally remarkable. There are indeed more and more geniuses in our universe," someone remarked.

"Mr. Su, you must be a lot stronger than in the past. Why don't you go and have some fun over there?" said someone with a smile.

"That's true. I heard that Mr. Su was capable of challenging the Divine Lord Rank, whereas normal Star Lords would be crushed if they tried," said a female gently with glittering eyes.

"So to speak, wouldn't Mr. Su have the strength to go head to head with Xuanyuan Long in a couple of years?" asked a surprised guest.

"Of course. It's only a matter of time, considering Mr. Su's growing speed."

"Tsk, tsk."

Those guests looked at Su Ping with gentler eyes. Their conversation was partly aimed at flattering him, but all of them knew that Su Ping could really grow that fast.

After all, geniuses such as Xuanyuan Long would often stagnate in the Star Lords level for thousands of years before they reached the Ascendant State; that time was long enough for Su Ping to become a top Star Lord and compete with them.

It was worthy of note that people like Xuanyuan Long had claimed the positions of many geniuses on the Divine Lord Rank when they rose to prominence.

It wouldn't be long for Su Ping to nab a place on the Divine Lord Rank by the time he touched the limits of the Star Lord State!

Su Ping felt somewhat helpless while being watched by that many people. He didn't care about his public image, but it had become hard for him to only eat and drink like a glutton when a lot of people were shooting appreciative glances his way.

Su Ping decided to chit chat with them. "Has any of the Divine Lord Rank's top scorers of any star zone made the trip over?"

"Top Divine Lord rankers?"

A guest raised his head and looked around. He soon withdrew his gaze and shook his head. "I don't think so. However, the guy who ranks second in the Dragon Eagle Star Zone is here; he almost escaped my attention. It seems that the Bleak Candle Dragon's egg will be his."

"Oh?"

The other guests looked in that direction and soon found him.

"It's hard to say. The Divine Lord Rank of the Dragon Eagle Star Zone isn't that impressive. It's no better than the Golden Star Zone's." A guest shook his head.

"I would have entered the contest had I known that the Loulans would be this generous. The Bleak Candle Dragon can be extra loyal and intimate if you raise it up starting from its egg form. Only such loyal pets are trustworthy in dangerous moments; you can't rely on pets you tamed once they've grown."

"That's not true. Only if you trust your pets will they trust you back. Grown pets can be quite loyal if properly tended to and trained."

Those guests immediately started to discuss pet loyalty.

Su Ping was at a loss, seeing how they had apparently forgotten about him. But then, he enjoyed the newfound peace to eat and drink again.

He was no longer interested in the battles, since none of the top rankers were present. He was interested in witnessing what high-ranking geniuses from the other star zones were capable of, but there wasn't an opportunity for it.

Soon, the old man with red eyebrows next to Su Ping said, "Brother Su, someone is challenging you."

"Is that so?"

Su Ping raised his head. He first thought of Ye Ling, who had a conflict with him earlier. But then, he found that it was a Star State stranger.

This came as a surprise for him. The Star State young man stared at him and declared, "I heard that Brother Su Ping is also here, Lord Supreme's disciple and the champion of the last Universe Geniuses' Contest. I wonder if you can enlighten me."

"Lord Supreme's disciple?"

"Su Ping? That's a familiar name. Ah! Isn't he the genius who condensed a small world in the Fate State?"

"He's here too? Where is he?"

Everyone exclaimed after such a revelation; some even stood up and looked around to find him. They followed the young challenger's gaze and pinpointed Su Ping on the high platform.

Shock painted their faces when they saw him, seated among the most honored guests of the Loulans.

Su Ping was dazed, immediately realizing that he had become the center of attention.

The four maids next to him also became nervous. Even though they were famous stars, and no strangers to public attention, the guests who were attending the gala were celebrities in their respective galaxies; the pressure caused by their gazes would almost make the attendants collapse.

"Who are you?" asked Su Ping in confusion.

The young man said with a smile, "I'm from the Jiajiu Galaxy. I've also participated in the Universe Geniuses' Contest; unfortunately, I didn't make it to the end. However, one failure is nothing. Now that we're both in the Star State, I would like to practice with you and measure the gap between myself and the champion of the universe."

Su Ping shook his head. "Don't focus your eyes on someone else. A cultivator should try to improve himself; the gap between us doesn't mean a thing. We cultivate hard because we have to surpass ourselves. That's the only way to reach the top!"

The young man was stunned by that answer, but then he wore a cold smile and said, "Brother Su Ping, are you unwilling to fight me because it'll ruin your reputation? Or is it because it'll ruin the image of a super genius that you've built up?"

"What?"

Su Ping was dazed. He then noticed the malicious intent by looking the young man in the eye.

However, that man was only in the Star State. How could he be bold enough to challenge him?

Was he acting under orders?

Su Ping raised his head and looked around. He saw that some Ascendant experts of the Loulan family were frowning, as if angered by the young man's actions. Some of the guests looked at him with a friendly smile, while others seemed to be looking forward to the drama.

Su Ping couldn't tell which of them was targeting him from their expressions.

He thought for a moment, then suddenly understood what his master once said. Some enemies were invisible, because a lot of people might be accidentally offended by him just because he was strong.

That was the reason why even Celestial State experts had an endless number of enemies.

However, they would only remember the enemies that posed a true threat to them.

*Higher trees catch more wind. It seems that I have to be one of those trees.*

Su Ping looked down at the young man with glittering eyes. His face turned grim as he said, "It's not that I don't fight people on my level because I'm afraid to ruin my reputation. It is because it will devastate you. If you want to challenge me, try to defeat my partner first."

Once he said that, a shadow appeared next to him and stepped out of the summoning space.

### **Chapter 1015: Fighting Will**

"Go. Don't kill him," Su Ping said softly.

Whoosh!

The Little Skeleton received Su Ping's instruction the moment it appeared. The little fellow instantly charged at the young man in the battlefield.

"Huh?"

The young man was stunned, given that Su Ping had merely asked his pet to fight him. Then, his face and neck turned red as he trembled in fury. He was the genius of a galaxy; he may not be as talented as Su Ping, but how could he be defeated by a pet?

"You..."

The Little Skeleton reached him before he could say anything. Ignoring all the rules, it simply launched a sharp, dark saber aura able to cut time and space apart.

The young man's pupils constricted. He went and summoned his own pets right then. Six Star Lord pets appeared next to him; four of them were dragons, and the other two were also rare pets.

They felt pressure and became vigilant the moment they appeared. Two of the dragons released several defense skills in front of the young man. Two small worlds were established at the same time to hide the young man; no one would be able to find him unless his two pets were defeated.

"Don't think you're the only person who owns Star Lord pets. Those who solely rely on their pets are nothing!" roared the furious young man.

Su Ping remained casually seated on the high platform.

On the battlefield—the Little Skeleton's saber aura was blocked. The little one looked at the six Star Lord pets; their intimidating aura spurred its own battle status. It was enshrouded in black mist, and its white bones were barely visible, like a demon from the abyss.

Hiss! Hiss!

All of a sudden, the rays of light around its body were gone, as if swallowed by something. Then, a dark semicircle appeared, showing the contours of scary creatures that were letting out blood curdling roars.

“A small world?”

“That skeleton is only in the Star State, isn’t it?”

The Ascendant experts on the high platform were shocked. It was understandable to find some human geniuses able to condense a small world in the Star State, but could pets do that too?

Mingling in the crowd, Six Lives Buddha and Lilian looked at each other with a mix of bewilderment and confusion. *Su Ping’s Star State skeleton condensed a small world... What the hell was that all about?*

Roar!

Roars burst out of the small world. Following that, a thick shadow dashed out of the dark manifestation, gathering in the Little Skeleton’s saber. The weapon immediately unleashed a dark aura that was cutting space apart, as well as all the approaching energy. It was the law of destruction!

Su Ping had taught that law to the Little Skeleton using the skill he had acquired from the system!

Its small world was actually tapping the limits of the first level!

Faith power also surged out of the dark small world. Countless ghosts seemed to be crawling out and devoting their lifelong faith to the Little Skeleton. Those ghosts had been conquered by the Little Skeleton in all the previous battles fought in the cultivation sites.

The dazzling saber aura glowed and illuminated the entire arena, to then abruptly fall from the sky!

“Well...”

In the arena—the young man was already shocked by the aura. His mind was too taken in by it to consider evading. Even the idea to dodge had been abolished; he simply stood there, stunned.

A dragon next to him charged forth with a sad roar, while covered with its small world.

Bang!

Blood burst out, and the cry of a dragon resounded.

The gigantic dragon corpse fell. It had been cut in the chest, and its small world was shattered. The body fell heavily in front of the young man; its blood gushed out like a waterfall and dyed the ground red. The head touched the ground, with the young man reflected in its big eyes.

Eventually, it slowly closed its eyes with affection and reluctance.

The scene was frozen still in the young man’s eyes. Suddenly awakened, he had cold sweat all over his body; deep grief surged from his heart and soon transformed into fear. He raised his head, only to see the tiny black shadow that looked like the god of death waving its saber again!

“No, no...”

The young man felt so cold it was as if he had seen death itself. His eyes were bloodshot as he urged his other pets to attack, but all of them were intimidated by the Little Skeleton. They were Star Lords, but all of them had been overtaken by the fear of death caused by the Little Skeleton's small world.

They slowly moved back, going against the young man's commands; this was causing strong headaches due to their contracts, but still, none of them dared to step up.

After all, there was a difference between pain and death.

Suddenly, someone else flew into the battlefield and landed in front of the young man, before he cried out to Su Ping, "Have mercy!"

Su Ping lowered his head, and the Little Skeleton paused its actions. However, the black mist around its body was still surging aggressively.

"M-Mr. Su, he's just too ignorant; don't be angry with him. I apologize on his behalf..."

The middle-aged man had cold sweat running down his forehead. He found that he was under enormous pressure in front of the skeleton too, even though he had been a Star Lord for a long time.

"He hasn't surrendered yet. The battle isn't over," said Su Ping indifferently.

The middle-aged man quickly turned around and asked the young man to surrender.

The young man also realized what was going on, and was about to surrender. It was indeed humiliating, but he had gone there prepared to lose against the best genius of the universe. He simply didn't expect that the man could push him so far with nothing but a pet.

Right when he was about to open his mouth... a dark shadow moved. The Little Skeleton in the sky was suddenly gone, to swiftly reappear in front of the young man like a ghost.

"I..."

Pff!

Hardly had he said the word when he was interrupted by an excruciating pain. His arms fell in front of him, and the Little Skeleton stood at a half-meter distance in front of him, staring at him with red light in its eye sockets.

The young man held back his pain and roared, "I give up!"

The red light in the Little Skeleton's eyes faded away. The bony pet absorbed all the black mist around its body; then, it slowly drifted back to Su Ping and stepped into the gate of summoning, as if it had never been there.

However, there was nothing but silence in the field.

Everybody looked at the young man seated on the high platform with a weird expression.

"T-Thank you for sparing his life, Mr. Su." The middle-aged man's face was pale. He found that he had been completely unable to stop that attack from happening, nor even capture the skeleton's trail. He wouldn't have fared any better if the skeleton had attacked him. *Is it really a Star State pet?*



*A monstrous pet for a monstrous master. Was that the top resource gifted to Lord Supreme's disciple?*

Su Ping didn't say anything, simply looking away.

The young man whose arms had been lopped off was trying to stop his bleeding, only to find that he couldn't. He was starting to panic and feel dizzy since he was constantly losing blood. The lingering law of destruction on his wounds couldn't be erased.

Pff!

He controlled his energy and sliced to scrape his own wounds, which finally allowed him to stop the bleeding.

He looked at the man on the platform with hate and fear. They were both in the Star State, yet the latter had the power to kill him with ease. His six Star Lord pets weren't enough to keep himself safe. Was that the ability of the top genius of the universe?

He had never been in touch with such a renowned figure. He suddenly regretted doing such a stupid thing for some petty rewards.

The young man tried to hold back his grief as he looked at his severed arms and the dragon corpse. He had acquired the pet when he was in the Fate State, and wasn't expecting it to be killed that day.

Some Ascendants experts of the Loulan family immediately asked him and his companion to leave, once he admitted defeat. Su Ping's performance changed the impression many people had about him; they finally had a sampling of the strength and personality of the top genius of the universe.

Others went up to the stage and continued practicing after the young man retreated. The atmosphere became heated again.

However, the main topic of conversation was Su Ping's pet.

The little guy was merely in the Star State; many Star Lords and even Star State warriors had noticed this. Still, it had already condensed a small world, which was a rather horrifying fact. Only a few top geniuses of the human race could have achieved that, such as Six Lives Buddha.

It came as a shock that the pet had achieved the same.

Furthermore, they had never heard about any Ascendant State skeleton. It wasn't recorded in the Federation.

If it was an unseen rare pet, how rare could it be?

Besides, even pets with Ascendant bloodline weren't as monstrous while in the Star State.

"Lord Supreme's disciple is truly extraordinary. It must have been trained by a marvelous trainer that he invited, right?"

"Only a marvelous trainer could train such a talented pet. Not everybody has access to such resources!"

"Won't it be able to crush all the Star Lord beasts? He is already able to beat most Star Lords with his pet. If he also takes action, he can easily become the top rank holder of the Divine Lord Rank, right?"

Everybody attributed the strength of the skeleton to Su Ping's master. After all, that was the only plausible explanation.

Su Ping wasn't truly bothered by the comments. Although it was a great opportunity for him to advertise for his store, he didn't need to do any marketing, as he already had too many customers waiting outside the establishment.

"A skeleton..."

On the platform—Ye Ling, wearing clothes as white as snow, had cold glittering eyes. He didn't expect Su Ping to have such a great pet.

Back in the crowd, Dragon Shepard had a shocked expression; he felt that his world had been turned upside down.

*Didn't everybody say that dragons were the strongest pets?*

*How could a skeleton mutant turn into something this horrifying?*

"That skeleton is as strong as two or three of my dragons combined..." Dragon Shepard's feelings were a mess. He mostly relied on his pets; he felt uncomfortable after seeing their kind surpassed.

"Why do I feel that we've been dwarfed by his pet?" said the nearby Six Lives Buddha with raised cheeks. He looked at Su Ping who had remained cool throughout the fight on the high platform; he had the feeling that the guy was trying to show off!

"..."

Lilian was silent too.

They had been trying to catch up with Su Ping, yet they found that even his pet had almost caught up with them. That was truly a critical hit!

After that, more geniuses from the Loulan family and other star zones went to the stage and fought again. Soon, the bloody-robed young man—who had left to take care of his wounds earlier—jumped back into the stage.

Xuanyuan Long, a talent from the Sword Skull Star Zone, went to the stage without flinching.

A fierce battle soon took place. Everybody was fully invested in observing their fight, including the Ascendants on the platform. Those two were already considered the best warriors below the Ascendant State.

"It's true that those with higher ranking on the Divine Lord Rank are true geniuses. They have already reached the limits of the Star Lord State," remarked someone among the audience.

"I heard that you hit the ceiling when you fully master the four supreme laws. Only such geniuses have the talent to grasp all of them. My talent was lacking, so I only had potential to work on one of them. Luckily, I was able to see its origin and create my own path.

"If they devote themselves to one path, there's a good chance that they'll rise to the Ascendant State."

“Many people must have told them that. However, geniuses are geniuses because they’re different from all the mediocre people.”

“A very talented Star Lord once told me that it would be pointless to rise to the Ascendant State if you can’t become the strongest person on that level... Talk about arrogant declarations. Only such gifted kids can be that confident. Unfortunately, that kid was killed before he reached the Ascendant State.”

Su Ping listened to their discussions and watched the battle taking place in the arena. The two contenders had a similar amount of energy storage, and their small worlds were very solid. They had similarly mastered three supreme laws respectively; they were only slightly weaker than him at the moment.

*My master taught me the basics to grasp the law of vitality; I still have to rely on my own abilities if I want to fully grasp it. Not even a Celestial can impart this to you directly.* Su Ping observed in silence. It became increasingly clear to him that the Federation was weaker than the Archean Divinity, a place where experts were already forming multiple small worlds.

When those godly experts rose to the tier equivalent to the Ascendant State, they undoubtedly surpassed Ascendant State experts of the Federation and became as strong as Heavenly Lords.

*I need to reach the limits as soon as possible and condense a second small world. I’ll redefine the meaning of Heavenly Lord when I reach the Ascendant State someday!* Su Ping thought with glittering eyes.

## **Chapter 1016: Gifts**

It didn’t take long for the battle on stage to end. Xuanyuan Long narrowly defeated the bloody-robed young man.

Someone else issued another challenge. It was obvious that they didn’t want to give away the Bleak Candle Dragon’s egg that easily.

The top experts on the Divine Lord Ranks from many star zones showed up in the consecutive battles that followed. They showed much more strength than normal Star Lords did, raising a lot of exclamations.

The atmosphere heated up as the geniuses on the Divine Lord Rank exchanged blows.

It was at that moment when Loulan Feng invited Su Ping to the main platform, saying that the master of the family wanted to meet him.

Su Ping didn’t decline. After all, the Loulan family was among the seven biggest families; even the Celestials had to show them some respect. Likewise, Loulan Feng had been overly courteous towards him only because they thought highly of his potential and his master.

He followed the man to the main platform.

Su Ping felt that the pervading noise had abated considerably when he arrived; it seemed that an invisible law was in place to block some of it.

In addition, the air in that place was densely packed with astral power. Powerful auras could be sensed all over the place, as grand as mountains, which belonged to the seated Heavenly Lords.

Many Ascendants noticed Su Ping as he made his way over; they focused their attention on the junior.

A few Heavenly Lords who were talking also noticed Su Ping and glanced at him.

Heavenly Lord Jian Lan stopped talking to observe the young man. She had already gone through Su Ping's files and knew how talented he was; her own estimation was that he would be on par with her the moment he became an Ascendant.

However, the Ascendant State was still a major obstacle that couldn't be ignored.

The master of the Loulan family was seated at the most honorable position; he was a six-meter tall man who carried a graceful and majestic aura.

As a matter of fact, the master of the Loulan family was inspired more reverence than emperors did. After all, an emperor could only master one dynasty, while the master of the family controlled countless galaxies and enterprises; emperors were just like ants in his eyes.

Su Ping walked up the stairs and approached the master of the Loulan family. The people seated next to him were Heavenly Lords, who were giving the young arrival intimidating stares. Normal people would have trembled under such harsh scrutiny, but Su Ping had seen too many horrifying beings in cultivation sites. The Chaos Perception Dragon for instance; it was a much scarier being than those Heavenly Lords, even while it was sleeping.

"It's an honor to meet you, seniors."

Su Ping smiled confidently, without being too arrogant.

The master of the Loulan family asked with a smile, "How is your master?"

"He's doing great."

"Mr. Su, it's an honor for the Loulan family to have befriended a young genius such as yourself," said the family master with a smile. "Although Lord Supreme undoubtedly showers you with resources, the Loulan family can give you something too. Whatever you need, just tell me."

Su Ping shook his head and said, "I'm not in want of anything at this moment."

"Not even pets with Ascendant State bloodlines?" said a handsome Heavenly Lord, obviously as a joke.

The Loulan master laughed and said, "Mr. Su, whichever kind of pet you need, I'll have someone look for it later. I guarantee it'll be no worse than today's prize."

Su Ping knew he was talking about the Bleak Candle Dragon's egg, and was slightly intrigued. However, he already had enough pets that needed a lot of caring; he wasn't planning on getting more pets at the moment.

After all, having too many pets wasn't a definitive indicator of strength. Although the number of pets was important, he had too many things to do at the moment; it was important for him to develop his pets until they became Star Lords.

"I'm not short of pets right now." Su Ping shook his head. It would be hard to return the favor later on if he were to receive an Ascendant pet from the Loulans.

The family master showed a weird expression after seeing that Su Ping was unmoved by his offer. The Heavenly Lords and the other Ascendants looked at him with admiration too. Even figures like them would find it hard to refuse an Ascendant pet, not to mention one that was better than the Bleak Candle Dragon.

"It seems that Lord Supreme does favor you." The family master heaved a sigh, choosing not to dwell on the subject any longer. "This is the first time we've met. Mr. Su, you've never been to our main estate before. Consider this a gesture of friendliness from my family."

He waved his hand after saying that, and three glittering balls flew out of the void.

The three items approached Su Ping and then their brilliance faded away. They were a string of red beads, a green pill, and a mask.

"Those Red Dragon Divine Pearls are Ascendant defensive treasures. Every pearl can resist an Ascendant State attack!" The master of the Loulan family chuckled. "The pill is made of Astral Source Tears, which contains a massive amount of astral power; it may come in handy when you try to reach the Star Lord State, Mr. Su.

"The mask is a secret treasure of Ascendant level which can hide your aura. When you travel in the future, Mr. Su, you may use it to change your identity. Most Ascendants would be unable to identify you."

The Ascendant guests gazed at the secret treasures gifted to Su Ping with glittering eyes.

There were very few Ascendants, let alone those with such strength. Su Ping could hardly be assassinated while using the last treasure!

Although there would virtually be no Ascendants stupid enough to aim for Su Ping's life, they wouldn't be able even if they wanted to when Su Ping had such a treasure!

"The Loulan family has truly invested a huge amount of money on him!"

"Wouldn't it be better to save such a treasure for the geniuses of his family?"

"He's so generous. Is he that confident to forecast that this young man will reach the Ascendant State?"

"The Loulans will suffer a huge loss if that kid fails to reach the Ascendant State!"

A lot of Ascendant State experts had different thoughts.

Su Ping was rather surprised too, not expecting the Loulans' gifts to be as generous. No wonder the family master took the Heavenly Lord's joke in stride and offered him an Ascendant State pet; it was hard for him to decline such sincerity.

After a moment of silence, Su Ping eventually accepted the three gifts.

"Thank you," said Su Ping.

The master of the Loulan family put on a smile after seeing Su Ping's solemn expression. It was indeed a huge investment, but he believed that the young man was worth it; he was willing to bet on the possibility that Su Ping would reach the Ascendant State. Even if he failed, the loss was acceptable; if it did come to pass, those gifts worthy of a Heavenly Lord's appreciation would definitely be worth it.

Su Ping accepted the three gifts and straight off wore the string of beads, which would be triggered automatically to defend against Ascendant State attacks.

There were altogether nine beads on the string, which meant that they could resist nine attacks for him!

Together with the Prime Sky Mirror, Su Ping believed that he was even safer than before. Normal Ascendant experts could hardly ambush him, unless they also had strange treasures.

Su Ping said goodbye and returned to his platform after some chit-chatting.

"Congratulations, Mr. Su. You've received great treasures," said the red-eyebrowed elder with a smile.

The other guests joined in the rounds of congratulations.

Some were only saying it as a polite gesture, but some were truly envious.

All of them were friends of the Loulans, but none of them had ever enjoyed such privilege. They'd be lying if they said that they weren't green with envy.

However, despite their jealousy, they understood the family's purpose. A young master such as Su Ping was under Lord Supreme's protection, and his future was nothing but promising; none of them would make an enemy out of such a guy, either.

*I can use this pill right now.*

Su Ping was silently examining the pill in his storage; it was given to him along with two Ascendant State treasures. Although the family master claimed that it only contained abundant astral power, Su Ping was able to tell how awesome it was. When he breathed in the air, Su Ping felt that his astral oceans were surging and his body felt extremely comfortable.

There were too many people present, so he decided not to take it out to examine it further; he intended to wait until the ceremony was over.

The sparring matches ended at that moment. Ye Ling turned out to be the final champion; he was invited to the main platform where he picked up the Bleak Candle Dragon's egg while everybody watched.

The egg was almost ten meters tall. Its surface was golden, with lots of narrow red stripes which made it seem as if it had been burnt. They also looked like the veins of a leaf.

Ye Ling was no longer as pale as before, once he picked up the egg. His quick assessment allowed him to detect an almost overflowing vitality inside the egg when he received it.

He had gone all out in the following battles so he could get the egg, and even used forbidden skills to win. The battles had made him splurge ten years worth of his cultivation. However, the cost was absolutely worth it since he won an Ascendant State egg!

Once the sparring was done, some Ascendants stepped up and interpreted their understanding of laws. Such lectures were highly beneficial to all the cultivators who had made the trip over from afar.

Time flew. Three days passed.

The gala finally reached a perfect end, and the Sea of Illusions was finally opened.

*It seems that the Loulans' main purpose for holding this gala is to invite Heavenly Lords for something.*

Su Ping had focused most of his attention to the seats on the Heavenly Lords' side during the festivities. He didn't know what they were talking about, but they seemed to be arguing a lot.

None of those powerhouses had paid much attention to the practices and teachings during the gala.

Once the event was over, the Ascendants of the Loulan family announced that the Sea of Illusions would open in two days. Aside from Su Ping, there were many others who had made the trip especially for the Sea of Illusions.

Su Ping returned to the Loulans' cultivation holy land and resumed his cultivation.

Loulan Lin also went to the cultivation area and was planning to talk to him, but then she became angry since he went straight to cultivating. Having no other choice, she too focused on cultivation.

After setting a secluded spot with a barrier, Su Ping took out the pill he was given, and immediately felt that the astral power density around him was dozens of times higher. Every ray of light emitted by the pill contained a mountainous astral power.

*Probably anyone can reach the peak of the realm if this is used to break into the Star Lord State.* Su Ping sighed.

No matter how untalented a person was, reaching the limits of the Star Lord State as long as a small world was established!

Su Ping quickly swallowed the pill.

Wasn't he afraid of indigestion?

Su Ping didn't feel any kind of pressure. The Chaos Star cultivation was so effective that Su Ping never felt full thus far. No matter how much, he was able to absorb lots of astral power; his cells were able to store an unimaginable amount.

Right from the moment the pill entered his mouth, Su Ping immediately felt that dense astral power moved from the surface of the pill, to later spread throughout his body. Every layer of the pill was enough to fill him up.

However, the two astral oceans inside him were constantly swallowing the astral power to transform it into deity aura, which was immediately used to condense stars. Crystal fruits were soon condensed in his body.

Su Ping became stronger with each newly condensed star.

His pores were constantly absorbing astral power from the astral array inside the holy land. Su Ping felt as if he were almost melting in an ocean of astral power.

It took some time for the pill to gradually shrink until it was the size of a grain; Su Ping finally felt that the expanding astral power in his body slowed down by then.

Su Ping woke up from his cultivating trance, and first thought was the Sea of Illusions. Shocked, he took out his watch and checked the time.

To his relief, precisely two days had passed. Fortunately, he didn't miss anything.

Once that was out of the way, Su Ping noticed the number of stars in his body, and was instantly shocked. He had gained more than twenty stars in two days!

"I only need a few more stars to complete the seventh Astral Painting!"

Su Ping was delighted. That pill had increased his cultivation speed dozens of times, compared to the holy land's normal speed. This also meant that his improvement rate was hundreds of times faster than on a normal planet!

*I'll cultivate for a few more days after I return from the Sea of Illusions. My small world will reach the ceiling of the first level when I complete the seventh Astral Painting.* Su Ping was excited; he paused his cultivation for a moment.

Hardly had Su Ping stepped out when he saw a familiar person close by.

Once he saw Su Ping, Loulan Feng quickly stepped up and said, "Mr. Su, you're finally back. The Sea of Illusions has already been opened. Everyone is there. Let's join them."

"Okay." Su Ping nodded.

### **Chapter 1017: Stepping Into Illusions**

Loulan Feng led Su Ping to a high point in the skies of the planet.

The place was currently the side with nighttime. Only a faint hint of light could be seen through the reflection of the planet's surface. A giant gate stood in the void.

A lot of people had gathered in front of that portal. Many of them were Ascendants.

"This is the gate which leads to the Sea of Illusions that the Loulans control. I've sent you some information about the place via email, including certain rules set by the family."

Loulan Feng then said to Su Ping via telepathy, "You must stick to what you believe while you roam inside the Sea of Illusions. Everything that you'll see will be illusions made to keep you there forever."

"Okay." Su Ping nodded, and split some of his mind power to visit the virtual world. He was then able to see an email in his inbox.

Su Ping read the message contents while approaching the gate.



The Ascendants of the Loulan family had mentioned something about the Sea of Illusions back in the gala, but they didn't mention any details. It was a place that existed beyond the nine layers of the universe, which had been confirmed by the Federation.

There were Illusory Spirits inside the Sea of Illusions, which were special energy creatures that preyed on the emotions of living creatures.

Su Ping took his time reading the email. The Loulans had indeed been sincere; there were a lot of interesting incidents documented, which were the basis for many survival rules.

"You can attract Illusory Spirits with emotions. Your willpower will be enhanced if you swallow them.

"Fear is the Illusory Spirits' favorite.

"You may use fear as bait to attract and catch them.

"Illusory Spirits transform in various ways. It is impossible to distinguish illusions from reality without strong willpower.

"The deepest part of the Sea of Illusions is a forbidden place, filled with chaotic storms and strange tones. Flee whenever you hear weird sounds..."

Su Ping went through all the email's content, silently memorizing its content.

"This is the egg of an ancient whale that was refined to make a special treasure. It can strengthen your mind if you wear it, reducing the likelihood of you being bewildered."

Loulan Feng gave Su Ping a black box and said, "Mr. Su, you must be extra careful. The family has also sent a manager to protect you."

Su Ping accepted the black box and felt its coolness. "You're too kind."

"We're only doing what we should."

Loulan Feng smiled.

Su Ping didn't decline the Loulans' kindness. He knew that even if he did, they would still send someone to protect him in secret. After all, he was in their territory; Lord Supreme would definitely punish them if anything happened to him. Besides, the Loulan family was betting strongly on his future.

The gate opened while they talked, and some people went in.

"Although the Sea of Illusions is dangerous, the Illusory Spirits found therein can help you improve your willpower. It's unfortunate that those spirits can only be killed and absorbed while inside; we don't have a way to seal and take them out yet..." Loulan Feng sighed.

The Loulans would be holding the key to a great fortune if Illusory Spirits could be sealed.

A person then flew over from a distance.

Loulan Feng noticed, then quickly led Su Ping toward her and said, "Manager Tan."

She was an attractive plump woman wearing casual clothes and a watch; there was also an eye-catching gem necklace hanging from her neck. She turned and saw them approach. She glanced at Su Ping and said, "Our family master asked me to protect Mr. Su."

Loulan Feng nodded with a smile. "So I've been informed."

He turned his head and said to Su Ping, "This is Manager Tan who has been tasked with protecting you. She's adept with matters of the mind; in fact, she subdued an Ascendant State dragon with mental power alone. She will help you flee if we run into danger."

Su Ping felt a vague pressure from the beautiful woman, which was much greater than that of normal Ascendant experts. He said courteously, "Thank you for your help in advance, Manager Tan."

"I can only ensure your safety; I won't be able to help you hunt Illusory Spirits. Don't wander too far off when we're inside," said Manager Tan with a calm tone. Protecting Su Ping had been forced upon her. He had great potential, but her main objective was to become a Heavenly Lord; connections and resources weren't important to her.

Therefore, she wasn't interested in socializing.

She wouldn't have accepted the task if it weren't for the family's direct request. She didn't even take care of the talented juniors of her own family.

"Sure."

Su Ping nodded.

The files shared by Loulan Feng mentioned that Illusory Spirits were energy creatures that would appear inside one's head, which would make them invisible to others. Therefore, hunting them was a personal matter.

However, a senior could still detect the mental waves of a junior and infer the situation of his inner battles; said senior could pull him out of danger in time.

"Stay where you are," Manager Tan said.

She extended her finger and laid it on Su Ping's forehead. He then felt that something was added to his head, but he couldn't tell exactly what it was.

"What was that?" Su Ping asked vigilantly.

"It's a secret mental skill of mine. One of my thoughts is left in your head; it'll resolve trouble for you if you're in crisis. It'll also help me know where you are; I'll remove it after we leave the Sea of Illusions. Don't worry," said Manager Tan casually.

Su Ping understood, so he kept silent.

He would have to go back to the Celestial Court once his trip to the Sea of Illusions ended; he would then ask Elder Yan to check if anyone had left any troublesome bits on him.

More people arrived while they spoke.

Su Ping saw Six Lives Buddha and Lilian among them, both accompanied by an Ascendant State protector.

He also saw some people he had seen back in the Loulans' cultivation grounds, Hai and Lin for instance. Both of them were also being protected by Ascendant State experts.

"This is a peaceful period in the Sea of Illusions. That is why the place is so crowded," said Loulan Feng with a smile, "But don't worry. You won't notice them, and neither will they; only people who have made preparations can sense others, like the link between you and Manager Tan.

"It is also impossible to fight one another while you're inside, unless the Dark Tide rises and blows your soul out of your body... Still, if that comes to pass, it is better to run for your life than to fight."

Su Ping had read all the relevant information, so he gave a slight nod.

The peaceful period inside the Sea of Illusions occurred once every couple of hundred years. However, the specific time was unpredictable, even with the super computers of the Federation; at best they could only make a forecast within three months before a new peaceful period arrived.

The dangerous period was when the Dark Tide rose; it was a time with a higher amount of spirits, and all kinds of weird things could happen.

Most people had gone inside by then. Manager Tan said, "Let's go."

Su Ping nodded.

"Good luck!" Loulan Feng waved at them and smiled.

Manager Tan flew forward. Su Ping waved back at Loulan Feng and followed his guardian. The two of them reached the gigantic gate. Some were immediately able to recognize Su Ping, but his arrival didn't come as a surprise, as the involvement of a genius like him was expected.

Manager Tan greeted the gatekeeper and then led Su Ping inside.

Su Ping felt as if he had just gone through a thin membrane after passing through the gate; such a layer was like a cool and soft film. He had been entirely enshrouded as he stepped in; Su Ping found himself in the middle of a strange universe, instead of the darkness on the other side of the gate.

Half of the sky was brilliant with countless glittering stars, while the other half was a dark and desolate domain.

Su Ping felt as if gravity were nonexistent, and he couldn't propel himself. His only option was to be pulled toward the dazzling stars.

Su Ping turned his head around, but he didn't see his protector, Manager Tan.

He remembered the information provided by Loulan Feng. The Sea of Illusions was a special cultivation place. It was also known as the place of loneliness.

Companions were undetectable, even while coming in groups. Only their individual selves could be sensed, aside from the wandering spirits.

*She must be somewhere close, and is able to feel me. This place is not enough of a challenge for Ascendants. Su Ping looked at the brilliant stars without a tinge of anxiety. It's said that everybody sees a different Sea of Illusions; the stars are definitely not real, then.*

*Illusions are based on my subconscious mind. Is there such a world inside my head?*

*Wait, such doubts only disturb my mind. I cannot doubt myself here.*

Su Ping looked around. He tried to imagine plains and lands, but they didn't manifest. He then felt a pulling force and saw a red and golden arc of light in the dark sky. That was the afterglow of a planet being swallowed!

A gigantic black hole was spinning towards him, increasing the gravitational pull!

There was a slight change in Su Ping's expression; even an Ascendant expert could die upon making contact with a black hole.

*This must be an illusion.* Su Ping stared at the black hole, while he kept telling himself that what he saw wasn't real. However, his body was being rapidly pulled towards the black hole, which grew in size and twisted his eyesight. Sharp and huge fangs were growing inside the black hole!

It was an unimaginably massive mouth!

Su Ping's pupils became constricted. He quickly launched a sword aura—

However, his attack disintegrated only a few hundred meters away.

Su Ping felt goosebumps as the dark mouth moved closer. He was certain that it was a powerful spirit.

*Astral power and laws don't matter here. My mental power is the only thing I can rely on.*

Black light appeared in Su Ping's eyes. Just as the mouth inched closer, his quivering hairs suddenly froze, and an intense killing intent was released from his heart. He condensed his willpower, making it turn into a dazzling sword that swept over and cut the black hole apart!

Su Ping heard a devastating shriek when the black hole exploded, but he roared back and suppressed the noise.

Soon, the view of the universe was gone, and only a black beast dozens of meters long lay in the void. Its upper half was torn, shedding misty blood.

The body was similar to that of a giant whale, but there were sharp and long stings on its forehead, almost beard-like.

"This is an Owl Spirit!"

Su Ping's pupils were like pinpoints when he saw the spirit. According to Loulan Feng's files, it was a Class A spirit that most Star Lords had to avoid; only Ascendants could stand a chance.

He had run into an Owl Spirit right from the get-go.

*Didn't they say that I wouldn't run into powerful spirits unless I went into the depths of the Sea of Illusions? Still, it was also mentioned that horrifying spirits may be encountered at the outer rim. Am I too lucky?*

Su Ping solemnly extended his hand and swallowed the spirit, immediately feeling a coolness in his head. His mind was sharpened, and he was calmer than ever. His senses were greatly improved too.

The hazy world before his eyes became a lot clearer. Many of the clouds were gone; he could vaguely see a person ahead of him.

Su Ping thought it was Manager Tan, his companion. He walked forward, only to find that the person's back was extremely attractive; he found her clothes familiar.

*She's not Manager Tan. Weird...*

Su Ping's eyes flashed. He shouldn't be seeing anyone else; it had to be another illusion.

The mysterious person moved forward slowly but surely at that moment. Su Ping narrowed his eyes and watched. The hazy mist gradually dispersed, and the person suddenly stopped to turn around, showing a beautiful face that belonged to Joanna!

Su Ping was surprised and confused. *Illusions come from the bottom of my heart.* "Why am I seeing Joanna here? Have I been subconsciously wanting her? No way! I'm not a despicable boss!"

#### **Chapter 1018: True or False?**

Joanna waved her hand at Su Ping while he mumbled to himself.

The hazy mist surrounded him and was about to drown Joanna again; her face was rather blurry in the mist, but her eyes were extra brilliant.

Su Ping was stunned for a moment upon looking at her eyes.

He felt that he had been through a similar scene before.

Was it in his store?

Su Ping suddenly remembered something and looked away. That was merely an illusion; he would only sink further if he started believing them. Instead of moving forward, he moved in the opposite direction.

Joanna stood quietly, watching him leave.

Joanna was soon buried in the heavy fog. Su Ping continued to move forward, spreading out his senses. He was currently able to sense everything within a ten meter radius, all thanks to him absorbing the Owl Spirit. Three meters was his maximum perception earlier on.

Wu! Wu!

All of a sudden, Su Ping heard the crying wind above him. He looked up, only to see a cluster of hair flying by. The noise seemed to be produced by the hair.

*Is it a spirit? Or another illusion?*

Su Ping narrowed his eyes and observed. After thinking for a moment, he condensed a stone with his thought and threw it.

The stone passed right through the hair, unimpeded. Su Ping was relieved. Then, he saw that the black hair seemed to have noticed him; it then swerved towards him.

Su Ping considered it an illusion. However, he felt a chill when the black hair approached. His pupils became pinpoints as he slashed with his sword.

A miserable scream burst out. The black hair was cut apart, exposing the wriggling flesh and blood underneath. Meanwhile, Su Ping saw a wound where the black hair had been previously hit. His stone had indeed struck the spirit, yet somehow the latter had misled him into thinking that the stone had passed through.

“How unpredictable.” Su Ping had a grave expression; he was no stranger to such feelings. He had encountered a lot of strange creatures in dangerous cultivation sites.

It was thanks to the vigilance developed in those environments that Su Ping had managed to survive thus far.

Su Ping quickly attacked and chopped the spirit to pieces. He then attracted the spirit’s body and absorbed it.

The spirit’s remains turned into misty energy that quickly flowed into his body. Soon, Su Ping felt that his senses could reach an extra meter.

*This spirit isn’t as scary as the owl, but it’s just as good when it comes to charming.* Su Ping moved even more cautiously. He knew that Manager Tan was right next to him and would offer help if he was in danger, but he preferred to survive on his own, without relying on others.

He pressed forward through heavy fog, then heard alluring songs every now and then. He didn’t see anything in the end when he tried to track the source of those sounds.

He would occasionally feel something brushing against his arm, even though he didn’t see anything pass by. He would examine his body and find that it was just an illusion.

*Everything is so real. It’s hard to tell spirits from illusions. The only solution is to treat all illusions as spirits. It’s an exhausting approach, but it’s also the safest.*

He walked for a good while, and then a beautiful person appeared in the heavy fog again. She was none other than Joanna, whom he had seen earlier.

She stood in the mist. Her face was somewhat blurry, but her eyes were bright and clear; she stared and waved at him.

*This illusion is hardly convincing.*

Su Ping shook his head. He knew that Joanna couldn’t leave the store; it would be impossible for her to show up in that place.

He would have been confused for a moment if he would have seen his parents, or his naughty sister who kept roaming around. However, Joanna, Tang Ruyan and his other friends were currently locked in his store by the system; they simply couldn't come out.

Su Ping turned around and left, completely ignoring her.

The illusion waved at him every time, as if she wanted him to follow her somewhere. No matter the reason why Joanna's illusion was there, it would be better to stay clear from it.

This time, Su Ping didn't go in the opposite direction; he took a turn to the left.

He ran into a couple of spirits on the way and executed them, increasing his perception range to a sixteen meter radius.

He then saw a gargantuan shadow looming in front of him. Once the mist had finally dispersed, he saw that it was a huge tree with an old man seated at its base.

"Huh?"

Su Ping frowned a bit when he recognized the old man who played chess with a toad back in Luofu. The guy seemed to be playing alone at the moment.

*He's very likely a Deity Emperor back in Luofu; it would be impossible for him to be here, or his very presence would have shocked the entire Federation. He's in a realm beyond the Celestial State.* Su Ping's eyes flashed. He then gave a slight head shake as he was ready to leave.

The old man stopped playing exactly at that moment. He said to Su Ping, "She's the closest person to you. You should trust her."

"Huh?"

This message left him in a daze; he then looked at the elder with suspicious eyes.

"You must be the chosen one. We've been waiting for you for a long time..." The old man slowly rose and looked at Su Ping with a friendly smile.

"What do you mean by the chosen one? By 'she', were you referring to Joanna?" Su Ping raised his eyebrows.

"It has been looking for a successor in every universe while going under the name of 'system'. You're one of the successors found; the most outstanding at that," the old man stared at Su Ping and said, "Your friend is helping you; she's your employee. You should know that she won't hurt you. You're in a very dangerous position right now..."

"What?"

Su Ping was lost for words.

That old man even knew the system, which meant that the illusion came from his heart.

After all, the Deity Emperor on Luofu couldn't have gone there, nor Joanna. It was impossible for him to be aware of the system either, which was his greatest secret.

It wasn't Su Ping being overly confident, but he didn't think the Deity Emperor was capable of detecting the system. After all, the Deity Emperor was beyond the Celestial State, but there were also Celestial Emperors and Ancestral Gods in the Archean Divinity!

The system didn't even consider Ancestral Gods a big deal. It was unlikely for the system to be perceived by any of them.

Su Ping glanced at the old man, who helped him condense two deity vortexes and transform into a deity; he owed that man a big one. He knew the man was just an illusion, but he didn't act rudely. He shook his head and thought, *Manager Tan is right by my side, yet I cannot perceive her. It means that this place is likely to be a place in my heart, or my subconsciousness, built by the special environment of the Sea of Illusions. So, all the illusions and their words are the manifestations of my subconsciousness...*

"This is the Heavens..." said the old man, seeing that Su Ping was about to leave, but then his body trembled and became much vaguer when he said 'Heavens'. Still, he gazed at Su Ping and asked, "Why don't you try trusting your friends?"

"My friends are outside. They're not here," Su Ping replied and left.

"Outside..." the old man mumbled. He was gradually enshrouded by the fog and becoming part of it, disappearing along with the tree.

Su Ping shook his head again as he saw this happen. It was indeed an illusion, very likely concocted by a spirit to lure him over.

*If this place is the world of my subconsciousness and the spirits invaded through the Sea of Illusions, I should still be the master of my own subconscious mind,* Su Ping thought and imagined a vast plain.

Soon after, a vast plain appeared before his eyes, which was a replica of what he had envisioned.

"Just as I expected..."

Su Ping's eyes glittered. He walked towards the plain, but he quickly retreated since he had a bad feeling right when he was about to set foot there. Meanwhile, he saw a human being rushing to the wide terrain. Then, a heavy fog arose and a roar burst out.

The fog surged. Soon, a roar came from the fog. "I've even slain the Heavens before. These lingering thoughts are nothing. Break!"

The fog roiled intensely; then, a mountain was flung back while a bloody moon appeared in the sky. A blood-colored eyeball that grew on a hideous, gargantuan head was revealed as the fog dispersed; it was akin to a mountain, thousands of meters tall.

*Bloody eye, pig torso and lion claws...* Su Ping narrowed his eyes as he looked at the gigantic and intimidating spirit. *It's a Black Swallower, the S-rated spirit documented in the Loulan family's files! It never appears, except in the Dark Tide period. Why is it here? I just came in... This should still be considered the outer rim!"*

Su Ping felt like his head was about to explode. According to the Loulans, even Ascendants had to flee from S-rated spirits!



He wanted to believe that the monster he saw was an illusion!

An illusion created by his fear, or another spirit!

However, the spirit's intimidating aura was so substantial that Su Ping's body stiffened, as if restrained by an invisible rope. He could hardly move!

In the meantime, a scream also resounded inside his head. Following that, Su Ping saw the slim shadow of Manager Tan appearing next to him!

Her shadow immediately charged at the Black Swallower, with zero hesitation.

"Damn it. It's real!"

Su Ping couldn't have looked more awful. Manager Tan's inserted thought wouldn't have been invoked if his life wasn't at risk.

*Run!*

He made use of the time window bought by Manager Tan, turning around to flee.

A scream was heard the moment he turned around. Hardly had Manager Tan's thought reached the Black Swallower when it was quickly torn apart by the black vortices on its skin.

*They were too far apart in levels. Even if an Ascendant were to take action, they would still be crushed.* Su Ping's face was pale, as he hadn't felt the pressure of death in a long time. He had already died a million times in cultivation sites, but he relied on resurrections to a point that he no longer feared death. But that was reality. He would truly die permanently this time if he couldn't avoid it!

*Did a member of the Loulan family set a trap to get me? Or, did something happen in the Sea of Illusions? The ones who entered before me would have died by now if they ran into the same creature, and the Loulans should have noticed...* Su Ping was so befuddled that his only thought was to run.

The Black Swallower roared and charged at Su Ping, making the surrounding space shake.

It was exactly at that moment when the person who had been pushed into the fog flew out to face the Black Swallower again.

"Run! I'll stop him!" said the person as he flew past Su Ping.

"You're nothing but a lingering thought. On your knees!"

Su Ping saw a pair of sharp and bright eyes as they passed each other; they were ablaze with passion and determination. The man charged forth without an ounce of hesitation.

All the situation left Su Ping in a momentary daze. Battle noises were heard behind him just a moment later. Both the young man and the Black Swallower were roaring.

Su Ping ran crazily, not daring to look back until he was a long distance away.

He saw that the fog was surging; the noises were vaguely heard by then.

“Is he... not an illusion?” Su Ping’s head was a mess. He felt that he had seen those eyes before, but he was completely certain that he had never met the man, not even when he visited cultivation sites. After all, the man’s eyes were too special to be forgotten!

*If this is a world of my subconscious mind, only those weird spirits should be able to invade it. Is that man an illusion I created?*

*Even so, can illusions fight spirits? Unless, everything I’ve been through is an illusion. This would mean that I’ve only met one spirit, and I’m still trapped in an illusion created by that thing...*

*However, the illusion was all too real. The improvement of my perception after absorbing the Owl Spirit feels authentic. Can it also block my senses?*

The more Su Ping thought about it, the more horrified he was. But he had another question. For all this time, Su Ping believed that his willpower was a cut above that of his peers. If everything before his eyes was an illusion and he had been fooled, then... Wouldn’t everybody else, including Star Lords, fall for it too?

*All this is unusually dangerous. So, not everything is an illusion; I won’t be fooled. Those things exist for free. But who was that guy?*

Su Ping’s confusion grew. The Sea of Illusions was a special space that the Federation had yet to fully control, or even understand.

However, some rules and information about the Sea of Illusions had been ascertained thanks to explorations conducted by countless people. Su Ping’s experience seemed to be one of the exceptions to the rules.

It was highly unusual for monsters such as the Owl Spirit and the Black Swallower to appear at the edge.

### **Chapter 1019: Illusory World**

Su Ping didn’t stop; he kept on moving further away.

The noises gradually faded into the distance, until they couldn’t be heard anymore. Su Ping didn’t know when Manager Tan would take him away; she must have sensed that her lingering thought had already been triggered. His mind would be freed if she took him out of the Sea of Illusions.

*Something is wrong about this trip. Did the Loulans not do any reconnaissance work? I heard that the best AI of the Federation has been monitoring the Sea of Illusions; it sends out alarms if anything goes wrong...*

Su Ping’s eyes flashed. He noticed that the color of the fog was off; it was slightly dark, as if contaminated by ink.

It was then that the illusion of the tree and the old man reappeared. The old man waved at Su Ping.

“My young friend, the Tide of Filth is coming. Come here.”

Joanna appeared next to the old man before Su Ping replied. She looked at him quietly, with anxiety in her eyes.

Su Ping's expression changed ever so slightly, then walked away without saying anything.

"My young friend, are you really that unwilling to trust us?" the elder shouted at Su Ping's back.

Su Ping didn't look back. But then a majestic throne appeared in front of him, where an awe-inspiring skeleton sat. It looked down at Su Ping proudly. "I didn't want to show up, but you're just too stubborn. Can't you tell what's true and what's not?"

Su Ping's pupils were constricted. He was too familiar with the skeleton and the throne; it was the horrifying lord he had encountered in his first trip to the Chaotic Realm of the Undead, just after he acquired the system. The bloody crystal he had the Little Skeleton consume was stolen from that lord.

"Trust us. We won't harm you," said a young man as he appeared next to the skeleton king; he had a less horrifying and more familiar look. It was none other than the young mentor who had taught Su Ping in the Archean Divinity's Heaven Path Institute.

"If you don't trust them, can't you trust the Heaven Path Institute? You would have already died if we wanted to kill you!" said a rather intimidating voice, and a majestic illusion surfaced behind the young man's back, no less fearsome than the horrifying skeleton lord.

Su Ping's expression changed. The illusions he had seen in the cultivation sites shouldn't be there, and yet they felt so real. Their auras were giving him goosebumps, as if he were facing them in real life.

*Why are there this many people inside my mind? I've only met them once. They should have sent my parents or my sister, or even my pets if they wanted to fool me...* Su Ping's expression changed. He didn't say anything, simply choosing to take another path.

The skeleton king and the hazy figures behind him let out cold voices as Su Ping turned around. Some sounded extremely disappointed, while others shook their heads and sighed.

"That's the most outstanding successor? Ha!"

"We've waited for billions of years. To think we saw him as our ray of hope. How disappointing!"

Su Ping didn't look back; he kept on moving forward.

The heavy fog around him suddenly surged like a tide, as if pushed by something.

Su Ping was caught unprepared; he tried to resist, but the fog crashed into him like a wall. The experience was suffocating, as if he had fallen into a deep sea—he could see nothing but darkness around him.

Su Ping heard shrieks and roars that sounded like the cries of certain creatures from the depths of the fog.

He struggled to clear the fog around him, but more and more fog gathered. He would occasionally see some hideous and bloodcurdling shadows passing by.

There were hoarse creaks akin to those made by insects approached from his back.

Su Ping condensed a sword with his mental power and slashed in their direction. He seemed to have hit something as a cry burst out. The creature seemed infuriated; the fog surged again and a gigantic shadow lunged at him.

Su Ping saw a scary mouth pushing the fog away and trying to swallow him whole.

He hurriedly condensed another mental sword and slashed at the mouth.

The mouth was quick to react, crushing the mental sword to pieces.

Su Ping's body was about to crash into the mouth, but then his wrist felt cold. A cool and soft hand grabbed his wrist and pulled him aside, saving him from the vicious maw. He then felt that his body was pulled in one direction by the hand's owner.

*Is this Manager Tan?* Su Ping felt dazed, as he could sense that the hand belonged to a female.

The two of them moved at a very fast speed; the heavy fog buffeted his face as they moved. Su Ping didn't know why Manager Tan was there, nor could he confirm her identity. Still, she had indeed saved him from that monster, so she couldn't have malicious intentions.

The fog pressed close from the rear. Su Ping could hear the shrieks of the monster as he was being quickly pulled forward. The shrieks were soon left behind; Su Ping felt that he was moving at an unimaginable speed.

Soon after, his savior gradually stopped.

The swirling fog gradually slowed down. Su Ping quickly thanked her and asked with uncertainty, "Are you Manager Tan?"

The fog in front of Su Ping gradually dispersed after a good while passed, showing the profile of a beautiful woman with blond hair. She was none other than Joanna.

Su Ping was stunned for a moment, but then felt rather creeped out.

A warm voice came from somewhere near Joanna's back. "You don't need to be scared."

The heavy fog dispersed, revealing figures that had been hidden thus far. They were all blond gods. The one at the center was a giant woman who wore a luxurious robe, with a train so long it resembled a phoenix tail; the other gods next to her were as small as her hands. Su Ping was even able to see every wrinkle on the old woman's face with clarity.

The gods next to the old woman were whispering.

"Is he the successor?"

"He's so weak. He can't be, can he?"

"Him being weak at the moment is of no relevance. Don't forget him."

Su Ping was torn between shock and suspicion. Was he hallucinating, or was it real?

Su Ping looked at Joanna and couldn't help but ask, "Who are you exactly?"

Joanna gazed at him gently. Su Ping had never seen such an expression on her face before. Was it some sort of desire deep in his heart? But the sensation when his wrist was grabbed felt all too real.

Were the illusions from that place so real that they were indistinguishable from the real thing?

However, he was sure that Joanna was in his store; she couldn't possibly be there.

With that in mind, everything he saw was an illusion.

Still, Su Ping couldn't understand why she could touch him; the only explanation was that his senses had also been blocked by the illusion.

Some illusions could cause pain or even death. If the brain died in the illusion, it would also die in reality; the brain would think it was dead and would pause all the bodily functions.

*If this is an illusion, what about all these people I don't know. Why are they in my subconscious mind? Was the battle between the Black Swallower and the mysterious young man real or not?*

Su Ping became suspicious about everything that had happened.

The old man stared at Su Ping gently and said, "Kid, don't be scared, this place is safe. Those spirits won't dare approach. You may return when the waves subside; we'll capture some spirits for you to absorb. All you need to do is to cultivate here."

Su Ping watched coldly, still silent.

The old woman was quite vivid, yet he took her as an illusion; he didn't believe anything she said.

*Is this the horror of the Sea of Illusions? No wonder Celestials also think twice before entering this place.* Su Ping's eyes glittered.

The Federation had such a huge population that countless people would be sentenced to death in every solar system. If those people were sent as scouts, they would be able to explore any unknown areas. Besides, the Federation had an army and many scientists; it was perplexing to know that the Sea of Illusions remained unconquered.

*Concentrate. Nothing is real.*

Su Ping calmed down and his anxiety disappeared. He slowly focused his attention.

A few gods appeared in the fog after a good while, carrying two spirits.

Su Ping slowly opened his eyes. He took a deep breath and thought of a lot of things as he looked at the lifelike gods and Joanna who were standing before him.

What was real and what was false?

Those false things were producing real feelings.

And yet, certain things that were real were as intangible as the moon reflected on the water.

*Illusions... Illusions...*

*Are all of these things part of my imagination?*

He felt silent upon looking at the bodies of those two spirits. If illusions were as real as the reality itself and could bring forth real feelings, then... Were they illusions?

What was the distinction between illusions and reality?

Was reality the place for true existences?

Then, were such existences subjective feelings, or objective facts in the universe?

If they were subjective feelings, everything he was seeing was real!

If they were objective facts in the universe, was the universe real? How could he confirm that the universe was real? Based on his subjective feelings, or imagination?

Su Ping lowered his head and stared at the two bodies for a long time.

The gods around him were looking at him in silence.

A long while later.

A long while later...

Su Ping didn't know how much time had passed. He kept asking himself questions, gradually tapping into an amazing new concept.

*Illusions are real too. Reality and illusion are the same.*

*The reflections in the water seemed to be illusions, but they do exist in reality. They are only 'views', but not objects themselves...*

*If there's another world beyond reality, that would be the world of illusions!*

*The reflection of the world...*

Su Ping understood something all of a sudden: he realized how to condense a second small world!

An illusory world!

A world based on illusions!

Boom!

His mind shook right when the epiphany arrived; he then felt that his body was getting hot. The feeling was quite unreal, as if there was a membrane covering his skin. He was sensing those physical changes, but something seemed to be stopping him.

*Everything is false. Everything is real...*

In a subtle and gradual transition, his eyes became clearer and sharper. He looked at the two bodies on the ground, then extended his hand; a vortex that looked like a black hole appeared in his palm, which absorbed the spirit bodies and transformed them into a significant amount of energy. He could subtly feel how his senses were truly being improved.

*Even if all of this is an illusion, so what? I can also resurrect if I die in an illusion!*

*If my body can be fooled into killing itself in an illusion, it can also be fooled into living an eternal life!*

*However, my bodily functions do require real energy. The energy of the illusions can fool my mind, but they can't improve my body in reality. I cannot obtain real energy from this illusory place... So where is the energy coming from? The universe? Or maybe this Sea of Illusions?*

While in a trance, Su Ping felt that he was approaching the core truth of the Sea of Illusions.

Maybe the Sea of Illusions was everywhere in the universe, except that it couldn't be perceived through normal methods.

It was like people being unable to capture oxygen until the corresponding equipment was invented, but human beings themselves had been living off of oxygen since the primitive times.

Just because something couldn't be seen or detected didn't mean that it didn't exist!

*Is that power the real energy hidden in the Sea of Illusions?* Su Ping's eyes glittered.

He couldn't confirm his speculation without leaving that place.

He looked at the gods before him and asked, "Are there more spirits?"

The old man put on a big smile and quickly nodded. "Yes, of course. You, capture a few more. It doesn't matter if they're big!"

"Okay," said a few well-hidden gods and left.

Their auras surpassed the Ascendant State; Su Ping felt that they were similar to his master, or even stronger.

"Where's the way out? You must know, right?" Su Ping asked with a smile, as if no longer scared of anything.

The old woman said with a smile, "Of course. If you want to leave, we can escort you at any time. It's truly dangerous for you to come to this place with your current level. It is fortunate that we're still in the borderlands and those guys didn't notice you. Otherwise..."

"Those guys?"

Although he knew she was an illusion, Su Ping still happily chatted with her.

"It's best that you don't know their names, or you'll eventually be detected by them. You'll catch their attention even if you just read their names..." said the old man in a low voice.

Su Ping chuckled, deciding not to ask further. According to what he understood, all of those things existed in his subconscious mind, but he had no idea why that unknown woman and the strange gods were there.

## **Chapter 1020: The Heaven Killer**

The gods who had gone away to hunt returned with a few more spirits soon after.

There was an Owl Spirit, plus a few Class A spirits that Su Ping had only seen on the files the Loulans had offered.

*Even if they're capable of capturing Class A spirits, there can't be that many of them nearby. According to the Loulan family, it was already extremely 'lucky' for me to encounter any of them.*

Su Ping shook his head with a smile. That illusion was hardly convincing.

However, thanks to the knowledge he had just acquired, he could still transform the illusion into reality as long as he was able to convince himself to believe it.

The illusory spirits could be transformed into real nutrition. The source and components of such nutrition were part of the Sea of Illusions' deepest secrets.

Su Ping didn't hesitate to absorb the spirits.

The latter turned into misty energy which flowed into his body. Su Ping felt that his mind was even quicker, calmer and more substantial. The gods before him even looked clearer than before too

*I haven't been freed from my illusion yet. If this is real, I should be able to see through more illusions with the improvement of my willpower, making them become vaguer in my eyes. Is it because I'm still in the illusion? However...*

Su Ping slowly closed his eyes. His body seemed to be undergoing a certain change.

The faces of the gods changed when he closed his eyes.

They had previously scorned him when he questioned them. However, they became solemn at the moment.

"This is his first visit to this place, yet he has already grasped the path of illusions. It seems that we've underestimated this successor."

"As expected of the chosen one. He's truly smart."

"It seems that he can survive in this place without us, as long as he doesn't approach the inland battlefield."

All the gods who hunted spirits for Su Ping seemed to be comforted. Su Ping had disappointed them at first, but their impression of him changed. They saw hope again.

"We should join the battle," said the old woman at the center with a soft voice.

The gods' expressions became grave after they heard her. They looked at Su Ping thoughtfully; no one complained.

"We must buy more time and hope for him," said a god in a low voice, staring at Su Ping and clenching his fists.

None of the gods disagreed. Su Ping's change had brought them confidence and motivation.

"Anna, he's yours," said the old woman softly.



Joanna—who was standing in front of Su Ping—was stunned for a moment. She then glanced at Su Ping intently. A moment passed, then she shook her head with a caring expression, like none Su Ping had ever seen. She said softly, “He’s already capable of defending himself; he doesn’t need me. I have to do something for him...”

The old woman glanced at her and felt her determination. Then she said, “Let’s go!”

All the gods’ eyes turned sharp and they gradually disappeared.

Su Ping slowly opened his eyes as they disappeared. Then, he saw that none of the gods remained. He heard what they said during their departure; after all, the illusions were based on his subconscious mind. The voices would have still reached him, even if he covered his ears.

*My perception range has been increased to a thirty meter radius...* Su Ping examined the fog around him. Although it was darker than before, his perception range was ten times wider!

*Even Ascendants will have it hard when trying to infiltrate my mind when I leave this place,* thought Su Ping.

Su Ping felt slightly embarrassed when he looked at the place where the gods used to be and recalled what he said, wondering if he had always been subconsciously fond of other people’s adulation.

*Maybe it’s in the nature of every human being. Everybody likes to be praised.*

Su Ping shook his head. In any case, he was already capable of protecting himself while roaming that place.

Since he had just mastered the path of illusions, Su Ping could not only absorb illusory spirits as though they were real, but also transform the things he imagined into real entities!

The objects he could transform depended on his willpower!

“Disperse!” Su Ping suddenly roared.

As if following commands, the heavy fog trembled violently. Then, the dark fog gradually dispersed, revealing a blank void in front of Su Ping’s eyes.

*Spirits love fear. Unfortunately, I can’t force myself to fear. However...* With a thought, Su Ping had the Dark Dragon Hound appear next to him.

However, Su Ping didn’t summon the Dark Dragon Hound from his contract space. He merely imagined it.

The Dark Dragon Hound next to him could only exist in the Sea of Illusions. Su Ping could hardly turn what he imagined into real entities while in the real world, unless he could create a world similar to the Sea of Illusions.

“Fear!”

Su Ping imagined how the Dark Dragon Hound would run in panic while exploring the cultivation sites. His pet dog was the first to run whenever they encountered a formidable opponent; however, Su Ping would always force it to confront its fear.

Very soon, the Dark Dragon Hound trembled with fear.

Su Ping observed the environment. The fog—rather peaceful a moment earlier—suddenly surged. The waves were subtle at first, but then they rose like boiling water soon after.

However, the fog quickly settled and became tranquil again after seething for a moment.

Before Su Ping started to investigate, a dark ray of light had burst out from the fog from one side, charging at the Dark Dragon Hound like an octopus.

Su Ping had already detected the anomaly hiding in the fog. He condensed his willpower into a sword and slashed out.

Bang!

The spirit was instantly cut into halves; Su Ping's sword made another turn and soon chopped the spirit into pieces.

He then raised his hand and absorbed the spirit. It was a Class B spirit according to the Loulan family's files.

Su Ping's willpower was improved again after absorbing the spirit. His perception range was expanded by one meter.

Su Ping didn't stop there; he continued fishing out the spirits with the Dark Dragon Hound's fear.

Su Ping was able to move hundreds of kilometers in one instant with the path of illusion. He could imagine and create laws as long as his willpower could support it; he was almost invincible in that place!

*Even if I encounter Ascendants, they wouldn't be a match for me unless they have mastered the path of illusion too.* Su Ping was feeling quite confident at the moment.

More and more spirits appeared in the fog, attracted by the Dark Dragon Hound's fear. To Su Ping's surprise, most of them were Class B and some were Class C. As for the weaker Class D spirits, they were as rare as the Class S ones, which gave Su Ping a bad feeling.

The only thing he could trust was the information acquired outside of the Sea of Illusions.

He trusted the information the Loulans had gathered, which meant that he was already in a relatively deep place of the Sea of Illusions.

The strength of the spirits encountered was an indication of where he was.

That was probably the only way to confirm one's location in the Sea of Illusions.

*Inferior spirits are near the edge, but I encountered a big guy the moment I came in. Although I didn't know whether or not that big guy was real, I seem to be in a deep place right now.*

*Does everybody arrive at a random location after passing through the gate? But the Loulan family didn't mention that.*

*The fog around me has an unusual color. It's supposed to be bright, yet it's black right now...*

Su Ping remained vigilant of the environment while hunting the spirits, and was ready to retreat if anything went wrong. He had a speculation that he couldn't confirm.

The spirits lured by the Dark Dragon Hound's fear were getting stronger and stronger as time passed. Some were even Class A spirits.

Su Ping fought the Class A spirits, finding that it wasn't too hard to kill them; he could even tear the spirits apart with the path of illusion from the inside.

Su Ping's willpower increased rapidly as he slew more spirits, and his perception range was increased to seventy meters.

It was twenty times greater than when Su Ping entered the place!

Su Ping felt the situation was rather surreal. However, the path of illusion was directing him; this kept him clear of any self-doubt.

*I'm improving even faster than when I explore cultivation sites!* Su Ping thought.

The Sea of Illusions would surely be a top plane like the Archean Divinity if it was listed among the system's cultivation sites!

After all, it was a place that not even Celestials had explored in full.

*Those Celestials must have mastered the path of illusions, yet they have still been unable to fully explore the place; it must be unimaginably dangerous!*

*The strongest spirits that the Loulan family has recorded are categorized as Class SSS. However, a piece of information mentions a horrifying being above SSS Class would show up once every couple of thousand years, killing anyone it meets whenever it appears!*

*The information about that creature was left by one of the few Celestials who have died in the Sea of Illusions.*

Su Ping managed to grasp the path of illusion, but he still didn't dare to act carelessly. After all, it was a place where even Celestials could die; it was as dangerous as the ninth space!

The black fog surged again while Su Ping continued hunting, planning to increase his perception range to a hundred meters. This time, all the black fog surged while moving fast, blowing Su Ping's hair back.

Something seemed to be pushing the black fog. It also seemed that something massive was running in his direction and knocking the fog away.

*What is that?*

Su Ping changed his expression. He hurriedly made the Dark Dragon Hound stop emitting fear. Meanwhile, he quickly flashed and disappeared from the area, reappearing thousands of meters away.

Hardly had Su Ping reappeared when Su Ping heard a voice. "Why are you still here?"

It was none other than the mysterious young man who had fought against the Black Swallower earlier on.

However, Su Ping didn't see him; he could only hear his voice coming from the fog. It seemed to echo from a far off place, beyond his perception range.

*Is it because my willpower has been strengthened? That is why I can't see his illusion any more, and can only hear his voice?* Su Ping thought.

While he pondered, the mysterious young man said quickly, "Leave now! You'll be discovered if you meddle in the battle!"

Although he knew that the person was imaginary, Su Ping couldn't help but ask, "Who are you?"

He wanted to know why he had imagined that mysterious young man.

The man had a pair of eyes ablaze with passion and determination. Su Ping was sure that he would have never forgotten him, had they ever met before.

"You may call me Heaven Killer!" said the mysterious young man, "We will meet again. You must live on. All of our hope rests on your shoulders!"

"Heaven Killer?" Su Ping was stunned for a moment. He felt that the name was rather familiar.

Judging from his title, it was easy to tell that the man was a horrifying being with a realm beyond the Celestial State.

After all, none of the Celestial experts would dare mention the Heavens!

"Let's go!"

The fog surged before Su Ping could say another thing. He then felt that his body was quickly pushed away to a far distance.

The push was so real that Su Ping felt appalled. Was the mysterious young man not an illusion?

Su Ping soon found that it was the black fog pushing him. He thought that the force had originated from the mysterious young man, but it was more like the inertia produced by the moving fog. It was just like being in the middle of a torrent, one would feel as if someone were doing the pushing.

In the middle of the fog—Su Ping felt that his head was stinging. The fog entered his body, turning into countless sharp needles which stung his head, making him want to break out of his shell.

The pain was so excruciating that he wanted to run away from it.

However, only his thoughts could possibly escape!

*What a feeling, caused by the fog...* Su Ping was shocked. That was the black tide, as documented by the Loulan family. A person's consciousness would separate from their soul, once hit by the black tide. After that, it would be very hard for it to join back with the soul!

Without the protection of the soul, one's consciousness could be swallowed by the black tide at any moment!

According to the research done by the Federation, the black tide was the actual energy transformed from all the swallowed consciousnesses. It was highly corruptive!

*Damn it. This isn't my illusion! Did something happen on the other side of the gate?* Su Ping looked rather awful; he couldn't stay there any longer. Even though he had mastered the path of illusion, he wasn't bold enough to wander the Sea of Illusions during that dangerous period. He was still too weak.

"Hurry!"

"Send him away!"

"They felt something!"

Some voices echoed in the fog. They weren't too far from Su Ping, but they were beyond his perception range, and he couldn't see them.

Meanwhile, Su Ping felt a lot of forces pushing his body; they felt like giant hands.

His body was uncontrollably flying forth at a high speed, as if latched onto a rocket. The thick fog brushing past his body made him feel as if his soul would have left his body.