

Humanity 1081

Chapter 1081 Colossal Bugs

When the swarm was ten miles away, the outer Insect Race diverted to meet them.

As Lu Ye sped along, the aura and spirit force fluctuations of the Divine Sea Realm were blatantly evident, without any intention of concealment. The Insect Race, highly sensitive to such spirit force fluctuations, was naturally drawn to him like moths to a flame.

Yiyi flashed out from Amber's body, keeping close to Lu Ye's side. She was the first to activate magic and spells, launching them towards the Insect Race ahead. Lu Ye held his power back, closing the distance a bit more before finally swinging his saber in repeated slashing.

Sharp saber light, like crescents, swept forward, tearing through everything in its path. One by one, the Insect Race creatures were sliced in half, the cuts neat and smooth, spilling insect blood and scattered corpses.

Amber, too, let loose roars from Lu Ye's shoulder. Each tiger's roar held a peculiar power, causing the advancing Insect Race to slow down, their movements stiffening.

Even back when Amber was at the Spirit Stream Realm, it had demonstrated the ability to suppress the psyche. Its tiger roars could often impact the mind of enemies to a certain extent.

Now, it was a Demon Commander level beast, equivalent to the human race's True Lake Realm, and the tiger roar's power was naturally even greater.

Facing powerful beings like Liew Yuemei at the Divine Sea Realm, the tiger roar was ineffective, but against these low-intelligence Insect Race, its power was undeniable.

One man, one spirit, one tiger—a partnership renewed after three years. Wherever they went, the Insect Race fell like rainfall.

In just a few miles of combat, countless Insect Race creatures were slain. Lu Ye, leading Yiyi, charged headlong into the dense swarm, wreaking havoc!

On the walls of the pass at Jinglan Lake, a figure sat desolately, with an aura as faint as candlelight. This was Chen Xiao, who had been dispatched to support the pass at Jinglan Lake.

An hour ago, he was full of vigor, but now he was barely breathing.

His injuries were too severe; the left half of his body was almost gone, his internal organs visible through the gaping wound, jagged as if something had bitten him savagely.

Such grievous injuries meant he wouldn't survive long. He was holding on just to report the situation to Sky Gate Checkpoint and pleaded for them to send stronger Divine Sea Realm reinforcements.

But the feedback was disheartening. Sky Gate Checkpoint told him to hold out for another hour because even if a summon was issued, it would take time for a Divine Sea Realm expert to arrive.

Another hour... Chen Xiao chuckled bitterly. Forget an hour; in his current state, he couldn't even hold on for a tea's time.

While communicating with his superiors, Chen Xiao suddenly looked up. His eyes, dim to the point of extinguishing, flickered with brightness. Losing too much blood, he murmured with lips pale as paper, "What sound is that?"

A healing cultivator beside him was frantically channeling her spirit force to heal him. Her frail figure seemed willing to exhaust all her spirit force, but it had no effect on Chen Xiao's wounds. Tear drops the size of beans silently rolled down. Upon hearing Chen Xiao's question, the healing cultivator replied, "Sir, you must hold on."

As for the sound, all she could hear was the flapping of the Insect Race's wings and the wriggling noises of their mouthparts.

Chen Xiao shook his head, "There's a sound..." His eyes brightened more, "It's a tiger's roar! Someone is here."

Beasts didn't come here without reason, but that was indeed a tiger's roar, which meant a cultivator from the beast-taming faction had arrived.

He just didn't know how many people there were or how strong they were.

"Quickly, warn the newcomers. There's a big Insect in the swarm!"

The term "big Insect" didn't refer to size but strength. Only Insect Race creatures equivalent to human race cultivators of Divine Sea Level 7 or above were called big Insects.

It was a tacit understanding accumulated over more than two years of the Nine Provinces cultivators fighting the insect calamity.

In the swarm besieging the Jinglan Lake Pass, there was indeed a big Insect. He had suffered at the hands of a big Insect, having his protective spirit force broken and half his body bitten off during the fierce battle. Had he not been near the pass and supported by cultivators there, he would have certainly died on the spot.

Normally, human cultivators with similar strength could handle larger numbers of Insect Race because human race cultivators have various skills, while the Insect Race acts purely on instinct. Even the weakest cultivators can typically fight two or even three times their number of insects.

The problem was that this swarm had a significant number of big Insects, with some even equivalent to Divine Sea Level 8.

Having already suffered greatly, he naturally didn't want the newcomers to repeat his mistakes.

The healing cultivator beside him quickly channeled spirit force, shouting, "Be careful, there are many big Insects in the swarm!"

Even though she shouted with all her might, her voice was drowned out by the cacophony of Insect Race wings flapping and whooshing, unsure if the newcomers heard her.

Lu Ye heard her, but there was no room for retreat. He was already inside the swarm, surrounded on all sides by the Insect Race, especially the dozen or so fierce ones exerting immense pressure on him.

These dozen fierce ones should be hounds, resembling canines at first glance, with short limbs and tails, but covered with thick carapace providing significant defense. Lu Ye's saber light, devastating to ordinary Insect Race, was like mere scratches to these hounds.

Their mouths, however, were crocodilian, with sharp teeth ready to inflict terrible wounds should one be careless.

The dozen hounds formed a semi-circle, mixed within the multitude of Insect Race, closing in on Lu Ye. They were so powerfully hostile that Lu Ye immediately sensed their presence.

The numbers were too great, even Lu Ye didn't dare to face them head-on. He could only propel himself upward, leaping to find a chance to break through.

A dozen hound bugs followed closely. In terms of speed, they were far inferior to Lu Ye. Under normal circumstances, Lu Ye could easily shake them off. Hound bugs were not known for their speed. However, surrounded by the insect swarm, Lu Ye could not perform at full speed. No matter which direction he fled, there were numerous Insect Race hindering his path.

As the Boulder Mountain Saber chopped and slashed, he forcefully carved out a bloody path. Yet the distance of the dozen large bugs was getting closer and closer. The leading few had already opened their bloody mouths, ready to bite him.

Seeing there was no way to evade, Lu Ye could only massively stimulate his Divine Soul Power. An invisible force, centered on himself, burst outward, transforming into a shockwave.

The surrounding Insect Race all seemed struck by lightning, their bodies stiffening on the spot, and even the hound bugs were no exception.

Using Divine Soul Power against the Insect Race is the most effective means because the Insect Race has low spiritual intelligence. Low spiritual intelligence means a weak Soul Power, making it easy for a human race cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm to suppress them through Divine Soul Power.

However, this method cannot be used extensively. Even for a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, Divine Soul Power has limitations, and replenishing it is not as convenient as spirit force. Once excessively consumed, it's easy to fall into a listless state.

Taking advantage of the moment where the Insect Race was immobilized, Lu Ye spun the Boulder Mountain Saber around himself while shouting softly, "Yiyi!"

Even though they hadn't seen each other for years, they still understood each other's thoughts. Yiyi quickly flashed and hid back inside Amber's body.

In an instant, the surrounding space darkened, as if a bright moon had risen, casting a cold moonlight, and thick clusters of moonlight saber light bloomed wantonly like iron flowers.

Tyrannical Saber's second form—Crescent Moon!

This is the most suitable saber skill to use when surrounded.

The sound of thuds came, and within a thirty-zhang radius around Lu Ye, an almost empty space was cleared. Countless Insect Race members perished at the same time.

Only the hound bugs remained unharmed. Their strength was formidable enough, and the carapace on their backs provided robust protection. Even when struck by the saber light of Crescent Moon, it only left an impression on them without causing substantial damage.

However, accompanied by a massive impact force, these hound bugs were still forced to fall downward one after another.

They quickly regained their footing and once again lunged at Lu Ye, but after unleashing Crescent Moon, Lu Ye swiftly changed direction and charged downward towards the pass.

With obstacles in his path, Lu Ye swung his saber to clear the way. Amber roared with a thunderous roar, the coordination between man and tiger was extremely skillful.

In Jinglan Lake Pass, the many cultivators all looked in the direction of the commotion, each one extremely tense.

With Chen Xiao as a lesson from the past, everyone was worried about the newcomer, unsure if he could break through smoothly.

The massive insect swarm suddenly began to squirm, like hot oil in which salt had been sprinkled. Immediately after, where the intense squirming occurred, saber lights cut through one after another, followed by a figure flickering with spirit light.

Chen Xiao immediately shouted, "Quick, open the array to receive!"

Without his command, the cultivator presiding over the protective array immediately activated the jade cluster in hand, opening a gap in the big array in the direction of the newcomer.

Lu Ye flashed and rushed in, the gap closed again, separating the many Insect Race members following him, who were then overwhelmed by various attacks.

Rushing into Jinglan Lake Pass, Lu Ye expanded and retracted his Mental Consciousness, instantly gaining a general understanding of the situation here.

Not optimistic, the situation here is far worse than at Dark Moon Forest Pass. Several cultivators were already injured or dead, and there was a large amount of insect corpses remaining at certain positions on the city walls. Clearly, the Insect Race had broken through the defense more than once but were repelled by the cultivators here.

Comparatively, the defense at Dark Moon Forest Pass is noticeably more stable. At least the defense line there has not been breached by the Insect Race yet.

This situation arose firstly because the insect swarm here was stronger, and secondly, because here lacked a strong individual in charge.

Dark Moon Forest Pass had Li Taibai and Lin Yue, both in the Divine Sea Realm, taking turns in battle to kill enemies, greatly alleviating the pressure of defending the pass.

No such conditions were available here.

Though there was a presence of a Divine Sea Realm aura...

Lu Ye approached Chen Xiao and glanced at his severe injuries, clasping his fists in salute: "Lu Ye from the Justice Department, greets Senior Brother!"

Chen Xiao looked behind Lu Ye, seemingly awaiting something.

Understanding dawned on Lu Ye, who then said, "It's just me. I was passing by and sensed something strange, so I came to have a look."

"Junior Brother Lu has a good heart." Chen Xiao sighed slightly, "It's also impressive that you managed to charge in. Didn't you encounter those large bugs?"

Lu Ye's cultivation is only at Divine Sea Level 2, far behind him. If he truly encountered those large bugs, there would be no way to survive.

Chapter 1082 Mess to Clean Up

"I run fast," Lu Ye explained.

"You're quite lucky," Chen Xiao didn't doubt anything. In his view, being able to charge in alive, Lu Ye's luck was certainly something, yet he was so unlucky to be besieged by those giant insects and suffer such severe injuries.

Taking deep breaths, Chen Xiao's voice turned weak: "Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect, I've heard of you, hope you can continue to be lucky. I've requested reinforcements, but you should understand the current situation. Even with the resources of the provincial guard, it's not easy to dispatch appropriate personnel. The orders from within the pass mandate me to hold on for two hours, but I can't achieve that. Can the defense of the Jinglan Lake Pass be entrusted to you? In any case, ensure the mountain pass isn't lost within two hours!"

Lu Ye wanted to comfort him a few words, but couldn't say them out loud. Chen Xiao was more aware of his injuries than anyone, and there was no need for self-deceptive words. He nodded solemnly: "I will do my utmost!"

"Good!" Chen Xiao nodded: "Then it's entrusted to you!"

As he finished speaking, the spirit force within him suddenly dissipated, his head slowly bowed down, and his gaze dimmed.

The healing cultivator beside him was still desperately activating her spirit force to sustain his vitality, but to no avail. Chen Xiao had been holding on, entirely relying on his determination. Now that Lu Ye had arrived, although not perfect, he was still a Divine Sea Realm cultivator. After entrusting the task of guarding the Jinglan Lake Pass, he couldn't hold on any longer.

"Don't waste your strength," Lu Ye spoke.

The healing cultivator wiped away the tears streaming down her eyes; even though she had grown accustomed to life and death since embarking on the cultivation path, she hated her own ineptitude every time someone died before her.

Many healing cultivators experience such a psychological journey. They witness life and death the most, transitioning from initially being heartbroken and frustrated, to gradually becoming indifferent and viewing life and death without sentiment, marking their growth.

The assault and defense continued; on the pass's city walls, various defensive structures roared with a buzzing fury, striking powerful attacks into the invading insect swarm.

Lu Ye turned his head and glanced around, meeting the eyes of many Jinglan Lake Pass cultivators, keenly sensing the low morale.

It was inevitable.

The original Mountain Pass Chief, Liew Yuemei, mysteriously lost her life, causing unrest and fear. Coincidentally, the insect plague struck. A Divine Sea Realm defender had finally arrived, but ended up heavily injured, worse than death, and now passed away like Liew Yuemei.

Although another Lu Ye had come, his cultivation was merely at Divine Sea Level 2...

Even the Level 6 Chen Xiao had no room to exert his abilities; what could a Level 2 accomplish in such a situation?

The entire Jinglan Lake Pass had lost its central leadership from the start. If not for their usual rigorous training and mutual cooperation, the mountain pass would have long been overwhelmed by such a large-scale insect plague.

The prospects were bleak, low morale followed as a matter of course.

If possible, breaking out and escaping wouldn't be a bad option. After all, there weren't any ordinary people living here; even if the insect race occupied the mountain pass, there wouldn't be too much subsequent loss. As long as the mountain pass soldiers survived, they could always return one day.

But given the current situation, how could they break through? The insect plague encircled the entire mountain pass, and how many would survive if they truly attempted that?

The best opportunity for a breakout had already passed before the insect plague enveloped the mountain pass.

A bitter situation indeed, Lu Ye sighed inwardly. But ultimately, this mess had something to do with him. If Liew Yuemei were still alive, sitting here during the insect plague, the mountain pass's condition wouldn't be so dire. Regardless, Liew Yuemei did possess strength.

But she just had to seek death!

As their eyes met, Lu Ye slowly spoke: "Tasked with responsibility, I'm also one of the provincial guards. Since fate has brought us here, there's no room for refusal. Today, I take on the defense of the Jinglan Lake Pass, and hope everyone can join me in working together to slay the insect race and protect the mountain pass!"

"Please issue the command, Sir!" a True Lake Realm cultivator cupped his fists.

"Please issue the command, Sir!" the crowd shouted in unison.

"None of you are children. Given the current situation, you know what needs to be done without my excessive instructions. Continue as you were before. I do not excel in mountain pass defense compared to you. I have only one order: ensure the defense line is not breached!"

Many soldiers sighed in relief, fearing that Lu Ye might intervene and disrupt the pace and arrangements with reckless orders. Especially since he was so young and younger than all the True Lake Realm cultivators present, it's inevitable that some might have the blemish of being over-ambitious.

Luckily, despite his youth, he possessed self-awareness.

"Sir, the insect plague is aggressive. If there were no Divine Sea Realm insects, the defense of the mountain pass could still hold. But among the swarm, there are many Divine Sea Realm insects, along with huge ones..." A beefy guy with the beard spoke. This person was at True Lake Level 9, just a step away from the Divine Sea Realm, clearly with some status at the Jinglan Lake Pass. His opinion basically represented the ideas of all the mountain pass soldiers.

Lu Ye glanced at him and said: "What's your name?"

The beefy guy sternly replied: "Yooi Huang!"

Lu Ye nodded: "The mountain pass is left to you all; as for the Divine Sea Realm insects outside..." He turned around, facing the direction of the insect plague, raised his hand and summoned an object, "I'll kill them!"

When the last word fell, the spirit force surged, and the object the size of an infant's head suddenly split apart, transforming into countless fine Scale Armor fragments. Under the guidance of Lu Ye's own aura, these Scale Armor fragments seemed to have a life of their own, clinging to him.

The crackling explosions sounded continuously, accompanied by an extremely violent aura.

Red light burst forth, and an invisible wave of energy swept in all directions, causing those on the city wall to stand unsteadily, squinting their eyes in unison.

When Yooi Huang and others looked again, they were all stunned.

Because where Lu Ye originally stood, there was now a tall crimson figure that had replaced him. The figure was tall and slender, with sharp angles all over, looking vicious.

Many complex and intricate patterns covered its surface, stretching from its cheeks across its entire body, forming a wildly extravagant totem with vivid, interwoven colors.

The towering figure just stood there quietly, making no movements, yet emitting an endless fierce aura, as if an ancient ferocious beast imprisoned for countless years had just broken free.

The invisible pressure permeated the air, making even Yooi Huang, a True Lake Level 9, sweat on his forehead.

The already ferocious aura became even more violently unparalleled with the abrupt appearance of a gigantic long knife.

Not far from Lu Ye, the healing cultivator who had just mended Chen Xiao's wounds let out a soft moan and retreated more than a dozen steps.

"Cover armor!" Yooi Huang stared blankly at the suddenly appearing giant figure and instantly recognized what it was.

In the Nine Provinces, there is a faction for cover armorers, with which he had dealings. However, the cultivators of the cover armorer faction, like those of the beast-taming faction, have always been in a rather awkward position. Their strength depends almost entirely on the constructs and demon beasts they command.

Most of the time, cover armorers and beast-taming faction cultivators serve the role of pathfinders in complex and unknown environments, because even if their constructs or demon beasts are lost, it doesn't directly harm the cultivators themselves.

Never had he thought there was such cover armor that simply by donning it could elevate a person's aura to such a violent degree.

Is this still cover armor?

Amidst his internal shock, the crimson figure already darted out, passing through the protective array's light screen and crashing violently into the dense swarm of insects at such speed that even someone at the pinnacle of the True Lake Realm like him could not see clearly, only catching sight of two crimson streams trailing from its eyes.

The towering figure wielded the massive long blade, a simple slash that cleaved through the densely packed insect swarm, and then dived in. In an instant, countless lives waned.

All cultivators witnessing this scene were dumbfounded, and for a moment, the defense of the mountain pass nearly paused, as the originally relentless attacks became sparse.

Fortunately, the insect swarm was drawn by Lu Ye and didn't take the opportunity to attack. Otherwise, the defensive line could have been breached, resulting in many more casualties.

"Don't just stand there, get moving!" Yooi Huang shouted angrily.

The shocked soldiers awakened as if from a dream, quickly attending to their duties.

Whether they could survive this siege by the Insect Plague, they didn't know, nor did they know if they could hold out until support arrived from the Sky Gate Checkpoint. But they knew what they had to do, especially after seeing Lu Ye charging into the insect swarm single-handedly.

If someone just passing through could sacrifice themselves like this, how could the soldiers of Jinglan Lake Pass lag behind?

If the mountain pass stands, so do they; if the pass falls, they perish.

The originally low morale suddenly soared.

There was no denying it; the superiors leading by example was the best way to boost morale, far more meaningful than any grand speeches in such a dire situation.

Lu Ye didn't know how to manipulate people's hearts or command subordinates, as he lacked the mind for it. His choices were both driven by the circumstances and his own intention.

Donning the Dragon Throne armor was perfect for such a battlefield; there was no need to deliberately seek out the enemy's location. A simple slash, a swing of the knife, and every stroke yielded results.

In contrast, dueling someone like Liew Yuemei was not very suitable for the display of the Dragon Throne's potentials, which is why he didn't summon the Dragon Throne during their battle. It wasn't solely because he had already activated the Bloodstain Spirit Runes and Beast Transformation Secret Technique.

After donning the Dragon Throne, his entire perspective elevated significantly. When facing a single target, it couldn't fully showcase the Dragon Throne's strengths.

This piece of equipment was entirely meant for large-scale skirmishes.

With the power of one, battling enemy leaders from all sides, wherever the Dragon Spine Saber fell, even Divine Sea Realm Insect Race members were fragile as paper.

Chapter 1083 Hounds

The swarm raged, dense swarms of insects, amidst which a tall, crimson figure charged, the Dragon Spine Saber swinging relentlessly, slashing out one blood-red saber light after another. Insects were continuously cleared out next to him, yet more filled the gaps, the cycle repeating endlessly.

The Insect Race showed no fear of death; many, even at the brink of death, would desperately bite or unleash their unique abilities. These abilities were varied: some insect races spewed web-like spiders, and others, like ants, sprayed highly corrosive mucus.

In an instant, the scene was boiling, endless sounds emanating from the Dragon Throne. After mere moments of combat, the crimson cover armor turned colorful.

Inside the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye spread out his Mental Consciousness, probing for the presence of Divine Sea Realm insects within the vast swarm. Upon detection, he furiously slaughtered forward.

Though the swarm was huge, what truly posed a significant threat to the mountain pass defensive line were these Divine Sea Realm insects. Lu Ye, despite his efforts, couldn't entirely eliminate them by himself, even with the cover armor. Therefore, he had to eliminate as much high-end combat power of the swarms as possible to relieve the pressure on the mountain pass.

Especially the dozen or so hound insects he encountered on his way. If he couldn't take the chance to resolve them, no matter how many insects he killed otherwise, it would be futile.

In such a confrontation, defense was rendered meaningless because, at every moment, the Dragon Throne was withstanding attacks from all directions. Even if he wanted to defend, he couldn't hold it.

He could only attack, attacking continuously, firmly holding the initiative in his hands, and attacking as many insects as possible before he was exhausted.

His own reserves were rapidly depleted during the battle, and Lu Ye only felt like he had become a dilapidated house, leaking everywhere.

Of all his trump cards, the Bloodstain Spirit Runes undoubtedly consumed the least of himself. Next was the Beast Transformation Secret Technique, and the greatest drain was wearing the Dragon Throne.

Because once he donned the Dragon Throne, it was as if countless, invisible needles pierced his body, voraciously consuming his strength, including spirit force, blood Qi energy, Divine Soul Power...

This consumption was all-encompassing and unavoidable, a cost required for wearing the Dragon Throne.

The only solace for Lu Ye was that he was now at Divine Sea Level 2, much stronger than before, allowing him to last longer.

The violent fluctuations of power were like a beacon in the dark, drawing swarms of insects to him like moths to a flame.

In the heat of the battle, Lu Ye suddenly turned to look in one direction, his view filled with bizarrely shaped insects, but from that direction, a few unusually powerful auras emerged.

It was those hound insects!

Ever since charging into the swarm, he had been searching for traces of these hound insects. Now, having finally discovered them, he hesitated no more. With the swing of his Dragon Spine Saber, he forcefully carved out a path. In just three breaths, several hound insects mingled among the various insects came into view.

They were not large but moved extremely agilely in this chaotic battlefield, using other insects as cover to try to approach Lu Ye.

But Lu Ye had been watching for their traces, so how could he let them succeed easily?

At the moment of encounter, the hound insects seemed to realize their exposure and collectively roared, pouncing from different directions toward Lu Ye.

Lu Ye fixed his gaze on the nearest hound insect and swung his saber down.

The Dragon Spine Saber, shrouded in red, seemed like a burning iron brand, its sharp arc formidable and unparalleled, splitting anything in its path into two.

However, more vicious auras suddenly appeared behind and beside him. Amidst the cover of numerous insects, other hound insects revealed their presence, forming a pincer attack.

Lu Ye was slightly awe-struck; these hound insects... seemed different from typical insects, they actually knew how to cooperate, and even hid themselves before striking.

Momentarily, Lu Ye felt like he had encountered a wolf pack's ambush.

These were no hound insects; calling them wolf insects would be more fitting.

A dozen or so hound insects above Divine Sea Level 7 attacked simultaneously. Despite wearing the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye dared not ignore them. The Dragon Throne, forged from dragon scale, was indeed impressive; after countless insect attacks using various methods, it remained unsullied, merely mottled on the surface, but at the cost of Lu Ye's own reserves.

In other words, every attack absorbed by the Dragon Throne consumed Lu Ye's strength.

Wearing the Dragon Throne also continuously consumed his strength, and under this double strain, Lu Ye, even now at the Divine Sea, couldn't last much longer.

He absolutely couldn't let so many hound insects attack him simultaneously, or defense would be impossible.

With a single thought, Lu Ye dashed like lightning toward the three hound insects directly ahead. In an instant, they clashed at close quarters. He punched one hound insect lunging at him, sending it flying, then kicked a second one away.

The Dragon Spine Saber came down, meeting the third hound insect.

The massive saber transformed into a blood-red arc, slashing fiercely onto the hound insect's back, splitting the white bone carapace with a crack, the saber embedding itself within.

For other insectoids, such a stroke would have dismembered them long ago, but the defense of these hounds is clearly stronger than typical insectoids; even the Dragon Spine Saber couldn't fully execute its power in one slash.

Spirit force surged around Lu Ye, imbuing the saber as he let out a furious shout, simultaneously dragging the saber down heavily.

A piercing friction sound echoed, the hound shrieked in pain, its mouthparts squirming relentlessly, emerald green blood sprayed forth, and the tough bone carapace finally split open, its small body cleaved into two halves.

The breath extinguished.

Lu Ye felt no joy from the success, for numerous fierce auras were already pressing close from his side and behind.

Boom, boom, boom...

The bodies of the hounds collided against the Dragon Throne, making sounds as they climbed like leeches, their heavily fanged mouths opened, viciously biting various parts of the Dragon Throne.

Lu Ye only felt his own essence draining away like floodwaters through a sluice, even the Dragon Throne itself emitted a strained sound.

He raised his hand, grabbing a hound biting his right arm, the Dragon Spine Saber pointed towards the constantly widening mouthparts, stabbing straight over.

The hound clearly sensed the danger, struggling to resist, but under Lu Ye's firm grasp, how could it escape?

The giant saber stabbed into the hound's mouthparts, out through its tail, a fierce slash, cutting off most of its body.

Lu Ye reached for another hound, but unexpectedly, upon witnessing their comrade's tragic fate, the hounds all retreated together, leaving Lu Ye grasping at thin air.

They seemed to realize they couldn't be captured by Lu Ye, or it would mean disaster.

Lu Ye's expression turned solemn, finally grasping one thing—the intelligence of these hounds... is much higher than ordinary insectoids!

Whether all large insects are thus, or only these hounds possess such capacity, he wasn't sure, but their behavior indeed differed from typical insectoids.

After the fierce battle, expending much essence, only two hounds had been slain, which naturally dissatisfies Lu Ye; he instantly targeted the closest hound to him, planning to go and slay it, when suddenly, frenzied forces from below approached swiftly. Amidst the chaos, Lu Ye glanced down, seeing a massive, grotesque mouthpart leap towards the sky, rapidly drawing near. The mouthparts as large as a house, filled with interlocking fangs, grotesque and terrifying.

He wished to dodge, but with insectoids blocking him from all sides, evading was impossible at that moment.

The next second, the world plunged into darkness, and no sight of surroundings could be seen anymore.

Lu Ye was angered, never imagining he would one day be swallowed by insectoids; the mouthparts should belong to a kind of worm, gigantic in size, he had seen before. Although this worm was hideous and terrifying, it had an obvious disadvantage—it couldn't fly, only moving on the ground, so Lu Ye hadn't bothered with them.

But this didn't mean they had no counter against airborne enemies, due to their enormous size, instantly straightening their bodies to open their mouths and devour foes in the air.

Lu Ye was caught like this, swallowed not only with himself but many insectoids around him.

A sense of compression came from all sides, along with corrosive energy enveloping the Dragon Throne; confined space made wielding a saber difficult, and if a regular combat cultivator were swallowed like this, escaping might be truly challenging—long-term entrapment leading either to death by compression or erosion.

But Lu Ye's expertise wasn't confined to merely combat cultivator's methods.

As spirit force surged, intricate Yin-Yang Dual Origins swiftly outlined and melded, in the blink of an eye, a fiery red spirit force egg formed, its shell shattered, accompanied by the sonorous sound of phoenix cries, the Fire Phoenix broke from its shell.

Incandescent power scorched all around, ceaseless sizzling from the surroundings, soon burning a large hole in the worm's abdomen, liberating him from the constraint, blazing wings spread wide, a colossal entity spanning tens of yards emerged grandly.

If outsiders witnessed such, they would see the tall Dragon Throne seemingly sprout a pair of wings.

Lu Ye moved with dragging the saber, cutting a massive slit in the worm's stomach, rushing upwards, from the wound, the worm's innards poured outward.

Once he rose again into the sky, slaughtering freely, on the ground, a worm with a split belly thrashed frantically, writhing in dying struggle.

Within the mountain pass, formations hummed, and numerous soldiers at the pass united their efforts, repelling one wave after another of insect plagues, everyone contributing their strength, especially those array cultivators and artifact refiners, rushing around the walls, repairing formations overburdened and damaged, replacing and arranging spiritual artifacts and treasures at the array eyes.

The soldiers sharply noticed the decreasing intensity of the insectoids' attack on the mountain pass, lacking previous madness.

Moreover, the size of insect plagues was evidently smaller than before.

They naturally wouldn't presume this was some grand mercy from the insectoids; the reason for such change must be one: someone, single-handedly plunged into the swarm, occupied much of the insectoids' focus, slaughtered many insectoids.

Chapter 1084 Hard to Hold On

The insect swarm obscured the view, and the soldiers within the mountain pass couldn't see the battle inside. Naturally, they had no idea what was happening, only feeling intense energy fluctuations emanating from within, accompanied by sudden Phoenix Cry sounds and faintly visible crimson light blooming amidst the swarm.

Yooi Huang moved around different parts of the mountain pass, taking the initiative to coordinate the defense at each location, tirelessly engaged. In this moment of crisis, the entire Jinglan Lake Pass was more united than ever, giving their all, because everyone knew that if they couldn't overcome this calamity today, a terribly tragic fate awaited them.

Turning his head to look at the still-dense insect swarm, Yooi Huang secretly hoped that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect could hold on.

What Lu had done gave the soldiers at Jinglan Lake Pass a glimpse of hope, but ultimately, he was just a Divine Sea Level 2 cultivator, and no one knew how long he could endure.

While secretly worried, he was also a bit puzzled. Could a Divine Sea Level 2 cultivator really possess such great skill?

He had interacted with many cultivators in the Divine Sea Realm. Not to mention others, even the former Mountain Pass Chief Liew Yuemei was a Divine Sea Level 7 cultivator, yet even if Liew Yuemei were still alive, delving so deep into enemy formations would have been tough for her. In such an

environment, surrounded by enemies on all sides, a single misstep could lead to irreversible consequences.

Ultimately, Yooi Huang could only attribute Lu Ye's abilities to the magical cover armor.

As time passed, the scale of the insect swarm diminished, much to the relief of the soldiers at the mountain pass. Notably absent among the invading insect race were Divine Sea Realm insect race members. Though they were still numerous, the defensive fortifications at the mountain pass could barely cope.

Hold on, and victory is ours!

However, Lu Ye felt it increasingly difficult to persevere.

By now, more than half an hour had passed since the battle began. The insect race creatures killed by him alone were innumerable, reducing the swarm size by about twenty percent, and combined with the efforts at the mountain pass, the swarm was now only half its original size.

He had almost eliminated all the Divine Sea Realm insect race members, except for those hound-like insects.

These creatures were too cunning, and due to their small size, they moved extremely nimbly.

After Lu Ye slew two hound-like insects consecutively, they realized he was not to be trifled with and never confronted him head-on. They often sneaked in, attacked suddenly, and swiftly fled, having the cunning of a ghost cultivator, disappearing a thousand miles if a strike missed. Concealed by the swarm, Lu Ye could do little against them.

Besides the two hound-like insects he killed at first, Lu Ye had killed two more, though by sheer luck.

But at least eight hound-like insects remained! Such a nimble and powerful force posed a tremendous threat, whether to him or to Jinglan Lake Pass.

Inside the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye was panting heavily, his arm numb from wielding the saber.

The prolonged use of the Dragon Throne had drained him significantly. Continuing like this, he wouldn't have the strength to maintain the Dragon Throne, let alone keep fighting.

A strategy must be conceived!

Returning to Jinglan Lake Pass for rest was the best option. His recovery was simplistic, and in no time, he would be full of vigor. Yet, during his recovery period, without someone to restrain these hound-like insects, the defensive fortifications at Jinglan Lake Pass might not withstand the swarm's assault.

The swarm's scale had indeed shrunk, but so had the defenses at the pass. This was due to many compounded factors: cultivators' energy being depleted, formations operating under excessive load getting damaged, and primarily, a shortage of manpower at the pass, hampering their ability to exploit defensive advantages fully.

Consequently, even though the insect swarm had substantially decreased in size, the pass's defenses were not as strong as before.

Therefore, the eight hound-like insects coupled with the remaining swarm still posed a monumental challenge to the pass's defense. If the defense were breached, the soldiers at the pass would be in danger.

So retreating to the pass was not an option.

If returning to the pass was not feasible, the only solution was to lure those hound-like insects away. Although their spiritual intelligence was higher than ordinary insect races, they were still insect races. Lu Ye sensed their vengefulness, especially since he had killed four of their companions. During this time, they had been plotting to take his life, and without the Dragon Throne, he might indeed have fallen here.

With a plan in mind, Lu Ye turned around, charging toward the outside, spreading his Mental Consciousness to monitor the hound-like insects' movements.

As expected, these hound-like insects kept their eyes locked on him, hidden among the numerous insect races, ready to strike at any moment.

This was precisely what Lu Ye wanted.

The Dragon Spine Saber swung, cutting through waves, carrying the aura of death. During this, the hound-like insects dashed in and out, lunging to bite Lu Ye and swiftly retreating, never giving him a chance to counterattack.

Lu Ye didn't bother with them, as long as they followed him.

Before leaving, he intended to kill as many ordinary insect races as possible.

Dozens of breaths later, the space ahead cleared abruptly, and light entered his view.

He broke through!

With a large group of insect races behind him, Lu Ye turned back, swinging his saber. A massive blood-red saber light swept out, annihilating numerous insect races.

But his figure wobbled violently, followed by explosive sounds. The Dragon Throne that cloaked his body shattered, breaking into countless tiny Scale Armor fragments, converging and gathering, reforming into that baby-head-sized orb.

Lu Ye grabbed it and stuffed it into his storage space, staggeringly flying into the distance.

Yet, a worry lingered in his heart. If the eight hound-like insects didn't pursue him, he'd have to kill his way back, and if so, he'd have to retreat to the pass to rest and recover.

Luckily, his worry was unfounded.

It seemed that when they saw him stow away the Dragon Throne, they realized this human was now at the end of his rope, no longer possessing the fierce and unparalleled aura he had earlier. The eight hounds that had been eyeing him hesitated no longer and chased after him swiftly.

Lu Ye felt a great resolve in his heart, and while fleeing with all his might, he pulled out a handful of elixir pills and stuffed them into his mouth, then swallowed a drop of Soul Cleansing Water, rapidly refining it to replenish his own consumption.

The speed of the hounds was very fast; Lu Ye's normal speed was surprisingly inferior to theirs, forcing him to activate the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes to bolster himself, barely keeping pace with the hounds.

In the chase, one man and eight insects streaked through the sky, leaving the other chasing insect races far behind.

On the city wall at the mountain pass, Yooi Huang keenly noticed changes in the swarm as no more battle ripples came from there—did Lu Yiye... die?

Such a talented young man, if he were to die here, would be too great a pity.

But he quickly dismissed his suspicions because although the insect tide's offensive force had increased significantly, there was no sign of any Divine Sea Realm insect races, let alone large insects.

His heart understood; Lu Yiye wasn't dead but definitely wasn't in a good situation and had chosen to lure away those large insects.

Lu Yiye was in trouble, and the mountain pass wasn't doing well either.

Without Lu Yiye's restraint, the insect plague had thrown all its energy into the offensive on the pass, and for a moment, the pass's defensive line was precariously close to breaking.

Yooi Huang roared and bellowed, encouraging the soldiers, desperately pouring his own spirit force into a formation, unleashing its might.

However, on the battlefield, while morale and determination are important, victory ultimately depends on strength. With the gathering of the insect tide, a section of the pass's defense line finally collapsed. A large number of insect races burst through it, and the cultivators around the defense line fought desperately to block them, but still could not prevent the widening of the breach.

Yooi Huang rushed forward and fought for just a moment before becoming covered in scale armor wounds. Watching cultivators beside him fall one by one, fury surged in his heart, anger rising from his courage, he blocked the breach bodily, roaring and slaying foes.

Numerous ferocious and terrifying insect races swarmed toward him, yet Yooi Huang stood firm, even if it meant dying, he would use his body to block this breach!

Just as he resolved to die, sparkling starlight suddenly spread out of nowhere, instantly filling his view.

Immediately, violent energy fluctuations surged out of that starlight.

Yooi Huang's pupils contracted instantly, realizing something was wrong, and hurriedly activated spirit force to shield himself.

The next moment, a dense and deafening explosion sounded, within his vision, massive flames fiercely erupted, and the powerful shockwave sent Yooi Huang flying, landing in disarray, coughing violently a few times.

Has Lu Yiye come back?

This thought arose in Yooi Huang's mind, but he quickly realized it was wrong; Lu Yiye was a combat cultivator, but the technique just now was a magic cultivator's doing.

Reinforcements have arrived! Yooi Huang reacted.

Looking up, he saw a figure not particularly tall standing where he had just stood, blocking the breach in the defense line. One after another, large-scale spells were cast, with power so immense, holding off a large number of insect races' attacks by himself!

Yooi Huang recognized him, it was a Divine Sea Level 8 expert from Sky Gate Checkpoint, seemed to be named Wan something, he truly wasn't sure of his full name.

He wiped the blood off his face and quickly rushed to the newcomer: "Veteran Wan!"

Veteran Wan was casting techniques to hold off the insect tide while speaking: "The scale of this insect tide isn't large, how did it get like this, didn't Chen Xiao say there were large insects?"

He had fought his way through the insect swarm from outside, seeing no sign of the large insects, nor any Divine Sea Realm insect races. This kind of insect tide theoretically shouldn't pose a great threat to a mountain pass.

But here at Jinglan Lake Pass, the defense was extraordinarily tough, and looking at the situation, there appeared to be a number of casualties.

"Large insects were lured away by Lu Yiye, and many Divine Sea Realm insect races were probably killed by him." Yooi Huang hastily explained.

"Lu Yiye?" Veteran Wan raised an eyebrow, "That Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect?"

"Certainly!"

"Where is he now?"

"Not sure, we haven't felt his presence since earlier, but he should still be alive."

Veteran Wan frowned and said no more, ordering: "Solidify the defense line first!"

Yooi Huang received the order and hurriedly called the cultivators at the pass to gather.

Once the defense line here was somewhat solidified, Veteran Wan waved his sleeve and boldly charged out.

For Divine Sea Realm cultivators, in such a situation, they must take the initiative to attack to leverage their advantage, rather than merely holding the line with many soldiers.

Offense is the best defense, the more enemies slain, the less pressure on the defense line.

Both Lu Ye and Veteran Wan did this, Li Taibai and Lin Yue did this too.

Chapter 1085 The True Body and Doppelganger Join Forces

Compared to the dire situation at Jinglan Lake Pass, Dark Moon Forest Pass is undoubtedly much better.

The insect plague that emerged from the ground fissure split into two; one swarm headed north to Dark Moon Forest Pass, and the other went south to Jinglan Lake Pass. Although the northern swarm was large and included some Divine Sea Realm insects, there were very few large insects; just two in total. With Li Taibai and Lin Yue, two Divine Sea experts, stationed at the mountain pass, the situation remained under control from the beginning.

Once Lin Yue and Li Taibai joined forces to kill those two large insects, the situation stabilized completely.

Now, the cultivators at Dark Moon Forest Pass need to proceed cautiously, gradually eroding the incoming Insect Race to ensure they are completely exterminated while maximizing their own safety.

With the situation thus handled, Lin Yue relaxed. A healing cultivator beside her was treating her wounds.

The injuries were neither light nor heavy, sustained during the battle with those two large insects. For someone in the Divine Sea Realm, they weren't severe enough to affect her performance.

Turning to Lu Ye, she said, "Junior Brother, you've worked hard. You did very well this time, and I will commend you to Ten Thousand Demons City."

This time in dealing with the insect plague, Li Taibai's performance undoubtedly satisfied her greatly. Without his assistance, handling the insect plague would not have been so easy; the defense line might have been breached, leading to many casualties at the mountain pass.

Especially in slaying those two large insects, Li Taibai's flying sword greatly reduced her worries. The swift, flickering sword light appeared whenever she needed it most, alleviating her difficulties and demonstrating remarkable strength.

She couldn't help but be impressed. No wonder he has the capacity to leap ranks in battle. Such a display isn't something any Divine Sea Level 2 can match; anyone else would be lucky not to hold her back, let alone provide such significant help.

She used to think Li Taibai could rival someone like Lu Yiye of the Haotian Alliance, but now she realizes she underestimated him.

Lu Yiye indeed stirred quite the storm in the Spirit Stream battlefield and Cloud River battlefield, attracting frequent attention from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's top sects.

But since advancing to the True Lake Realm, he seems to have quieted down, especially in recent years, leaving no trace of his presence.

Such a sharp young talent, gradually fading with age; such circumstances are not rare and occur often, indicating a lack of sustained momentum.

It seems that Lu Yiye is such a person. While his cultivation was low, he displayed extraordinary talent and monstrous aptitude, causing worry among major sects. But as his cultivation increased, he gradually returned to mediocrity.

In contrast, newcomers like Li Taibai are truly rising stars.

During his Spirit Stream and Cloud River journeys, he attracted little attention. Hardly anyone knew him, but upon reaching the True Lake and Divine Sea realms, he suddenly exploded onto the scene. Only people like him can go far and achieve what others haven't.

It is said that decades ago, Feng Wujiang from the Righteous Blood Sect was such a person. With modest cultivation, he seemed unremarkable, but once he surged skyward, he soared to great heights, quickly reaching levels ordinary cultivators struggle to attain in a lifetime.

Such people are late bloomers.

Of course, given Li Taibai's age, he isn't precisely a late bloomer, but the principle remains the same.

Lost in thought, Lin Yue mentally dismissed Lu Yiye as unworthy even to carry Li Taibai's shoes. Looking over the last hundred years, only Feng Wujiang could be compared to Li Taibai.

"Just doing my duty, Senior Sister is too kind," the doppelganger responded, gazing ahead as if observing the movements of the insect plague, but truly keeping an eye on the main body's situation.

He has to think of a way to assist the main body.

The eight large insects were relentlessly pursuing, exhausting the main body with battles. Despite quick recovery efforts, restoring initial strength is difficult in limited time.

To completely annihilate the strong foes in this battle, both the main body and doppelganger must work together, which is why the main body is leading the eight large insects in this direction.

Lu Ye didn't know when Haotian Alliance's aid would arrive, so he had no choice but to make this decision. Whether Jinglan Lake Pass can hold after he leaves isn't under his control. He just hopes the mountain pass soldiers can persevere.

No immediate support was coming, but within a radius of about 30 miles, he had a natural ally, his doppelganger.

If executed properly, though killing all eight large insects might be difficult, eliminating half should be achievable. As for the remainder, without a massive insect plague aiding them, they are less threatening.

The distance continued closing as the main body led eight hound insects across the boundary between the two mountain pass areas.

The doppelganger no longer hesitated, saying, "Senior Sister, I'm going to slay another batch!"

As he spoke, he summoned sword light, enveloping himself and darted into the insect swarm. In an instant, Sword Qi raged. Since many Divine Sea Realm Insect Races had been slain by him and Lin Yue, the swarm, though sizable, posed little threat.

However, he should not linger too long in the insect swarm without Dragon Throne protection, for being trapped within could still prove troublesome.

The main body dared to fight alone into the insect swarm, relying on the Dragon Throne's protection.

Lin Yue hadn't had time to give a reminder when Li Taibai's figure was overwhelmed by the swarm, bringing a silent chuckle to her. However, she was pleased that Junior Brother Taibai was willing to exert such effort. Although their time together wasn't long, she was very satisfied with Li Taibai. He lacked the arrogance of youth and the pride of a prodigious genius, perfectly executing all her orders while remaining approachable to other soldiers at the mountain pass.

You could say that a person like him is very easy to get along with. In the few months Li Taibai had been at the mountain pass, he had already earned great respect, and the soldiers held him in high esteem.

Feeling the intense fluctuations of spirit force within the swarm, Lin Yue knew it was Li Taibai killing the enemy. But soon she sensed something was wrong because the commotion of battle gradually diminished and faded away, and she couldn't even detect Li Taibai's aura under her mental consciousness.

She panicked slightly, hastily checking the battlefield marking to confirm that Li Taibai's mark was intact, and quickly sent a message: "Junior Brother Taibai, where have you gone?"

No response came, leaving Lin Yue momentarily bewildered.

At this moment, the doppelganger was rapidly heading towards the main body, flying straight to the ground fissure where the insect swarm emerged, slowing down only when reaching the spot, and descending towards the fissure.

Hiding in a concealed position, it activated Concealment and Breath-concealing to cloak itself, lying in quiet ambush.

At this moment, eight large insects were circling within this thirty-mile radius under the lead of the main body. The reason for this was twofold: one, to wait for the doppelganger to get into position, and two, to buy time to recover their strength.

Only when the doppelganger was ready did Lu Ye shift his body and fly towards the fissure.

The eight large insects closely followed, clinging like maggots on a bone, impossible to shake off.

Lu Ye deliberately lowered his flight height, passing by a mere ninety feet from the fissure, with the hounds following unsuspectingly.

As the killing intent burst forth, sword light surged.

Stream-like sword flashes flew out from the fissure, converging into a river of sword light. The sword stream split into three, transforming into three sword dragons, drilling madly and in an instant, attacking beneath the final three hounds.

The hounds, although possessing higher spiritual intelligence than the average insect race, ultimately had limited intelligence. They hadn't imagined the threat lurking below, and by the time they reacted, it was too late.

Two of the sword dragons, effortlessly spiraling, tore open the bellies of the hounds. Streams of sword light poured in, tearing them apart on the spot in an instant.

Almost all insect races have carapace protection on their backs, but they are not without weaknesses; their vulnerability lies in their bellies, which mostly lack carapace protection, including the hounds.

Lu Ye had utilized this weakness multiple times during entanglements in battles at the mountain pass, managing to slay two hounds before.

However, due to the hounds' highly agile movements, achieving success was often difficult.

The doppelganger Li Taibai's ambush timing was perfect, paired with the terrifying burst of the sword cultivator, killing two hounds in one strike.

The third managed to escape disaster, not because of the doppelganger's poor Sword Control, but due to the hound's quick response, turning instantly upon sensing something amiss, causing the sword dragon aimed at it to strike empty air.

The three sword dragons scattered suddenly, transforming into countless sword lights, encircling the remaining hounds from behind, forcing the closely formed hounds to scatter.

As the doppelganger made its move, the main body suddenly turned, unfolding fiery red wings at its back. Empowered by Move-Like-The-Wind, its speed peaked in an instant, flashing to the nearest hound, drawing the Boulder Mountain Saber, and stabbing straight towards the hound's menacing mouthparts.

The hound was still evading the doppelganger's sword light, never expecting that the human, who had just been fleeing in disarray, would suddenly strike.

If it were two different cultivators coordinating, no matter how telepathically linked, such seamless cooperation would be impossible. But there was no such problem with the coordination of the main body and doppelganger.

After all, whether it's Lu Yiye or Li Taibai, they are the same person.

The Boulder Mountain Saber pierced forth, the hound unable to dodge, the long blade stabbing through its mouthparts straight into its vitals.

The Cactus Spirit Runes activated, and with a twist of the long saber in Lu Ye's hand, the hound's body was torn apart.

Lu Ye withdrew the saber for a downward slash, a giant force impacting. The hound immediately fell downward, insect blood and shattered innards scattering in midair, rapidly snuffing out its life.

In just a few breaths, eight hounds had been dealt with, three already defeated, leaving five. Such are the benefits of an ambush; in a normal fight, achieving so much in so short a time would be impossible.

Sword lights continued to rain down from below, forcing the hounds to dodge in an embarrassing mess. Although the sword lights were sharp, gaining no further advantage for the moment.

The main body wielded the saber attacking another hound, forcing it to retaliate hastily, the battle locked in a fierce melee.

Chapter 1086 Still Cui Can and Radiant

Lu Ye's assault was fierce, but the hound was ultimately a big insect, with an incredibly sturdy white bone carapace on its back. Even when struck by the Boulder Mountain Saber, it merely left marks without causing fundamental damage, making it difficult to take its life for the moment. Instead, the hounds' constant lunging and biting put him in a perilous situation.

Two more hounds regained their senses after being struck by the sneak attack, surrounding Lu Ye from the left and right, while the remaining two headed towards the ground fissure, searching for traces of the doppelganger.

They knew that in such a battle, they must never expose their vulnerable abdomen to the enemy, so the doppelganger hidden in the ground fissure posed a threat.

Helplessly, the doppelganger could only leap out from the ground fissure, accompanied by numerous sword lights, darting towards its true body.

Utilizing Sword Qi and performing Words and Sword Theorem, after breaking through the interception of two hounds, it smoothly merged with the true body.

In an instant, the aura of the true body and doppelganger blended, connecting their life forces, and forming an array.

Ordinarily, for cultivators to form an array, they must have telepathy, be well-coordinated, and require long practice, or use the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc.

However, for the true body and doppelganger, forming an array was extremely simple, as they were inherently one, without needing any external force.

Both their auras surged, two bodies faced five hounds head-on, yet remained unfazed, with a dazzling display of saber light and sword flashes.

The situation at Dark Moon Forest Pass settled completely, no longer requiring Lin Yue's involvement; what's left was cleanup. The insect swarms were foolish, only knowing to press the attack without retreat. The cultivators within the mountain pass merely needed a steady approach to completely exterminate the remaining Insect Race.

She was concerned about Li Taibai's safety, so she fought her way out, searching everywhere and constantly sending transmissions, but received no response.

At the same time, outside Jinglan Lake Pass, Veteran Wan's voice echoed: "I'll leave the rest to you all; I'm going to find that Lu Yiye."

Using magic and spells to clear the way, rumbling through the insect swarms, heading outward.

Lu Yiye had lured all the big insects away and hadn't returned yet; his situation must be unfavorable. He needed to go assist him; as for the mountain pass, it was no longer a concern. The remaining Insect Race were merely moving battle merits for the pass soldiers, left for them to handle.

North and south, two major camps, two mountain passes, two figures almost simultaneously set off, heading towards the ground fissure.

Moments later, Veteran Wan sensed something; intense spirit force fluctuations came from the front, evidently indicating a heated battle happening there.

He immediately sped up, and soon saw the battlefield ahead.

In mid-air, two figures swiftly moved back and forth, one wielded a saber with fierce saber light, and the other controlled a sword with rampant Sword Qi, one attacked from afar coordinating the battle, and the other engaged in close combat, complementing each other seamlessly.

In the sky, there was a slowly rotating river of Sword Qi, continuously contracting and restricting the big insects' space to move.

As Veteran Wan arrived, he witnessed the saber-wielding figure strike, swiftly exploding a hound mid-air, scattering insect blood across the sky in a visually stunning scene.

Even though he had never seen it before, Veteran Wan recognized at a glance that the saber-wielding youth was Lu Yiye, because Lu Yiye was a combat cultivator who wielded a saber and always had a white tiger beast with him.

This matched some of the intelligence he'd received before.

He quietly sighed in admiration, no wonder he's a figure who stirred up storms in Spirit Stream Realm and Cloud River Realm. Though he kept a low profile during the True Lake Realm for a few years, he ultimately had an immensely deep foundation, being able to slay such a big insect so effortlessly.

The power of such a strike couldn't possibly be unleashed by someone at Divine Sea Level 2.

He was slightly puzzled about the identity of the sword cultivator—who was this person? He had neither seen nor heard of them, yet their Sword Control skill was incredibly proficient, and remarkably, they harmoniously coordinated with Lu Yiye!

This kind of coordination could only occur between exceptionally close individuals or with the use of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc.

Thinking thus, Veteran Wan suddenly looked up into the distance, where Liu Guang rapidly approached, accompanied by the unmistakable aura of Divine Sea Level 7.

Soon, a graceful figure came into Veteran Wan's sight.

Simultaneously, Liew Yuemei also spotted Veteran Wan.

Two individuals from north and south, charging in for support, exchanged glances momentarily, then both directed their gaze towards the fierce battlefield, each gaining clarity.

Almost instinctively, they both halted their steps, standing firmly several hundred yards from the battlefield, refraining from advancing recklessly, both quietly channeling their spirit force. Read ahead and get updates at *.

Veteran Wan now realized that the young sword cultivator was not a Haotian Alliance cultivator, but from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, otherwise Lin Yue wouldn't have rushed over.

In this case, it seemed Lu Yiye encountered this sword cultivator by chance and the latter had acted nobly to assist?

If so, how could they coordinate so smoothly with Lu Yiye?

He couldn't quite comprehend, but it did not hinder Veteran Wan from accurately assessing the current situation.

These two young warriors collaborated to slay the giant insects. Although the scene appeared thrilling and dangerous, the situation was actually under control, and their lives were presumably not in danger. Whether they could annihilate the remaining insects depended on their skills.

At this point, it was inappropriate for others to intervene precipitously, especially when Lin Yue was nearby. If someone rashly interfered, it would surely disrupt the collaboration of the two young warriors and easily cause misunderstanding with Lin Yue.

A multitude of thoughts crossed Veteran Wan's mind, while Lin Yue was also feeling tumultuous emotions at that moment.

Veteran Wan did not know Li Taibai, but she recognized Lu Yiye.

Who would have thought that Lu Yiye would appear here, collaborate with Li Taibai in insect-slaying, and judging by Lu Yiye's various performances during the battle, he was clearly unyielding to Li Taibai in any way. In terms of cultivation, the two young warriors were evenly matched. In other words, if they were to duel each other, it would be hard to predict who would win or lose.

Lin Yue was a bit dazed.

Previously, she thought that Lu Yiye lacked momentum and had faded into obscurity. She believed the Nine Provinces would soon be a place where Li Taibai made his name.

But now it seemed that things were not as she imagined; Lu Yiye was still the same Lu Yiye, still dazzlingly radiant.

Veteran Wan's thoughts were hers as well, so they both stopped outside the battlefield in unison.

"Fellow Daoist Lin, it's been a while." Veteran Wan's audio transmission through Mental Consciousness reached her ears. Though they weren't particularly familiar, they had met a few times, so they recognized each other.

"Fellow Daoist Wan," Lin Yue responded.

"Congratulations, Fellow Daoist Lin. Such a talent among your ranks. What's the young man's name? Where does he come from?"

Lin Yue frowned, not wanting to reveal Li Taibai's background. But on second thought, a figure like Li Taibai was destined to become famous in the Nine Provinces, and it was impossible to hide him, unless he was never allowed to appear in public.

She then straightforwardly said, "Li Taibai. As for his origin, he's merely an independent cultivator and not from any prestigious sect."

"An independent cultivator!" Veteran Wan was surprised. He originally thought that the young sword cultivator was secretly nurtured by a top sect from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, yet he turned out to be an independent cultivator?

He didn't believe Lin Yue would deceive him on such matters, so if she said Li Taibai was an independent cultivator, he undoubtedly was.

Though independent cultivation isn't easy, it doesn't mean they can't achieve great accomplishments. In the history of the Nine Provinces, some top experts have been independent cultivators, and these people often receive great opportunities and mystical inheritances. So even if they weren't from prestigious sects, their backgrounds were still remarkable.

"Today's young people truly are extraordinary," Veteran Wan sighed. "These two collaborate well. In my opinion, we need not interrupt, just monitor the formation. How does Fellow Daoist Lin feel about this?"

Even with mutual understanding, it's better to clarify some matters.

A few years ago, faced with such a situation, the two would certainly not have thought this way and would have charged into the battle, dealing with the emerging talents first.

But now, with the insect plague sweeping the Nine Provinces, both major camps have tacitly paused their conflicts, and even cultivators meeting in the wild sometimes collaborate sincerely.

With such awareness among the lower-level cultivators, how could these two at the Divine Sea Realm not have it?

Lin Yue nodded in agreement, "I was thinking the same!"

With the two monitoring the formation, even if Lu Yiye and Li Taibai didn't achieve complete success, the remaining giant insects wouldn't escape.

Once the discussion was settled, both turned their gazes to the battlefield, only to witness another surprise.

Because in just a brief moment, another giant insect was slain through the combined efforts of the two young warriors. This time, Li Taibai acted decisively. His nimble flying sword pierced through the insect's abdomen, exited through its mouth, stirring up a rain of insect blood.

Of the five giant insects, only three remained, and the balance of power shifted, leaving little suspense in this battle.

Lin Yue and Veteran Wan were increasingly filled with sighs and amazement.

Neither Lu Yiye nor Li Taibai exhibited the level of power typical for cultivators at their realm.

If it were ordinary cultivators at Divine Sea Level 2 faced with this situation, they would have perished long ago. Yet, these two could successfully slay giant insects one after another, particularly with their cooperation, which was genuinely delightful to watch—decisive and straightforward, without any hesitation.

Such collaboration was rarely witnessed by Veteran Wan or Lin Yue.

A dozen breaths later, Lu Yiye initiated the attack, striking through the air with his saber towards one giant insect. In an instant, the sharp saber light slashed, carving a deep fissure into the insect's back without taking its life. Instead, he withdrew, facing another approaching insect.

As Lu Yiye withdrew his saber, the sky suddenly gathered countless sword lights, transforming into a remarkable sword slash that precisely struck into the injured insect's back fissure.

The thick white bone carapace was cleaved by the saber, then slashed by the sword, no longer able to sustain itself, it split apart. Without this layer of protection, the insect's body cracked open.

"Excellent!" Veteran Wan couldn't help but exclaim. Such seamless cooperation was also a visual feast for the spectators.

Chapter 1087 Kindred Spirits

Lin Yue also had a smile on her face, because in terms of battle achievements, Li Taibai had already killed two of the giant insects, while Lu Yiye had only managed to kill one, giving Ten Thousand Demons Ridge a slight advantage.

Only the last two giant insects remained.

Lu Ye, both in his original form and his doppelganger, was about to charge forward and seize them all at once. These two giant insects finally realized the danger; originally eight of them had chased out, but now there were only two left after the battle. How could they continue fighting?

The limited spiritual intelligence of the Insect Race could not provide them with much thought, so at this time, they could only follow their instincts.

Realizing the dire situation, the two giant insects fled in opposite directions, one to the left and one to the right.

Lu Ye's original form and doppelganger each pursued one, while Veteran Wan and Lin Yue also swiftly moved, rushing to assist.

Earlier, the two young men had been tightly coordinating their efforts, making it inappropriate for others to intervene. Now that they had separated and the giant insects were trying to escape, naturally, they could no longer stand by idle.

Lu Ye's original form united with Veteran Wan, while his doppelganger teamed up with Lin Yue, each engaging in battle with spirit force swirling.

Moments later, the battle on the original form's side concluded first. After all, Veteran Wan's cultivation was slightly stronger than Lin Yue's, granting an advantage in such a battle.

Immediately following, the doppelganger's side also finished off the last giant insect.

The great battle came to an end.

The original form sheathed his sword, while many sword lights hovered and returned to the sword gourd on the doppelganger's side. The two turned around, exchanging glances across hundreds of yards.

Lu Ye pondered that given the circumstances, he ought to say something. Normally, it would be fine not to speak if no outsiders were present, but the Divine Sea Realm and Lin Yue were here at this moment. It would be too strange to say nothing.

After hesitating for a moment, he slowly opened his mouth: "You're quite something."

The doppelganger grinned in response: "You're quite something too!"

Lu Ye's eye twitched; complimenting oneself so unabashedly felt even stranger...

But in the eyes of Veteran Wan and Lin Yue, it seemed like mutual admiration between two rising stars.

A perfectly normal thing, for rising new stars like Lu Yiye and Li Taibai of this era to find someone to match their caliber undoubtedly feels like a great blessing. The path is long and arduous, and two competing individuals are always better than one feeling isolated.

Lu Ye cupped his fists: "Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect, many thanks to Fellow Daoist for your assistance."

The doppelganger returned the greeting: "Independent cultivator Li Taibai, exterminating the Insect Race is the responsibility of us cultivators."

"When the opportunity arises, let's have a drink together, Fellow Daoist."

"Sure, sure."

Engaged in idle chatter, Lu Ye really did not know what else to say.

Fortunately, Veteran Wan was beside him, stroking his beard with a laugh: "Ah, youth—it's truly wonderful!"

Lin Yue clearly felt the same and agreed: "Indeed."

"Now that the matter here is settled, I shall take my leave," Veteran Wan said, turning to head toward Jinglan Lake Pass, Lu Ye following closely behind.

On the other side, Lin Yue also called out to the doppelganger, heading toward Dark Moon Forest Pass.

A woman's curiosity is particularly strong, even someone like Lin Yue in the Divine Sea Level 7 is no exception, asking on the return journey: "Did you know Lu Yiye before, Junior Brother?"

The doppelganger quickly shook his head: "First time meeting."

"You worked with him so well that I thought you two were already acquainted."

"Perhaps it's due to similar dispositions."

That is possible, and Lin Yue wouldn't doubt it since, in her view, Li Taibai had no reason to deceive her; besides, one from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and one from Haotian Alliance—how familiar could they be?

"You two look alike, and your cultivation is similar; standing together, you appear as brothers," Lin Yue remarked with a light smile, clearly in a good mood.

The doppelganger thought to himself, more than brothers; they're actually the same person.

Lin Yue added: "But Junior Brother is far more handsome than Lu Yiye."

On the original form's side, Veteran Wan was less talkative, simply inquiring about the recent situation. Lu Ye picked out some things that could be spoken about, managing to handle the inquiry pretty well.

Upon returning to Jinglan Lake Pass, the battle there was already nearing an end. Numerous soldiers charged out from the pass, forming different arrays under the effect of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, quickly reaping the lives of the Insect Race.

Lu Ye and Veteran Wan had no intention of intervening; they simply moved around the battlefield, allowing the soldiers to express their battle spirit fully.

A little while later, all the Insect Race creatures were thoroughly eradicated, and the soldiers began cleaning the battlefield, gathering the corpses of their fallen comrades.

Lu Ye found Veteran Wan and said: "Veteran Wan, now that the matter here is settled, I should depart as well."

He set out this time for just two things, but unexpected events unfolded, drawing him into the Insect Plague defense. Now that matters are settled, there's naturally no need to linger.

Veteran Wan was communicating with someone when he raised a hand, signaling Lu Ye not to speak. So, Lu Ye quietly stood aside and waited.

After a moment, Veteran Wan finished his communication and looked at Lu Ye, saying, "The Jinglan Lake Pass is now leaderless. You need to temporarily stay here to oversee things."

Lu Ye was taken aback, "With you here, why do you need me to oversee?"

Veteran Wan replied, "I am a mobile brigadier general, not restricted to any one pass. I go wherever I am needed. There's a new task from above, and I'm leaving now."

"Then transfer another Divine Sea Realm here. I'm currently only at Divine Sea Level 2; how can I oversee a pass?"

Veteran Wan gave him a meaningful look. "Though your cultivation is low, your strength is impressive. Why be modest? Besides, manpower is scarce everywhere now, and we can't find suitable personnel to oversee for the time being. You shall temporarily take on the position of Mountain Pass Chief. I see that the soldiers hold you in high regard. If another Divine Sea Realm were to come, they might not command as much respect. So, for now, you're the most suitable candidate."

"But I'm from the Justice Department..." Lu Ye still wanted to resist. Overseeing a pass is no easy task. If he had a choice, he'd prefer a mobile position with more freedom.

"The Justice Department is part of the provincial guard. I've already reported this to the provincial guard, and someone will notify Chief Qian. That's settled. I have a task to attend to, so I must go!"

As the words left his mouth, Veteran Wan ascended into the sky and disappeared in an instant.

Lu Ye watched him leave, speechless and unable to understand how the situation had developed this way. How did he suddenly become a Mountain Pass Chief?

Although he was also a pass chief before, there was always Lin Yue above him, never needing him to take charge.

But the situation at Jinglan Lake Pass was different. No one was above him, making him the de facto leader.

Yooi Huang hurriedly approached him and saluted, "Humble subordinate greets Lord Mountain Pass Chief!"

Who knows where he got the news from, likely from Veteran Wan's audio transmission, and now he's calling him chief.

"What is it?" Lu Ye asked.

Yooi Huang handed over a jade slip, "This details the personnel losses in this battle, please have a look, sir."

Lu Ye took it and glanced at it. A batch of people had died at Jinglan Lake Pass during this Insect Plague defense, not a large number, just a few dozen.

Previously, such casualties for a pass would not be significant, but with the current manpower shortage, such losses are considerable.

Lu Ye didn't know how to handle it, but recollecting his doppelganger's experiences at Dark Moon Forest Pass, he said, "Find someone to transport the bodies back to Haotian City and issue a death notice for the sects and families behind these people to reclaim the bodies."

"Yes, sir!" Yooi Huang obeyed and left.

Doesn't seem too hard? Lu Ye thought.

The battlefield marking suddenly relayed a message. Upon investigating, he found it was from Qian Wudang, and it came with a lashing rebuke.

"Rascal, instead of staying put in Haotian City, why did you run off to Jinglan Lake Pass?"

Qian Wudang was furious. The Justice Department had finally produced a talent, and during the last grand council, even Chow Ye's request from the Military Supplies Department to transfer Lu Ye was blocked by him. But now, Lu Ye had run off to Jinglan Lake Pass, clearly disregarding his position as Department Chief.

"I was bored with my closed-door meditation, so I took a stroll and ended up here. By chance, I encountered the Insect Plague defense and lent a hand," Lu Ye promptly replied.

"Did you know Liew Yuemei is dead?" Qian Wudang asked.

"I heard. How did she die?"

"I should be asking you. Did you kill her?" Qian Wudang's suspicion was justified. He knew of the incident years ago when Liew Yuemei, abusing her power, pursued Lu Ye. At the time, he and the sect master had to intervene, creating personal enmity that would give Lu Ye a motive to kill Liew Yuemei.

"My lord must be joking. I'm merely at Divine Sea Level 2, and Liew Yuemei was already at Level 7. How could I have killed her?"

"You alone might not be able, but what if you included Li Taibai?"

"You know of Li Taibai too, my lord?" Lu Ye felt a jolt in his heart. Veteran Wan indeed had a loose tongue; he spread the news fast. However, it was understandable, as some matters cannot be concealed, and from Veteran Wan's perspective, there was no need to hide it.

Lu Ye at Divine Sea Level 2, to oversee a pass, needs notable achievements, and slaying those large insects is an achievement.

"I just heard! I also heard that Li Taibai had a vendetta against Liew Yuemei for the death of his child!"

It's undeniable that those in high positions in the Divine Sea Realm are well-informed, hence Qian Wudang's suspicion.

Lu Yiye and Li Taibai both have deep grudges against Liew Yuemei. With their mutual understanding and ability to surpass levels to kill enemies, it's plausible they could take down Liew Yuemei.

Moreover, the timing of Lu Ye's appearance here was too coincidental, making it hard for Qian Wudang not to speculate.

"My lord, this is truly a wrong accusation. I have never met Li Taibai before today, and he is from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Why would I collude with him?"

Liew Yuemei's death, no matter what, couldn't be admitted, not even to Qian Wudang.

"As long as you believe it yourself!" Qian Wudang was tired of arguing, "But for now, you need to oversee Jinglan Lake Pass. Having shown your exceptional prowess, perhaps the provincial guard can send someone to replace you or maybe not. Nonetheless, there's one thing you must remember: you're part of the Justice Department, and no one can change that."

Chapter 1088 Lu Yiye Must Not Be Touched

After ending the transmission with Qian Wudang, Lu Ye furrowed his brows.

Judging by the current situation, there's no escaping the task of overseeing Jinglan Lake Pass. Just as Qian Wudang said, who made him happen to be at the right place at the right time and show extraordinary strength?

In this, there must also be the strong recommendation of Veteran Wan, otherwise, it would be impossible for such a large mountain pass to let someone at Divine Sea Level 2 oversee it alone, but a personal recommendation from a guerrilla brigadier general at Divine Sea Level 8 does carry some weight.

For Lu Ye, this wasn't really something too hard to accept, depending on how he thinks about it.

Even if he returned to Haotian City, he would have to continue refining the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc. Staying here, he would do the same refinement, and besides, this place is far from the emperor, with no one to restrain him; he could even have more time for himself.

Considering all this, staying at Jinglan Lake Pass seemed somewhat better than returning to Haotian City.

Of course, how long he can stay here depends on how the provincial guard moves their personnel. If suitable personnel is brought over, he might soon extricate himself; if not, he would have to stay here indefinitely.

Not much of a problem, the only thing that made Lu Ye somewhat cautious was the suspicion Qian Wudang hinted at regarding Liew Yuemei's death.

Qian Wudang might have just mentioned it offhandedly or perhaps really had such a suspicion; but in the end, Liew Yuemei was indeed killed by him!

If not for the sudden outbreak of the Insect Plague, he would have been able to swiftly leave after killing Liew Yuemei, and no one could have linked him to her death.

But the outbreak of the Insect Plague left him no choice but to deal with Jinglan Lake Pass, forced to assist as best he could. In fact, if he hadn't come to the rescue at the crucial moment, the place might really have been breached by the Insect Race, leading to a large number of casualties among the soldiers.

Qian Wudang holds a high position, able to receive intelligence that many cannot access, hence the suspicion. But this matter lacks direct evidence, is a mess that's hard to settle clearly. Furthermore, even if Liew Yuemei truly died by Lu Ye's hands, what can Qian Wudang do about it?

Yet, such a suspicion is a seed, and if Qian Wudang can have it, it means others might as well.

For instance, the high-ranking members of the Tianyuan Sect, or those strong individuals close to Liew Yuemei!

This is something that cannot be ignored.

After all, as long as Lu Ye does not admit it, no one can do anything to him. A Divine Sea Level 2 killing a Divine Sea Level 7 is after all a bit far-fetched, so suspicion can remain just that—suspicion.

Little did he know, right at that moment, an old woman was soaring aggressively towards Jinglan Lake Pass from the direction of Sky Gate Checkpoint.

The old woman was precisely Yu Huajin, an elder of the Tianyuan Sect and Liew Yuemei's mother-in-law.

Though old in age and slightly hunched, she was truly at Divine Sea Level 9. A few years ago, she was not as aged looking; it's just that a tremendous setback in recent years left her physically and mentally exhausted, wounding her vital energy.

That setback came from the severing of her family's only bloodline.

To speak of it, her fate throughout life was extremely tragic.

Shortly after her marriage, her husband died—not by murder but because of a failed attempt to break through the Divine Sea, which damaged his psyche, causing his spirit force to go erratic, ultimately resulting in self-explosion.

She was widowed at a young age, but fortunately, she carried a child in her womb, whom she painstakingly raised to adulthood, achieving some level of success. She had hoped her son could make a name for himself across the Nine Provinces, boosting the clan's prestige, only for him to be slain by that cursed Feng Wujiang during a confrontation for not obeying orders!

When the news reached her, Yu Huajin nearly went mad, but she was aware of the gap in strength between herself and Feng Wujiang, as well as the Righteous Blood Sect's flourishing supremacy at the time, so she could only bury her bitterness and hatred deep within her heart.

With her son gone, her hope rested on her grandson...

Her grandson's aptitude was decent, worth nurturing with great effort; to avoid any accidents during his growth, she especially placed him under the care of the Jinglan Lake Pass at Sky Gate Checkpoint, for the pass's chief was his biological mother, to better oversee his well-being.

Heaven was not so kind, for her poor grandson was murdered a few years ago!

Although the killer soon faced retribution, his life couldn't be brought back. The Tan family's bloodline was thus severed, leaving only her and her daughter-in-law, two bereaved women of different surnames, to support it.

It was this setback that severely wounded Yu Huajin's vital energy, subjecting her to a severe illness. After recovering, though she retained her Divine Sea Level 9 cultivation, it was evident to anyone with a keen eye that her blood Qi was declining. In a real fight, she might find it difficult to exert her full prowess of a Divine Sea Level 9.

Such occurrences are typically only found in those Divine Sea Realm cultivators who have lived for many years, as age and approaching life's end weaken their foundation, leaving cultivation intact but hard to wield.

It should not have occurred with Yu Huajin, for by age, she had not yet reached the point of decline.

Since her grandson's death, there had been little contact between Yu Huajin and her daughter-in-law, as every interaction tore open a wound in their hearts, causing unbearable pain.

Then just yesterday, she received news of her daughter-in-law's death.

Her husband dead, her son dead, her grandson dead, and now even her daughter-in-law had passed, yet this old woman, who ought to have died, still lingered on this earth!

Yu Huajin once suspected whether her fate was too unyielding, causing those related to her to be doomed by her presence.

The daughter-in-law's death was a mystery to her—she didn't know who killed her, and even if she wanted revenge, she was powerless.

However, some news eventually reached her ears. Although she knew it was unlikely, she desperately needed someone to vent her anger on. Thus, she left Sky Gate Checkpoint and rushed towards Jinglan Lake Pass, fearing that if she were late, the person might leave.

Evidence? What evidence does an old woman on the verge of death need? Suspicion alone is enough!
Note from the editor: Always check * for corrections.

First, head to Jinglan Lake Pass to kill Lu Yiye, then go to Dark Moon Forest Pass to kill Li Taibai! Even if her abilities had declined, she was still a Divine Sea Level 9!

Someone was blocking her path ahead.

Yu Huajin halted her fleeing light, her expression gloomy.

The person glanced at Yu Huajin and sighed softly, "As expected!"

"Senior Brother Zhao, why are you here?" Yu Huajin asked. The person was an acquaintance from Tianyuan Sect and was currently an elder in Haotian City, making him quite influential.

Moreover, their relationship was more than just fellow sect members. When they were young, Senior Brother Zhao had deep feelings for her. After her husband's death, he took care of her for many years, but as they grew older, they naturally drifted apart.

That relationship was never meant to see the light of day, though many in the Tianyuan Sect were well aware of it.

Zhao Cheng looked at Yu Huajin with a complex gaze, feeling the weight of time's passage. The once beautiful flower of Tianyuan had grown old in such a way, evoking a myriad of emotions.

Though he too had aged, appearing slightly decrepit, it was nothing compared to Yu Huajin's plight.

He knew in his heart that she had suffered too many blows over the years and had lived a life full of hardships.

Yu Huajin suddenly realized something, and her expression turned cold and stern: "Senior Brother, are you here to stop me?"

Zhao Cheng sighed, "Junior Sister, you must not touch Lu Yiye!"

Upon receiving some news, he immediately understood that Yu Huajin would act rashly, which is why he waited here specifically for her. Now it seemed his concern was justified.

If there was anyone in this world who understood Yu Huajin best, it was none other than him.

"Why?" Yu Huajin looked at Zhao Cheng, puzzled. "What connection does Senior Brother have with Lu Yiye that warrants protecting him?"

Zhao Cheng replied, "I have no connection with that young man, Junior Sister. Do not misunderstand. It's just that his involvement now is too significant; he cannot be touched."

"He's a newcomer who recently advanced to the Divine Sea; how could his involvement be so crucial that he cannot be touched?"

Zhao Cheng knew that unless he provided an explanation today, it would be impossible to stop Yu Huajin, so he decided to be truthful: "Didn't Sky Gate Checkpoint recently allocate a batch of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs over?"

Yu Huajin didn't understand why Zhao Cheng suddenly mentioned this, but she patiently responded, "Yes!"

"Let's not talk about the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, but what do you think of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, Junior Sister?"

"It's truly an extraordinary item. With that array disc, it can boost the soldiers' strength by 30%," answered Yu Huajin, suddenly realizing, "Senior Brother, are you saying that these two items are related to Lu Yiye? Surely it can't be that he refined them?"

Zhao Cheng silently thought to himself that his Junior Sister was not too dim-witted and nodded, "He indeed refined them. This is classified information known only to the major council members, and Deputy Alliance Leader Pang has issued a gag order, so outsiders haven't heard about it. Given the situation, Junior Sister should understand that there's no way he can be touched."

Yu Huajin could hardly believe it. Leaving the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones aside, they've been around for some years but had a supply interruption. However, the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc was indeed universally acknowledged as a fine item.

When she first saw the array disc, she had wondered which Artifact Crafting Master had made it and had privately inquired but found no definitive information. It turned out to be made by Lu Yiye.

Since the words came from Zhao Cheng, Yu Huajin had no doubts, momentarily dazed...

A chilling sensation suddenly engulfed her entirely. Yu Huajin, her mind heavily shaken, had no time to react. Zhao Cheng hadn't noticed either until a sudden outburst of spirit force made his face change drastically, and he lunged forward.

But in the next moment, he froze, staring fearfully and apprehensively at the space behind Yu Huajin.

Yu Huajin's whole body stiffened, not only because of the intense pain but also because her hunched figure straightened a bit. She stared fixedly at the sword tip emerging from her chest, finding it hard to accept that she, a Divine Sea Level 9, had been ambushed without a trace.

Her Mental Consciousness flickered, sensing the sinister yet familiar aura behind her. Gritting her teeth, she lashed out, "Nian Yuexian!"

After years of dealing with this woman and suffering repeated losses at her hands, Yu Huajin, despite not seeing her face, instantly recognized her aura.

Zhao Cheng simultaneously shouted, "Fellow Daoist Nian, please show mercy!"

Chapter 1089 Persuaded to Leave

Although the sword tip was pierced out from the heart position, it deviated slightly downward, so it didn't directly hit the vital point. This means that Nian Yuexian had no intention of killing Yu Huajin; otherwise, with that attack just now, Yu Huajin would have surely perished!

This gave Zhao Cheng a glimmer of hope, and he hastily spoke to plead for mercy.

At the same time, he was shocked by Nian Yuexian's audacity. Within both the Haotian Alliance and the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, internal conflict existed, but these conflicts were mostly restricted to covert dealings and were never brought to light. After all, the guard discipline was in place, and even the strong cultivators of the Divine Sea Realm had to somewhat consider each other's face.

There was only one exception, and that was Nian Yuexian.

Over the years, she had openly attacked Yu Huajin on more than one occasion, causing him to suffer losses many times. It didn't matter much before; though Yu Huajin suffered, it was merely a bit of disgrace. But this time was obviously different. Such a sneak attack, such an injury, one wrong move could lead to death.

If Yu Huajin were truly to die here, then Nian Yuexian would certainly not escape the discipline of the guard.

Would she care?

Zhao Cheng truly didn't know. Ever since Feng Wujiang died in battle, this woman's actions had become incomprehensible. Otherwise, she wouldn't have the grand reputation of being able to single-handedly suppress a mountain pass.

At this moment, Nian Yuexian's entire body was pressed against Yu Huajin's back, without leaving a trace. The Willow Catkins Cutlass pierced out from Yu Huajin's back, and front heart, spirit force was shaking unceasingly, making Yu Huajin's face twist in pain.

Yet she dared not make the slightest move because the cold killing intent behind her chilled her to the bone. Having cultivated for so many years, she had been injured countless times. But this was the closest she had come to death.

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Life or death depended solely on the other party's whim.

A gentle breeze blew, spreading the scent of blood.

Nian Yuexian spoke softly, "You entertained thoughts you shouldn't have, this sword can be considered a lesson. If I find out in the future that you appear within about 30 miles of Lu Yiye, I will certainly take your life!"

It was merely a straightforward statement, without any harsh words, but Yu Huajin knew this woman was truly capable of doing such a thing.

She gritted her teeth and said nothing, her face full of humiliation and unwillingness.

Nian Yuexian didn't expect a response from her either. After speaking, she withdrew the sword and delivered a kick to Yu Huajin's back, causing her to stagger forward. Zhao Cheng quickly caught her, and upon raising his eyes, he saw only a streak of light quickly receding in his field of vision.

"Junior sister, how are you?" Zhao Cheng hurriedly asked.

Yu Huajin opened her mouth and spat out a mouthful of blood, her head tilted to the side, and she lost consciousness.

Zhao Cheng was shocked and quickly checked, finding that Yu Huajin wasn't dead, merely fainting from anger due to being overwhelmed for a moment. It was probably also out of humiliation. She, a grand Divine Sea Level 9, had been sneak attacked, to have been threatened like that, and at the time, she had neither the means nor opportunity to retaliate. How could the proud Yu Huajin accept it?

The injury was also not optimistic. Nian Yuexian had evidently done something after stabbing her; it appeared to be a simple penetrating wound, but inside her organs were a mess.

Even for Yu Huajin in her peak state, it would take one or two months to recover from such an injury, let alone now when her blood Qi had declined, no longer what it once was.

Her life was indeed not in danger, but such injuries couldn't possibly be recovered from without at least half a year of rest.

Zhao Cheng sighed inwardly. Although Nian Yuexian had been excessive, this matter truly couldn't be blamed on her. As Nian Yuexian said, this strong-willed junior sister had entertained thoughts she shouldn't have, and so she was naturally taught a lesson.

He could persuade her once, but he couldn't always keep an eye on Yu Huajin. Based on his understanding of her, even if he managed to persuade her this time, she would find another opportunity.

In some sense, this outcome was perhaps the best result. In the current situation, Lu Yiye absolutely must not be tampered with, otherwise, no one would be able to save Yu Huajin.

Just as Nian Yuexian would not truly kill Yu Huajin, for if she did, then the grand Haotian Alliance would have no place for her.

The matter would end here today. Yu Huajin had suffered in silence and would not spread it around, and he himself would keep it quiet. Rest assured, Nian Yuexian would not mention it to anyone either.

Holding Yu Huajin, Zhao Cheng activated his spirit force to help her suppress her injuries, then soared into the sky, for he still needed to find a healing cultivator.

Dozens of miles away, Nian Yuexian, who had concealed her figure, quietly watched this scene. Only when Zhao Cheng disappeared from her sight did she send out a message: "It's been resolved."

In Haotian City, Thang Yifeng looked at the message from Nian Yuexian, his eyes twitching slightly.

Although Nian Yuexian used the word "persuade" in her message, he understood that Nian Yuexian would not possibly use such gentle means. The way she persuaded people must have been very intense.

Lu Ye had appeared at Jinglan Lake Pass, assisting the mountain pass warriors in defending the checkpoint, and had teamed up with Li Taibai of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to slay a giant beast, showcasing extremely impressive heritage and strength. Afterward, with Veteran Wan's strong recommendation, he temporarily remained at the pass to hold the fort.

Coincidentally during this period, the former mountain pass chief, Liew Yuemei of Jinglan Lake Pass, died under mysterious circumstances...

And whether it was Lu Ye or Li Taibai, both had grudges against Liew Yuemei.

Putting together all this information leads to much speculation. When Qian Wudang questioned Lu Ye and Yu Huajin rushed to Jinglan Lake Pass from the Sky Gate Checkpoint, they were also making speculations.

Zhao Cheng was likewise the same, and to prevent Yu Huajin from committing a great mistake, he specifically came to stop her.

How could the sect master not have any actions? He couldn't leave Haotian City temporarily, so he could only send a message to Nian Yuexian, asking her to make a trip. Now it seems the results are quite good.

Lu Ye was completely unaware of these undercurrents and turbulence; this is the benefit of having someone above looking out for you. Many potential crises, even if he doesn't see them, even if he's not aware of them, his elders can kill them in the bud without anyone knowing.

He is quite busy now.

After the battle, the mountain pass was in ruins, many things needed handling, and required him, the Mountain Pass Chief, to make decisions.

Although he hadn't experienced these things before, Dark Moon Forest Pass was going through the same situation. He had a doppelganger observing over there, so he just needed to mimic Lin Yue.

Thus, although it was his first time as a Mountain Pass Chief, his actions were orderly and composed, and the soldiers beneath him took notice and were quite gratified.

After several days, the post-battle affairs at the mountain pass were finally almost sorted out.

In the grand hall, Lu Ye sat upright, Yooi Huang and several other True Lake Level 9 cultivators stood by, reporting various matters, causing Lu Ye to feel overwhelmed, and he interrupted them: "When Pass Chief Liew was alive, how were these issues handled?"

He didn't believe that Liew Yuemei would personally attend to all these various issues. If that were the case, where would she find the time for herself?

Yooi Huang replied, "We were all helping out in handling them, and after they were handled, we would present them to Pass Chief Liew for her perusal and decision."

Lu Ye responded, "Then let's do it as before; what was done before, let's do it that way afterward, unless there are matters that absolutely need my attention, you don't need to ask me."

Yooi Huang and the others exchanged glances and all respectfully complied, having roughly figured out Lu Ye's disposition. It seems the new young Mountain Pass Chief was not one who clung to power or issued commands recklessly.

It's a good thing; at least in terms of familiarity with the mountain pass, Lu Ye cannot compare to them, and it's better for many matters to be handled by them.

Immediately afterward, he took out a jade slip: "But, sir, the resources for the mountain pass require you to personally apply for allocation from Haotian City. This is the list."

The resources for cultivators' cultivation can be purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault using battle merit and merit, but the public resources of the mountain pass require allocation by the provincial guard.

Not to mention, so many fortifications need repair, the damaged Arrays and the Spiritual Artifacts and spirit treasures placed in the Array Eyes can't have the soldiers pay from their pockets; that wouldn't make sense.

Thus, Lu Ye must apply for them from Haotian City himself; others do not have this authority.

Lu Ye took the item and inspected it, his brow furrowed slightly: "Are these resources a bit lacking?"

Although he didn't know how much resources were needed at the mountain pass now, the categories and quantities listed seemed not much.

Yooi Huang said, "A bit lacking, but probably barely enough."

"That won't do; we must have some surplus to respond to unexpected situations." Lu Ye threw back the jade slip: "Add more things, triple...no, five times the amount!"

The True Lake cultivators looked at him in shock; was he applying for resources or conducting a robbery?

Yooi Huang cautiously said, "Sir, it's like this; battles are frequent now, and various checkpoints are desperately lacking resources. Even if we apply like this, the provincial guard may not be able to provide."

Even if they apply for more, what if the provincial guard doesn't give them? It wouldn't just be embarrassing.

There's also something Yooi Huang didn't tell Lu Ye; back when Liew Yuemei was alive, she applied like this, but because she had connections at the Sky Gate Checkpoint, she could often use private leverage to get some support from there.

Lu Ye's cultivation level is far less than Liew Yuemei's, and he doesn't have connections at the Sky Gate Checkpoint. If the materials requested in the jade slip get approved, it's already quite good, so how could he expect more?

Lu Ye said, "It's like doing business; we raise the price, and they pay. Applying for allocation is our business; whether they give it is their business."

Yooi Huang and the others exchanged glances, hearing such a statement for the first time, and were momentarily speechless.

"Anything else?" Lu Ye asked.

Everyone shook their heads. Although there was originally much to report, since Lu Ye had spoken as he did, and was willing to delegate power, there was no need to report further; they could handle it themselves.

"That's it, let's adjourn," Lu Ye waved his hand.

The group respectfully withdrew.

As they exited the grand hall, someone said worriedly, "Brother Yooi, do we really follow the Mountain Pass Chief's idea with this resource list?"

Yooi Huang said, "Since Sir said so, we can only follow his idea."

That person said, "I just fear they won't approve it; then it will surely delay the repair of defensive structures. The Military Supplies Department on the provincial guard side is a pack of mythical beasts Pixiu, not easy to handle. If we leave them with a bad impression, applying for resources will be troublesome in the future."

Chapter 1090 Visitors from the Military Supplies Department

A few people discussed fruitlessly; after all, this is the new pass chief's first command. They couldn't oppose too much and had to comply, but in their view, the new pass chief might face an unyielding refusal this time.

The supplies from the Military Supplies Department are not easy to apply for, even when there is no war in the past, the applied supplies always came with a discount, let alone now when battles are tense everywhere.

This might be good as it would allow the new pass chief to quickly adapt to the style of the Military Supplies Department and not act recklessly in the future.

It's good to be youthful and vigorous, but ultimately it must conform to the larger trend.

Therefore, they hurriedly drafted another list, reported it to Lu Ye, and through Lu Ye's submission, conveyed it to Haotian City's Military Supplies Department.

Next is to wait. Even if the supplies come quickly, it still requires some time. In the past, just the approval process alone required a few days' process. The folks at the Military Supplies Department are known for being stingy as iron roosters, wishing all supplies could be kept in the vault instead of being leaked.

In the inner hall of Lu Ye's palace, a golden vortex slowly rotated, Yiyi and Amber were immersed in the rich and pure spirit force, practicing cultivation.

In the two years Lu Ye was not around, their cultivation relied entirely on Yiyi's battle merits to obtain, occasionally receiving some aid from the sect master to steadily improve their strength.

Now that Lu Ye has returned, there's no worry about the gold-hued spirit fortune stick anymore.

Lu Ye's current battle merits are so abundant that he can't use them all, allowing them to constantly maintain with the gold-hued spirit fortune stick, enabling one spirit and one tiger to cultivate freely and enhance themselves.

From the very beginning, Yiyi and Amber have been inseparable from him, and now as his cultivation rises easily, the disparity in strength grows, so Yiyi and Amber's cultivation must be enhanced quickly, otherwise, one day, one spirit and one tiger will be unable to keep up with his progress.

Lu Ye was not cultivating, but instead was arranging the teleportation array on the side.

Meanwhile, over at Dark Moon Forest Pass, the doppelganger is doing the same task.

Having not arranged a teleportation array for a long time, Lu Ye was uncertain as to the distance his current cultivation could connect. If it couldn't reach a thousand miles, then this arrangement would be ineffective, as the connection between the two arrays would not link and naturally cannot teleport.

If it can reach, many things can become simpler in the future.

Not to mention, he also has tasks to refine Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and As-Close-As-Siblings array discs. The efficiency of refining by the true self alone cannot compare to the efficiency when both the true self and doppelganger are involved.

If so, the efficiency of refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and array discs can be multiplied, and when his realm ascends in the future, there will be no need to find a secret meeting place outdoors, saving some traveling time, without the fear of being secretly followed and ambushed by those with malicious intent.

Just like days ago, if the teleportation array had been used to send the doppelganger directly to the true self's location, Liew Yuemei wouldn't have stumbled upon his whereabouts, nor would she have discovered the secret of the true self's doppelganger.

Only, at that time, Lu Ye didn't consider this, coupled with re-condensing the doppelganger being not too complex... resulting in Liew Yuemei covertly following, sparking subsequent incidents.

Despite not arranging a teleportation array for a long time, the skill wasn't rusty. Only moments later, the two arrays each took shape.

If it were arranged by two different cultivators, it would naturally not link, but strictly speaking, the true self and the doppelganger are the same person, so the two arrays arranged don't have this concern.

Now it's just looking to see if the distance presents a problem.

The true self here activated the array's power, mental consciousness spread, accompanied by the array's humming, resonating afar, the other array a thousand miles away reacted similarly.

It worked.

And it feels like the distance isn't at its maximum. In other words, with his current Divine Sea Level 2 cultivation, the arranged teleportation array can span distances greater than a thousand miles.

How far the exact limit is, that requires some verification.

Lu Ye's true self stood in the array, spirit force urged, infusing into the array, with spatial distortion, instantly vanished. Once vision restored, he was already in the residence of the Dark Moon Forest Pass doppelganger.

He pushed open the door, leisurely walked out, wandered through the Dark Moon Forest Pass, where post-battle aftermath was busy, although Lin Yue was personally overseeing, making the doppelganger seem idle.

Following Lin Yue's aura, he flew to a section of the city wall, Lin Yue turned her head, smiling gently: "Junior Brother Taibai."

Lu Ye nodded and stood by her side, casually saying: "How's Senior Sister Lin's injury?"

During the Insect Plague's attack, Lin Yue was injured, but seeing her current state, it should be no major concern.

"Just a minor wound." Lin Yue replied, "Junior Brother should rest well after exhausting battles, why run out here?"

After the doppelganger teamed with the true self to slay a large insect a few days ago, Lin Yue clearly cherished the doppelganger more.

She initially valued Li Taibai, viewing him as comparable to Lu Yiye, now elevated to capable of rivaling Feng Wujiang, but before not having a clear grasp of the doppelganger's strength. Witnessing that battle, she truly realized Li Taibai's mighty foundation.

That's even with her injuries, the myriad tasks at the mountain pass, she didn't have the doppelganger step out, because in her view, Li Taibai is at a critical time for self-advancement, shouldn't be disturbed by trivial matters.

The stronger Li Taibai's strength, the firmer the pass defense, within mere months Li Taibai can ascend one level realm, in years to come, might surpass her in cultivation.

A person like him is destined for great achievements, treating him better now will reap more benefits in the future.

"Bored to the extreme, came out to take a look. Is there anything that needs my help?" Lu Ye asked.

"No need, Junior Brother, go cultivate. I'll handle things here at the mountain pass."

Lu Ye departed accordingly.

Returning to his residence, he left some fire spirit stones and materials for crafting array discs for his doppelganger. Through the teleportation array, he returned to Jinglan Lake Pass.

Sitting cross-legged, he began cultivating while taking out an item.

It was the Tyrannical Saber Technique lineage obtained from the Soaring Dragon World.

Initially, Lu Ye handed this item to his third senior brother, Xiao Xinghe, for the comprehension of the Tyrannical Saber Technique. A few days ago, Lu Ye traveled to Red River City, partly to meet with the members of Team D-9 and partly to retrieve this item.

The Tyrannical Saber Technique lineage consists of three saber skills. Lu Ye comprehended the first style, Myriad Stars, during his Cloud River Realm days, and in the True Lake Realm, he comprehended the second style, Crescent Moon.

But no matter what, he couldn't discern the third style, suspecting back then that it's a skill only qualified for comprehension at the Divine Sea Realm.

Now having advanced to the Divine Sea, he naturally should comprehend this final saber skill.

Immersing his mind within, in an instant, it was as if he was within the stellar space. Unlike the previous two times, this time there were no silhouettes practicing saber skills; instead, a brilliant big sun blinding his eyes.

But upon careful observation, Lu Ye was startled to find that it was not a big sun but a convergence of fierce saber light.

The big sun suddenly bloomed like a lotus, sweeping across the surroundings. The unparalleled sharp saber intent swept in, and Lu Ye's immersed mind melted away like snow under the glaring sun.

Lu Ye opened his eyes, many insights burgeoning in his mind.

On a section of the city wall at Jinglan Lake Pass, Yooi Huang was conducting his daily inspection. After days of aftermath handling, the mountain pass showed no traces of the recent great battle, although many defensive works still needed material repairs, which couldn't be rushed.

As the end approached, he suddenly sensed something, turning to look in a direction.

He saw two streaks of flowing light rapidly approaching, one of which unmistakably carried the aura of Divine Sea Level 5. Yooi Huang quickly focused his vision, soon realizing who was arriving.

Such speed! With that thought in mind, he soared up to greet them.

In a moment, the two streaks arrived before him, revealing two figures, one of them a familiar face, the Manager Foo Yao from the Military Supplies Department, the other, however, was unfamiliar.

Though Foo Yao had only the cultivation of True Lake Level 8, he bore the heavy responsibility of transporting materials to various mountain passes. In such times, having a Divine Sea Realm accompanying as a guard wasn't unusual.

But he wondered from which department this Divine Sea Realm had been reassigned.

"Manager Foo." Yooi Huang clasped his fists in respect. Although his cultivation level was a tier higher, those from the Military Supplies Department were always esteemed, not to be slighted.

Foo Yao nodded slightly, smiling, "Ah, Brother Yooi, it's been a while."

Yooi Huang was surprised, as Manager Foo had never given him a friendly face during his previous material transportation visits. This wasn't due to individual character, but the natural disposition of the Military Supplies Department; anyone wishing to obtain anything from them had to endure coldness. It was just part of the job, not much to blame.

Yet today, Foo was greeting him with a smile. Has the sun risen from the west?

"Manager Foo, such a weary journey, you must be tired." Yooi Huang cautiously said, then glanced at the Divine Sea Level 5 beside him, "And this lord is...?"

Foo Yao explained, "Lord Liu has been reassigned from the provincial guard to accompany me in transporting materials."

Yooi Huang saluted again, but the Liu-named Divine Sea merely nodded slightly, without speaking.

"Where is Pass Chief Lu? I don't see him around." Foo Yao inquired.

Yooi Huang inwardly panicked, having forgotten to notify his Pass Chief of the Military Supplies Department's arrival. By custom and logic, the Pass Chief should welcome them to foster a good relationship, making future material requests easier.

Quickly thinking, he explained, "The Lord Mountain Pass Chief was exhausted from a recent fierce battle and has been resting for days. Please, this way inside, I'll notify the Chief right away."

Foo Yao maintained his smile, "Indeed, that's exhausting. I'll trouble Brother Yooi to announce us."

Yooi Huang marveled inwardly, feeling Foo Yao's attitude today was unusually pleasant, almost too kind.

Uncertain where the problem lay, he could only lead them inside before heading to Lu Ye's residence.

Immersed in comprehending the third style of the Tyrannical Saber, Lu Ye sensed the restriction being triggered. He rose and opened the door, seeing Yooi Huang standing outside, and asked, "Is there a battle?"

Instinctively thinking it was another Insect Race attack.

Yooi Huang responded, "Not a battle, someone from the Military Supplies Department has arrived."