

Humanity 111

Chapter 111 Mountains and Rivers Meet by Chance

Liusu Place's Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye walked out slowly accompanied by the respectful send-off of a manager.

The final six pieces of origin magnetic ore had been sold, along with the storage sack he had obtained from those individuals from Cloudy Mountain, which he also sold to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

He didn't sell Senior Brother Zhou's storage sack, instead, he paid some fee to have an elder cultivator from the mercantile union unlock the restriction lock, hoping to find something valuable inside.

To his great disappointment, after comparing the gain with the cost, he not only made no profit but actually suffered a loss!

Indeed, opening sacks comes with risks, and investment should be made with caution.

The most valuable thing on Senior Brother Zhou's person was probably that Spiritual Artifact Longsword, which was already broken by Lu Ye during their encounter.

This lesson led him to secretly decide that in the future, unless the storage sack belonged to someone like a Young Master, he would sell them all in bulk.

By contrast, the beast-taming collar was sold for more than a dozen Spirit Stones. That was Senior Sister Yooi's Spiritual Artifact, specifically designed for dealing with demon beasts, and it had limited use, so it wasn't worth much.

The Spirit Stones he received were mostly exchanged for elixir pills by Lu Ye, who only kept thirty Spirit Stones for emergencies, as transactions between cultivators were primarily based on Spirit Stones, and although using elixir pills was possible, it came at a loss.

In the mercantile union, one could only buy nine elixir pills for ten Spirit Stones.

This time, the pieces of origin magnetic ore he dealt with were fairly large, which is why they were quite valuable, and in the end, he obtained five hundred elixir pills.

Counting the dozens of Spirit-Nurturing Pills he still had left, that was all of his current assets.

For a low-level cultivator, this was a significant fortune.

But after some brief calculations, Lu Ye knew that these elixir pills wouldn't last long. As his cultivation gradually improved and the efficiency at which he refined elixir pills increased, the consumption rate was set to accelerate even more once he reached Level 4.

Amber had also turned into a major consumer of pills. That day, Lu Ye had given Yiyi several bottles of elixir pills, and upon asking yesterday, it seemed there weren't many left.

Undoubtedly, in just over ten days, Amber's imposing aura had grown stronger, having clearly grown considerably. Hua Ci had privately mentioned to Lu Ye that Amber might be an extremely rare exotic beast, which could be inferred from its ability to transform Yiyi into a minion spirit.

Such exotic beasts, if provided with sufficient resources, could grow rapidly and might become a strong ally in the future.

Lu Ye, however, hadn't really noticed it himself, as his knowledge wasn't extensive. He only knew that in the future, he would likely need to find ways to earn resources for cultivation.

The stash of origin magnetic ore he had brought from Evil Moon Valley was dwindling, and once the elixir pills he had were consumed, he couldn't rely on the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes to slowly enhance his strength — that efficiency was far too low.

So even though Lu Ye currently had an abundance of elixir pills, his mood was rather melancholic.

Walking on the streets, Lu Ye headed towards Hua Ci's medical spot. He hadn't gone far when he suddenly heard an angry roar coming from the second floor of a tavern nearby, "More wine! Where is everyone? Have you all died?"

Lu Ye listened and was momentarily stunned because the voice sounded familiar, as though he had heard it somewhere before.

But since departing from Qingyun Mountain, there were not many people he had come into contact with on his journey. How could he have encountered someone he knew here?

After a brief moment of contemplation, his expression turned solemn.

He turned and walked towards the tavern. As he entered, someone came up to greet him, "Fellow Daoist, please come inside. What would you like to eat? What would you like to drink?"

Although his demeanor didn't resemble the obsequiousness of an inn's server in the mundane world, his attitude was quite enthusiastic.

Those who work in the marketplace are mostly independent cultivators. Without a sect to rely on or elders to look after them, they accumulate the resources for cultivation through this means.

Your next read is at empire

"Looking for someone," Lu Ye said in a low voice and headed straight for the stairs.

The independent cultivator then backed away with a smile.

Ascending the stairs step by step, Lu Ye only stopped when he reached the entrance to the second floor, peering into the second level.

By the window, a disheveled and desolate-looking man sat with several small dishes laid out before him on the table, which along with the floor was littered with empty wine jars...

He seemed to be experiencing something extremely upsetting and was attempting to drown his sorrows in alcohol.

Lu Ye only glanced briefly before quickly retreating, his heart pounding.

Dong Shuye!

Although Lu Ye thought the voice sounded familiar when he heard it, he considered it somewhat unlikely. To be safe, however, he still took the risk to confirm.

With one look, he confirmed that this person was indeed Dong Shuye, who had been pursuing him.

Lu Ye couldn't understand what exactly Dong Shuye had gone through. The man before him bore no trace of the formidable presence he once had while pursuing Lu Ye. To say he looked like a dog that had lost its home would not be an exaggeration—his appearance was extremely bleak, and a scar now marred his cheek.

Lu Ye was baffled as to why Dong Shuye would come to this place.

What he could be sure of was that Dong Shuye was not here to find him. At the time, Dong Shuye must have thought he had killed him, which is why he had left. If he were truly here to continue the pursuit, he wouldn't be hiding away drowning his sorrows in alcohol.

Lu Ye also remembered what Hua Ci had told him previously: the Nine Stars Sect's outpost had been overrun by Xuanmen, the entire place razed by fire.

Even so, the outpost was still there; it's just that the Nine Stars Sect would have to pay a hefty price to rebuild it. Xuanmen didn't have the capability to occupy two outposts.

Now, seeing Dong Shuye alive despite the outpost having been captured, Lu Ye thought it plausible since Dong Shuye was a Level 7 magic cultivator—it wasn't easy to kill someone that strong.

Lu Ye couldn't figure out why Dong Shuye was here, nor did he have any interest in finding out. All he knew was that he needed to get out of there as fast as possible.

Continuing to stay in this area was dangerous. If Dong Shuye were to stumble upon him one day, even nine lives wouldn't be enough to save him.

On the second floor, Dong Shuye looked down at the street below with a vacant gaze, watching the constant stream of people. The bustle of the world filled him with an urge to slaughter them all.

The day he chased Lu Ye, he received an urgent message from Cao Ye to return to the sect's outpost. What he saw upon arrival was a maelstrom of carnage and blood, the entire outpost engulfed in flames.

In the midst of that chaos, having waited for a long time, Wang Yeang approached with sword in hand!

Dong Shuye, his spirit force greatly depleted from his constant traveling, was outmatched by Wang Yeang's calm and measured tactics.

Moreover, he was already somewhat no match for Wang Yeang.

In that battle, Dong Shuye nearly lost his life to Wang Yeang on the spot. While he was lucky enough to escape with his life, three of his spiritual orifices had been damaged by Wang Yeang, which caused his cultivation from Level 7 to fall back to Level 6.

He hid in the wilderness for more than a month to nurse his injuries before he dared to reappear.

The Nine Stars Sect had called for him multiple times, but how could he dare to respond?

It was bad enough that the outpost had been captured, and countless disciples had been killed or wounded, but what was crucial was that a variety of enhancements granted by the Heaven's Augury Pillar had been stolen by Xuanmen.

The outpost's buildings could be reconstructed, new disciples could be recruited, and lost resources could be accumulated again, but those enhancements were not so easily restored. They were the result of decades of effort by the whole sect's Spirit Stream Realm cultivators.

One could say that with this single battle, years of the Nine Stars Sect's operations on the Spirit Stream battlefield were destroyed in an instant.

Furthermore, the Young Sect Master had been killed under his watch.

With these failings, it wasn't just that Dong Shuye, a Level 7 cultivator, couldn't shoulder the responsibilities— even a Level 9 wouldn't suffice.

The sect's call was undoubtedly to assign blame. If Dong Shuye dared to return, he wouldn't live to see the moon tonight, much less tomorrow's sun.

He was scared, and thus he used all the merit he had accumulated over the years to erase the Nine Stars Sect's mark from the battlefield marking, effectively defecting from the sect!

Chapter 112 - Escape

Throughout the Nine Provinces, defectors like Dong Shuye who abandoned their sects are extremely rare, for erasing the brand of one's original sect requires the expenditure of a considerable amount of merit. But Dong Shuye had no other choice.

Years of hard-earned merit spent in its entirety, burdened with the reputation and identity of a traitor, with three spiritual orifices broken, the path ahead almost severed, Dong Shuye was practically at the end of his rope.

And all of this was simply because the mountain tiger named Yiye had killed the Young Master of the Nine Stars Sect.

Had it not been for this, the Nine Stars Sect would not have accepted Xuanmen's declaration of war, and had it not been for this, he would not have taken the risk to personally set out to pursue and kill the enemy, nor would the sect's stronghold have been so easily breached.

Remembering the dead mountain tiger, Dong Shuye's anger flared, wishing he could dig up his corpse and hack it into hundreds of pieces.

Dying like that was letting him off too easy! Stay updated through empire

Fortunately, Dong Shuye was not without options. Over the years, he had made some connections at the Spirit Stream battlefield, and even though his cultivation had fallen, he still had reached Level 6, and his Level 6 was almost stronger than that of any ordinary Level 6. It was possible to find some 8th-9th grade faction to join.

But before that, he had to get far away from the Nine Stars Sect's territory. The sect headquarters were likely already searching for him.

...

"Lu Ye, are we leaving?" In the room, Yiyi asked.

Lu Ye nodded, "It's time to go." Then he turned to her, "You and Amber can stay."

"Don't you dare leave us behind!" Yiyi was somewhat annoyed. "We agreed to start this journey together and to finish it together. Do you think Amber and I are burdens?"

"Nonsense," Lu Ye flicked her forehead, "Without Amber, I would've died long ago."

Yiyi rubbed her forehead, huffing, "So I'm the most useless one."

"You're useful too."

"How am I useful?" Yiyi looked at him with anticipation.

Lu Ye thought seriously for a moment, "When I rest, it's you who keeps watch by my side, allowing me to get a good sleep."

"Oh." Yiyi lowered her head.

Lu Ye lifted her chin, "All right, we'll leave tomorrow. Go say your goodbyes to Spirit Jade."

After Yiyi left, Lu Ye stood still, thinking that he should also say goodbye to Hua Ci. He had already left without a word the last time, and regardless of anything else, she had saved him twice. It wasn't right to keep doing this.

Stepping out of the bamboo hut, he went next door and knocked lightly on the door.

Hua Ci opened the door, saw it was Lu Ye, and asked warily, "What is it this time, trying to drug me again?"

"Give me a break!" Lu Ye couldn't help but glower at her, "You fooled me last time, you think I didn't realize?"

It was only several days later that he came to his senses. How could Hua Ci, a Level 5 healing cultivator who was proficient in pharmacology, be so easily knocked out by a single elixir pill? Even if the pill had that effect, merely sniffing it couldn't possibly cause such a potent reaction.

Hence, he took out the pink elixir pill and sniffed it himself.

Nothing happened! Only then did he understand that he had been played by Hua Ci.

"You found out, huh..."

Lu Ye glowered at her again, and then he brought up the matter at hand, "I'm leaving tomorrow. I came to bid you farewell and to thank you for rescuing me twice."

Hua Ci blinked, "I'm a healer, you're a patient. You provided the spirit jade, and I saved you—it's only natural."

"Regardless, I still have to thank you," Lu Ye said earnestly.

Hua Ci smiled, "Then I wish you a smooth journey and a future as splendid as brocade."

"Thank you."

"Is there anything else?"

"Hm? No, that's it."

"Then I'm going to rest."

After the door was closed, Lu Ye suddenly remembered he had forgotten to add this woman as a friend... He raised his hand to knock, thought better of it, and gave up on the idea. With his departure this time, the chances of seeing her again were unlikely.

The next morning, as usual, Hua Ci, accompanied by Kong Niu, hurried to Liusu Place.

By the time Lu Ye left, she was already gone.

However, it was Ruan Lingyu who came to see him off, bidding a tearful farewell to Yiyi; even as Lu Ye rode Amber far away and looked back, he could still see her standing in front of the dilapidated gate, waving vigorously.

Once they descended the mountain, Amber started sprinting, with the surrounding scenery rapidly receding into the distance. Yiyi's mood wasn't very high, as over these days, she had formed a deep friendship with Ruan Lingyu, and it was naturally hard for her to part with a friend so suddenly.

Lu Ye didn't know how to comfort her, so he let her be, and busied himself by swallowing elixir pills and refining his cultivation on the tiger's back.

He was just a step away from reaching Spirit Stream Level 4, which he estimated could be achieved by tomorrow.

It wasn't until they stopped for the night that Yiyi slowly began to bounce back. She took off the storage sack tied around Amber's neck and pulled out many powders and clean cotton cloths.

"Where did all these come from?" Lu Ye asked curiously while eating grilled meat.

"Sister Hua Ci gave them," Yiyi explained. "She said if you get hurt again, these medicines can be applied externally and taken internally."

As for the clean cotton cloths, they were undoubtedly meant to dress wounds.

Looking at these items, Lu Ye felt a mix of emotions. Although Hua Ci was a bit greedy and her words could be cutting, she was undeniably a warm-hearted person.

Knowing that Lu Ye often got injured in fights, she had prepared these things for him.

"Really..." Lu Ye smirked; she could've just given these things to him when saying goodbye yesterday, yet she said nothing.

"Lu Ye, Lu Ye, did Sister Hua Ci fall for you?" Yiyi asked curiously, her face full of intrigue, while Amber, who was gnawing on a chunk of meat, also raised its head, staring intently with its tiger eyes ablaze.

"Nonsense, child." Lu Ye put the items away. He didn't think he had such charm that a few simple encounters could bewitch such a woman.

Hua Ci had healed many people; to her, he was ultimately just a somewhat wealthy patient.

But for Lu Ye, her two life-saving favors were something he needed to remember in his heart.

The Independent Wanderers Society was actually a pretty good place. If Lu Ye didn't need to go to the Righteous Blood Sect's base, staying there would have been a great choice.

Continuing his cultivation, Yiyi disappeared somewhere for a while and came back acting sneaky and stealthy.

They resumed their journey at dawn, and occasionally, Yiyi would vanish without a trace, sometimes even taking the storage sack Lu Ye gave her. When Lu Ye asked her what she was up to, she just smiled mysteriously and refused to tell him!

She and Amber had a special connection; as long as they weren't too far apart, they could sense each other, so Lu Ye wasn't worried about her getting lost.

"Yiyi, what's your last name?" Lu Ye asked, while on the back of the tiger, as Yiyi finally settled down for a while.

"I don't remember," Yiyi shook her head. There was a lot she remembered, but also much she had forgotten.

"I see..." Lu Ye thought for a moment, "Everyone should have a last name. How about you take mine?"

"Take your last name?" Yiyi tilted her head, thought about it, and then lit up with a smile: "Okay! You're called Lu Yiye, and I'll be called Lu Yiyi. It sounds like we're family!"

Suddenly, she jumped onto Amber's head, and facing the oncoming wind, she put her hands around her mouth and shouted: "My name is Lu Yiyi!"

In the open wilderness, her voice carried far and wide...

Chapter 113 Spirit Stream Level 4

Pill energy dissolved, and spirit force flowed, gradually filling up the 47th orifice.

On the second night after leaving Mount Ying, Lu Ye met the requirements to ascend to the Level 4 realm.

However, to advance to the Level 4 realm, he still had to switch his Cultivation Technique.

Owing to his frequent switches between the Bestial Gluttony Feast and the Golden Cicada Carefree Method, such a task was not difficult for him. Under Lu Ye's control, the rapidly flowing spirit force within his body swiftly calmed down, and the connections between the major spiritual orifices were cut off.

He then channeled his spirit force according to the route prescribed by the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique, starting from the Root Spiritual Orifice, passing through the 1st Spiritual Orifice, the 2nd Spiritual Orifice, all the way to the 9th Spiritual Orifice.

Perhaps because it was his first time activating the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique, the Minor Circumambulation cycle ran very slowly. Lu Ye maintained his focus, and the spirit force that flowed like a stream within the 9 Major Spiritual Orifices picked up speed and eventually circulated autonomously.

The first Minor Circumambulation system was formed.

He then stimulated the 10th orifice, pouring spirit force into the 11th through 18th orifices, following the same method.

A moment later, the second Minor Circumambulation system was formed.

After another moment, the third Minor Circumambulation system began to operate.

Next came the fourth one. However, the jump from Spirit Stream Level 3 to Level 4 was a significant upgrade because the fourth Minor Circumambulation system encompassed as many as eighteen orifices.

Since it was his first time initiating such a system that included eighteen orifices, Lu Ye was a bit more cautious.

About half a cup of tea later, he shook slightly, and from where he sat at the center, a wave of energy swept in all directions, pressing down the nearby campfire.

Spirit Stream Level 4 attained!

Lu Ye was pleased and silently sensed the changes within himself.

Compared to Level 3, Level 4 indeed brought significant growth. The benefits of eighteen orifices were at least twice that of every previous level, and the spirit force he could summon in an instant had increased by nearly half. Naturally, the strength he could exert was now much greater.

Moreover, when compared to the Golden Cicada Carefree Method, the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique had many advantages.

One was an Earth-class technique, the other a Yellow Rank Technique, and the assistance they provided to cultivators was naturally different.

The most apparent change was the speed at which the spirit force flowed within the body. The speed of circulating spirit force with a Yellow Rank Technique was significantly lower than with an Earth-class technique, with the latter being at least 20% faster!

This change, when reflected on the cultivators, could also enhance their strength.

He stood up, drew his long knife, and poured his own spirit force into it. In a flash, a red glow appeared on the side of the blade as if a layer of burning flames clung to the knife. Enhanced by Sharpness spirit runes, such a weapon would have an explosive lethality.

Lu Ye raised his eyebrows and casually swung the knife, casting a flower pattern. Under the night sky, the knife danced like a fire dragon.

With a slash, a short burst of air-breaking sound was heard.

Ascending to Level 4 had indeed brought a substantial increase in strength, much more than any previous advancements. No wonder people say Level 4 and Level 7 are the dividing lines.

If he possessed this level of cultivation during his fight with Senior Brother Zhou of Cloudy Mountain, he was confident he could've killed him with little cost.

After retracting his spirit force, he sheathed the knife and sat down again. He took out the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique to study. The Earth-class technique came with several spells, which Lu Ye had already seen before. However, the requirements to practice those spells were somewhat high; even the least demanding spell required a Level 4 cultivation as a foundation.

Previously, Lu Ye could not cultivate them, but now, he finally had the qualifications.

Honestly, during the fierce battle with Luo Ji, Lu Ye envied his ability to cast magic and spells. In combat, a low-level cultivator who knows magic and spells often easily gains the upper hand.

On the other hand, Lu Ye could only face the magic and spells thrown at him head-on. If it had not been for the Defense Spirit Runes, he would have been played to death by Luo Ji long ago.

He used to have some Spirit Talismans that could make up for his shortcomings in combat methods, but now there were only a few Spirit Talismans left in Lu Ye's hands. The ones for attacking had long been exhausted, and if he could master a spell, he didn't dare say how much his strength could improve, but at least he would have one more means of combat against enemies.

However, he didn't rush to explore that spell. He had never dealt with such things before and was afraid that he might not understand it at a glance. It wouldn't be too late to study it slowly when he had time.

Right now, he was only exploring the spiritual orifices needed to be opened for the Level 5 realm.

To cultivate to the Level 5 realm, one needs to open at least sixty-three orifices, eighteen more than the Level 4 realm.

However, since Lu Ye had previously opened two extra orifices that were included in the route of conducting energy for the Level 5 realm, he only needed to open sixteen more orifices to advance to the Level 5 realm.

Given his current speed of cultivation, as long as he had enough energy and no disturbances, he estimated it would take just over a month.

Reflecting on the time the sect master threw him into the Spirit Stream battlefield, he was just a junior cultivator who had opened his 3rd orifice. He entered this place completely confused, treading on thin ice, where a pack of wolves could trap him in a tree.

In the blink of an eye, four months had passed.

Although his cultivation was still not high, the initial hardships were behind him. Moreover, his experiences over these few months could be described as rich and colorful.

He had participated in major battles between two sects, been hunted by cultivators far stronger than himself, competed with disciples who had cultivated Heaven Rank techniques from top forces, and fought life-and-death struggles with many who were stronger and had higher cultivation levels than him...

Thinking like this, Lu Ye felt that his past four months had been truly fraught with hardship, and he couldn't help but shed tears of bitterness for himself.

Still, it was all in the past. He had been powerless due to his low cultivation before, but now as a cultivator at the Level 4 realm, he wasn't bold enough to say he could walk sideways in the outer circle of the battlefield, but at least his ability to protect himself had greatly improved.

In the outer circle, most cultivators had a lower cultivation level than him, so he was no longer at the very bottom. Now, he could stand high and look down on others.

He channeled his spirit force and looked down to check his battlefield imprint.

The recorded information was as simple as ever.

Name: Lu Ye

Identity: Disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect.

Cultivation: 47 orifices opened.

Location: Spirit Stream battlefield.

Merit: One hundred seventy-four.

When he left the Sky-Splitting Gorge, he remembered his merit was one hundred forty-two points. However, he had added thirty-two points for killing five individuals from Cloudy Mountain, and after recalculating using the method he had figured out on his own, he found the numbers matched up. Continue your adventure at empire

It seemed that to gain more merit, he still needed to defeat enemies above his realm.

Lu Ye had a vague feeling that merit would be of great importance in the future!

It was time for sword practice. Lu Ye took off his shirt, revealing his robust upper body covered in fierce and crisscrossing scars. Though the injuries had healed, the scars remained. Hua Ci still lacked the ability to completely eliminate those scars.

Stroke by stroke, he chopped with utmost seriousness. Two Shichen later, drenched in sweat, Lu Ye finally stopped his sword practice, walked to the side, took out his water flask to clean himself, and returned to sit by the campfire, meditating on his cultivation.

Currently at Level 4 realm, he needed to understand his current cultivation efficiency and how many elixir pills it would take to open another orifice.

Chapter 114 Magic and Spells

One night had passed, and Lu Ye had finished his cultivation.

As he had thought, after his cultivation increased, the number of elixir pills needed to open an orifice also increased. Now at Spirit Stream Level 4, to open an orifice would consume about eighteen pills. Of course, with the assistance of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, the consumption was somewhat reduced.

As for efficiency, there was no significant change.

With the assistance of the Bestial Gluttony Feast Technique, his speed in refining elixir pills had always been much faster than ordinary people.

He had anticipated the increased consumption of elixir pills, as it had increased significantly when he last opened his 46th and 47th orifices.

Riding Amber and continuing on the road, with Yiyi's company, he didn't feel lonely. However, since leaving Mount Ying, she had become mysterious, not only disappearing suddenly during their travels but also occasionally leaving during the night rests.

Lu Ye had asked her but didn't get an answer, and so he didn't ask further.

It wasn't until they passed through a marketplace one day that Yiyi suddenly handed her storage sack to Lu Ye.

"Take these and sell them."

"What's inside?" Lu Ye, puzzled, took the storage sack and opened it to find many strange plants, herbs, and various roots and fruits inside. Stay connected through empire

These are medicinal ingredients? Lu Ye suddenly understood what Yiyi had been doing.

She had been disappearing now and then to collect herbs.

"How do you know about these?" Lu Ye asked curiously, as Yiyi had never had this skill before.

Yiyi proudly said, "Sister Hua Ci taught me, and Spirit Jade also taught me a lot." She explained, "Amber can't always depend on you for its sustenance. It's eating more and more, so I thought to learn some medical knowledge from Sister Hua Ci and Spirit Jade. I don't know how many Spirit Stones these can be sold for, but you'll know once you sell them."

The storage sack held many kinds of herbs in large quantities. However, because Yiyi was a beginner, the handling was rough and all types of herbs were jumbled together, roughly twenty to thirty portions in total.

Lu Ye smiled and said, "Then I'll go sell them."

"Okay," Yiyi nodded, retreating back into Amber.

In the marketplace, many cultivators were accompanied by demon beasts, but for low-level cultivators, they could not tame beasts that were too powerful. Thus, these beasts were mostly used for transportation, and nearly every one of them had a beast-taming collar around its neck.

Most demon beasts looked fierce and sinister. Amber's divine appearance was rare, so the moment Lu Ye appeared in the marketplace, he attracted the attention of many cultivators.

Some even came to ask if Lu Ye was selling Amber, which he, of course, refused.

After buying plenty of food and a few sets of clothes in the marketplace, Lu Ye then took Amber to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

After about half a cup of tea's time, they walked out and strolled away from the marketplace.

Riding on Amber's back, Lu Ye laughed and said, "Not bad, sold for four Spirit Stones."

Yiyi remained silent and did not surface, Four Spirit Stones, not even enough for Amber's daily consumption... This creature was now eating more and more, almost matching the consumption of Lu Ye's cultivation, yet its growth was incredibly obvious.

Lu Ye then advised, "The harvest is really not bad. It's like this for independent cultivators, accumulating bit by bit. Four Spirit Stones can buy four Spirit-Nurturing Pills. Moreover, this is just the beginning. Once you get familiar, it will gradually improve."

Yiyi still did not speak, clearly somewhat withdrawn. She had thought that the medicinal herbs she had painstakingly gathered these past few days would fetch a good price, but the outcome had greatly disappointed her.

Seeing that persuasion was futile, Lu Ye did not say more. Greater expectations lead to greater disappointments. It was normal for the young girl to be a bit emotional.

While popping Spirit-Nurturing Pills into his mouth and allowing the Bestial Gluttony Feast to refine them, Lu Ye took out the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique and studied the magic and spells within it.

He had never studied magic and spells before, and now there was no one to guide him; he had to rely on himself to figure everything out.

Once he delved into his studies, he unwittingly entered a state of forgetting himself, as spirit force slowly surged through his body.

"I will find more and better medicinal herbs in the future!" After half a day, Yiyi suddenly spoke up and sat in front of Lu Ye, declaring solemnly!

Lu Ye looked up at her and encouraged with a smile, "I'm really looking forward to it."

Yiyi clenched her tiny fists, determined, "I'm going to find them now!" With those words, she jumped down from the tiger's back and disappeared in a flash.

Lu Ye shook his head and did not try to dissuade her. An attempt to dissuade her at this time would only backfire. Yiyi had the intention to subsidize Amber's consumption which was good, and Lu Ye let her be.

On the tiger's back, Lu Ye continued to study the magic and spells while driving his spirit force.

The first spell attached to the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique required a minimum cultivation of Level 4. The requirement for the second spell was even higher, needing Level 7, and the last one required cultivating the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique to Great Perfection, meaning opening all 180 orifices.

The latter two spells were too far out of reach for Lu Ye at the moment, so he was studying the first spell, called Fire Phoenix.

The more he studied, the more astonished he became, for casting spells had many similarities to constructing spirit runes.

Both required using one's own spirit force to form specific patterns. These patterns formed a closed loop in which spirit force flowed in a specific sequence, thus unleashing various miraculous effects.

Were magic and spells also a way of displaying spirit runes? Lu Ye couldn't help but wonder.

Currently alone, there was no one to resolve his doubts, so he had to continue his studies in silence.

Fortunately, he had received three spirit runes from the Talent Tree. Each time he acquired those runes, a massive amount of complex information would merge into his mind, allowing him to thoroughly master the spirit rune.

However, because he had never systematically studied them, although Lu Ye could easily activate those three spirit runes and even use them in combat, he still remained in a state where he knew what they did, but not why they worked that way.

It was like cooking a dish. As a chef, Lu Ye was merely adding various seasonings to the dish based on the information he received. The dishes he prepared were delicious indeed.

But a chef with rich cooking experience knew when to add which seasonings, how much to add, and how to control the heat, making the dish undoubtedly more delicious.

However, it was also because of the knowledge of those three spirit runes he had previously acquired that after studying, Lu Ye found that casting Fire Phoenix seemed not to be very difficult.

Chapter 115 - Fire Phoenix?

"Wow, what a beautiful quail!"

Under the night sky, Yiyi exclaimed as she gazed at the plump bird in front of her, its body faintly radiating a pale red light intermingled with traces of light gold.

If it hadn't been a manifestation of Lu Ye's spirit force, she would probably have picked it up.

Lu Ye felt a vein pop on his forehead and corrected her, "What do you mean a quail, it's a Fire Phoenix! Say it with me, Fire! Phoenix!"

Yiyi stared at him with a look that said this is clearly a quail, don't treat me as if I'm blind ...

Amber also came over, lowered her head to sniff at the plump bird fluttering its wings in mid-air, found that not only was it inedible, but it seemed quite dangerous, so she leapt away with a tiger's jump.

Lu Ye felt insulted ...

He had clearly studied the Fire Phoenix Technique, but how did he end up with this thing?

Checking the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique, his casting methods and the activation of his spirit force should have been correct, but where did it go wrong? A perfectly good Fire Phoenix Technique had turned into a Fire Quail Technique.

Was this the outcome of his whole day of diligent study? Lu Ye found it somewhat amusing yet sad.

Among all the techniques he mastered, activating Defense Spirit Runes consumed the most spirit force, Sharpness was next, and Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes was minimal.

The consumption of the Fire Phoenix Technique was between Defense and Sharpness.

After a whole day of research and more than a dozen attempts, he had finally succeeded, but the result was hard for him to accept.

It was like a new father, suddenly finding his newborn incredibly ugly, wishing he could stuff it back into the womb for a remake.

However, the result was as it was, and whether he accepted it or not, he couldn't change it.

Could he bring this creature out to face an enemy? He feared that releasing it wouldn't burn the enemy to death but would have the enemy dying of laughter.

"Fine, this is a Fire Phoenix!" Yiyi, seeing Lu Ye looking massively upset, said against her better judgment.

"This is a quail ..." Lu Ye raised his hand, and the quail dissipated in mid-air.

He walked to the side, took off his shirt, and began practicing saber skills.

Indeed, magic and spells are all garbage; only saber skills are truly his calling.

If ever I delve into magic and spells again, may I be a lump of dung! he vowed to himself silently.

...

After ten hasty days, a snow-white big tiger burst into a region filled with mountain peaks. Lu Ye sat on the tiger's back, travel-worn.

It had been over four months since he left from Qingyun Mountain, but the actual time spent traveling was only a little more than half of that; he had often been delayed for various reasons. He was in a rush to reach the headquarters of the Righteous Blood Sect, so since leaving Mount Ying, he hadn't stopped at all.

Although the headquarters of the Righteous Blood Sect was still very far away, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and it would eventually be completed.

According to the ten-part map, this area was called Hundred Peaks Mountain, aptly named for its exactly one hundred peaks of varying sizes, with three factions residing nearby.

Lu Ye preferred not to interact too much with those from sects to avoid accidentally revealing his identity, so he planned to pass through Hundred Peaks Mountain as he had done on his journey thus far, rarely intersecting with cultivators.

Though the range of Hundred Peaks Mountain was vast, with Amber's speed, it should only take a few days to cross.

Yiyi was particularly fond of places like this because, amidst these natural settings, she could find many medicinal herbs. Ever since that day she faced an ordeal while selling herbs, she had become even more diligent.

At this moment, at the very heart of Hundred Peaks Mountain, a grand temple stood prominently, with numerous cultivators constantly entering and exiting.

In the center of the grand temple, a huge Shadow Moon Disc was positioned right in the middle, displaying the entire terrain and topography of Hundred Peaks Mountain in a circular shape.

Not only that, but it could also monitor the movements of the cultivators within Hundred Peaks Mountain and feedback in an intuitive manner.

On this Shadow Moon Disc, three different colors of lights were continuously flickering.

The first was blue, the second was black, and the third was red.

Each point of light represented a cultivator, and the richer the light, the higher the cultivator's cultivation. The three colors represented three sects.

These were the three factions scattered around the outer circle of Hundred Peaks Mountain.

One belonged to the Haotian Alliance faction, Qing Yu Mountain.

The other two belonged to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge faction, Tailuo Sect and the Qin family, respectively, the latter being a family faction.

Throughout the Nine Provinces, it was rare for family factions to grow large due to many limitations in developing a family.

Of course, there are exceptions, and there are still a few families in Nine Provinces with profound backgrounds.

And within the levels between 8th and 9th grades, there are many family factions.

Lu Ye had encountered Yu Xiaodie and the Liu brothers in Evil Moon Valley; they were actually from family backgrounds, but because they were too weak and had no rank, the people of Evil Moon Valley had easily overpowered them with no resistance.

Although the Qin family was also considered a 9th grade faction, it was still slightly inferior compared to a true 9th grade sect. Fortunately, they had the nearby Tailuo Sect for mutual support, so their days in the Spirit Stream battlefield were not too harsh.

Currently, all three factions were gathered at Hundred Peaks Mountain for an event called the Dragon Spring Meet.

This tradition had continued for over a hundred years, held every three years.

It originated from a hidden Dragon Spring beneath the temple, which contained water with miraculous properties. The wellspring would emit spirit mist when the water erupted, and cultivators could enter it to temper their physical bodies and dissolve pill poison.

For low-level cultivators, the stronger their physique, the better, especially for those who intended to follow the path of physique cultivation; Dragon Spring could lay an excellent foundation for their cultivation.

There were many rare resources in the Spirit Stream battlefield, such as minerals, spirit fruits unique to the battlefield and unattainable in the rest of Nine Provinces; many factions had waged endless wars over these resources, creating deep-seated enmities.

For outer circle factions like Qing Yu Mountain, Tailuo Sect, and the Qin family, Dragon Spring was undeniably a vital resource.

When Dragon Spring was first discovered, there was no Qin family, just conflict between Tailuo Sect and Qing Yu Mountain, which always resulted in many deaths. However, as Qing Yu Mountain had a more robust foundation, they emerged victorious each time.

It was only fifty years ago that the Qin family set up a base nearby and joined the competition. As natural allies within the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge faction, the Qin family and Tailuo Sect together outnumbered Qing Yu Mountain.

Before this, even when Qing Yu Mountain won, the power of Dragon Spring was not fully utilized as the number of cultivators in a sect was limited. After the cultivators from Qing Yu Mountain left, those from Tailuo Sect could still partake in the leftover benefits, albeit in a somewhat pitiful manner, but better than nothing. Experience more on empire

But now, when Tailuo Sect and the Qin family won, the situation was different.

Having more cultivators combined than one faction, the power of Dragon Spring, which could only accumulate so much every three years, would be completely utilized by these two factions; afterward, the wellspring would become no different from ordinary water, with not a trace of its body-tempering effects left.

After recurrent instances of this situation, Qing Yu Mountain flipped the table.

Chapter 116 Dragon Spring Meet

...

Thirty years ago, at a Dragon Spring Meet, Mount Qingyu directly sought the intervention of a 6th grade sect, leading to a resounding defeat for Tailuo Sect and the Qin family.

Find more adventures on empire

While Mount Qingyu had allies, so did Tailuo Sect and the Qin family.

With Mount Qingyu breaking the rules first, Tailuo Sect and the Qin family were not to be outdone. In the subsequent Dragon Spring Meets, allies from all sides took turns entering the fray, burying countless cultivator's bones beneath Hundred Peaks Mountain.

After three to five such encounters, the three parties realized that such strife was detrimental to all, not to mention the heavy losses suffered by the defeated side. Even the victorious party had to distribute a large share of their right to enter Dragon Spring, with less than 20% remaining for themselves.

Furthermore, such large-scale conflicts easily led to chaos and resulted in the deaths of a great many cultivators. The losses suffered by the three parties during those Dragon Spring Meets were far greater than before.

If this continued, it was feared that the three families might even face the discontinuation of their lineages.

Eventually, led by Tailuo Sect, the high-level cultivators from the three powers discussed the issue and, under the witness of Heaven's Augury, they signed a contract.

That was that from then on, no one would seek external allies for the battle. However, considering Mount Qingyu was up against two, they were permitted to gather help nearby. Additionally, they set a limitation on the cultivation of the cultivators participating in the Dragon Spring Meet and granted Mount Qingyu some other concessions.

This was not a sign of weakness from Tailuo Sect and the Qin family. Both knew that only by doing so could they ensure the continuity of their own disciples. Otherwise, a large-scale chaos every three years would result in an unpredictable number of deaths.

Clearly, Mount Qingyu was sensible, and with the various agreements signed, all parties were satisfied.

Since fifteen years ago, the Dragon Spring Meet had taken on the form it has today.

As for the helpers that Mount Qingyu sought, they naturally consisted mainly of independent cultivators from the vicinity. For this purpose, Mount Qingyu offered very generous conditions, attracting countless independent cultivators like moths to a flame.

In the previous Dragon Spring Meets, Mount Qingyu had occupied the advantage. While it could not be said that they won a complete victory, at the very least, they took the lion's share when it came to division of the final spots.

However, just a few days into the current Dragon Spring Meet, Mount Qingyu had suffered heavy losses, with their peaks being taken one after another.

Hundred Peaks Mountain comprises precisely a hundred peaks, and the three powers had agreed in the initial contract on a method for distributing the quota for entry into Dragon Spring.

That was to vie for ownership of these hundred peaks!

Among the terms of the contract signed back then, there was a provision granting Mount Qingyu certain concessions, which meant that out of the hundred peaks, Mount Qingyu initially occupied forty. Of the remaining sixty-odd, Tailuo Sect had thirty-five and the Qin family twenty-five.

Put another way, if this situation were to continue until the end of the Dragon Spring Meet, then Mount Qingyu would take forty percent of the slots to enter Dragon Spring—and they would be the first to go in.

Tailuo Sect would take thirty-five percent, going in second.

The Qin family would get the last twenty-five percent.

Though this allocation was not perfect, all parties were reasonably satisfied.

But since it was a competition, it was unlikely that the Dragon Spring Meet would maintain this status quo until the end. Hence, the battle for the peaks began three days ago.

Now, of the hundred peaks, Mount Qingyu holds thirty-five, Tailuo Sect forty, and the Qin family's twenty-five remains unchanged. Mainly, it is because the Qin family had taken little action in these initial days, with the battles occurring mostly between Mount Qingyu and Tailuo Sect.

...

In the great hall, three people stood around the Shadow Moon Disc in a triangular formation, each corresponding to one of the three colored light points within the disc.

Representing Mount Qingyu was Tang Wu, a man of around thirty, with a commanding presence and a physique that gave off an immovable, mountainous aura. His blood Qi was extremely robust.

The Tailuo Sect was represented by a bewitchingly attractive woman named Han Zheyue, who dressed provocatively and sat casually in a Taishi Chair, her long legs propped carelessly upon the Shadow Moon Disc. Her delicate and flawless feet were painted with deep red nail polish, contrasting sharply against her pale skin, invoking wild fantasies.

The slit of her dress, running up to the top of her thighs, offered little in the way of modesty, drawing the frequent glances of passing disciples from all three clans. Yet she appeared completely indifferent to their attention.

Behind her stood a fair-complexioned young man, gently massaging her shoulders.

The representative from the Qin family was Qin Wanli, a slender man armed with a crescent-shaped saber at his waist. His gaze would drift over to Han Zheyue from time to time, and occasionally, when their eyes met, she would throw a flirtatious look his way, leaving Qin Wanli giggling foolishly.

All three were of the Spirit Stream Level 9 in cultivation. Usually, they would be honing their skills within the Core Circle of the battlefield, but they had come back specifically to preside over the Dragon Spring Meet.

Even though the contract witnessed by Heaven's Augury prohibited breaking the agreement, there were many loopholes to exploit, so at the start of each Dragon Spring Meet, each faction would send a Level 9 back to oversee the proceedings.

It was rare for those from the outer circle to see such individuals. Xuanmen and Nine Stars Sect also had Level 9 cultivators, but usually, only a Level 7 and Level 6 would preside over the sect's territory.

Among the three, Tang Wu had a stern expression, exuding an unwelcoming vibe, while Han Zheyue was full of seductive charm. As for Qin Wanli, he seemed rather harmless.

"Keep your filthy paws to yourself, or I won't mind chopping them off!" Tang Wu glanced at Han Zheyue and said in a cold tone.

Han Zheyue pursed her lips and smiled, "What, can't handle the play? Going to flip the table again like you did thirty years ago?" Seeing Tang Wu in a bad mood naturally delighted her, and as adversaries, there was no need to put on a pleasant face for each other.

However, under Tang Wu's piercing gaze, she eventually brought her feet back down, turned to Qin Wanli, and said, "Let's join forces and kill this guy!"

Qin Wanli continued to give a foolish smile, "Senior Sister Han is joking; I'm nowhere near that capable."

"Coward!" Han Zheyue pouted, looking somewhat bored and annoyed.

Moments later, someone approached Tang Wu and whispered something to him, to which Tang Wu slightly nodded.

After that person withdrew, Tang Wu turned to Han Zheyue, "Your Tailuo Sect certainly knows how to hide your cards well, willing to let such a large group of disciples be raised by other sects. Aren't you afraid they'll grow too accustomed to others?"

All three powers operated in the same region and were aware of each other's capabilities, so Tang Wu had been wondering where the problem lay. How come Mount Qingyu had suffered such a loss just a few days into the battle?

Only now did he receive accurate information.

Previously, the Tailuo Sect had recruited a group of disciples with exceptional talent but didn't keep them within their own domain. Instead, they allowed them to cultivate within friendly forces, until suddenly they returned to participate in the Dragon Spring Meet, catching Mount Qingyu off guard.

These cultivators now possessed quite impressive cultivation, with several at the Level 5 realm.

It's important to note that the cultivation allowed for the Dragon Spring Meet was limited to between Level 2 and Level 5 realms.

This was because Level 1 cultivators lacked extensive combat experience and participating in such contention often led to their deaths, while those at Level 6 risked accidentally killing lower-level cultivators, resulting in significant deductions of merit – a loss no cultivator could afford.

This rule also aimed to prevent unnecessary casualties by setting limitations on the participants' cultivation levels.

In essence, the highest level of cultivation currently at Hundred Peaks Mountain was at the Level 5 realm. Originally, Mount Qingyu had an absolute advantage with their Level 5 cultivators, but Tailuo Sect's sudden increase in numbers disrupted this balance, which directly led to Mount Qingyu's defeat.

Chapter 117 Lei Ming?

This is related to Mount Qingyu having occupied the highest number of peaks in the early stages, and during the early stages of the Dragon Spring Meet, having a greater number of occupied peaks isn't necessarily a good thing. As a result, Mount Qingyu had to spread out its forces to govern these peaks.

Now, having lost ten peaks in succession, the defensive force of Mount Qingyu has become more concentrated, which made it very difficult for the Tailuo Sect to make any progress.

Moreover, not many people from Mount Qingyu actually died, as the cultivators originally governing those peaks chose not to engage in a tough fight upon detecting the strength of the enemy, preserving a significant portion of their power.

The current disadvantage is only temporary and cannot determine the final outcome.

After several days of coping, it was clear that Mount Qingyu was about to counterattack. On the terrain map projected by the Shadow Moon Disc, several peaks where blue light spots intersected with black ones had erupted into fierce battles. The cultivators of both sides fought relentlessly, and from time to time, light spots would be extinguished.

The blue light spots represented the cultivators from Mount Qingyu, while the black represented the Tailuo Sect, and as for the red, they indicated the Qin family.

Tang Wu and two others all focused their attention on the confrontational area, judging the situation's advantage or disadvantage from the remaining number of light spots. Gradually, Han Zheyue's expression turned grim as she could see that the Tailuo Sect was clearly losing ground in this clash.

Half a shichen later, the result was out—Mount Qingyu had recaptured two peaks!

Han Zheyue immediately felt a bit displeased and snorted coldly, "A bunch of trash!"

Tang Wu still stood there, immovable as a mountain, neither pleased nor sorrowful.

"An independent cultivator has broken in," Qin Wanli suddenly spoke up.

Tang Wu and Han Zheyue turned their heads to look and immediately saw a new white light spot on the Shadow Moon Disc, appearing at the edge.

"Spirit Stream Level 4..." Han Zheyue immediately discerned the cultivation of the other party from the brightness of the white light spot, and her lips curled into a smirk, "This fellow really has rotten luck."

The reason for her comment was that the white light spot appeared within the Tailuo Sect's territory. That area was covered with peaks occupied by the Tailuo Sect, and each peak was guarded by at least five or six black light spots.

A cultivator at Level 4 was not considered weak in this area, but was definitely not among the strongest, as any cultivator at Level 5 could deal with them easily.

The range of Hundred Peaks Mountain was vast, and during the period of the Dragon Spring Meet, it was impossible for the three factions to waste energy sealing off the entire Hundred Peaks Mountain. Also, the nearby independent cultivators were all aware that the Dragon Spring Meet was taking place, and apart from those summoned by Mount Qingyu, no one would rashly intrude.

However, there are always some exceptions. During the various Dragon Spring Meets, it wasn't that no independent cultivator had accidentally stumbled into Hundred Peaks Mountain, and most of those who did didn't meet a good end.

If they broke in from the Mount Qingyu side, there was a chance they could be recruited under its banner.

But if they intruded from the Tailuo Sect or Qin family's territory... well, tough luck.

Because of the previous agreements, Mount Qingyu could recruit these outsiders to help, but the Tailuo Sect and the Qin family could only rely on their own power to prevent future problems. The Tailuo Sect and the Qin family would not allow outsiders to roam free in Hundred Peaks Mountain.

"Which side do you think he's from?" Han Zheyue looked at the white light spot with interest. As a Level 9 cultivator who had to reluctantly return to preside over the Dragon Spring Meet, it was a rather boring affair; she couldn't kill these little guys, nor could she fight them. She had to find some entertainment for herself.

Qin Wanli laughed, "Whatever faction Senior Sister Han says he's from, that's the faction he's from."

That was as good as saying nothing.

"What about you, Tang Wu?" Han Zheyue looked up at Tang Wu.

Tang Wu completely ignored her, causing Han Zheyue to pout, "Stiff as a post!" She turned her head to Qin Wanli, "Want to make a bet?"

Qin Wanli replied, "It's rare for Senior Sister Han to be in such a playful mood, I will certainly accompany you."

"Two hundred merits!" Han Zheyue immediately became excited.

"Cough, cough..." Qin Wanli suddenly started coughing violently, "Small bets make good fun, small bets make good fun."

After he spoke, he didn't give Han Zheyue a chance to reply and said directly, "I bet twenty points of merit that this person is from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge!"

Han Zheyue snorted dismissively, her interest waning, "So boring!" She reclined backwards, arms raised high, sprawling in a 'big' character shape on the Taishi Chair, revealing more than intended, her posture inciting wandering thoughts, completely lacking the demeanor of a Level 9 cultivator.

"Two hundred merit points, I bet he's from the Haotian Alliance!" Tang Wu, who had been silent all along, suddenly spoke up.

Han Zheyue sprang to her feet, looked at Tang Wu, and began to chuckle with pursed lips, "Alright, I'll take you up on that bet!"

"Heaven's Augury bears witness!"

"Heaven's Augury bears witness!"

In an instant, all three pairs of eyes turned to look at the white speck of light, watching as it sped toward the nearest peak with incredible velocity.

On the back of Amber, Lu Ye furrowed his eyebrows, unsure if it was just his imagination, but ever since a moment ago, he had the feeling that someone was spying on him; yet, when he carefully searched, he found nothing.

This made him more cautious, and he even called back Yiyi, who had been picking herbs nearby.

They continued onward without incident until they climbed the nearby peak, where Amber suddenly stopped.

Sitting atop Amber, Lu Ye's right hand rested on the hilt of his knife, his spirit force quietly surging within him as Amber crouched low and began to growl softly.

There was an ambush.

Lu Ye keenly sensed this, and he had already walked into someone else's trap.

He didn't know who was lying in ambush here, why they were ambushed in this place, or even the cultivation levels of those people. The situation was very unfavorable for him.

A strong wind swept across the mountain top, rustling the leaves. Suddenly, a voice sounded not far away: "Flash of lightning!"

Lu Ye turned his head toward the voice and saw a young man sitting on the trunk of a large tree. The young man was quietly watching him, and it was he who had spoken.

As the spirit force was activated, Lu Ye could see the spirit light around the figure.

A Level 4 realm!

He frowned slightly and tentatively said, "Lei Ming?"

The sound of a sharp whistle came rushing over, and Lu Ye quickly ducked, narrowly avoiding two lethal arrows that flew by on each side of his head, taking a few strands of his hair with them.

The assailant's attack had come without any warning; if it had not been for Lu Ye's experiences in life-and-death battles over the past days, he would not have been able to dodge this blow.

He had clearly responded incorrectly to the other party's signal, and the cultivator lying in ambush was extremely decisive, striking the moment the signal was misread.

Amber was already dashing to the left while Lu Ye stepped on her back and leaped up, blocking an arrow aimed at his face in mid-air, his gaze locked onto the young man who had spoken earlier.

As the attacker launched his assault, he had leapt down from the tree trunk, a longsword flickering in his hand as he charged at Lu Ye.

Find adventures on empire

Lu Ye had barely touched the ground when his opponent was already upon him, the longsword striking like a spirit snake, aiming directly for his heart.

Indeed, a single misunderstanding was all it took for them to strike with lethal intent.

Chapter 118 What is this?

Facing this fierce strike, Lu Ye did not dodge or evade, but fiercely struck down at the youth!

A fiery red light flashed over the blade, making it seem as if the long saber were ablaze.

Startled by Lu Ye's ferocity, the youth was taken aback and hurriedly changed his move to block with his sword.

With a clang, at the moment the saber met the sword, the longsword nearly flew out of his hands, and the youth was forced to retreat repeatedly by the force of the blow.

The shock in his eyes intensified, but before he could make another move, Lu Ye's long saber was already coming down on him like a torrential rainstorm.

Since leaving Qingyun Mountain, as long as conditions allowed, Lu Ye had insisted on practicing his saber skills for over four hours daily. Although such practice might not allow him to master any profoundly mystical techniques, it did solidify his foundation greatly.

Moreover, with the experience accumulated from numerous fights over these days, Lu Ye was no longer the naive young man who had just left Qingyun Mountain.

He had gradually formed his own combat style which was fierce and aggressive, for he relied on Defense Spirit Runes. If the youth had not hastily changed his move to block the first strike, that hit could have split him in two.

The youth's caution had led him to walk a circle at death's door, but that was it...

The sound of clangs continued non-stop, with each strike forcing the youth to retreat three steps. Under the strong force, the webs of his hands started to split.

A wail tore through his heart. Where did this madman come from? Engaging in combat with such intense aggression. Moreover, despite being at the same Level 4 cultivation, his strength was far inferior to this madman's.

As the opponent wielded his saber, the blood Qi energy around his body surged, giving him the illusion that the man in front of him was like a ferocious beast that had broken out of its cage, ready to devour someone.

He caught sight of two junior brothers encircling from behind through the corner of his eye. If he could just hold on for 5 breaths, he could join forces with them to surround the enemy.

As he retreated, he reached into his storage sack, just managing to pull out a Spirit Talisman to use when he heard a crisp snap...

Shocked, the youth caught a glimpse from the corner of his eye of his longsword breaking in two. The broken blade flew off at an angle, followed immediately by a numb sensation spreading across his body, freezing him in place.

His vision began to tilt, and the last thing he saw was a half of a body that looked strikingly familiar.

Is that my body? The youth's consciousness faded.

As blood spurted out, a tiger's roar came from Amber on the right, followed by terrified shouts. On the left, there was the sound of something cutting through the air as another hidden enemy shot an arrow at Lu Ye.

However, this arrow missed its mark, likely because the youth's death had unsettled the ambusher's mind.

It wasn't just him whose mind was unsettled, but also the two cultivators who had rushed to a position not far behind Lu Ye.

The Tailuo Sect had a total of five cultivators stationed on this mountain peak: one Level 4, two Level 3, and two Level 2.

Such an arrangement wasn't very strong, but this was the rear of the Tailuo Sect, so there was no need for a powerful lineup. The cultivators from Qing Yu wouldn't be able to reach this place if the frontline peaks didn't fall, making it one of the safest positions.

The reason for stationing people here was just in case, a safeguard.

Yet, what was supposed to be an infallible arrangement was disrupted by Lu Ye's arrival.

The two Tailuo Sect cultivators who had run up behind Lu Ye now felt as if they were doused with cold water on a winter's day, chilling them to the core.

They watched in horror as their senior brother at Level 4 was cleaved in two by an unexpected visitor within a mere 5 breaths, their fright and panic skyrocketing instantly.

This caused them to suddenly stop their advance, now less than ten feet away from Lu Ye.

Lu Ye turned around, his longsword pointing diagonally at the ground, with fresh blood dripping from the blade.

He stomped his feet on the ground, creating a crater where he stood, and in a few steps, he reached the two terrified cultivators of the Tailuo Sect.

In the face of life and death, these two finally unleashed their potential and charged at Lu Ye together.

After a clanging exchange of blows, both Level 3 cultivators staggered backward, wide open to attack.

The gap in cultivation meant that, even together, they couldn't block Lu Ye's several strikes.

The longsword, imbued with spirit force, drew a fiery red arc in front of him, this time even omitting the Sharpness spirit runes.

Experience tales with empire

As screams rang out, the chests of the two struck opened up, a faint smell of charred flesh emanating from the wounds, one fell to the ground, the other staggered back.

Lu Ye stepped forward and stabbed the longsword into the heart of the cultivator who had fallen, without pausing for a moment, he drew his sword and slashed towards the other.

However, from the corner of his eye, he spotted an arrow shooting towards him, which he sliced in half with his sword.

Just as he was about to finish off the other still struggling Level 3 cultivator, the man had already fallen to the ground, Lu Ye's earlier strike had severed his heart...

An extremely miserable scream came from one side, Lu Ye turned his head and saw Amber biting the neck of a female cultivator, blood spurting from her mouth. The female cultivator, still clutching a bow, struggled under Amber but couldn't shake her in the least.

This female cultivator was only at Level 2, hiding in a tree shooting arrows at Lu Ye. Amber had headed straight here when she parted from Lu Ye. If it were only Amber, perhaps she would have had no way to deal with her since the woman was up in a tree, but with Yiyi, it was different.

Yiyi appeared right behind the female cultivator and pushed her down with force.

Having followed Lu Ye, Amber had enjoyed good food every day, consuming countless Spirit-Nurturing Pills, growing significantly in strength. Together with Yiyi, they easily subdued this Level 2 cultivator.

Ignoring the female cultivator, Lu Ye looked to the side.

There had been two who attacked him with arrows, one was bitten by Amber; there was still another.

But when Lu Ye looked that way, he saw that this fellow had already run more than a dozen yards away.

Lu Ye was about to chase with his sword but suddenly remembered something and raised his hand toward the man's back, where a fiery-red spirit force began to gather in his palm.

Pure spirit force formed a large fire quail, which flapped its wings and soared forward like an arrow released from its bow.

In the blink of an eye, the fire quail grazed the fleeing cultivator and smashed into a large tree, igniting flames.

It didn't hit...

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow, spirit force gathering again in his palm, this time slightly adjusting the direction.

The second fire quail flew out, hitting the man in the back with a booming explosion. As if struck by lightning, the man fell to the ground, his back scorched. He twitched a few times and then fell silent. The power of the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique infused in the spell was indeed impressive.

A small red light flew from there and landed in the palm of Lu Ye's hand.

Lu Ye looked around and frowned, "What's this all about?"

This battle had come out of nowhere; he had only mistaken the enemy's signals, and they had rushed to kill him without even asking which side he was on.

Since they were so ruthless, Lu Ye naturally didn't hold back, and only after he had finished them off did he confirm that these guys belonged to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp. It seemed he hadn't killed the wrong people.

Chapter 119 Encirclement and Interception

In the hall, three pairs of eyes watched as a white point met with five black points. In just twenty breaths of time, the five black points were extinguished one after another, leaving only the white point still blinking incessantly.

All three onlookers twitched at the sight. Han Zheyue hastily raised her hand to press her battlefield marking, sending out an urgent message. Soon, nearly ten black points emerged from nearby mountains and converged towards that area.

This woman was clearly infuriated, not knowing where someone from Level 4 had appeared from and taken a mountaintop behind the Tailuo Sect, which was a slap in the face.

Although it was unclear how that person had done it, being able to defeat five opponents in such a short time and kill them all indicated extraordinary capabilities.

But that was a mountain occupied by the Tailuo Sect, and it was easy to mobilize troops to besiege him.

It was very likely that he had already been wounded, and if he dared stay there for a moment longer, he would surely not be lucky!

Tang Wu looked up at her but did not intervene. There was no interfering in such matters, as everyone had a battlefield marking, making communication quite convenient, and with people constantly coming and going in the great hall, any news would continuously be spread outside.

The three of them from Level 9 were stationed there not only to ensure the seamless conduct of the Dragon Spring Meet but also to interfere and command it to a necessary extent.

Your journey continues on empire

However, it was still a pity, as the entrance of this Level 4 individual to Hundred Peaks Mountain was poorly timed. Had he entered from the territory of Mount Qingyu, he could have been an asset to Qing Yu, but since he chose to enter from the Tailuo Sect's territory, his prospects were likely grim.

The only way out for him was to immediately retreat. During the Dragon Spring Meet, the Tailuo Sect wouldn't have much energy to pursue him.

While Tang Wu thought this, the white point began to move again. Seeing the direction of the white point's movement, Tang Wu knew this person was probably doomed.

Han Zheyue even clenched her teeth and sneered, "Well, quite bold!"

Indeed, after killing five cultivators of the Tailuo Sect, the white point did not choose to retreat but instead burst deeper into Hundred Peaks Mountain.

Qin Wanli laughed beside them, "Who is this greenhorn who doesn't know that we three families are holding the Dragon Spring Meet here?"

Yet, Tang Wu simply extended his hand towards Han Zheyue, silently looking at her, the meaning quite clear.

"What? Did I lose? Who knows which faction this guy belongs to? He just killed a few disciples of my Tailuo Sect, who can prove that he is from the Haotian Alliance?" The mood of Han Zheyue was already sour, and her tone became much harsher.

Her words were not without reason. In the Spirit Stream battlefield, even if belonging to the same camp, it was possible to attack each other, and killing others could still earn merit.

Tang Wu then withdrew his hand and didn't press the matter further.

He had also harbored the same thought. After all, their previous wager had been made spontaneously, and everyone knew that enforcing such a bet was difficult unless there was a way to definitively prove the white point's faction allegiance.

On the mountain, Lu Ye finished gathering his spoils of war and once again mounted the big tiger to set off on his way. For him, the previous skirmish was merely a minor interlude on his journey and did not impact much.

But to be cautious, he still had Yiyi run ahead to scout. Yiyi's ability to appear and disappear unpredictably was perfect for this task.

Sitting on the tiger's back, Lu Ye tossed a Spirit-Nurturing Pill into his mouth for recovery. The battle had started abruptly and ended quickly, so his consumption of energy wasn't extensive. Had it not been for the last-minute use of two spells, his expenditure would have been even lesser.

As for Han Zheyue's assumption that he must have been injured... that was not the case!

However, traveling alone, maintaining a full reservoir of spirit force was undoubtedly a good habit.

Speaking of which, the Fire Phoenix Technique was indeed powerful; it had struck a Level 2 cultivator and instantly claimed his life. The only downside of using this spell was a sensation of shame; it required a strong inner resolve.

It seemed that he had to find some time to study thoroughly and try to change the outward appearance of that magic form into a normal one.

A short while later after a cup of tea, Yiyi returned and informed Lu Ye of some bad news: there were several cultivators on the mountain ahead and they were heading straight this way. It seemed that these people were part of the same group as the ones previously killed.

Lu Ye could confirm that the five cultivators who had been killed hadn't been able to send out any messages before they died because the battle had ended too quickly for them to do so.

But even so, the companions of the other party had still come charging this way. What was going on?

After briefly pondering, Lu Ye decided to retreat.

He didn't know the cultivation levels of the cultivators coming his way. Yiyi had only seen several people and hadn't dared get too close, so naturally, she couldn't determine their cultivation levels.

If their cultivation levels were not high, Lu Ye still had confidence in dealing with them. But if among those people were a few in the Level 5 realm or one or two in Level 6, that would be troublesome.

Of course, the likelihood of that was not high, given that this was just the outer circle of the battlefield.

Lu Ye just felt that something was off about this situation. Throughout his journey, he had encountered some cultivators, but never had he met them so frequently.

He simply suspected he might have entered a territory of a particular force. However, the ten-part map indicated that this area was a juncture of three different forces and didn't belong to any single one.

Yiyi went ahead to scout again, and soon a worse piece of news came. There were also people behind them—more than ten, encircling him from that direction.

Lu Ye immediately sensed trouble, now quite sure that he had truly entered the territory of some force, or else this large reaction would not have been provoked.

By now, retreating had become impossible. Lu Ye could faintly sense the spirit force fluctuations stirred by those people, indicating that they were already very close.

He patted Amber on her body and changed direction, fleeing from the flank.

There were people in front and behind. Surely they couldn't be on the sides too?

In the great hall, Han Zheyue glared hatefully at the white light moving up and down in the Hundred Peaks Mountain. Orders were sent out, and waves of black points departed from various mountains, encircling that white spot.

She had just received precise information that the intruding cultivator was riding a snow-white big tiger, which was why his speed was so fast. The cultivators from the Tailuo Sect chasing him from behind simply couldn't keep up.

However, she didn't need her own disciples to catch up with the enemy. With her continuous deployment, a tight encirclement slowly formed. With the white spot surrounded by densely packed black points from all directions, he would be attacked no matter which direction he broke out from. If they could stall him just for a moment, the others would swarm up and chop him into minced meat!

For such a thing to happen during the Dragon Spring Meet really infuriated Han Zheyue. If it weren't for the prohibition against fighting during the meet, she would have dearly liked to personally capture that fellow riding the White Tiger and have him experience every torture under heaven!

On the tiger's back, Lu Ye's expression was extremely grave. After two hours of fleeing, he found that not only had he not shaken off those unknown enemies, the situation had actually become increasingly dire.

Yiyi no longer went out to scout, because there were enemies on all sides!

He was somewhat baffled by how the enemy had managed to form this encirclement. Riding Amber, he had zigzagged left and right with no discernible pattern in his route, and yet he still ended up surrounded.

There was no escaping now; the only option left was to break out!

Lu Ye gently patted the tiger's back with one hand and rested the other on the hilt of his sword. As if sensing his intention, Amber roared and with a burst of speed, they broke forward.

Chapter 120 Breakout

After crossing a mountain pass, several figures suddenly launched an attack from ahead. The leader, radiating intense spirit light, was unmistakably in the Level 5 realm.

This person leaped across the tree trunks, moving as swiftly as the wind, and pounced toward Lu Ye from more than thirty feet away. With a long spear in hand thrusting forward like a dragon, he bellowed at the same time, "Die!"

On that long spear, spirit force surged powerfully, and the sharp whistling of it tearing through the air added to the spear's threatening might.

As the distance between them quickly closed, Amber found it too late to dodge. Lu Ye raised his hand towards the man, with spirit force swirling in his palm.

The next moment, a burst of red light appeared, and a plump bird flapping its wings hurtled towards the man.

"A magic cultivator?" The attacker was greatly surprised, not expecting such speedy spellcasting from someone with only a Level 4 cultivation. It was definitely a magic cultivator.

This Dao technique seemed somewhat similar to the Firebird Technique, but unlike the usual Firebird Technique, the firebird he conjured was somewhat... plump.

In mid-air and with no space to dodge, the man thrust his spear and hit the incoming plump bird squarely.

With a booming sound, spirit force exploded, and the burning air enveloped him. Lucky for him being in the Level 5 realm, he managed to invoke his protective spirit force just in time to emerge unscathed. When he landed, his expression was grave.

In that brief encounter, he sensed the purity of the other's spirit force, which seemed beyond what someone at the Level 4 realm should possess...

Turning his head to look, he saw a young man riding a White Tiger slashing through from the flank with no intention of engaging him head-on. On the other side, two Level 4 cultivators were approaching in a pincer attack. One wielded a heavy-looking hatchet aimed at Big Tiger's head, hacking down.

The other held a longsword, flickering continuous sword blossoms aimed at Lu Ye on Tiger's back.

Once again, intense heat flared as red spirit force gathered, and another plump Firebird flew out, striking at the hatchet-bearing Level 4 cultivator. Experience tales at empire

At the same time, Lu Ye unsheathed his sword and slashed at the sword-wielding foe.

With a clash of metal, the sword-user, unable to halt his momentum, was forced to retreat. Although at the same cultivation level, he couldn't withstand Lu Ye's powerful strike boosted by the leap of the tiger.

On the other side, the plump Firebird was split by the hatchet-wielding Level 4 cultivator. While it didn't injure him, it spared Amber the deadly chop and took advantage of the man's disorientation from the explosion of spirit force to swipe a claw across him. The man grunted, a sound of broken bones emanated from his chest, and he fell to the ground.

In an instant, the two Level 4 cultivators' joint attack had been thwarted. The remaining Level 3 cultivators stood dumbfounded, watching the charging Big Tiger and the young man, momentarily at a loss for what to do.

"Quick, get out of the way!" the Level 5 cultivator urgently shouted.

In the original plan, he and the two Level 4 cultivators were supposed to lead the first round of attack to ensure the invaders would be knocked off the tiger's back—once off, their death was certain.

But he never anticipated that this Level 4 cultivator would be a magic cultivator, casting the Firebird Technique with extreme speed, foiling his fierce spear thrust with no result.

With him, at Level 5, not achieving the expected effect of blocking, and both Level 4 cultivators failing as well, how could the remaining Level 3 cultivators stop them?

The magnificent Big Tiger swept past those Level 3 cultivators, the young man riding it leaving them in the dust. The Level 5 cultivator pursued a few steps, watching as the distance between them grew, and could only stop in frustration.

Turning his head, he saw a Level 3 Junior Brother clutching his throat with blood drenching his upper body, as Blood Water continuously spilled from his mouth. Reaching out toward him, the junior brother desperately cried, "Senior Brother, save me!"

But what could be done? With such an injury, only death awaited.

By the time the pursuing cultivators from Tailuo Sect arrived, they found their fellow disciples standing with ugly expressions, one among them already dead on the spot.

...

...

Break out, break out, keep breaking out!

Lu Ye's expression was grave; he felt that enemies surrounded him from all directions, and no matter which way he went, he couldn't shake off their encirclement.

He simply couldn't understand who he had offended or whose territory he was on now. Had he fallen into a nest of thieves?

Fortunately, he had Amber, whose speed was extremely fast. Even faced with a ceaseless encirclement, he still had the means to fight his way out.

But he could feel that as he pushed forward, the efforts to encircle him intensified. At the beginning, it was rare to encounter a Level 5 realm cultivator, but now, there would always be one or two Level 5 realm practitioners amidst the cultivators he ran into, making it extremely difficult for him.

Not only was he struggling, but Han Zheyue, watching the Shadow Moon Disc in the hall, was equally distressed.

She watched helplessly as the white dot dashed left and right in Hundred Peaks Mountain, being encircled time and again, and then breaking through time after time while one or two black dots would occasionally be snuffed out.

In less than a day, over a dozen disciples of Tailuo Sect had died at this guy's hands!

Han Zheyue clenched her silver teeth so tight they made a crunching sound, wishing she could pluck the white dot off the Shadow Moon Disc and bite it to death!

The Dragon Spring Meet was going well until this troublemaker unexpectedly appeared. Tailuo Sect was suffering defeat after defeat at this person's hands. As the one responsible for the Dragon Spring Meet, Han Zheyue naturally had to take some responsibility.

If it was just this, it would have been fine. After all, losing a dozen or so disciples was a loss Tailuo Sect could afford; when had there not been deaths at the Dragon Spring Meet?

But the current situation was that Tailuo Sect had invested a lot of effort and manpower to encircle this person, leading to continuous losses in their confrontation with Mount Qingyu.

Tang Wu, this guy, was not just standing by idly. Seeing that Tailuo Sect was restrained by an outsider, he naturally had a lot of moves to make.

One by one, the peaks that had been captured were being lost.

And yet, Tailuo Sect couldn't simply ignore the outsider. Already, over a dozen disciples had died by his hand. If they neglected him, there would be no way to explain it. Moreover, with the outsider now on Tailuo Sect's territory, the losses would be even greater if he was not dealt with.

Therefore, Tailuo Sect was currently in an embarrassing predicament. They wanted to quickly kill the outsider and then devote all their energy to the struggle against Mount Qingyu, but they were unable to kill him, caught in a dilemma.

By comparison, Tang Wu was undoubtedly feeling secretly pleased. Originally, Tailuo Sect was at a disadvantage, but the arrival of this uninvited guest gradually helped swing the situation back in their favor.

Looking at that white dot scurrying back and forth in Hundred Peaks Mountain, he too was feeling a bit upset. It would have been better for this guy to follow a straight line, cutting through Tailuo Sect's territory and into Mount Qingyu's grounds. As long as he entered Mount Qingyu territory, they could meet up.

Based on this person's previous performances, if he could be brought under his command, he would undoubtedly be a great asset to Mount Qingyu.

Right now, all he could do was silently pray that the uninvited guest would last a little longer; only if he continued to survive, could he continue to tie down Tailuo Sect's attention.

As he was thinking this, Tang Wu's eyebrows suddenly raised because the white dot on the Shadow Moon Disc changed its direction once again, this time heading straight for Mount Qingyu territory.

The bastard finally came to his senses, Tang Wu immediately sent out his messages.

This was an opportunity. Mount Qingyu could try to see if they could make contact with this person.

Han Zheyue clearly saw Tang Wu's action and immediately glared at him, her gaze cutting like a knife. She spurred on the battlefield marking, sending message after message. No matter what, they could not let the outsider enter Mount Qingyu's territory!