

Humanity 1111

Chapter 1111 Vanguard Camp

The Nine Provincial States, each controlled by both the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge with three territories, while the disputed regions of Bingzhou, Tianzhou, and Dingzhou are evenly split between them.

Thus, the vanguard camp in Bingzhou this time is composed of powerhouses from both factions, gathering strong figures from both sides. Such a grand gathering is only possible in these special times and environments, rarely seen in ordinary times.

On the third day back at the mountain pass, before dawn, Lu Ye pushed open the door and stepped out of his chamber.

Amber was perched on his shoulder. Compared to more than a year ago, Amber's aura had become much stronger. Over a year of continuous cultivation and consuming a plethora of demonic pills had marked a noticeable growth in Amber.

After all, it is an exotic beast, and with Yiyi cultivating alongside it, its growth, although not as rapid as Lu Ye's, is much faster than that of an average human race cultivator.

Amber is not yet at the level of a demon beast in the Divine Sea Realm, but it's not far off.

For Lu Ye, during the war, as long as Amber was by his side, he could draw strength from it, so a slightly lower power level in Amber wasn't a concern.

For this reason, Lu Ye kept Amber by his side; the counterattack on the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm wasn't a war that could be won in one stroke, and every bit of external aid was crucial.

Looking up at the stellar space, the Myriad Stars were still scattered across the sky, promising a fine day.

His gaze inadvertently swept over a part of the stellar space and noticed a star that appeared much brighter than when he last observed it, though he didn't know the reason why.

Soon, however, his attention was drawn to a figure nearby. After a brief observation, he exclaimed in surprise, "Senior Sister Nian?"

Nian Yuexian was unexpectedly here, and by the looks of it, she seemed to be waiting for him.

"About to set out?" Nian Yuexian asked.

Lu Ye nodded, "I'm, after all, a junior and kind of a host here. It's not good to keep those seniors waiting for too long; it's better to go early. Senior Sister Nian, you are..."

"I'm also part of the vanguard camp," Nian Yuexian clarified.

Lu Ye understood.

Given Nian Yuexian's strength, it was only natural for her to be assigned to the vanguard camp.

"Then let's go together," Lu Ye invited.

Leading Nian Yuexian into the Heaven's Augury Hall, they arrived near the ground fissure through the teleportation array.

The hundreds of cultivators from the two mountain passes continued to fulfill their duties, slaying the Insect Race creatures crawling out from the fissure. This task had become routine; often the Insect Race barely showed up before being scattered and killed.

It was still early, and apart from Lin Yue, who was stationed on duty, no other Divine Sea Realm figures were present.

Approaching, Lu Ye exchanged a few words with Lin Yue and then waited quietly in place.

As the daylight brightened, one strong aura after another flew in from different directions, descended here, and clearly, they were all vanguard camp members gathering at this place.

There were those from both Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and Haotian Alliance, and with their powerful auras converging, the pressure on the hundreds of cultivators at the two mountain passes became immense, and they dared not slack off in the slightest.

By the time daylight fully arrived, there were already over two hundred members of the vanguard camp gathered here, and their numbers continued to grow.

Feeling the aura of those arriving, Lu Ye was secretly astonished.

Although he knew the Nine Provinces were places where hidden talents and powerhouses kept emerging, hearing about it was one thing, but seeing it with his own eyes was another. None of the vanguard camp cultivators gathered had a cultivation level below Level 7, and a shocking twenty percent were at Level 9.

At this rate, the entire vanguard camp's membership would easily reach several hundred.

Moreover, this wasn't the full capability of Bingzhou. It was impossible for all the cultivators above Divine Sea Level 7 to charge into the Insect Path. Both Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and Haotian Alliance needed to leave some forces to maintain stability in Bingzhou.

If one provincial state had such capabilities, what must the entirety of the Nine Provinces look like?

Lu Ye found it quite interesting that these powerful figures gathering did not have such clearly defined boundaries, nor did they draw swords upon meeting as one might imagine. Many of them, despite belonging to different factions, exchanged friendly words and laughter upon meeting.

This phenomenon was hard to observe in lower-level cultivators. The lower the cultivation, the more likely conflict would break out when they clashed; but the higher the cultivation, the more experienced they became and able to carry themselves with grace and ease.

Lu Ye sensed many scrutinizing gazes intentionally or unintentionally sweeping over him.

Among the Divine Sea Realm cultivators present, he had the lowest cultivation and was the youngest, partly due to the spread of certain news.

Nowadays, who doesn't know the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc originated from him, or that he ventured deep into the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm to bring back extremely valuable images, even contributing the Insect Race's refinement method.

It could be said that the Nine Provinces' opportunity to counterattack the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, he played a decisive role in promoting.

Coupled with the fact that, despite his young age, he had already attained the cultivation of Divine Sea Level 4, anyone with half a brain would realize that regardless of future changes in the Nine Provinces, he would secure a place.

Given the current situation, the entire Nine Provinces owed him a debt of gratitude, so although there were many scrutinizing glances, they carried little hostility.

Even if there's fear in their hearts, no one dares to show any hostility on such an occasion, at such a time.

"Hahaha, I am late." A hearty laugh came, followed by a silhouette sweeping in from the direction of the Dark Moon Forest Pass, behind which followed more than ten powerful warriors.

"City Lord!" The many strong warriors of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge greeted him, and even many cultivators of the Haotian Alliance also clasped their fists in greeting.

Lu Ye recognized this person as Long Bai, the City Lord of Ten Thousand Demons City in Bingzhou, whose status was equivalent to that of Pang Zhen on the Haotian Alliance's side.

He had not personally seen this person, but last night Long Bai, leading some Divine Sea Realm vanguard camp members, rested in the Dark Moon Forest Pass and had summoned the doppelganger Li Taibai.

As the brightest rising star of this generation of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, Li Taibai naturally gained the favor of the upper echelons of Ten Thousand Demons City. Long Bai did not withhold admiration and praise for the doppelganger, which gave Lu Ye a chance to slightly understand this person.

After some pleasantries, Long Bai turned his head to look at Lu Ye, laughing as he said, "This young friend must be Lu Yiye, truly extraordinary in demeanor."

Lu Ye saluted, "I have seen City Lord Long."

"I have been paying attention to many of your matters, young friend. If there comes a day you aren't happy in the Haotian Alliance, you're always welcome to my Ten Thousand Demons Ridge!" As he spoke, he winked at Lu Ye, implying something.

Yu Huajin went as far as to defect from the Haotian Alliance just to use the power of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to kill Lu Ye. This matter happened in the Dark Moon Forest Pass. How could Long Bai, as the City Lord of Ten Thousand Demons City, not know? It's even said that all the decisions of that matter were personally made by him, and he also sent a warning to Lin Yue's side to alert Lu Ye to be cautious.

After he said this, many people on the Haotian Alliance side frowned, although they knew Lu Ye was unlikely to agree to such a thing. Digging the wall right in front of others was indeed somewhat vile.

A voice came from afar: "If you can't speak, don't speak at all; no one considers you a mute!"

As the words fell, several figures had already entered the scene, it was Pang Zhen and the sect master and others.

Long Bai laughed heartily, "Old Pang, you're late."

Pang Zhen nodded slightly, "There were some matters that caused a slight delay."

One was the City Lord of Ten Thousand Demons City, the other the Vice Alliance Hierarch of the Haotian Alliance. In terms of cultivation, status, and strength, both are equal, and both are the main figures of this vanguard camp attacking the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm.

The two gathered together briefly to discuss.

After a moment, Pang Zhen spoke loudly, "The insect disaster has ravaged the Nine Provinces for more than three years, causing the Nine Provinces cultivators to be exhausted and the common people to live in distress. Today we gather here to act as the vanguard, break into the Insect Path, and counterattack the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm. The task is heavy and must not fail. Past grievances need not be mentioned; there are no factions here today. I hope all can unite and jointly exterminate the Insect Race!"

These Divine Sea Realm experts have been cultivating for a long time, each at Level 7 or above, and do not require too much stirring war motivation. Everyone knows what they will face when they receive the orders, so Pang Zhen only said a few simple words.

Next, insect blood was distributed.

Everyone received a jar, and Lu Ye also got one.

"Wait here for me!" Nian Yuexian, after receiving her jar of insect blood, flashed away into the distance.

Not only her, but all the female cultivators did the same.

This was mainly because applying insect blood is a delicate task, leaving no inch uncovered, which the female cultivators cannot perform under all eyes.

With the female cultivators leaving, the male cultivators were less modest, applying the insect blood all over themselves, even on their hair, turning green all over within moments.

After one incense stick's time, everyone gathered again. Lu Ye looked around, seeing one green-skinned figure after another, feeling the scene quite comical.

Of course, in the eyes of others, he surely looked equally ridiculous.

"Let's move out!" With a low shout from Pang Zhen, he and Long Bai first headed toward the ground fissure, with others following closely, the scene instantly becoming lively.

Below the ground fissure, those Insect Race members climbing out met their doom, as places passed by numerous Divine Sea Realm experts were instantly barren, leaving not a single piece of armor behind.

Lu Ye mingled among the crowd, with Nian Yuexian beside him, feeling somewhat idle.

With such a scene, such an array, he wasn't needed to act at all.

What he needed to do was wait for those ahead to capture some Divine Sea Realm insects alive and use means to enslave them.

The light above gradually disappeared, and soon they arrived at the mouth of the Insect Path. Still, Pang Zhen and Long Bai led the way, with the others following.

Having once delved into the Insect Path, Lu Ye was not unfamiliar with it.

Several hundred people moved like the wind, and in a moment, they all entered the Insect Path, though due to its limited size, they couldn't advance side by side, so the whole team formed a not too long line.

Lu Ye was positioned slightly toward the front since he needed to enslave the Insect Race, which would be difficult to do if he were too far back.

Nian Yuexian seemed responsible for guarding his safety, sticking close and not straying a step away.

Chapter 1112 Going Deeper

The vanguard camp charged into the Insect Path, unstoppable and victorious.

At this depth, the interference of the origin magnetic field was very weak, almost negligible. Additionally, with insect blood applied, it could block the erosion of the origin magnetic field, naturally not affecting the cultivators' strength.

With the strength of Long Bai and Pang Zhen, even if a dragon-class insect came, they could kill it instantly! Not to mention, the ones they encountered on the path forward were mostly below Divine Sea Realm.

The formation continued to advance, with ninety percent of the vanguard camp members appearing idle because only those at the forefront had the opportunity to engage in combat.

But everyone knew this was temporary.

The Insect Path was long, and the deeper they went, the more their cultivation was restricted. Coupled with the need to conserve their strength, it was unwise to let Long Bai and Pang Zhen remain at the front indefinitely.

In due time, others would replace them, allowing them to rest and recuperate.

Two hours later, someone from the front suddenly called out, "Where is Lu Yiye?"

"Coming, coming!" Lu Ye's figure flickered as he passed several people at the front, arriving at the source of the voice. In the flickering torchlight, he saw a physique cultivator with broad shoulders and a thick waist pressing down on a mantis insect, spirit force surging all around him. No matter how much the mantis struggled, it couldn't break free from his grasp.

This was a Divine Sea Realm insect, the first suitable one the team had encountered thus far.

Lu Ye wanted to control the insect, so it was not possible to choose targets casually. He had to select one at the Divine Sea Realm level; only then could the subsequent plan be guaranteed.

It seemed the vanguard camp learned through various channels that Lu Ye possessed the skill to control insects. Therefore, when Lu Ye arrived, streams of Mental Consciousness probed from the front and the back, eager to know what methods he would use.

Lu Ye raised his hand to point at the mantis insect's forehead, transmitting to Nian Yuexian, "Senior Sister Nian, please activate a spiritual attack to help tear apart the insect's psyche defense."

Although he could do this himself, he hadn't cultivated any Psyche Secret Technique, and his Divine Soul Power wasn't as strong as Nian Yuexian's. It was more convenient and quicker for her to tear apart the insect's psyche defense.

Nian Yuexian immediately activated her Divine Soul Power, and the mantis insect, upon being attacked, screeched incessantly, struggling even more vigorously, but was firmly suppressed by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge physique cultivator, unable to resist.

Lu Ye's Mental Consciousness surged, clearly sensing that the insect before him had little resistance, and he effortlessly planted the Soul Taming Divine Runes into its mind.

The mantis insect immediately calmed down.

The physique cultivator sensed something, exclaiming in surprise, "Is it... done?"

Lu Ye nodded, "Yes, Fellow Daoist, you can release it now."

The physique cultivator complied and released the insect, finding it indeed ceased resisting, marveling at it, "Astonishing skills!"

Cultivators of the beast-taming faction might also control insects, but not so effortlessly. The process was complex and carried a high risk of failure.

Yet Lu Ye achieved it in just a few moments—a Divine Sea Realm insect was tamed.

He couldn't fathom how it was done.

"Could this secret technique... be used on humans?" the physique cultivator asked a sensitive question.

Lu Ye felt like all ears around him perked up.

Such a secret technique, mysterious and unpredictable, would be terrifying if usable on humans.

Lu Ye said, "The higher the intelligence, the stronger the Divine Soul Power, the harder it is to control. Basically unusable on humans, only on insects with flawed spiritual intelligence." In truth, it was usable; otherwise, Dao Thirteen wouldn't have controlled one previously.

But in this situation, how could Lu Ye give an unsettling answer?

It's uncertain if the physique cultivator believed him, but he nodded slightly and turned to head forward.

Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian also advanced, though the team now included a mantis insect of Divine Sea Realm, moving forward with its pincers brandished.

As they continued to penetrate deeper, Divine Sea Realm insects were captured alive one after another and then enslaved by Lu Ye using Soul Taming.

Three days later, the team had dozens more insects, rumbling along with the formation forward, with Lu Ye sitting atop one of the insects.

Nian Yuexian sat on another insect next to him...

Their leisurely demeanor was more akin to a countryside excursion rather than a counterattack on the Great Secret Realm of the insects, drawing frequent glances from the vanguard camp's powerful members.

Long Bai, Pang Zhen, and others in the lead had been replaced. Such rotation had occurred numerous times; the coordination of different levels of cultivation was extremely tacit, especially since all these people were cultivators above Level 7. Sometimes, without words, a mere glance or a simple gesture could convey each other's thoughts.

Currently, leading the charge were the sect master and several other physique and combat cultivators. At this depth, the suppression of the origin magnetic field on the cultivators' strength had become quite evident, but as they had applied insect blood in advance, it was still within acceptable limits.

Lu Ye's position remained near the front but not at the very front.

As they delved deeper, the number of Divine Sea Realm insects in the team increased, but correspondingly, the pace of advancement slowed.

As expected, the suppression of the origin magnetic field grows stronger the further down we go, requiring increased caution and vigilance during our advance.

Moreover, due to the necessity of capturing alive the Divine Sea Realm insects, it often takes a considerable amount of time.

Unlike the vanguard camps of the other Eight Great Provincial States, which don't have this concern. Their sole objective is simple: kill!

Slay all insects encountered, leaving none alive.

Thus, in terms of advance speed, Bingzhou's progress is undoubtedly the slowest, as confirmed in the audio transmission exchanges between Pang Zhen, Long Bai, and other provincial leaders.

Several large insects were encountered, which have now become part of Lu Ye's forces.

On the eighth day deep inside the Insect Path, Pang Zhen suddenly approached Lu Ye from the rear of the team with a concerned look, asking, "Can you still hold on?"

Though Lu Ye's techniques for controlling the insect tribe are astoundingly skillful, it seems impossible for such tactics to be without limits. Logically, each additional insect Lu Ye controls should place an increased burden on his psyche.

Especially since Lu Ye previously stated at a major council meeting that the limit should be around one to two hundred insects.

Now, the number of Divine Sea Realm insects under his command has exceeded two hundred.

That is why Pang Zhen asks this question.

Lu Ye pondered briefly and replied, "It's about right."

While he could continue to control more, there's no need. Over two hundred Divine Sea Realm insects are adequate for the coming plan; any more would merely be an embellishment.

Pang Zhen nodded and ordered the front ranks, "If we encounter more Divine Sea Realm insects, there's no need for capture—kill them without mercy!"

At this depth, everyone's abilities are almost reduced to sixty percent of their potential, and constant fighting and movement have substantially drained their resources. Facing large insects with the intention to capture poses risks; killing them is undoubtedly more convenient and effective.

It's crucial to note that counter-attacking the insect tribe's Great Secret Realm is divided into three stages. The first stage is actually the easiest to accomplish; the most dangerous part is the initial phase of the second stage.

The vanguard camp must, of course, preserve its strength as much as possible.

Upon receiving orders, the vanguard camp cultivators accelerated their advance significantly.

Another day passed, and faint lights began to appear in the distance ahead, immediately signaling everyone that the end of the insect path was near. The source of that light was where the portal lies.

Indeed, as the formation advanced to the light source, an enormous elliptical portal appeared before everyone's gaze, resembling a blurred mirror. As the surface of the mirror fluctuated, insects continuously emerged from the portal.

The diverse cultivators gazed at this portal, fully aware that crossing it means entering the Great Secret Realm of the insect tribe—the source of the Nine Provinces' insect disaster.

The first step has been taken. The next step depends on further progress, which, if successful, could resolve a disaster persisting for years.

"Rest here, and focus on restoring spirit force!" Long Bai shouted, assigning a few individuals to guard the portal, destinating any insect that appears.

The Nine Provincial States need to act in unison. Though the nine vanguard camps are poised at the nine different portals, ready to strike into the insect tribe's Great Secret Realm, the main armies of the Nine Provincial States have yet to arrive.

While the vanguard camp delved into the insect path, teams from all over the Nine Provinces were already advancing from fissure locations and gradually converging at different positions within the insect path, steadily pressing on.

Given the vanguard camp's clearing of the way, the pressure they face is considerably reduced, and they only need to deal with scattered insects encountered in side paths.

Currently, the Nine Provinces' main army is marching deeper into the insect path. In truth, the insect path's interior is already filled with the presence of Nine Provinces cultivators, perhaps dispersed across various side paths, but with one unified objective!

Only when the main army is largely in place can the vanguard camp launch into the Great Secret Realm of the insect tribe; otherwise, even if the vanguard were all above Level 7, they'd struggle to achieve much.

While the vanguard camp strong rested, Lu Ye was busy working.

He needs to affix a certain number of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones onto each insect under his control. Otherwise, relying on these insects alone would hardly stir substantial commotion.

With Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, it's a different story. These stones are extremely volatile and can trigger powerful spirit force fluctuations. Since the insects are highly sensitive to spirit force waves, exploding these stones will inevitably catch the insects' attention.

Seizing this opportunity would allow the vanguard camp to strike into the Great Secret Realm, efficiently constructing a defensive line.

He wasn't alone in this task—others assisted, based on prior assignments.

Even so, it took nearly two hours to satisfactorily organize everything.

After a final check to ensure no detail was missed, Lu Ye approached the sect master and Pang Zhen, saying, "Disciple is ready here."

Pang Zhen replied, "The next tasks are in your hands, but make sure to prioritize your safety."

The sect master also advised, "If it's unwinnable, retreat at the first moment."

"Disciple understands." Lu Ye nodded solemnly.

Chapter 1113 Phase 2

Before the portal, Lu Ye tucked Amber into the spirit beast sack, and with a swift motion, landed atop a Sacred Beetle, lifting its wings to conceal himself underneath.

Constructing concealment, Breath-concealing Spirit Runes, it was all done in one fluid motion.

Immediately, an order was sent from his heart, and each enslaved insect raced in succession through the portal, disappearing from sight.

The Sacred Beetle carrying Lu Ye was mixed in the ranks, inconspicuous.

As light and shadow changed, the suppressive feel of the origin magnetic field vanished without a trace. Lu Ye knew he had crossed the portal into the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race.

The sounds of crawling and the rustle of wings filled his ears, accompanied by the gurgling from mandibles. Lu Ye commanded the Sacred Beetle to fly skyward instantaneously.

Reaching a certain height, he quietly peered down to see the vast array of varied insect races bustling before the portal, creating an awe-inspiring spectacle.

Under such circumstances, the vanguard camp would first have to endure a slaughter to secure a foothold. But once the spirit force fluctuated, it would inevitably draw more insects persistently.

Bingzhou had Lu Ye as the vanguard, leveraging the Insect Race and Explosive Fire Spirit Stones to distract the insects. The other Eight Great Provincial States lacked this tactic, making it more challenging for them to establish a front.

It all depended on the methods of those vanguard camp experts.

His mind sensed the position of his insect troops, issuing precise orders to each, sending them individually into the depths of the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm.

Within just two hours, over two hundred Divine Sea Realm insects were dispersed within a range of 20 to 50 miles from the portal—not too close to be ineffective, not too distant to be futile. Outside 20 miles and within 50 miles marked the optimal range.

Only then did Lu Ye send a message to the sect master: "The disciple is in position!"

Now, it was time to wait.

The assembly of the Nine Provinces army did not take long; those participating were all cultivators above the True Lake Realm, with each team having a Divine Sea Realm cultivator seated, ensuring efficiency was paramount.

Along their path, they encountered nothing but scattered insects within their forked route. Upon reaching the paths traversed by the vanguard camp, they could swiftly advance.

After two days, the Nine Provinces army gradually arrived, each provincial state lined up in a dragon formation.

The head of the army had already merged with the vanguard camp before a portal, but perhaps the tail was only deep into the insect paths by several thousand distances, restricted by the terrain until those in front charged into the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, limiting further advance.

In waiting, Lu Ye received the sect master's transmission.

The time for action had come!

He instantly issued commands to his two hundred insect troops.

Among the insect swarm, a Divine Sea Realm mantis insect suddenly swung its mantis saber, attacking its companion with rapid Sharpness, splitting many insects before realizing what happened.

There were stronger insects that survived the cuts, which instinctively counterattacked against the mantis insects.

Earlier, on his previous arrival at the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, Lu Ye discovered that the insects here did not coexist harmoniously but aggressively fought—the stronger treating the weaker as prey and advancement resources, while the weaker instinctively retaliated when attacked.

On the other hand, within the Nine Provinces, such insect conflicts were seldom visible, perhaps due to more enticing attractions outside.

On another front, a hound insect began tearing into its companion, escalating the slaughter quickly.

Simultaneously, a ten-foot-long centipede-like insect coiled around a companion, its mandibles twisting, chewing the carapace away to expose the flesh beneath.

Chaos descended inadvertently, and not just in one place.

The mutual slaughter among the insects inevitably triggered the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones carried on their bodies.

The booming sounds fiercely erupted, accompanied by turbulent and volatile spirit force waves.

To create sufficiently attractive spirit force fluctuations, each Divine Sea Realm insect under Lu Ye, at minimum, carried one hundred Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, with larger insects carrying more, such as that centipede-like insect, burdened with up to a thousand.

Once a single stone's power was ignited, the remaining fire spirit stones would soon explode in succession.

As the firelight surged skyward, it was like tossing a handful of salt into a pot of oil, instantly agitating the insect race within about 30 miles.

Almost all insects sensing the spirit force unrest became roused, instinctively converging towards the origin of the spirit force fluctuations.

Boom, boom, boom...

The explosive sounds perpetuated continuously, as pillars of flame erupted towards the sky, making the locations of over two hundred Divine Sea Realm insects the focal points of the gathering insect armies.

Not only were the insects on the ground attracted, but even those flying in the sky were drawn in.

Originally, there were some insects fluttering around Lu Ye, but now the air was solemn and clear. Looking up, it was empty all around, leaving only the Sacred Beetle he was riding.

Even the Sacred Beetle, which he had implanted with the Soul Taming Psyche, was somewhat attracted by the spirit force fluctuations. If he hadn't ordered it to suppress the urge, it might have carried him towards the nearest source of spirit force fluctuations.

If that really happened, it would have been quite amusing.

Glancing down, what was once a bustling portal became completely empty; not a single insect was in sight.

The execution of the plan was much smoother than anticipated.

The explosive sounds continued, and more than two hundred Divine Sea Realm insects scattered in different locations couldn't all move at the same time, which naturally allowed for better time delay.

The void within the portal trembled slightly, and several figures rushed out from the portal almost simultaneously, led by Pang Zhen and Long Bai.

Uncertain of the situation here, they were all prepared for action. However, upon charging in, they found no insects around; the nearest ones were miles away, quickly moving farther away.

This sudden scene left them a bit stunned, but they quickly realized it was Lu Ye's doing. Pang Zhen couldn't help but shout, "Well done!"

At the grand council meeting, although Lu Ye's proposal was passed, no one knew if it would work or how effective it would be.

It wasn't until now that they realized Lu Ye's proposal had a much greater impact than imagined.

Without mentioning anything else, the absence of insects in front of the portal allowed the vanguard camp to unleash their full potential.

More figures passed through the portal, entering the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm. In just a few heartbeats, hundreds of strong members of the vanguard camp had all passed through.

"Act according to plan!" With Long Bai's orders, the group of hundreds immediately spread out, slowly advancing outwards in a fan shape.

The tremors in the portal void had never ceased; after the vanguard camp, the cultivators responsible for constructing the defense line were the first to reach the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm. The cultivators varied in cultivation, some in the Divine Sea Realm, others in the True Lake Realm.

They were array cultivators, and their task was to set up various big arrays in front of the portal. In this situation, the faster they set up enough formations, the more they could alleviate the pressure on the vanguard camp, which undoubtedly tested their proficiency in the Array Path.

As the array cultivators started setting up, the spirit force fluctuations became chaotic.

Some insects had already sensed the spirit force fluctuations and were redirecting their path towards them. It was foreseeable that more and more insects would assault, eventually forming a massive insect plague to impact the human race's positions.

Lu Ye descended from the sky on the Sacred Beetle, joining the ranks of the vanguard camp.

The sect master was on the left, and Nian Yuexian on the right, providing a sense of security.

Amber was taken out from the spirit beast sack and placed on his shoulder, while Yiyi also flashed out and moved to the sect master's side, saying, "Master."

After glancing at Yiyi and sensing her spirit force fluctuations, the sect master nodded in satisfaction, "Good job!"

Yiyi's growth, evident after not seeing her for a long time, pleased the sect master greatly.

"Stay by my side and watch me slaughter on all sides!" The sect master declared with great ambition.

Yiyi clapped her hands and said, "Disciple will support the master!"

On the other side, Nian Yuexian transmitted a message to Lu Ye, "Don't stray too far from me."

Lu Ye chuckled, "Senior Sister, I'm not a child anymore, and I'm a combat cultivator!"

As a combat cultivator, it's only natural to take up the sword and fight rather than always remain under protection.

Nian Yuexian smirked and said no more.

Though the vanguard camp's forward movement wasn't fast, it wasn't slow either. They quickly advanced to a position five miles from the portal, essentially claiming territory. The rear area thus claimed would become the Bingzhou army's position.

Until the defense line was fully constructed, these vanguard strong cultivators had to withstand the Insect Race's attacks, buying time for the army to build a defense line.

The hundreds of individuals spread across a five-mile semicircular periphery, not too close to each other, which demanded high individual ability. This was why the vanguard camp only selected cultivators above Level 7.

A lower level of cultivation would make it difficult to shoulder the responsibility. If the Insect Race broke through the defense line, it could impact the rear.

The land claim operation on the Bingzhou side proceeded extremely smoothly without encountering any obstruction, all thanks to Lu Ye's proposal. The explosive fire spirit stones carried by the more than two hundred Divine Sea Realm insects, scattered apart, had drawn much attention from the Insect Race, giving Bingzhou sufficient preparation time.

However, the other Eight Great Provinces didn't have such capabilities. To claim land, they could only kill all the insects in front of them. At each portal, the war had already started from the moment the vanguard camp charged into the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, needing to kill and advance simultaneously, expanding their territory until they stabilized a base and made room for the arrival of the main army.

Chapter 1114 Establishing the Line

"Halt!" Pang Zhen's voice transmitted through the spirit force, and at his command, everyone stopped their forward steps.

Lu Ye gazed ahead, the myriad Insect Race surged like a tide, menacingly advancing with claws extended. Despite being mentally prepared, his expression inevitably turned grave.

The distance between them grew increasingly closer, and the spirit force of the vanguard camp's powerhouses began to fluctuate.

In the center of the fan-shaped area, Pang Zhen pinched a Spirit Talisman imbued with spirit force and tossed it forward. In an instant, thunder rumbled, and the sky changed colors as thunderclouds gathered and swirled.

"Kill!"

As the shout of anger emerged from his mouth, lightning burst forth, and thick bolts of thunder struck down from the thunderclouds, crashing upon the insect horde like a heavenly punishment. Amidst the reckless lightning, large swathes of the Insect Race's vitality perished.

This seemed to be a signal. When the lightning struck down, the vanguard camp's powerhouses also employed their own methods, attacking the swarming insect horde. In an instant, multicolored and powerful magic and spells took shape. Saber lights and Sword Qi crisscrossed, and countless weapon control lights zipped and flitted through the formation, bringing up sprays of blood.

The Insect Race's screeches were incessant, falling in patches, and blood drenched the earth in an instant.

To Lu Ye's left, the sect master and Yiyi cast their magic and spells together, slaughtering wantonly, though it was primarily the sect master's rampant killing while Yiyi contributed with her own embellishments... The gap in cultivation was too great, and Yiyi's attacks could only serve as a nice add-on.

To the right was Nian Yuexian, with overwhelming Sword Qi crisscrossing the sky, traversing indiscriminately and sharply intimidating.

However, whether it was the sect master or Nian Yuexian, in the choice of attack range, they both took into account the area Lu Ye faced. Probably, they thought that he, as a combat cultivator, couldn't quite play to his strengths in such a situation.

But seeing Lu Ye's direction, where numerous Fire Phoenix Techniques and Fire Dragon Techniques connected one after another toward the insect horde, both of them put their minds at ease.

The Insect Race's attacks came not only from the ground but also from the sky. Many in the Insect Race were naturally capable of flight, and even those without wings could travel through the air once their cultivation reached a certain level.

Yet, under the vanguard camp's powerhouses' counterattacks, all the attacking Insect Race, whether on the ground or in the air, could not get closer than three miles.

From the high ground looking down, the three miles of land in front of the vanguard camp's powerhouses had clearly become a death zone where no living being could approach. Any Insect Race crossing that line fell to the ground.

The insect corpses on the ground quickly piled up, with insect blood pooling into rivers.

This was destined to be a battle of no return. Facing these Insect Races, which had brought years of calamity to the Nine Provinces, the vanguard camp's powerhouses showed no mercy.

The pressure wasn't great. If the Insect Plague's attack was only of this magnitude, resolving the insect disaster wasn't difficult. But everyone knew this was just the beginning; the real pressure had yet to come.

Not to mention that there weren't many large insects among the attacking Insect Race, nor had there been a sighting of any giant insects that had appeared in imagery.

Moreover, as time passed and the cultivators consumed their spirit force, even the vanguard camp's powerhouses couldn't maintain such an onslaught for long.

The chaotic spirit force fluctuations attracted more and more Insect Race, and the scale of the Insect Plague expanded continuously, even though the Insect Race kept being slaughtered, more kept replenishing their numbers.

At this juncture, everyone felt fortunate about one thing: the Insect Race didn't possess much spiritual intelligence. Otherwise, if such a large-scale Insect Plague were to appear in the Nine Provinces, the entire situation in the Nine Provinces would likely collapse. Then, it would surely be a disaster upon the world, leaving life in ruins.

Lu Ye focused solely on defending his area, alternating between using the Fire Phoenix and Fire Dragon Techniques. He could also cast other magic and spells, but given the current situation, these two techniques were undoubtedly the most lethal and capable of inflicting area-wide damage.

Having demonstrated his capabilities, the sect master and Nian Yuexian could focus on their defensive areas without needing to divert attention to relieve his pressure.

The sound of air being cleaved resounded from behind, and soon, a series of figures stood beside him. Without any communication, the new cultivators immediately joined the ranks of the counterattack.

After the array cultivators first came through the portal, the Nine Provinces army's reinforcements arrived.

Most of them were magic cultivators because, in such a counterattack, magic cultivators could fully display their capabilities. There were also some physique cultivators and combat cultivators, primarily responsible for dealing with the Insect Race that broke through the frontlines, and they aided magic cultivators by using the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc for support.

Each of the teams was pre-assigned, so even though a large number of people flooded in at this time, they appeared organized rather than chaotic.

Originally, there was a bit of distance between Lu Ye and the sect master and Nian Yuexian, but with the reinforcements from the Nine Provinces army, the previously empty space between them was quickly filled by the newly arrived cultivators.

The reinforcements kept coming until the later arrivals found no place to land.

With these people's support, the vanguard camp's powerhouses dealt with the onslaught of the Insect Plague more effectively.

The second stage, the most dangerous initial phase, had passed.

"Advance!" Another command came from Pang Zhen's direction.

When the order was given, everyone stepped forward in unison, advancing ahead.

From above, a semicircle five miles in diameter was advancing outward at a steady pace, expanding the territory behind and extending their battle line.

Only in this way could the cultivator army's power be fully utilized to effectively damage the Insect Race.

Otherwise, confined within the five-mile radius semicircle, many would find no position to launch their attacks, wasting their forces.

Furthermore, for the entire Bingzhou cultivator army, a five-mile range was ultimately too small.

The counterattack line was pushing forward, but three miles out was still the death line for the Insect Race; most couldn't surpass this limit. Occasionally, a few large insects would break through but were quickly targeted and eliminated by the combat cultivators.

As the front extended, Lu Ye found himself farther from the sect master and Nian Yuexian, meaning he could scarcely expect support from either flank. If a powerful Insectoid appeared in his designated area, he'd need to handle it himself.

He spread his Mental Consciousness slightly and perceived that on his side, there was one Divine Sea Level 8 cultivator, four at Level 7, over twenty other Divine Sea Realm cultivators, and the rest were in the True Lake Realm.

Such a force was quite formidable and more than capable of handling regular situations.

Initially, the advancement was smooth and unhindered. Despite the extended battle line, more cultivators joined the counterattack sequence, which increased Bingzhou's attack intensity, so there was no pressure.

Over time, however, the pressure began to mount, with the Insect Plague growing larger on one hand, and the stretching battle line diluting strength on the other.

Fortunately, at this moment, Pang Zhen's voice rang out again, "Halt!"

He was obviously overseeing the whole scene, issuing the right order at the right time. Otherwise, without ceasing the advance, their front line would surely break first.

At this point, the situation was just right; there was some pressure, but not overwhelmingly so, still within manageable limits.

By now, the foremost line had been extended to over ten miles from the portal's location.

The magic cultivators continued to lead the action. In such defensive counterattacks, their contributions were unmatched by other factions, showcasing the advantage of range.

The combat cultivators, physique cultivators, and even ghost cultivators now primarily supported the magic cultivators with the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, and ensured their safety in case any insectoids broke through.

But so far in the fierce battle, none had breached the magic barrier, resulting in idle cultivation for the other factions.

Cultivators with weapon control could alleviate their boredom by using their weapons amidst the spectacular massacre of spells, but those without were truly at a loss.

After all, weapon control was used by cultivators with lesser cultivation to make up for their lack of attack methods. As their cultivation grew, weapon control became less valuable.

Like Lu Ye, who rarely relied on the power of weapon control in battles nowadays; instead, a saber light slash might be more powerful.

"Hey brothers, let some insectoids through. We short-ranged fighters hardly get to join in; we can't just watch."

"Exactly, exactly. Magic cultivator brothers and sisters, don't hog it all. Share a bit so we can stretch our limbs at least!"

"Lu Yiye, you're a combat cultivator. Where did you learn these superb magic skills? Is this fair?"

A noisy group disrupted the solemn war atmosphere.

Primarily because Lu Ye's area lacked a Level 9 master, so everyone was more relaxed. In sections guarded by Level 9 cultivators, things weren't as lax.

The magic cultivators, taking the hint, intentionally allowed some insectoids to pass through under the massive assault, hoping to relieve the boredom of the combat, physique, and ghost cultivators, but the noise only grew louder.

"Hey, you sword cultivator! Which sect are you from? You look decent, yet you're grabbing our insects. Just use your flying sword for long-range attacks!"

"Fellow Daoist, stop cutting with saber light! Killing insects from a hundred feet away is just like magic cultivator tactics. We combat cultivators should fight up close to showcase our prowess."

"To the one using Spirit Talismans, aren't you overdoing it? Everyone's got some talismans..."

In the midst of the chaos, insectoids still couldn't get within a hundred feet, while combat, physique, and ghost cultivators criticized each other. Though verbally rejecting each other's methods, their actions were decisive—typical double standards with saber lights, punch shadows, weapon controls, and Spirit Talismans doing their work.

"Watch out, a big one is coming!" an urgent cry suddenly rang out.

Everyone saw the incoming insectoid; the term "big" didn't refer to its size but its power. The aura emanating from it was clearly of Divine Sea Level 9 caliber.

Chapter 1115 Pressure

That is an insectoid resembling an armored pangolin. It was hidden within the massive insect swarm, charging forward along with the swarm. Before it revealed itself, no one noticed its presence.

It suddenly appeared, its powerful aura unveiled, only then entering the sight of numerous cultivators.

Instantly, from all directions, colorful magical spells were sent towards it.

Accompanied by violent rumblings and extremely chaotic spirit force undulations, the sky seemed to ignite a massive firework, spectacular beyond measure.

"It isn't dead!" someone shouted sternly.

Under the perception of Mental Consciousness, despite enduring so many magical attacks, the armored pangolin's aura didn't show the slightest sign of weakening.

This was truly astonishing.

To know, there were over ten Divine Sea Realm magic cultivators attacking simultaneously. Even if it was a human race Level 9, it shouldn't remain completely unscathed.

Yet, the armored pangolin had done just that.

More spells were directed towards that area.

Amidst the chaos, a mass of shadows charged out from the vortex of spells; it was the armored pangolin. At this moment, it curled its entire body tightly, spinning swiftly, like a spinning top, charging forward at high speed.

Because its size was not large, its movements were extremely agile. In its spins, it could evade most spell attacks, and those that did hit it couldn't hinder it at all.

To everyone's surprise, more and more armored pangolins appeared following it, each curling up and spinning towards them.

The cultivators quickly realized the problem at hand. This kind of spin was incredibly fast, resulting in some rebound effect against spell attacks, greatly weakening the power of the spells. Furthermore, this insectoid species, by nature, had a considerable resistance to magic attacks, thanks to the thick bone carapace on their backs.

The sudden appearance of a group of armored pangolins finally allowed the insect race to break through the three-mile death zone boundary, as the magic cultivators wasted too much energy on them. More insectoids swiftly followed the armored pangolins, pushing forward.

The magic cultivators realized something was amiss and immediately changed strategies, ignoring the armored pangolins, and continued pouring their spells into the insect swarm.

In such large-scale warfare, the advantage of magic cultivators was the ability to quickly kill enemies at a distance over large areas, preventing the spread of the insect swarm. Under such circumstances, wasting energy on opponents they couldn't deal with quickly was extremely unwise.

Only by effectively exterminating other insectoids was the right thing for them to do at the moment.

The distance quickly shortened, and when the group of armored pangolins approached within a hundred yards of the line, physique cultivators, combat cultivators, and ghost cultivators, who had long been eager, joyously stepped forward.

Lu Ye was among them.

He, along with another physique cultivator, directly targeted the leading Level 9 insectoid.

Figures dashed left and right, the physique cultivator's form instantly expanded, the whole figure brimming with blood Qi and spirit force, as if a burning Fireball.

Lu Ye even summoned the Dragon Throne, adorned on his body, his crimson figure several yards tall attracted many astonished gazes. The Dragon Spine Saber was released, and the suddenly erupted fierce aura was more aggressive than the insectoid's.

At such times, swift combat was undoubtedly necessary; otherwise, prolonged delay would be unfavorable to their side.

Especially considering the opponent was a Level 9 big insect, Lu Ye naturally dared not hold anything back.

The physique cultivator was first to move forward, at a distance of over ten yards, punches were sent forth, blood Qi and spirit force surged, a barrage of fist shadows descended, striking the big insect.

Amidst the roaring sounds, the big insect's advance was slightly impeded, even its spinning speed slowed a bit. The burly physique cultivator collided alongside, arms spread wide, with a stance that seemed to want to embrace the entire big insect.

Mysterious forces around undulated, not to say he was acting recklessly, this was clearly a kind of secret technique, also the physique cultivator's own combat style.

Man and insect collided, the physique cultivator's hands closed abruptly, the force of the embrace seemingly compressed even the Void in front, causing it to undulate and distort.

The big insect immediately emitted a shrill cry, the rapidly spinning body paused momentarily, even though its aura rivaled Divine Sea Level 9, under the physique cultivator's secret technique, it was hard to endure, the white bone carapace on its back instantly showed a slight fracture.

If the physique cultivator could maintain the secret technique execution, within a few breaths, he could squeeze and shatter this insectoid.

However, this was ultimately a Level 9 big insect, not easy to kill, as the insectoid shrieked, the physique cultivator flew out like a paper kite, both arms and even palms bloodied and mangled.

The big insect broke free, vicious light gleaming in its eyes, just about to chase and finish the kill, when a long saber already sliced down, the furious aura sweeping over it, heavily hacking onto its back, the carapace which already had a crack immediately developed a dent.

The powerful impact sent the big insect's figure tumbling downwards.

Lu Ye clad in the Dragon Throne, closely followed, Dragon Spine Saber swung wide, transforming into a myriad of saber shadows, engulfing it completely.

Lu Ye, clad in the Dragon Throne, was undoubtedly in his strongest state. However, wearing the Dragon Throne had an unavoidable downside — not only did it consume vast amounts of energy, but it also had issues with size.

This tool was more suited for large-scale massacres against multiple opponents, rather than single combat, especially when the opponent was a relatively small insect race.

Therefore, although Lu Ye's saber strikes were fierce, it was difficult to deal fatal damage to it in a short time. Of course, given enough time, he could still kill this large insect.

But what they lacked right now was time.

Because as these pangolin-like insects charged forward, along with the attacks from numerous physique cultivators, combat cultivators, and ghost cultivators, the defensive line held by magic cultivators was already under stress.

The most straightforward manifestation was that the insect tide had approached within two miles and was rapidly closing in.

At the critical moment, a physique cultivator charged forth again. He too was a battle veteran, and as he ran, he immediately noticed the awkward situation Lu Ye was facing. He made a swift decision, crashing into the sea of saber light and abruptly appearing behind the large insect.

His arms spread wide, and once more, a mysterious power erupted, with blood Qi and spirit force surging. He held the large insect tightly in his embrace, refusing to let go despite its struggles, and shouted angrily, "Lu Yiye!"

Lu Ye had already withdrawn his saber as the physique cultivator charged into the saber light, adopting a posture for a direct thrust, and almost simultaneously with the shout, the Dragon Spine Saber pierced forward.

The physique cultivator's pupils instantly contracted to needle-tip size due to the violent, fierce, and ominous power unleashed with that strike, which even made his Level 8 self shudder.

Especially since this strike was aimed in his direction, he couldn't help but feel a huge sense of terror, wondering if Lu Yiye, this rogue, was going to stab both the insect and himself...

Fortunately, he knew that Lu Ye wouldn't harbor any malicious intent towards him at such a time, so he forcefully steadied his mind, remaining immovable.

The Dragon Spine Saber pierced into the heart of the large insect, and the sharp saber tip broke through the carapace on its back, causing the physique cultivator to immediately feel an icy sensation in his chest...

The Dragon Spine Saber lifted, directly gutting the large insect, as blood and viscera rained from the sky, its life force quickly dissipating.

The physique cultivator quickly moved aside, his expression terrified.

Lu Ye had already charged towards the side, assisting others in dealing with the insect race that had approached near.

Everyone was fighting in blood-soaked battles, whether it be physique cultivators, combat cultivators, ghost cultivators, or magic cultivators, the endless light of spells never stopped from the beginning.

In Bingzhou, they benefited from Lu Ye's method of controlling the insect race, securing a perfect start. This was an advantage that the other Eight Great Provinces did not possess. After such a perfect start, a collapse of the front now would be unacceptable.

After initially stabilizing, Bingzhou's defensive line was now under pressure.

Not only was the area where Lu Ye was located under pressure, but all directions of the front lines were under pressure. The insect tide advanced one wave after another like a flood, and what the cultivators

could do was continuous slaughter, preventing the insect tide from accumulating strength to breach the front.

After parting ways with the physique cultivator, Lu Ye boldly charged into the swarm of insects, utilizing the might of the Dragon Throne and the ferocity of the Dragon Spine Saber to rampage across the battlefield.

Initially, other human race cultivators nearby cooperated, but gradually, they could only fight on their own.

Perhaps because the Aura of the Dragon Throne was too fierce, it most attracted the attention of the insect race, with countless insects perpetually swarming around Lu Ye.

Even though his speed of killing enemies was fast, it couldn't keep up with the rate of replenishment of the insect tide.

Eventually, at a certain moment, the scarlet figure several zhang tall was submerged by swarming insects. The insect race seemed to realize that this was an excellent opportunity, so more insects gathered from all directions, and in an instant, the place where Lu Ye stood turned into a mountain of insects, with no trace of the Dragon Throne's scarlet glow.

Not far away, the Bingzhou cultivators saw the situation and wanted to come to aid, but at this moment, no one could extricate themselves to help.

Just when everyone thought Lu Yiye was likely doomed, suddenly violent waves of spirit force surged from the depths of that insect mountain.

Next came dazzling brilliance, akin to a great sun suddenly bursting forth.

The insect mountain collapsed, and in that instant, a large number of insect races vanished in life force, leaving shattered limbs and flesh flying out.

Where the scarlet figure stood, a giant lotus flower slowly blossomed, and the dazzling brilliance was formed by countless saber lights. The lotus flower enveloped a radius of dozens of zhang, and within this range, not to mention the insect race, even the ground was shaved off, leaving the surface covered in crisscross scars.

The third move of the Tyrannical Saber: Lotus Sun!

Having retrieved the Tyrannical Saber technique from the third brother's inheritance in Red River City, after months of contemplation, Lu Ye already comprehended this third move.

Just as he had speculated before, the name of this third move contained the character "Sun".

This was a sign, with the first move being Myriad Stars, the second Crescent Moon, and the third Lotus Sun.

This was also the final move of the Tyrannical Saber technique, with its power far surpassing the previous two moves. Of course, its consumption was also significant, and now, displaying it in such an environment was just right.

Chapter 1116 Gaining a Foothold

As the battle intensified, suddenly, a massive pillar of light swept in from behind the lines, clearing a vacuum passage over ten miles long, turning all the insect race within it to ashes. It took three to four breaths of time before new insect race filled the corridor.

More light beams swept in from behind, accompanied by a great buzzing noise and an extremely violent wave of spirit force.

The formations behind the frontline were demonstrating their power.

Behind the hundreds of strong cultivators from the vanguard camp, the first to cross the portal were a large number of array cultivators. Their sole task was to quickly set up one formation after another.

Not defensive arrays, but killing arrays!

This was the Great Secret Realm of the insect race; the human race's goal was to exterminate the insect race, what use were defensive arrays? Only killing arrays were the way to go.

Attack is the best defense!

This time, Bingzhou had put in a lot of resources. Many spirit treasures of great power were brought in by major sects, including some sect treasures of top-tier sects!

It's worth noting that these treasures wouldn't be used lightly in ordinary times, like the Destructive Lightning Spear of the Tianyuan Sect...

These top-tier spirit treasures were placed within the formations, acting as the Array Eye, using the power of the formation to amplify their capabilities; how terrifying was the power they unleashed?

It can be said that such power could not be unleashed by any single cultivator, making it enormously destructive to the insect race.

The buzzing continued, and one formation after another ran in overload. With the activation of many spirit treasures and formation powers, the assault of the insect swarm was finally suppressed.

Within just one incense stick's time, the insect swarm was pushed back three miles.

The physique cultivators, combat cultivators, and ghost cultivators who fought outside the formation returned to the line, each sitting cross-legged to recuperate. Many were injured in the area where Lu Ye was, not to mention others, even the physique cultivator who had joined him in killing the giant insect looked quite miserable, with his hands and arms in a bloody mess.

However, for physique cultivators, such wounds were actually not a big deal because they had strong bodies and abundant blood Qi, so their recovery was fast.

Those truly seriously injured had already retreated near the portal.

There, healing cultivators were on standby, ready to heal the seriously injured at any time.

After one battle, the frustration of physique, combat, and ghost cultivators was finally relieved, and Lu Ye keenly noticed a subtle change in the way these people looked at him.

Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect, renowned far and wide, was once called Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer and one of the Three Calamities of Spirit Stream in his early years. Now, he is one of the Twin Heroes of Bingzhou.

But to some old-school Divine Sea Realm cultivators, Lu Ye's age was evident, and he was ultimately a newcomer.

A rising star might have a bright future, but not necessarily now.

But in the recent battle, everyone witnessed his skills with their own eyes. Although he borrowed power from external forces, that was also a part of his strength.

It can be said that the strength Lu Ye displayed was not in the least inferior to those old Divine Sea Realm masters and even stronger than most Divine Sea Realm cultivators, with a ferocious and fierce momentum and brilliant saber skills, which would be hard to believe, unless seen with their own eyes, that it came from someone in their early twenties.

Cultivators ultimately gauge status by strength, and Lu Ye gets the treatment according to the level of strength he displays.

Many Divine Sea Realm cultivators realized that this young man not only had a grand future but even at present, he was dazzlingly brilliant.

No one would see him as a junior anymore, as he now firmly held his position on the expansive stage of the Nine Provinces.

Rest, battle, rest again, battle again...

Magic cultivators also began to take turns taking action. No one knew how long this war would last, so they needed to use their power more efficiently to ensure a sustained offensive.

Human strength has its limits; no magic cultivator can maintain high-intensity magic and spells without the need for recovery.

The spirit treasures placed in the Array Eye could unleash great power at critical moments. They were a guarantee for the stability of the Bingzhou frontline and could not be used lightly.

Pang Zhen, Long Bai, Sect Master Muk Suifeng, and Su Xiu, five strong cultivators at Divine Sea Level 9, pulled out of the frontline to form a mobile unit.

Among them, Pang Zhen was the Vice Alliance Hierarchy of the Haotian Alliance of Bingzhou, Long Bai was the City Lord of Ten Thousand Demons City, Muk Suifeng was the current sword master of Beixuan Sword Sect, and Su Xiu was the Palace Master of Jade Cloud Palace. Both in strength and position, these individuals represented the pinnacle of Bingzhou.

The weight of the team they formed was self-evident.

Their task was first to coordinate the overall situation, and second to provide support all around to ensure the defense line was not breached. With such five powerful figures coordinating, as long as Bingzhou played steady and did not mess up, there would basically be no major problems.

At this moment, the five stood in midair, overlooking the entire battlefield, exchanging words through mental consciousness transmission.

"Our side has basically stabilized, what about the situation in the other provincial states? Have you asked?" Long Bai looked at Pang Zhen.

Pang Zhen said, "They've all gained a foothold, though in the early stages, nearly every provincial state experienced varying degrees of casualties."

This was unavoidable, as Bingzhou had Lu Ye's skills, which could attract the attention of the insect race, buying enough time for the vanguard camp; the other provincial states did not have such means.

Basically, the vanguard camp takes the lead in charging in, followed by a large number of cultivators, pushing the battlefield outward while a great war is ongoing, during which some casualties are inevitably incurred.

From this perspective, the credit Lu Ye has earned is not insignificant.

"In war, deaths are inevitable; dying is only due to one's inadequate cultivation," Long Bai remarked calmly. "However, if things continue at this pace, the cost of solving the issues here won't be too great. Could things be progressing too smoothly?"

Pang Zhen said, "The only hindrance to our actions before was resolving the suppression of spirit force by the origin magnetic field. With that problem resolved, the rest are naturally not troublesome matters. The Insect Race, after all, has limited spiritual intelligence. Driven only by sheer numbers and instinct, killing some insects doesn't require much ado. If their behavior persists like this, they are bound for extinction sooner or later!"

Muk Suifeng said, "Don't forget there are also the giant insects."

In the images provided by Lu Ye, there were some extremely large insects. How powerful these Insect Race beings could be, no one knew, as no one had encountered them yet.

And even now, these giant insects showed no signs of mobilizing, only their enormous figures faintly discernible at the edge of the field of vision.

Su Xiu seemed eager to try: "How about testing those giant insects?"

The men gave her a sidelong glance, despite her dainty and delicate appearance, like a modest jade, she was actually a physique cultivator, with unimaginable terrifying power contained within her small frame.

In their youth, they had more or less dealt with her, naturally aware of the madness hidden beneath her delicate and gentle surface.

She probably longed to provoke the giant insects; she was just hesitant to venture deeply alone and wanted to persuade others to join.

"Forget it," Long Bai promptly refused, "I'd like to live a few more years."

Su Xiu pouted: "Coward!"

Long Bai's forehead vein twitched.

The sect master spoke timely: "Compared to this war itself, what I'm more concerned about is another matter."

Everyone's attention gathered on him.

"In this Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race, there are no resources at all. How could such a large number of insects be nurtured? How were these Insects born?"

This was actually a question everyone was puzzled by. They had some ideas in mind but were reluctant to voice them without concrete evidence.

"The Nine Great Portals correspond to the Nine Provincial States, which is too coincidental. Furthermore, the outbreak of the insect plague was too sudden; there wasn't a single sign beforehand, as if an invisible massive hand was propelling this event."

In fact, the sect master had previously discussed this coincidence with Lu Ye, but neither had delved deeper.

Not only he and Lu Ye, any Divine Sea Realm cultivator in the Nine Provinces with a bit of insight would have suspicions in their heart. Some things are just hard to speak of.

"If so, then what is the purpose?" Long Bai asked.

The sect master sighed: "If I knew, I wouldn't have these myriad doubts, but considering the situation now, the appearance of the insect plague has led to one result."

Pang Zhen's eyes gleamed: "The first large-scale cooperative effort of the two camps in thousands of years!"

"What does this imply?" Long Bai frowned, "Do they want to use this war to ease the relations between the two camps?"

"Who knows." The sect master responded meaningfully, "In our cultivation journey, we must eventually follow Heaven's will. If an unseen hand is truly pushing behind this war, we might not have to wait long to understand its deeper meaning. For now... the time isn't ripe."

Several people fell into contemplation, vaguely feeling that after resolving this insect plague sweeping the Nine Provinces, something startling might occur.

At the battlefield, many magic cultivators continued to cast spells, exterminating the oncoming Insect Race.

Lu Ye lay sprawled on the ground, chewing on elixir pills to restore his spirit force and stamina.

Amber lay beside him, tongue lolling out long.

As the war proceeded, the frequency of physique cultivators, combat cultivators, and ghost cultivators being deployed was increasing. No longer could they afford to idle, so the various factions' cultivators had to seize the time to restore their strength.

Night deepened, with myriad stars blanketing the sky.

Lu Ye observed the starry sky within the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race; it wasn't too different from what's seen in the Nine Provinces, given that the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm was under the canopy of the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury after all.

Then he discovered something that surprised him somewhat.

In a certain patch of starry sky, one star seemed to shine brighter than before.

This was his third observation of this starry sky, not intentional, just random glimpses. The first time, he hadn't paid much attention; the second time, he noticed the change in the star's brightness, and this time it was even more evident.

He didn't know what the origin of this change was.

Chapter 1117 Phase 3

Although the war is intense, the course of the conflict is favorable to the human race. As long as the Insect Plague cannot breach the Nine Provincial States' formations, they can only come to die continuously. Given the current situation, it's only a matter of time before the human race can wipe out the Insect Race.

No matter how many bugs there are, they all have a limit and will eventually be exterminated.

As time passes, the offensive of the Insect Plague becomes increasingly weak, their numbers dwindling; ten days after the war began, the Insect Race could no longer mount a sizable offensive.

Recognizing this, the human side saw that the time for counterattack has arrived, marking the beginning of the third phase of the war.

The cultivator army of the Nine Provincial States will advance from nine directions, clearing away the insect race encountered along the way, and destroying hives standing on the ground to resolve the insect disaster from its roots!

The plan is simple, but executing it is not.

Firstly, certain forces must remain stationed at the portal to prevent any Insect Race from escaping.

Currently, almost eighty percent of the Nine Provinces cultivators' elite forces are concentrated in the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race. Although there are some Divine Sea Realm cultivators stationed in the Nine Provinces, their numbers are not significant, serving only as a contingency.

Much like the doppelganger Li Taibai, this time he did not follow the army into the Great Secret Realm due to the high importance Ten Thousand Demons Ridge places on him, unwilling for him to take unnecessary risks, they instructed him to guard the Dark Moon Forest Pass, handling potential leftover insects.

However, due to formations set by armies from various provincial states at each portal, not many need to be stationed on guard. With these formations, any unexpected insect assaults can be resisted.

Furthermore, the nine cultivator armies cannot advance in a straight line; doing so would allow too many to slip through. The advancement will necessarily stretch out the battlefield as much as possible to cover a vast area.

Simply put, the entire Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race is divided into nine sections, each army responsible for one section. Before advancing, all cultivators must position themselves along the section's edge, ready to move on command. This ensures cleaning the entire Secret Realm of the Insect Race thoroughly and addressing hidden dangers as best as possible.

How to discuss the marching plan is a matter for the upper echelons of the two camps. With battlefield markings, communication among the Nine Provinces cultivators is highly convenient, allowing for coordinated large-scale actions.

The efficiency of the upper echelons was quick, taking only half a day to finalize the plan. Once orders were issued, the Bingzhou position saw countless cultivators flying out to both sides.

From above, streams of light radiated to both sides like fairies scattering like flowers, growing distant.

Every set distance, a squad paused, and further on, a Divine Sea Realm cultivator stood still; this area became their responsibility.

No one issued commands about who should stay or move on, acting according to one's own volition. Above True Lake Realm cultivators, they all had criteria for judgment, no need for anyone to waste words.

Such dispersal of forces would be deadly at the war's onset, yet at this moment, it is the only choice. Adapting different strategies over time maximizes cultivator abilities.

On the way, forces are left, and others continue along the edge of the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race.

Lu Ye moved rightward, flying at the forefront, not because his cultivation is highest. Many cultivators here surpass his level, but because he explored the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race before, Bingzhou gave him a task.

That task is to connect with the neighboring provincial state army, ensuring seamless link of the two sides' formations, where someone there also took on this assignment.

With the line continuously shifting, fewer cultivators follow behind him. Though occasional battles erupt, any Insect Race cannot create large disturbances in face of this mighty cultivator army like locusts swarming.

After flying forward for a whole day, only less than two hundred cultivators remain behind Lu Ye, they then distantly saw a vast stream of light incoming.

The leading Divine Sea Realm cultivator ahead exchanged Mental Consciousness with Lu Ye, both halting, cultivators behind filled in blank areas of the line.

Thus, Bingzhou's and neighboring provincial state's lines have fully unfolded, now just awaiting orders.

The leading Divine Sea Realm cultivator flew over, landing beside Lu Ye, curiously examining him: "Are you Lu Yiye from Righteous Blood Sect, Young Friend Lu?"

Lu Ye silently chewed his elixir pill, preparing for combat; he glanced at him: "Enemy?"

The neighboring provincial state is Leizhou, controlled by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. This Divine Sea Realm, without doubt, is a cultivator from one of its sects. His approach without reason raises Lu Ye's guard.

Though the two camps now cooperate, past grudges don't simply vanish.

Among his camp, Yu Huajin wants him dead, even at the cost of defection. Despite his young age, Lu Ye is very vigilant.

Yet the opponent is Divine Sea Level 7; if truly enemies, Lu Ye doesn't care.

The Divine Sea cultivator chuckled, "Young friend, do you have too many enemies?"

Lu Ye replied nonchalantly, "I can't help it. In my younger days, I offended quite a few people from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. I have to be cautious when encountering strangers."

The man laughed, "Young friend, you're still quite young." Without beating around the bush, he said, "Perhaps you have enemies, but in places like the Spirit Stream battlefield and Cloud River battlefield, conflicts are inevitable. It's through conflict that one grows. In cultivation, where isn't there conflict? We've all come through such battles, and being in the midst of it, we're often not in control. I am Yu Shen of the Myriad Magic Sect, and I have a disciple who once worked with you and spoke very highly of your abilities."

"Myriad Magic Sect..." Lu Ye immediately reacted, "Lui Qing?"

Back when the Unparalleled Continent shattered, there was a member of the squad from the Myriad Magic Sect, precisely Lui Qing. He was also considered one of the Nine Provinces' most elite young talents, achieving impressive rankings in the Cloud River competition and held himself in high esteem.

However, after interacting with Lu Ye on the Unparalleled Continent, he realized he was a bit of a frog in a well, which spurred him to strive even harder.

"He's good!"

Yu Shen said, "In ordinary times, Lui Qing is quite good, but in an era with you, he seems a bit lacking. In comparison, you've already moved far ahead of your peers, making you unattainable for others."

Despite Lui Qing's diligent cultivation over the years, he remains at the True Lake Realm, whereas Lu Ye has reached Divine Sea Level 4.

In terms of cultivation speed, no contemporary young cultivator can match him.

Of course, now on the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side, a person named Li Taibai has emerged, reportedly whose cultivation speed closely follows Lu Yiye. He's another peerless genius.

Yu Shen came to find Lu Ye without any particular purpose.

Lu Ye's reputation precedes him; although still young and only at Divine Sea Level 4, who can underestimate his future? It's said that one day in the Nine Provinces, the Twin Heroes of Bingzhou are destined to shine more brightly than others, and the Nine Provinces will be their domain. So Yu Shen came just to have a casual chat with him.

No matter how the two major camps get along in the future, for now, they're at least not enemies.

The ones Lu Ye knew from the Myriad Magic Sect, besides Lui Qing, included another person, the Tofu Lady, far away in the Blood Refinement World.

Among the many elders of the Righteous Blood Sacred Land, Lu Ye interacted more with Lady Moon, mainly because she often caught him to sell tofu.

He's learned a lot from Lady Moon about how combat cultivators can deal with magic cultivators' attacks and how to swiftly and effectively slay magic cultivators. From this perspective, Lu Ye doesn't have a strong aversion to the Myriad Magic Sect and is even willing to have a casual chat with Yu Shen.

However, the age difference between the two led to them running out of topics, creating a bit of an awkward silence.

Lu Ye, trying to find a topic, said, "I heard that the Myriad Magic Sect once had an extraordinary figure, a woman?"

Yu Shen smiled slightly, "Young friend, you're quite knowledgeable for your age. Nowadays, few know about that elder from our Myriad Magic Sect. Truth be told, our sect's current 1st grade standing is thanks to the solid foundation laid by that elder."

"Where is that predecessor now? Considering the age, she should still be alive, right?"

Yu Shen shook his head, "I don't know, but it's said she's been in seclusion for many years. Whether alive or dead, only the Sect Master and a few people are privileged to know. Actually, not only my Myriad Magic Sect, but over the years, Bingzhou's top sects have always had a few prodigies rise with the times. Many would still be alive if you consider their age, but what they pursue differs from us. So they've mostly entered Life or Death Seclusion to unravel that layer of mystery."

Lu Ye thought to himself, "Sitting in a damn Life or Death Seclusion, they're already out in other domains selling tofu, and their disciples and descendants have no idea..."

But he also understood a few things.

Figures like Lady Moon and Jian Guhong lived in ancient times, from a few hundred to over a thousand years ago. The current generation of disciples and descendants indeed find it difficult to learn about their circumstances.

Those who lived in their era are probably all dead, and in the eyes of subsequent generations, these figures are all sitting in Life or Death Seclusion, and none dare rashly disturb them.

This resulted in the ancestors from each faction being sent to the Blood Refinement World while their families remained oblivious.

There's no need to discuss this with Yu Shen; it would be hard to convince him.

But speaking of which, could he perhaps use the token given by Lady Moon to bring a group of reinforcements from the Myriad Magic Sect to the Blood Refinement World?

Currently, Lu Ye could only pull reinforcements from Mount Tai. He wasn't sure how many could go, but it certainly wouldn't be many. After all, the journey is far, and teleportation inconvenient, so they'd have to select the strongest cultivators.

If he cooperated with the Myriad Magic Sect, they could probably bring more people along.

Chapter 1118 Even More Poisonous

Lu Ye held more tokens than just the one Lady Moon had given him; there were dozens more from various places in the Nine Provinces. Those senior figures hailed from top-grade sects; even if each sent just a few people, the gathered strength would not be underestimated.

Forming a Nine Provinces Allied Forces to expedition against the Blood Refinement World and sweep away injustice and darkness, wouldn't that be good?

However, this was just a vague idea; implementing it wouldn't be simple and would require careful planning.

During idle chat with Yu Shen, time slowly passed.

Until a certain moment, orders were conveyed: the counterattack began!

The array of the Nine Provinces cultivator army had already completely stretched across the edge of the Insect Race Great Secret Realm, leaving almost no gaps. As soon as the orders were given, everyone swiftly advanced forward, slaying all encountered Insect Race creatures.

The True Lake Realm cultivators had a single task: advance in a straight line and clear all obstacles along the way.

But the task of strong cultivators within the Divine Sea Realm was more complex; they needed to continuously patrol a specific area while advancing, resolve opponents that True Lake Realm cultivators found difficult to handle, and reduce casualties as much as possible.

This approach of advancing was somewhat troublesome in the early stage, as the line stretched too long and forces were too dispersed. If a team of True Lake Realm cultivators encountered overly strong Insect Race creatures, it would be hard to cope with, and without timely support from the Divine Sea Realm, some casualties might occur.

But this carpet-like advance had one advantage: it could deal a devastating blow to the Insect Race within the Great Secret Realm, reducing pressure on the cultivators who stayed behind to guard the portal.

Moreover, as time passed, the line would quickly shorten, and forces would become increasingly concentrated, until finally, the Nine Provinces army converged at the center of the Insect Race Great Secret Realm!

At that point, it would be the final decisive battle!

Lu Ye, transformed into a stream of light, flew through the air, occasionally striking down encountered Insect Race creatures, moving almost unhindered.

Currently, there were not many traces of the Insect Race in the outskirts of the Great Secret Realm, and the number of strong Insect Race creatures was not high, making the advance not too difficult.

Even True Lake Realm cultivators formed squads of several people using the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc to establish formations, and could manage even facing Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race creatures as long as their strength wasn't too overwhelming.

It wasn't until most of the day had passed that Lu Ye suddenly heard a piercing long whistle from the side—a call for help.

He immediately changed direction and rushed toward the source of the whistle, responding with a long whistle of his own.

After flying for some time, he saw several figures fleeing in distress toward him, uncertain from which faction they belonged. Though they had formed a formation using the array disc, their strength was not sufficient, currently pursued by a Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race creature. Fortunately, despite being outmatched, they managed to muster enough resistance thanks to the formation's power, and upon hearing Lu Ye's whistle, they hurried to meet him.

As they passed by each other, Lu Ye rushed toward the Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race, even before reaching it, unleashing several saber lights, producing dull crashing sounds, causing the creature to shudder violently and stalling its movement.

The True Lake Realm cultivators were bold enough; after seeing Lu Ye's move, they immediately turned to assist from the side.

However, they had little room to perform, as they only saw the fierce saber light flash, the Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race that had nearly cornered them being split in two with insect blood splattering everywhere.

Without pause, Lu Ye heard other calls for aid and had to quickly rush over to provide support, minimizing the lion's share of the army's losses.

The group stood frozen; among them, a True Lake Level 5 cultivator murmured, "That lord is only at Divine Sea Level 4, right? How can the saber force be so fierce?"

The pursuing Insect Race was quite strong; an ordinary Divine Sea Level 4 couldn't resolve opponents so swiftly, surely requiring a brief skirmish. That's why they immediately wanted to assist after receiving support.

"Divine Sea Level 4, wielding a saber, and so young, it could only be him!" The leading True Lake Level 8 cultivator mused.

The others instantly realized.

A person's name and tree's shadow; the current Lu Ye was no longer the one who could only skirmish at the Spirit Stream and Cloud River levels. A wave of insect disasters had spread his fame throughout the Nine Provinces, reaching heights most cultivators in the Nine Provinces looked up to.

Divine Sea Level 4 cultivation isn't significant; what's essential is that such young Level 4 cultivators are rare, and whether it's the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc or venturing solo within the Insect Race Great Secret Realm, or contributing the unique refinement method of insect blood—all these were great achievements.

It could be said that he alone facilitated this united action of the Nine Provinces cultivator army, single-handedly increasing the army's strength by thirty percent...

Looking through history, who else could accomplish this? Just these two points made the whole Nine Provinces indebted to him.

As the line kept moving inward, calls for help from the True Lake Realm teams continued without end, Lu Ye traveled across the battle line, sometimes fighting alone, sometimes teaming up with other Divine Sea Realm responders, triumphantly.

At a certain moment, as he passed a location, his gaze swept downward, a smile appearing, his body plunging straight down.

Here, a True Lake Realm team was battling a Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race creature. The Insect Race was strong, its emanating aura at Divine Sea Level 5, stronger than his own by a tier.

For other True Lake Realm teams, encountering such an Insect Race would likely prompt calls for aid, but this True Lake Realm team obviously had no such plans; they were fighting their own battle and about to succeed.

When Lu Ye descended, the Divine Sea Realm level Insect Race's carapace on its back was nearly shattered, its body covered with wounds.

The team was well-rounded, with a burly physique cultivator at the front, full of blood Qi, holding firm, capturing most of the Insect Race's attention.

There was a combat cultivator acting swiftly beside the Insect Race, their moves as swift as the wind.

Some sword cultivators wielded flying swords, and each sword light was sharp and fierce.

There were also magic cultivators casting intricate spells one after another.

The ghostly figures of ghost cultivators appeared intermittently, disappearing quickly after a single strike, never lingering for credit.

And then there was a graceful woman standing on a spider demon beast. Her delicate hands formed seals to activate a mysterious secret skill. The enormous spider demon beast beneath her looked menacing as it continuously spewed webs, weaving a net to restrict the movements of the Insect Race.

Lu Ye landed right on the back of this hideous spider. Perhaps due to her complete focus on the Insect Race, the gentle woman did not notice his arrival at all.

It wasn't until a hand mischievously rested on her waist that the woman was startled, instantly triggering her spirit force, and a plume of black mist suddenly enveloped her and Lu Ye.

Lu Ye's eyebrows twitched because, at that moment, a majestic smoke pillar surged skyward from his Talent Tree...

This woman... had become even more poisonous.

A gust of wind approached; the woman had already turned around, sweeping a palm over. Her slender jade hand hid an extremely terrifying strength.

Yet, Lu Ye caught her wrist effortlessly, winking at her: "So enthusiastic?"

The anger on the woman's face gradually subsided, and she said with a resentful expression: "Why didn't you get poisoned to death?"

Lu Ye couldn't help but sigh: "A snake's fangs, a wasp's sting, neither are as poisonous as a woman's heart! I'm lucky I'm immune to all poisons; otherwise, I'd have been poisoned to death by you."

"Serves you right!" Hua Ci glared at him, "Who told you to sneak over here?" She glanced at Amber: "Yiyi, you're just the same; he's trouble, and you didn't warn me."

Yiyi popped out from Amber's body, smiling with her lips pursed: "I forgot."

Hua Ci helplessly shook her head, turned around, and continued to activate her secret skill to fight the enemy alongside the others.

By now, everyone had noticed Lu Ye's arrival, but because of the entanglement with the Insect Race, they couldn't overly divide their attention.

Lu Ye shouted: "Does anyone need help?"

Li Baxian laughed heartily: "Junior Brother, just stand there and watch!"

Lu Ye merely asked casually and had no intention of intervening because this battle was nearing its end.

The six members of Team D-9 were now quite formidable, and their cooperation was seamless. Ordinary True Lake Realm teams might have no good way to handle such an Insect Race, but Team D-9 managed it more than comfortably.

Lu Ye noticed that many colorful mushrooms had grown on the Divine Sea Realm Insect Race, and they were growing rapidly. As the mushrooms grew, the Insect Race's aura correspondingly weakened continuously.

This was obviously Hua Ci's handiwork.

Lu Ye couldn't help but wonder: "Last time I saw you, you summoned a big toad. How did it become a spider this time? When did you switch to the beast-taming faction?"

Hua Ci replied while activating her secret skill: "It's not Beast Taming; it's my Five Poisons Envoy, which can grow with my strength."

"Five Poisons Envoy?" Lu Ye raised an eyebrow, "So there are three more?"

"Want to see?" Hua Ci asked.

Lu Ye declined decisively: "No need!"

A gentle woman with a refined temperament, cultivating with poison is one thing, but now she has developed a Five Poisons Envoy, each one grotesquely hideous. The inheritance Hua Ci obtained back on the Spirit Stream battlefield is quite bizarre.

But undeniably, this inheritance was indeed remarkable. So far, Lu Ye had never encountered such an eerie heritage.

Moreover, she had a mushroom-growing technique capable of unknowingly weakening the enemy's strength, gradually turning a victorious battle momentum into a lethal execution.

The harmonious cooperation and individual prowess of Team D-9 made this battle run smoothly, and Hua Ci's contribution was significant.

After a while, the aura of the Divine Sea Realm Insect Race grew even weaker, and signs of poisoning were evident. Team D-9 handled the situation more easily and deftly.

Distant howls echoed, and Lu Ye turned to look.

Hua Ci perked up: "Go ahead, be careful, don't overreach."

Only then did Lu Ye withdraw his hand from her waist, and after Yiyi returned to Amber, he leaped up, darting straight towards the source of the howls.

A hasty encounter, a brief meeting. The path of cultivation often saw separations, especially when the disparity in each other's powers widened, it became challenging to work together continuously.

Chapter 1119 Advance

The advancement of the Nine Provinces' army encountered little resistance, thanks to the overall excellent quality of the Nine Provinces cultivators.

All of them were True Lake Realm cultivators. Having cultivated to this realm, who hadn't waded through a sea of blood and storm? The environment in the Nine Provinces is not stable; from the Spirit Stream Realm onwards, cultivators must enter the Spirit Stream battlefield to contend with opposing forces.

This remains true into the Cloud River Realm, and later, they join the provincial guard, fighting against others, against the heavens, and against themselves, overcoming obstacles to achieve what they have today.

It could be said that each of them has rich combat experience. Plus, the insect plague has persisted for several years, and everyone is familiar with the attack methods of different Insect Races, making it naturally uncomplicated to handle them now.

However, some casualties are inevitable, which cannot be avoided.

Whether due to reckless bravery, a rush for achievements, or inadequate support from nearby Divine Sea Realm cultivators, various reasons cause death to descend unexpectedly.

But relative to the overall size of the Nine Provinces army, these casualties are insignificant.

The entire outer perimeter of the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race is almost everywhere covered with insect corpses lying on the ground, the peculiar color of insect blood dyeing the earth colorful and green.

After completing his support once again, Lu Ye looked into the distance. Over there stood a giant and hideous figure, towering thirty zhang high.

The giant insect is a more formidable existence than the larger insects. How strong is it exactly? No one knows, for no one has interacted with them to date. But just from their aura, they are definitely comparable to Divine Sea Level 9, and combined with their massive size, they're clearly not to be trifled with.

Yet at this moment, several figures are provoking this giant insect.

As Lu Ye observed, he saw several streaks of flowing light weaving around the giant insect, with powerful spirit force fluctuations continually emanating from there.

Among them were two particularly familiar figures, the sect master and Long Bai.

Pang Zhen, Su Xiu, and Muk Suifeng were not seen around, suggesting they had other tasks at hand.

The responsibility of dealing with this giant insect fell to several Divine Sea Level 9 experts led by Long Bai and the sect master.

With cultivation strength at their level, it could be said they have almost reached the end of their journey, having ample time to refine their lethal moves, all executed with exquisite precision and unrivaled might.

Moreover, their teamwork was extremely proficient. While the giant insect's aura wasn't weak, its enormous size made its movements clumsy. Just a little test by the Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators revealed its superficial strength, making it not difficult to deal with. The only challenge was its incredible defense, requiring more potent offensive means.

This realization put them at ease. Since they started assaulting the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race, they had always been worried about these giant insects, as no one knew their capabilities. But upon understanding, they found their concerns somewhat unwarranted.

Thus, they cooperated, employing various techniques to weaken the giant insect's defenses, and everyone tacitly focused their attacks on the same area for more effective strikes.

The confrontation had been ongoing for some time, and the carapace on the giant insect's neck began to show cracks, on the verge of breaking.

Opportunity came and went briefly. Just as Long Bai was about to deliver a fierce strike, a figure suddenly appeared atop the giant insect's head, followed by a series of crackling explosions. A three-zhang tall crimson figure appeared in everyone's sight.

The figure appeared so abruptly that neither Long Bai and his companions nor the giant insect noticed.

Until that three-zhang tall crimson figure raised an exaggeratedly styled long blade, spirit force surged. The blade suddenly ignited with blazing fire, aiming for the neck of the giant insect, viciously cleaving down!

The bone carapace at the neck of the giant insect, poised to shatter, could not withstand such a cut.

The descension of the long blade only paused momentarily before smoothly slicing through the insect's head. The enormous head tumbled down, spraying insect blood, drenching the just-arrived Long Bai in head and face.

He cursed angrily, wiped his face, and upon reopening his eyes, he saw a familiar figure swiftly retreating in what seemed like a stance of resolving a matter, then leaving with accomplishments and fame hidden.

"Thang Yifeng, your well-taught disciple, do you not intend to control him?" Long Bai wore a furious expression. This was the first giant insect slain by the Bingzhou side, holding significant symbolic meaning. He originally wanted to deliver the strike himself, only to be thwarted at the last moment, making him look rather embarrassed.

He recognized immediately who that sneaky figure was that infiltrated the battlefield.

Such a menacing and fierce aura, along with that iconic cover armor, could belong to none other than the boy from the Righteous Blood Sect.

Brazenly stealing credit right under the elders' noses was excessive.

The sect master remarked nonchalantly, "The child has grown, cannot be controlled."

Long Bai felt helpless, what more could he say? Claim his merit was stolen by a youngster? If stolen, it was because he was late in his action; it was the young one who seized the opportunity.

By now, Lu Ye had already fled ten miles away. It wasn't that he intentionally sought to steal any credit; he merely wished to experience the aura of that giant insect up close. On seeing an opportunity, he couldn't help but act.

To ensure a one-hit kill, he even summoned the Dragon Throne, and fortunately, everything proceeded smoothly.

...

Three days after the Nine Provinces army advanced, some unexpected changes occurred on the battlefield.

When Lu Ye received the transmission to head to a gathering point, many cultivators had already assembled there. Among them were more than a dozen Divine Sea Realm cultivators and at least several hundred True Lake Realm cultivators, and more nearby cultivators were rapidly arriving.

Among the Divine Sea Realm was a familiar face, Nian Yuexian, the highest cultivation level here, naturally commanding the most respect.

Lu Ye stepped forward and asked, "Senior Sister Nian, what's the situation now?"

Nian Yuexian replied, "There is an insect hive ahead, but there's a large gathering of the Insect Race around it, so we need to gather more manpower."

The number of Insect Race gathered was too large, something no single Divine Sea Realm or even a True Lake Realm team could handle. Under these circumstances, the only option was to summon nearby cultivators to unite and achieve success in one strike.

This was the first insect hive encountered as the front line advanced in this direction.

Lu Ye pondered briefly and said, "I'll go take a look."

With that, he leaped forward, heading deeper into the front lines.

Although he had explored the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm before, he had only skirted the edges of this world last time due to being on his own and not daring to expose himself. He truly had no idea what the situation inside the Great Secret Realm was.

Knowing oneself and the enemy ensures victory in a hundred battles. In this current war, gathering intelligence was a priority.

As he sped forward, strangely, he didn't encounter a single Insect Race along the way, an unusual occurrence. Only after flying several dozen miles did he see an insect hive standing ahead, surrounded by a large gathering of the Insect Race.

The Insect Race crowded the periphery of the insect hive like a well-trained army, standing vigilantly ready.

He ventured a bit further, spreading out his Mental Consciousness to investigate the situation around the insect hive.

Under normal circumstances, the spirit force fluctuations from Lu Ye at this distance would attract the Insect Race, yet Lu Ye found that although the insects showed signs of unrest, none actively charged forward, remaining in place.

Lu Ye frowned. The situation seemed strange. It was known that the Insect Race had little spiritual intelligence, acting purely on instinct, whether weak or at the Divine Sea Realm.

Such a vast number gathering outside the insect hive, forming a seemingly impregnable defense, was unusual.

However, it might be reasonable if guarding the insect hive was an instinct, taking precedence over spirit force fluctuations.

After a brief investigation, gaining some understanding of the Insect Race's strength here, Lu Ye returned.

More cultivators had gathered by then.

Nian Yuexian was not inclined to give orders, having been alone guarding a pass for many years without any subordinates. Lu Ye once took orders from her during his time at the Cangyan Mountain Pass.

But now, since she had the highest cultivation, everyone naturally looked to her for guidance. Reluctantly, she had to take charge, assigning tasks to the Divine Sea Realm gathered there.

Fortunately, there was no need for any complex strategies. A straightforward division of forces into several routes for a direct assault would suffice.

Half an hour later, twenty Divine Sea Realm cultivators and over a thousand True Lake Realm had amassed, enough to take the insect hive ahead. Thus, at Nian Yuexian's command, all cultivators divided into three groups and charged towards the insect hive.

Lu Ye was positioned in the left route, alongside other Divine Sea Realm cultivators, whose cultivation varied, the lowest being Divine Sea Level 2, and the highest Level 7; his Level 4 was considered mid-range.

But even those with higher cultivation didn't underestimate him at all.

Lu Ye's fearsome reputation for slaughtering enemies across realms since the Spirit Stream Realm had left a deep impression, such that almost all Divine Sea Realm cultivators in Bingzhou knew not to judge him by his realm alone.

This was something nine out of ten geniuses in Nine Provinces history had not achieved.

The three groups steadily advanced. Gradually, the insect hive came into view, and the Insect Race gathered outside it became clearly visible.

Cultivators quietly stirred their spirit force, readying for battle.

Combat cultivators and physique cultivators were at the front, ghost cultivators at the rear, and magic cultivators held the back position.

As the three groups closed in, the Insect Race outside the hive showed obvious agitation, yet none made a move, still surrounding their hive like stars circling the moon.

From the central route, Nian Yuexian's flying sword darted out, its hum rising as magic spells rained down upon the insect swarm.

At the same time, the Insect Race quickly launched a counterattack.

Although most of the Insect Race lacked long-range attacks, a small portion did, their assaults resembling more innate abilities than spells.

Chapter 1120 The Final Insect Hive

For example, some insectoid creatures resembling spiders can spit out webs with astonishing stickiness, making it difficult for a cultivator to escape once entangled.

There are also insectoid creatures similar to porcupines, whose quills can be shot out with great force.

In some respects, insectoid creatures share certain traits with demon beasts, and in many ways, there are striking similarities between the two. However, all insectoid creatures have one distinctive feature, which is a solid carapace covering their body surface, something most demon beasts do not possess.

Therefore, even if the spiritual intelligence of insectoid creatures is low, they can pose a certain degree of threat to cultivators if not dealt with carefully.

In the mutual attack between the cultivators' army and the insectoid creatures, the insectoid side suffered heavy casualties. Compared to the cultivators' side with a variety of attack methods, the insectoid creatures' tactics seem rather weak, and such counterattack strategies reaps no advantage.

After some aggressive attacks, numerous insectoid creatures were annihilated. Except for a few careless ones among the True Lake Realm who were injured, everyone else remained unscathed.

As if realizing that continuing this way would lead to total annihilation, the swarm guarding the periphery of the insect hive finally couldn't hold back and charged forward against the cultivators' attacks.

Most of the insectoid creatures were slain on their way, and the few who rushed to the front line could achieve little. The physique cultivators and combat cultivators at the forefront of the formation were not to be trifled with. On the left, center, and right formations, twenty Divine Sea Realm cultivators worked simultaneously, using various means to kill the insectoid creatures, piling their bodies high.

Nian Yuexian's flying sword roared back and forth, sometimes transforming into a sword dragon, sometimes condensing into a single strike. Even the giant-grade insectoid creatures couldn't withstand her flying sword strikes.

Troops advanced steadily on three fronts, neither fast nor slow, steadily clearing the insectoid creatures in their line of sight. The battle lasted less than an hour before it ended.

It was a significant victory for the cultivators.

Looking around, the ground was littered with insect corpses, and even the towering insect hive became dilapidated.

Although the surface-dwelling insectoid creatures were thoroughly cleaned out, under the detection of Mental Consciousness, it was still possible to clearly sense the hidden presence of many insectoid creatures deep underground.

Obviously, these insectoid creatures were hiding inside the insect hive.

An insect hive is not just the part standing aboveground; that is only a small portion. The grandeur of the insect hive truly lies underground, where the main body is hidden from view.

During the recent major battle, many insectoid creatures retreated into the insect hive and vanished, and it was clear they were hiding inside now.

Having dealt with the visible enemies, naturally, the hidden ones must also be dealt with, only then can the mission be completed fully.

Many Divine Sea Realm cultivators gathered around Nian Yuexian, who made some brief arrangements, leading them along the passageways inside the insect hive.

Twenty Divine Sea Realm cultivators surged in succession, followed by teams of True Lake Realm cultivators.

Upon entering the insect hive, a dark, cold atmosphere hit them, along with an extremely unpleasant odor.

Lu Ye had experience delving into insect hives before, whether it was on the Spirit Stream battlefield or in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, he had ventured into the depths of the hives. However, the previous hives he encountered were naturally not of the same caliber as this one.

Under the detection of Mental Consciousness, the inner passages of the insect hive seemed intricate and numerous, with many insectoid creatures lurking in these forks, lying in wait.

Even with the Divine Sea Realm's Mental Consciousness, it was impossible to clearly map the routes underground, compounded by the constraints of the terrain. Therefore, there was only one method to eliminate the underground insectoid creatures.

Split up and act separately.

Each person took a different path, and in less than a cup of tea's time, Lu Ye found himself all alone.

As he proceeded, searching and slaying insectoid creatures as he went, twisting and turning, Lu Ye couldn't tell exactly how deep he was.

However, with a sudden flash of Mental Consciousness, he could sense the presence of human race cultivators nearby, with battles sporadically breaking out, spirit force surging.

This carpet-style search was undoubtedly time-consuming, but to ensure there were not too many escapees, they could only act this way, at least to fundamentally destroy the insect hive. Otherwise, it would continue spawning new insectoid creatures endlessly.

More than half an hour later, just when Lu Ye was still continuing his search, a Mental Consciousness suddenly undulated from a certain direction.

Someone found the core of the insect hive!

Lu Ye immediately changed direction, tracking the source of the Mental Consciousness, traversing numerous branches in the process.

As he hurried along, intense spirit fluctuations came from that direction, indicating that the Divine Sea Realm cultivators were engaged in a struggle with the insectoid creatures.

By the time Lu Ye finally arrived at the location, the battle was almost over.

This was a large chamber, with fleshy walls and floors, giving the sensation of entering the stomach of some creature. The fleshy walls were covered with various-sized nodules, within which insectoid creatures were in the process of hatching.

The core area of the insect hive was always guarded by the hive's protectors. These protectors were generally the strongest members of the swarm, each being giant-grade. From birth, they guarded the core area and would never leave until death.

The number of protectors seemed quite large, yet under the coordination of numerous Divine Sea Realm cultivators, they were still slain until the blood flowed in rivers.

Nian Yuexian had arrived early, her flying sword sweeping through, invincible.

Lu Ye hurriedly joined the battle.

In no time, all the insectoid guardians had been completely exterminated. Among the Divine Sea Realm cultivators who had arrived, a few were injured, but fortunately, the injuries weren't severe.

The main issue is that for those in the Divine Sea realm, this kind of environment is ultimately somewhat constrained, making it difficult to fully utilize their learned skills.

In the very center of the chamber stands a gigantic tumor, which is the core of the entire insect hive. Inside it contains a vitality core, the source of energy for the Insect Race's incubation.

Nian Yuexian stepped forward, broke open the tumor, and extracted all the vitality cores, effectively cutting off the power source of the insect hive. Even if left unattended, it would no longer be able to hatch the Insect Race.

Of course, it was best to destroy the entire chamber to truly eradicate the problem.

This task fell to Lu Ye and another Divine Sea realm magic cultivator. Both had spirit force of the fire element, which made them most suited for this kind of scorched earth task.

A moment later, as everyone exited the chamber, Lu Ye and the magic cultivator each used their methods, setting ablaze roaring flames that quickly spread an acrid smell.

Nian Yuexian's Mental Consciousness fluctuated, sending out an audio transmission, prompting all the cultivators still underground to retreat along the original path.

Then, they regrouped and continued advancing.

The advance of the Nine Provinces cultivator army encountered no significant setbacks; any giant insects encountered were preemptively handled by those at Divine Sea Level 9, and any insect hives encountered were easily removed.

The course of the war was overwhelmingly in favor of the human race.

This was undoubtedly as everyone had hoped and was perfectly reasonable.

Given the immense size of the Nine Provinces cultivators, with a full eighty percent of the elite split into nine armies charging into the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, if they couldn't easily resolve the problems, that would indeed be troubling.

The pace of the advance was getting faster and faster.

Mainly because as they progressed, the original encirclement of the entire Insect Race's Great Secret Realm kept getting shorter, concentrating the cultivators' strength even more.

With more people, defeating enemies naturally became easier.

Since the start of the third phase of the counterattack against the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, half a month later, various teams of differing sizes gradually made their way to the central position of the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm.

Upon reaching this point, everyone stopped.

More teams converged, and unanimously halted their steps.

A day later, the Nine Provinces army had already formed an encirclement around the center of the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm. Thus, the nine armies had officially united, signifying a thorough carpet-style purge of the entire Insect Race's Great Secret Realm. During this half-month period, the number of exterminated Insect Race was beyond calculation; even counting the giant insects, several dozens were annihilated.

The number of removed insect hives exceeded a hundred.

At this point in the war, victory seemed imminent, but it wasn't over yet, because at the very heart of this Insect Race's Great Secret Realm stood a massive insect hive.

It was much larger than any insect hive encountered along the way. If the previous insect hives were akin to thatched cottages, this one was a grand palace, completely incomparable.

If it hadn't been witnessed with one's own eyes, it would be hard to imagine that an insect hive could feel so majestic.

But that's the reality.

While a larger insect hive doesn't necessarily mean stronger insects, everyone recognized that beneath this hive, many massive insect-level beings might be hidden.

This was the final barrier in the counterattack against the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm; once this hive was removed, it would signify the complete victory of the Nine Provinces army.

Having come this far, it was natural to strive for perfection.

Outside the insect hive, it was empty, with not a single trace of the Insect Race.

The leaders from the Nine Provincial States gathered in one place, discussing their next strategy: how to most effectively remove this insect hive and how to minimize their own casualties, these were all matters they needed to consider.

On the Bingzhou frontline, Lu Ye joined Team D-9, together gazing at the gigantic insect hive, marveling at the sight.

Li Baxian said, "A hive this large should have plenty of insects inside, right?"

"Who knows? Only by going in can we see," Lu Ye shook his head. Interestingly, when confronting previous insect hives, his Mental Consciousness could more or less detect some hidden presence of the Insect Race.

But in front of this final insect hive, his Mental Consciousness showed emptiness, without any traces of living beings, almost as if there were no Insect Race underground at all.

Of course, it's also possible that the Insect Race were deeply hidden.

"Once this insect hive is removed, the counterattack can be considered a perfect conclusion, what plans does the junior apprentice brother have next?"

"Diligent cultivation?" Lu Ye replied casually, though he had a vague premonition that the day when he would return to the Blood Refinement World was not too far off. Although there were no clear signs, nor any call from Heaven's Augury, it was just an intuition.

Therefore, he had much to accomplish, especially if he needed to use the tokens gifted by the seniors to recruit more powerful allies; he needed to think it through clearly.

But before that, he needed to figure out one thing: how many people he could bring with him upon returning to the Blood Refinement World this time.