

Humanity 1121

Chapter 1121 Decisive Battle

Teleportation consumes energy, and the amount of energy consumed depends on two factors.

Distance and volume.

The farther the distance, the larger the volume, the more energy is consumed, and vice versa.

Take Lu Ye himself, for example. Now that he's in the Divine Sea Realm, compared to when he was in the Cloud River Realm, activating the teleportation array requires consuming much more of his own spirit force.

Because in terms of volume, his cultivation has grown from the Cloud River Realm to the Divine Sea Realm, and the growth in strength is also a change in volume; the energy consumption is naturally incomparable.

From Nine Provinces to the Blood Refinement World, the unknown distance is so vast that the energy required for teleportation must be enormous; this is also why when he returned to Nine Provinces last time, Dao Thirteen was left behind, to save energy.

Thinking back, he and Ying Wuji along with nine others were teleported by the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury to the shattered Unparalleled Continent, but at that time the Unparalleled Continent shouldn't have been too far from Nine Provinces, because shortly after they resolved the issues of the Unparalleled Continent, the shattered continent merged with the Cloud River battlefield and became a part of it.

Moreover, at that time they were all Cloud River Realm cultivators, the volume wasn't large, so the consumption wasn't too great, thus Heaven's Augury could easily send them there.

But this time, if Lu Ye wants to bring reinforcements to the Blood Refinement World, they must be in the Divine Sea Realm, and the higher the level, the better, making the consumption difficult to estimate.

Lest he painstakingly gathers a large batch of helpers on this side, only to find that Heaven's Augury can teleport a limited number of personnel over, it would be futile.

But how to determine how many people he can bring over? Lu Ye doesn't know, and this matter can't be asked of others.

He can only hope that when the time is right, Heaven's Augury will give him some indication.

"Cultivation requires effort, but one must not disappoint a fair lady," Li Baxian whispered, glancing intentionally or unintentionally in Hua Ci's direction, "Junior Sister Hua Ci is a good girl; Junior Brother should make a move when the time is right."

Talking about matters of romance, Lu Ye couldn't help but look at Li Baxian with a complex expression.

Should he give Fourth Senior Brother a prior notice, tell him that Senior Brother is not dead yet, otherwise the seniority could become somewhat confusing...

"Is there something on my face?" Li Baxian touched his face.

Lu Ye shook his head: "Nothing, just thinking about some things."

It's best not to say anything for now, and besides, this isn't something for outsiders to interfere with. When the boat reaches the bridge, it will straighten naturally. He believes Senior Brother won't be unreasonable.

Moreover, judging from the current situation, Sister-in-Law seems to be somewhat letting things take their course; otherwise, she wouldn't let Feng Yuechan always stay by Li Baxian's side. If she, as a mother, doesn't worry, why should he?

Meanwhile, the sect masters of Nine Provinces had already agreed on a specific plan, and a powerful voice came from over there: "All Level 9 cultivators, come and gather!"

This is obviously meant to gather the strongest batch of cultivators, to form an elite force; the environment inside the insect hive is not suitable for massive personnel entry. In such an environment, deploying the most elite personnel to resolve issues is the best choice.

In an instant, figures flew over there from the nine armies, each exuding an impressive aura.

Soon, more than two hundred people were gathered.

Although Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators aren't exactly mysterious dragons, ordinary cultivators rarely get to see them. But at this moment, more than two hundred of them gathered together.

Except for a few Level 9 cultivators left in Nine Provinces, all others are here.

This is also the top fighting force of Nine Provinces.

After a brief exchange, the more than two hundred figures disappeared into the insect hive.

This final battle, Lu Ye, a Divine Sea Level 4, is certainly not qualified to participate, even those Level 8 cultivators can only wait.

It's not bad.

After a war lasting a full month, the cultivators are indeed tired, and it's a good chance to rest, waiting for those Level 9 cultivators to solve the final problem before returning triumphantly.

After this, the insect disaster will be completely resolved, and it's expected that Nine Provinces will soon recover its vital energy.

Next, the cultivators will face practical issues. After this deep cooperation between the two camps, how should the camp positions be established in the future?

Should they maintain the previous endless confrontation, or lay down arms and negotiate peace, with mutual non-aggression?

This is probably unrealistic because cultivators need various resources for cultivation, and resources are obtained by earning them, and fighting for them. So a cultivator's life is destined not to lack battles and disputes.

With such a large number of cultivators in Nine Provinces, each has their own pursuits and grievances. Wanting them to coexist peacefully is wishful thinking.

Ultimately, these matters are the concerns for the high-level figures of the two camps. For those whose identity and strength aren't at that level, considering these is meaningless.

Time passed, and not until more than two hours later did an extremely faint fluctuation of spirit force emerge from deep underground, so faint that only those with the Mental Consciousness of the Divine Sea Realm could detect it vaguely.

Lu Ye knew that the final battle between the human race and the Insect Race had erupted, and the battleground must be very deep, so the commotion on the surface wasn't significant.

Though the ripple of the battle was faint, it was chaotic, after all, with so many in the Divine Sea Level 9 involved, the battle must be intense.

Everyone thought this would be a battle with little suspense.

The Nine Provinces had dispatched their most elite force of over two hundred people, foolproof in principle, but as time passed, more and more people sensed something wrong.

Because since the battle began, there was no sign of stopping, under perception, there was always an extremely faint aftershock of combat coming from the depths underground.

This undoubtedly indicated how fierce the battle was...

A day passed, two days passed, three days passed...

The fighting continued, finally, someone couldn't hold back and contacted their sect's Level 9 to inquire, and the feedback received was shocking.

The situation was not as the Nine Provinces cultivators imagined, a sweeping victory, but had fallen into a state of extreme stalemate, even very unfavorable for the Nine Provinces cultivators, because the opponents they encountered this time were too bizarre.

So bizarre that even the Level 9 cultivators found it difficult to inflict substantial harm on them.

Most crucially, all the cultivators who delved deep underground were trapped, and there had even been some casualties!

These were Level 9 cultivators, losing any of them was a tremendous loss, something unspeakably disastrous if it happened to a particular sect.

The news spread, causing an uproar in the cultivator army, with an atmosphere of panic and unease enveloping the entire army.

It must be known that those who delved into the insect hive this time were among the Nine Provinces' top combat powers. If anything happened to them, the blow to the Nine Provinces cultivation world would be unprecedented.

Not to the extent of breaking heritage, there's still Level 8, Level 7 if Level 9s are lost, but if that group truly got wiped out, it would take decades for the Nine Provinces cultivation world to regain its vital energy.

After all, not every Divine Sea Realm can promote to Level 9, even considering Nine Provinces' vast size, there are only so many Level 9s alive now, because, in the Nine Provinces' broad environment, the later stages of the Divine Sea Realm become increasingly difficult to ascend, especially after Level 7, where each level becomes like a chasm, and it's not just a matter of sufficient accumulation to advance smoothly.

Lu Ye hadn't reached that level yet, so he couldn't feel it, but most cultivators, upon reaching Level 7, could clearly feel that there was an invisible force, in the depths, suppressing the growth of one's strength, yet to this day, no one can make sense of what kind of force it exactly is.

Hence, in an environment like the Nine Provinces, every cultivator able to ascend to Level 9 is like a dragon among men.

The news of the battle inside the insect hive spread rapidly, and cultivators below the Divine Sea Realm were helpless in the face of such a situation; the only thing they could do was wait.

The Divine Sea Realm cultivators divided into two factions: one wanting to deploy forces to support those in Level 9, at least rescuing them, mostly comprising sect cultivators having their own Divine Sea Realm fallen among them.

The other faction advocated watching and waiting; if even those in Level 9 couldn't solve the issue, then others going into the insect hive would also be in vain.

For the first time, signs of division appeared in the Nine Provinces army, which had been united for a month.

Cultivators are also human, and naturally have human weaknesses, everything is fine when progressing smoothly, but once setbacks occur, a variety of opinions and stubbornness surface.

It can't be said that any side is wrong, as each has its judgment and reasoning, and such debate is not a confrontation between two camps; even within the same camp, there are differing opinions.

But everyone knew that a plan had to be made quickly, for while they argued here, those Level 9 cultivators below were still struggling, and no one knew how long they could hold on.

"We can't go!" one Divine Sea Realm exclaimed loudly, "If they had deemed support necessary, they would have already sent word for help. With more than two hundred people and none sending any call for aid, it shows that the situation below isn't as simple as we think. They must also believe that support is useless, recklessly going in will only increase casualties, so we absolutely cannot go to support."

This statement made a lot of sense and received quite a bit of support.

"Furthermore, it hasn't come to that point yet, those Fellow Daoists might still have a chance to break out. If we go for support rashly, we would only add to the chaos."

More people fell into deep thought.

But soon enough, someone countered, arguing incessantly.

In the gathering place of the Bingzhou cultivators, Lu Ye pointed his finger on the battlefield marking, intending to message the sect master or Senior Sister Nian to inquire about the situation but hesitated, fearing to distract them.

He finally abandoned the idea of messaging and stood up, heading directly toward the insect hive.

Whatever was happening below, he would know by seeing it firsthand.

No matter what choices others make, he had made up his mind. If the sect master and Senior Sister Nian were indeed in an adverse environment, he naturally would go to support them; it was impossible to sit idly by. If the situation wasn't as dire as imagined, he was confident that, given his strength, he wouldn't be a burden to them and could play some role.

Chapter 1122 Advancing Instead of Retreating

As soon as Lu Ye moved, he immediately attracted the attention of many Divine Sea Realm cultivators, and soon some silently followed.

The number of people grew.

Those Divine Sea Realm cultivators who insisted on observing the situation did not obstruct them. They could express their own opinions and adhere to their own judgments, but they wouldn't rashly interfere with others' actions; this is a principle of dealing with people and things.

Lu Ye didn't pay attention to those following him. For him, even being truly alone didn't matter.

After rushing into the insect hive, he immediately found a passage and swept downward.

Upon entering the insect hive, he noticed some unusual things.

This insect hive was fundamentally different from the ones he had encountered before.

Previously, the passages inside the insect hives were simple Insect Paths, which the Insect Race created underground to facilitate their entry and exit.

But here, the Insect Paths were surrounded by a layer of flesh wall.

Flesh walls are usually only seen at the core of an insect hive; they aren't present in the Insect Paths, yet this insect hive's paths were covered in flesh walls, which was quite unusual.

While dashing, he drew out the Boulder Mountain Saber, dragging it along as he went, its sharp blade slicing the flesh wall, releasing a foul stench.

Lu Ye inspected his Talent Tree, finding no abnormalities, indicating that those smells were merely unpleasant and not poisonous.

Nothing else leaked from the flesh walls, seeming no different from the flesh walls he had seen in the cores of other insect hives.

He continued to move deeper, with a large number of cultivators following behind.

Along the way, there were no traces of battle, nor did they encounter any members of the Insect Race.

This was different from other insect hives, where the paths inside often had Insect Race ambushes, requiring cultivators to fight their way through as they went deeper, but here, it was smooth and unobstructed.

However, Lu Ye felt a sense of unease.

After all, if things really were this smooth, the Level 9 cultivators would have resolved the issue long ago.

Lu Ye still didn't know what kind of enemy they had encountered.

After advancing for only a few moments, a sudden change occurred.

The flesh walls around him started rapidly wriggling, then swelling and growing, filling the entire Insect Path in the blink of an eye.

Lu Ye felt immediately wrapped in a piece of rotten meat, his mouth and nose filled with the foul smell, surrounded by a soft and squishy sensation.

Cries of alarm rang out everywhere.

Not only was he enveloped in flesh walls, but the cultivators who were following him deeper inside also experienced this.

In an instant, chaotic spirit force surged and fluctuated as everyone used their techniques, trying to break free from the grip of the flesh walls.

Lu Ye desperately unsheathed his saber; as spirit force surged, he executed the third stance of the Tyrannical Saber, Lotus Sun.

Dazzling light burst forth, sharp saber light exploding like a blooming lotus, cutting through the Void with him at the center.

The bound feeling vanished instantly; the flesh wall enveloping him was immediately cleared away, leaving a huge cavity.

However, just as he escaped the predicament and before he could take further actions, the cavity was filled again by the writhing flesh walls, and the sense of pressure and binding returned.

The force of the binding was immense, and it felt as if he was gripped in a giant hand, his breathing becoming labored.

Such binding strength would likely cause anyone below the Divine Sea Realm to instantly explode; even Divine Sea Realm cultivators with lower cultivation or insufficient physical strength would be in trouble.

Lu Ye sensed several instances of life fading behind him, accompanied by some brief screams.

Misfortune had already befallen some.

This was truly an unsuccessful start; they had intended to support those Level 9 cultivators in fierce battle, but upon entering the insect hive, they already suffered losses.

Lu Ye was temporarily safe, but he could clearly sense the binding force growing stronger. If he didn't find a way to escape the grip of the flesh walls, sooner or later he wouldn't be able to withstand it.

In fact, the best response to such a crisis would be to summon the Dragon Throne, but he was now completely enveloped by flesh walls, with no space to summon it, and the pathways in the insect hive weren't wide enough to make effective use of the Dragon Throne.

"Retreat, quickly retreat!" someone shouted from behind.

After only brief contact, everyone realized the seriousness of the situation; while the flesh walls could be destroyed, their rapid regrowth continued to envelop them. Given such circumstances, forget about penetrating the insect hive to provide support; after awhile, even self-preservation would be challenging.

So to survive, they had no choice but to retreat quickly.

Lu Ye didn't retreat; not only did he not retreat, he instead advanced forward. Yet, even the power of the Tyrannical Saber's third stance only afforded him a brief moment, after which he was once again enveloped by the flesh walls.

At this moment, he wondered if the sect master encountered such a thing when he entered.

They likely didn't; otherwise, they would have sent messages to inform those outside.

Since the sect master didn't encounter such an attack, but his group did, this differential treatment was clearly not the insect hive's instinct but a consciousness control in action!

This consciousness clearly doesn't want more people to come and make trouble, so it wants the newcomers to back off.

This is also the reason Lu Ye advances instead of retreating; no matter what that consciousness is, if it wants him to retreat, then he must advance. At this moment, only by going against that consciousness can he have a chance to succeed.

However, there is one thing to be thankful for: the supporting cultivators hadn't gone too far in before the flesh wall reacted.

If they had really gone too deep, there might not even be space left to retreat, leading to heavy casualties.

Is that consciousness compassionate? Clearly not. There's only one explanation for this situation.

The consciousness doesn't dare to bind too many cultivators with the flesh wall, so it attacked when the supporting cultivators had not yet gone deep.

Why is that?

Lu Ye thinks that if he can figure out this problem, it will greatly aid the upcoming actions.

His Mental Consciousness spreads out, monitoring all directions, while he keeps wielding his saber, trudging forward with difficulty.

In this constant struggle against the flesh wall, Lu Ye discovered something: the flow of life force.

Cultivators are very sensitive to life force, especially Lu Ye, who refined a drop of Sacred Blood in the Blood River of the Blood Refinement World, gaining the Blood Race's heritage, and is thus much more sensitive to life force than ordinary cultivators, since most blood techniques are performed based on one's life force, especially the Blood Refining Technique.

The flesh wall is destroyed but can quickly regenerate, obviously replenished by life force. In other words, by continuously destroying the flesh wall, he is depleting the life force stored in the insect hive.

He suddenly realizes, no wonder the consciousness doesn't want too many cultivators going deep inside, because each cultivator's destruction of the flesh wall is a depletion of life force.

The sect master and the others are deep within the insect hive fighting an unknown enemy, causing significant damage to the flesh wall, which needs to be replenished by life force.

The consciousness that can trap the most elite group of the Nine Provinces likely relies on the enormous, endless life force, and doesn't want it wasted on other cultivators, hence it tries to make them retreat.

Lu Ye vaguely feels he's grasped a key point.

Life force, perhaps, is the deciding factor in this battle!

As he trudged forward through the insect hive passage, outside, many cultivators gathered, many with lingering fear on their faces.

Having cultivated for so many years, they had never encountered such a bizarre scenario. Just now, if they hadn't retreated quickly, they might have been utterly annihilated.

Even so, a few fell in the passage.

"Did everyone make it out?" someone asked.

"Someone's still in there."

The situation was very clear because there were fluctuations of spirit force coming from within.

The group looked around and immediately understood who was still in the passage.

Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect!

This quick judgment was naturally because Lu Ye was leading, making a strong impression, and now that those still alive had retreated, he was the only one missing.

His whereabouts were already very clear.

"Is he... unwilling to retreat?" Under their perception, they didn't sense any intent of Lu Ye to retreat, instead, he was slowly advancing.

Such a bold and skilled move couldn't help but evoke amazement.

But this reckless act was clearly not going to end well, and even if he succeeded, how much assistance could one person really offer to those at Level 9?

For a moment, everyone was filled with anxiety. They had originally planned to delve into the insect hive to provide support, but now they couldn't, which was truly embarrassing.

Inside the insect hive passage, Lu Ye stopped his actions.

This isn't feasible. The position of the sect master and his group is unknown in depth; at his current speed, how long would it take to reach them? Moreover, this would exhaust his spirit force, and he might perish from exhaustion before even arriving.

He needs to think of another way.

As soon as he stopped, the flesh walls around him rapidly enveloped him, seemingly intent on swallowing him whole.

Lu Ye became ruthless in his heart; then let's see, who will devour whom.

If his previous speculation was correct, then even if he doesn't reach the battlefield where the sect master and others are, he can still play his part.

Allowing the flesh walls to bind him, he activated the power of his Talent Tree.

In an instant, invisible roots spread from his body surface, penetrating into the flesh wall.

At that moment, Lu Ye's eyes shot open because he clearly sensed how abundant the life force contained within the flesh wall was.

In the present Nine Provinces, the most abundantly life-empowered individuals are undoubtedly those Level 9 physique cultivators, such as the sect master.

Yet even the life force within the sect master's body pales in comparison to what Lu Ye is currently sensing. They are utterly incomparable.

Not only is it vast, but this life force also gives a different impression as if it transcends the realm of Lu Ye's understanding, an existence above the Divine Sea Realm!

Chapter 1123 The Final Battlefield

The life force contained within the flesh wall is evidently a more mysterious form. Compared to normal life force, it's like the difference between water and ice. Although fundamentally the same, the life force in the flesh wall is much more refined and exquisite.

This might be why it can quickly multiply and repair the flesh wall.

An insect hive, as such an entity, inherently stores a vast amount of life force. This is the energy source for the insect race's incubation; every insect hive contains a vitality core.

Now, this life force is so refined and exquisite, naturally making it difficult to handle.

Lu Ye isn't sure what exactly the sect master and the others are facing, but judging from the changes in the flesh wall, their opponents likely possess such characteristics. Otherwise, the top practitioners of the Nine Provinces wouldn't be in such a predicament.

If he can deplete this life force, it could alleviate some pressure for the sect master and the others.

This is why Lu Ye surmised that even if he doesn't go to the battlefield, he can still provide help to the sect master and the others by staying here and acting appropriately.

His method is to devour!

He uses the power of his Talent Tree to devour, which is his forte.

In an instant, an endless stream of life force is absorbed through the roots of the Talent Tree and injected into Lu Ye's body. Upon internal observation, large clouds of gray mist immediately ignite on the Talent Tree.

It's not that this life force is toxic; it's just that, being an external power, it must be converted into Lu Ye's pure energy through the burning of the Talent Tree.

The restrictive force of the surrounding flesh wall also continuously strengthens, forcing Lu Ye to activate the Lotus Sun every so often to secure enough breathing space and time for himself.

The Tyrannical Saber 3rd Movement grows more powerful with each move, and correspondingly, the consumption increases as well.

However, with the devouring and absorption by the Talent Tree, the spirit force Lu Ye expends replenishes rapidly, with even a large surplus remaining.

This cycle repeats endlessly.

Until one moment, when Lu Ye once again activates the Lotus Sun, breaking the tight constraints of the surrounding flesh wall, the area turns spacious and empty.

The flesh wall ceased to regenerate, and not only that, even the area beneath his feet, originally occupied by the flesh wall, rapidly dissipates, revealing the passageway's original form.

Lu Ye's eyelids droop slightly, this sudden change underscores a certainty in his mind.

The previous changes in the flesh wall were all controlled by a consciousness.

But as he employs the power of his Talent Tree, that consciousness recognizes the bizarreness of his methods, knowing it cannot confine him and would only have its own power absorbed, thus it ceases to resist forcibly.

Lu Ye turns to look around, the passage behind him is completely filled with flesh wall, and the passage ahead is the same. Only the area where he stands, roughly three zhang in length, displays the original look of the underground passage.

It seems as though he is trapped here.

But how could this truly confine him?

Holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, he steps forward. If the mountain won't come to me, I'll go to the mountain.

The flesh wall ahead starts wriggling and dissipating as he steps forward, disappearing bit by bit with each step. Conversely, the flesh wall behind begins to regenerate and grow, always leaving him with just a three zhang range of free space.

It looks as if the flesh wall has truly developed its own consciousness, continually retreating with his advance. Even when Lu Ye changes his speed, the front and rear flesh walls keep pace with the synchronized diminishing and growing.

Lu Ye gains an understanding.

This isn't out of fear of him; it is a silent invitation!

Inviting him into the true battlefield, that hidden consciousness understands that mere flesh walls can no longer restrain him. To deal with him, he must be brought into the battlefield.

This aligns perfectly with Lu Ye's intentions. He was initially worried about finding the correct path in the winding underground passage, but since the opponent is extending an invitation, finding the way is no longer a concern.

He just needs to follow the direction where the flesh wall dissipates.

His speed increases, and Lu Ye can clearly feel the battle fluctuations drawing closer and closer.

Until a moment when he suddenly charges into a vast space. Instantly, the roar of turbulent spirit force comes from all directions. In his vision, figures shuttle back and forth, various mystical techniques bloom relentlessly, creating a lively scene.

Before Lu Ye can observe this battlefield, the sound of something shattering comes from the side, immediately followed by a swift, sharp aura attacking.

He quickly turns his head and sees a mantis insect race brandishing its mantis saber, striking at him.

This mantis insect race is noticeably larger than those he had encountered before, and under the flickering light, he can clearly see several intricate patterns on its body. Even the carapace on its back glows with a faint metallic sheen.

Not far away, on the flesh wall, is a ruptured flesh sac, like a scar on the flesh wall, but it is rapidly mending.

This is clearly a newly hatched Insect, and its aura is actually at the level of Divine Sea Level 8, which is somewhat illogical.

Because while hatching is simple, the growth of the Insect Race has a gradual process. It's impossible for it to have such powerful strength right out of the egg. If that were the case, there wouldn't be so many low-level Insect creatures.

Lu Ye wasn't sure what this big bug was up to, but anything hatched in this place was obviously a bodyguard of the insect hive.

Moreover, it was specifically aimed at him; otherwise, there would be no reason for it to appear at such a close distance.

The confidence of that consciousness in placing him on the battlefield must have stemmed from this!

The flesh wall couldn't deal with Lu Ye, and was even restrained by him, but these bodyguard insects could.

If it were any other Divine Sea Level 4 being ambushed by an insect bodyguard like this, they might really have bad luck, but that consciousness clearly underestimated Lu Ye's skills.

The Boulder Mountain Saber thunderously unsheathed, and in the next moment, the sound of metal clashing rang out as the mantis saber of the Mantis Insect was blocked. Following the motion, Lu Ye pushed, sending the Mantis Insect reeling, its center wide open.

The next moment, an endless stellar space unfolded, and stars fell from the sky.

In the blink of an eye, the Mantis Insect was struck dozens of times, blood gushing, yet it didn't die. Its already ferocious aura became even more violent, and a rapid and shrill screech poured from its mouthparts, as though it was enduring great pain, its figure staggering drunkenly.

Although its bodily injuries were severe, they weren't lethal to it. But ever since the Boulder Mountain Saber merged with the Soul Severing Saber, it could slash at the psyche even while wounding the body.

This invisible and intangible damage was the most deadly.

Even though it was a giant bug comparable to Divine Sea Level 8, its spiritual intelligence was ultimately low, and its psyche weak, making it unstable under such attacks.

Seizing this opportunity, Lu Ye moved past it, sword light flashing, and the giant bug's body stiffened. By the time Lu Ye regained his stance, its head had tumbled down, the headless corpse twitching continuously.

Lines of Mental Consciousness from all directions began probing this way, clearly those of the Level 9s who noticed Lu Ye's intrusion, which was only natural. They were all Level 9s, and a sudden burst of Level 4 energy was as conspicuous as a light in the night.

After discovering his traces, they were all astonished.

A figure wrapped in a ribbon-like sword light darted to Lu Ye's side—it was Nian Yuexian: "Why did you come here!"

"Just came to take a look." As Lu Ye spoke, his gaze turned toward the center of this space.

Under the flickering glow around, there was a very bloated figure, resembling a fat fleshy worm.

Yet it had over a dozen thin, long claws splaying out on either side, flailing madly at the moment, blocking all oncoming attacks. Approximately at what counted as its head were two scarlet eyes unwaveringly fixed on Lu Ye.

In the instant their eyes met, Lu Ye understood that this was the source of the consciousness controlling the flesh wall.

In other words, it was this bloated insect controlling the flesh wall, and it was it that led Lu Ye into this battlefield.

Suddenly, an invisible force gathered and surged forth, transforming into a shockwave crashing toward Lu Ye.

Nian Yuexian's expression changed: "Be careful!"

She swooped in to block Lu Ye and the insect, spirit light bursting around her.

Yet she was still a moment too late. Besides, Mental Consciousness attacks are extremely swift and can't be intercepted just by wanting to. They are unlike ordinary, substantive attacks.

Nian Yuexian knew well the strength of this insect's Mental Consciousness. Everyone present had suffered at its hands, so she couldn't help worrying about Lu Ye, fearing he might come to harm.

Precisely because the opponent's Mental Consciousness was so terrifying, they did not seek assistance. By comparison, that force of Mental Consciousness was somewhat beyond the realm of Divine Sea; even

for those of Level 9, withstanding it was incredibly challenging. Only people like them could barely hold on under such Mental Consciousness attacks. Lower cultivation individuals would die in an instant.

The few Level 9s who died previously fell because their psyche was not strong enough and was shattered by that bloated insect.

When the enormous Mental Consciousness impact hit, Lu Ye's psyche barrier was as delicate as paper, instantly torn apart, and the force blasted into his Divine Sea.

The next moment, waves surged within the Divine Sea, but under the suppressive force of the Soul Suppressing Pagoda, the turbulent waves soon calmed.

No serious harm was done; the feeling was like someone angrily swinging a large hammer made of cotton at him.

The impact was significant, yet unable to cause any real damage.

Meanwhile, the flesh walls around Lu Ye swelled rapidly, turning into pockets of flesh that burst open, revealing insect bodyguards swarming toward him.

The numbers were so many they startled even Nian Yuexian. Even she couldn't handle so many insect bodyguards at once. These creatures, each one at the giant bug level, were even more troublesome than ordinary giant bugs.

Immediately, she enveloped Lu Ye in sword light and dashed away with him.

Chapter 1124 Insect Matriarch

"Does the Insect Race have spiritual intelligence?" Lu Ye asked as he observed the battlefield's environment.

At this moment, waves of Mental Consciousness continued to assault his Divine Sea, but under the suppression of the Soul Suppressing Pagoda, it ultimately proved futile.

"That's the Insect Matriarch!" Nian Yuexian's face showed a hint of discomfort. Although the Divine Soul Shock from the Insect Matriarch was aimed at Lu Ye, she was too close to him, inevitably affected, "Defeating it will end the fight, but its regenerative ability is terrifying; ordinary injuries are useless against it."

The battle had raged for so long, yet the Level 9 cultivators had surely inflicted damage on the Insect Matriarch. However, even the most serious injuries were quickly healed, leaving them unsure of how to win and merely dragging the battle on.

They realized the Insect Matriarch's rapid healing stemmed from its abundant and pure vitality. Was it possible that depleting its vitality sufficiently would strip the Matriarch of its regenerative powers?

This idea was worth testing, so despite the dire situation, the Level 9 cultivators persisted, continuing to entangle with the Insect Matriarch.

Having reached this cultivation level, they've encountered countless crises in their lives; they can't lose their fighting spirit due to a small setback.

With the realm undecided and life and death not yet split, no one dared to claim they'd lost for sure.

They hadn't anticipated this encounter at all initially; they followed the passage peacefully, encountering no Insect Race along the way, but arriving here, the situation turned bizarre.

In the vast space, only the Insect Matriarch awaited them.

Battle erupted soon after. Though the Insect Matriarch seemed solitary, it could spawn numerous bodyguards at will, and coupled with its powerful Divine Soul Power, it caught Nine Provinces' elite team off guard.

Almost everyone was left dazed by its Divine Soul Power shock, with casualties emerging as a result.

Even among Level 9 cultivators, there's variation in strength—some with stronger Divine Souls could withstand the Insect Matriarch's shock, while those weaker couldn't.

Thankfully, only a few casualties occurred, and the remaining Level 9 cultivators managed a solid counterattack, triggering a fierce battle lasting until now.

"Insect Matriarch..." Lu Ye pondered. It was the first time hearing this term; throughout his battles, including actions to eradicate insect hives, he'd never encountered an Insect Matriarch in those hives.

Was it due to the hive's size?

This particular insect hive stood in the center of the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, the largest one, hence an Insect Matriarch appeared.

Unclear whether the Matriarch spawned the hive or the hive nurtured the Matriarch, it reminded of the chicken-and-egg dilemma, without a conclusive answer.

"Is there no vitality core here?" Lu Ye asked.

Nian Yuexian shook her head: "No, all the vitality is concentrated in the Insect Matriarch."

Lu Ye had already noticed this, as the Matriarch's vitality was astonishingly immense. Currently, more than a dozen Level 9 cultivators surrounded the Matriarch in combat, occasionally breaking through its defenses, inflicting light or heavy wounds, but regardless of severity, they healed instantaneously due to its vitality.

The recovery speed surpassed even the flesh wall's regrowth.

"We've considered a strategic retreat to avoid confrontation, but this place is completely sealed, making escape impossible."

The dense flesh wall enveloped the entire space, destruction speed unable to match the flesh wall's regrowth, so forming a passage was impossible. Ever since they entered, the Level 9 cultivators lacked a retreat.

The entrance where Lu Ye entered had also been filled by the flesh wall.

"You shouldn't have come in," Nian Yuexian sighed gently.

Gathered so many Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators unable to defeat the Insect Matriarch, Lu Ye's rash entrance as a Level 4 was indeed a risky move.

Luckily, Lu Ye's own strength was formidable, so despite lower cultivation, he wasn't a burden; thus, he dared enter.

At this moment, he contemplated an issue.

Given the Insect Matriarch could rapidly spawn powerful bodyguard insects, why did it drag him into this battlefield? It could've deployed insect bodyguards to eliminate him in the passage.

If true, he'd face being overpowered alone.

Since the Matriarch didn't choose this, likely not because it refused, but because it couldn't...

In other words, these rapidly spawned insect bodyguards, despite strength, faced severe limitations, probably unable to leave easily. The unique environment empowered them upon hatching, thus the Matriarch drew him in here.

It allowed Level 9 cultivators to enter likewise, as here it could exert full power.

While fleeing with Nian Yuexian, the pursuing insect bodyguards multiplied, freshly hatched ones joined from both sides, intercepting from the front too.

Even though Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian's skills were quite formidable, they were still caught in perilous situations, and the scene was a chaotic mess.

Not only were there Insect Race bodyguards gathering towards him, but also the Level 9 cultivators.

After such a long time of fighting, the cultivators also discovered a problem, which was that the Insect Matriarch could hatch only a limited number of Insect Race bodyguards.

At most, the number wouldn't exceed eight hundred.

Before Lu Ye came in, each of them had to simultaneously deal with several bodyguards; they killed them, but new ones would hatch soon, ceaselessly.

So even though their self-preservation was assured, it was hard for them to help others.

The situation continued like this all along.

But since Lu Ye entered, the stalemate began to change; the number of Insect Race bodyguards facing the Level 9 cultivators decreased...

Because most of the newly hatched Insect Race bodyguards joined in the pursuit and blockade against Lu Ye.

They were all seasoned cultivators and could clearly see through such changes.

Long Bai shouted, "Kid, what did you do before to get so much attention from the Insect Matriarch?"

This was also what others were curious about.

The Insect Matriarch's intense focus on Lu Ye clearly indicated that it saw him as a huge threat; otherwise, it wouldn't react like that.

This was quite unbelievable, considering even these Level 9 cultivators didn't seem to merit much attention from the Insect Matriarch, who treated them all equally. So how could a mere Level 4 cultivator be singled out like this?

Yet, it seemed only natural, after all, it was Lu Yiye, a person favored by Heaven's Augury, capable of what others couldn't.

Everyone quickly realized that the key to breaking this deadlock might lie with Lu Ye, which is why the Level 9s were gathering around him without previous agreement.

"Picking the softer targets?" Lu Ye casually replied.

Long Bai curled his lips, clearly skeptical, but this wasn't the time to probe Lu Ye's secrets, so he shouted, "Whatever method you have, use it quickly, otherwise we're all gonna be dead ducks!"

Lu Ye no longer hesitated; he threw himself downward, shouting, "I ask you, seniors, to protect me!"

Whoosh, whoosh, the sound of air splitting filled the sky as beams of light rapidly pivoted, encircling Lu Ye like stars surrounding the moon, descending together.

Standing on the elastic flesh wall, Lu Ye immediately activated the power of the Talent Tree, letting the invisible roots pierce into the flesh wall, his heart hanging in suspense.

The Insect Matriarch could control the flesh wall, and during previous engagements in the passage, he couldn't easily contact the flesh wall. If now the Insect Matriarch controlled the flesh wall to evade him, he'd have no recourse.

At that time, the only option would be to retreat through the passage they came from, at least not let these Level 9s lose their lives.

But to his relief, as the power of the Talent Tree unfolded, the flesh wall beneath showed no signs of vanishing; the devouring power of the Talent Tree commenced, quickly absorbing vast, pure vitality.

Lu Ye didn't know why the Insect Matriarch didn't control the flesh wall to avoid him but thought there must be a reason, perhaps related to the Insect Race bodyguards.

If his previous guess was correct, these Insect Race bodyguards that could hatch quickly needed the special environment here to maintain their combat power and therefore couldn't leave this place.

This area was considered the Core Nest of the entire insect hive, tightly wrapped by the flesh wall, smooth and flawless; if a hole appeared, it would inevitably destroy something, affecting the power of the Insect Race bodyguards.

Once these Insect Race bodyguards lost their role, the Insect Matriarch would die even quicker, as the attack power of more than two hundred Level 9s was not something to be taken lightly; no matter how perverse its recovery ability was, there'd be a moment it runs out of vitality.

So even knowing that Lu Ye had the ability to devour its vitality, the Insect Matriarch didn't control the flesh wall to evade and avoid Lu Ye's techniques.

When faced with two options of harm, it chose the lesser; the Insect Matriarch's spiritual intelligence wasn't low.

Or perhaps even the Insect Matriarch couldn't easily control the flesh wall here.

Lu Ye couldn't be bothered to explore the reasons behind it, as the development of the situation was ultimately in their favor.

And as he moved forward, the Insect Matriarch let out a sudden sharp, ear-piercing wailing, while the long and thin claws on either side of its body flailed even more crazily.

That wailing unmistakably contained extremely vast and pure Divine Soul Power, sweeping out explosively in all directions. In an instant, there were constant muffled groans from the cultivators around Lu Ye, while some people's complexions visibly paled, and within Lu Ye's Divine Sea, the waves surged violently.

By the Insect Matriarch's side, there had always been more than a dozen people tangling with it, continuously inflicting damage and depleting its vitality, and now they too were caught off guard, simultaneously retreating briefly.

Chapter 1125: Orchestrating Everything

The onslaught of the Insect Race guards had noticeably become wilder, swarming from all directions but were blocked by the various Level 9 cultivators' methods, being cut down one by one.

For each fallen Insect Race guard, a new one hatched, quickly joining the combat sequence with an unending and relentless assault.

In just a brief moment, several were injured.

The situation suddenly became a bit grim.

Initially, these Level 9 cultivators, although mostly fighting independently, were agile and flexible; they fought when they could and retreated when they couldn't, so dealing with the varied numbers of Insect Race guards wasn't too hard. Most of the pressure they endured came from the Insect Matriarch's Divine Soul Shock.

But now the situation was different. Lu Ye was about to use a method that even the Insect Matriarch feared, which required them to protect Lu Ye. This essentially turned a mobile battle into a defensive one.

The Insect Race guards, however, were all fearless of death, which unavoidably made the Level 9 cultivators feel the pressure. Fortunately, each of them was an experienced cultivator and quickly formed comprehensive coordination, but this state was clearly unsustainable.

Lu Ye keenly noticed this and immediately retrieved something from his storage space, raised his hand and shattered it instantly.

A large mist spread and enveloped the surrounding Level 9 cultivators with the surge of spirit force.

Someone took a deep breath and immediately felt invigorated, the fatigue in their psyche from repeated strikes by the Insect Matriarch had completely disappeared, their face beaming with vitality.

"Soul Cleansing Water!" Those who recognized it quickly realized what the mist inhaled into their lungs was.

That was indeed what the Soul Cleansing Water transformed into.

"Good lad, to bring out such a treasure, I'll wager my life to keep you alive today!" Long Bai shouted, and his attacks suddenly became fiercer.

Not just him, but the other Level 9 cultivators also became increasingly fierce in their tactics.

The fatigue of the psyche would affect the performance of their strength, but the supplement of Soul Cleansing Water in mist form was undoubtedly timely. They were silently amazed; the bottle of Soul Cleansing Water Lu Ye took out contained at least dozens of drops, an invaluable treasure, yet Lu Ye used it without any hesitation or regret.

This action alone greatly increased the affection of many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators for Lu Ye, making them more vigorous in ensuring his safety.

With protection from the surrounding Level 9 cultivators, Lu Ye focused his mind and fully activated the power of the Talent Tree.

Numerous roots plunged into the flesh wall, madly devouring the vast vitality within.

The Insect Matriarch's reaction became increasingly frantic, obviously feeling threatened. It attempted several times to charge over but was blocked by the joint efforts of more than ten Level 9 cultivators, continuously screeching, and launching Divine Soul Shocks.

But even for it, maintaining such Divine Soul Shocks for an extended period was impossible. After several fruitless attempts, it could only resist stubbornly.

The scales of victory seemed to be tipping in favor of the human race cultivators, but everyone knew that the real fight for survival had only just begun.

What could be confirmed now was that Lu Ye's method posed a significant threat to the Insect Matriarch. Although no one yet understood what mysterious technique he was using, it seemed he was just standing there...

If this could be maintained, the human race would surely win!

But the key was how long the human race side could hold on?

The consumption of psyche was replenished by Lu Ye's earlier action, but the spent spirit force and stamina couldn't be so easily restored. In such an intense battle, even Level 9 cultivators couldn't conserve their strength because every moment, they faced relentless charges from numerous Insect Race guards.

During the lulls in battle, the cultivators quickly swallowed elixir pills for replenishment, but it was still a drop in the bucket.

If Lu Ye couldn't draw out the Insect Matriarch's essence before their line was breached by the Insect Race guards, an extremely grim fate awaited everyone!

Lu Ye also keenly sensed this.

He had to come up with a plan, at least give the Level 9 cultivators some time to catch their breath...

At this moment, Long Bai suddenly frowned, turned his head, and looked at Lu Ye: "Kid, be careful, you look like you're about to explode, don't push yourself too hard!"

No wonder, Lu Ye's vitality was fluctuating intensely, becoming extremely overwhelming and unstable...

This was inevitable, the Talent Tree absorbed too much of the Insect Matriarch's vitality, although it was combusted and refined to bolster Lu Ye's own essence, correspondingly, it also increased his vitality intensity.

Making him like a balloon about to burst.

Lu Ye was the key to breaking through the current situation; Long Bai couldn't help but worry about his condition. By now, he had discerned a bit of truth; although he didn't know what mysterious method Lu Yiye had used, it clearly had the effect of stealing the enemy's vitality.

Otherwise, there was no reason for a Level 4 cultivator like Lu Yiye to have his vitality swell to such an extent.

"Then let it explode!" Lu Ye replied casually.

With a loud bang, a thick blood mist suddenly enveloped the surface of his body, as if blood was spurting out from inside him, spreading out in the blink of an eye, transforming into a continuously flowing Blood River.

A group of Level 9s felt their hearts turn cold...

It was hard to see a glimmer of hope, and now that very hope has exploded. What should they do now?

But quickly, everyone realized that Lu Ye wasn't dead. The blood river condensed from the exploding blood mist was just a secret technique being deployed.

At this moment, everyone was enveloped in this Blood River. They couldn't see their hands in front of them, and their vision was filled with a flowing blood-red color. The sensation around them was extremely sticky.

Their Divine Sense was also obstructed when extended.

This secret technique... is quite mysterious!

"Lu Yiye, are you okay?" someone asked worriedly, shouting out.

"I'm fine. Please go ahead and kill the enemy, seniors," Lu Ye's voice echoed from all directions of the Blood River. For a moment, no one could determine his true position, increasing their awe at this secret technique's eerie nature.

The Blood River Technique of the Blood Race was inherently both offensive and defensive—a Mysterious Secret Skill that achieves the Final Achievement of Blood Techniques. Within this Blood River, Lu Ye held absolute home ground advantage.

His intention was to invoke the Blood River Technique to create a favorable environment for his side to fight and to relieve the pressure of his expanding life force. However, after deploying the Blood River Technique, he discovered an unexpected benefit.

That is, it became more convenient to harness the power of the Talent Tree.

Originally, when he activated the Talent Tree's power, he could only absorb the life force within the area where he stood. But after the Blood River Technique spread out, wherever the Blood River covered, the roots of the Talent Tree could extend to.

This meant that the range the Talent Tree could draw from became much wider, and the change wasn't slight!

If the previous absorption was like a small stream flowing continuously, now it was like a mighty river surging endlessly.

The Insect Matriarch keenly sensed this change, as the life force being absorbed originated from it. Before, Lu Ye was just like a mosquito, sucking its blood. Although there was loss, causing substantial harm would require much accumulation of time.

But now it was different. Lu Ye, like a mosquito, cut a big gash on it, causing the blood to gush out.

It was from this moment that the Insect Matriarch first showed a panicked emotion.

The ten-plus Level 9s entangled with it swiftly noticed this change, and their attacks became even more fierce and violent.

Meanwhile, the many insect race bodyguards, under the order of the Insect Matriarch, also became ferocious in their attacks.

But at this moment, they were all within the Blood River, blind and obstructed, making it exceedingly difficult to find the enemy. Conversely, the Level 9s, under Lu Ye's secret guidance, could easily locate them, erupt in a surprise attack, kill with a single blow, immediately disappear, and move on to the next target.

The Blood River Technique Lu Ye activated bizarrely became the most advantageous battleground for the human race cultivators and insect race bodyguards. Even though the Level 9s were also affected within the Blood River, Lu Ye was their eyes, their Divine Sense.

Within the battlefield, Lu Ye orchestrated everything.

Previously, when the Level 9s killed the insect race bodyguards, they had to find a way to destroy the bodies thoroughly because if the bodies fell onto the flesh wall, they would be swiftly covered and absorbed by it, which was contrary to the cultivators' original intent to drain the Insect Matriarch's life force.

Only by completely destroying the bodies of the insect race bodyguards could it count as consuming the power the Insect Matriarch used to hatch them.

Cultivators with fire attribute spirit force found this most convenient; they could roast them thoroughly with a single flame. Other element sign cultivators didn't have such convenient methods. They generally stored the bodies in a storage sack, but in fierce battles, they often didn't have the chance to do so and could only let the bodies fall onto the flesh wall.

Now, there's no need for such trouble, as the dead insect race bodyguards falling into the Blood River would quickly dissolve completely.

As early as when the Talent Tree completed its first metamorphosis, Lu Ye realized he could strengthen himself by absorbing the power within cultivators' bodies. But such practice would be akin to cannibalism, which Lu Ye couldn't mentally accept. Moreover, he mainly used the gold-hued spirit fortune stick for cultivation, so he didn't need to absorb the spirit force within cultivators' bodies...

Yet inevitably, he couldn't completely avoid such matters. Consuming humans was unthinkable, but consuming insects was somewhat reluctantly acceptable.

To be honest, some insect races tasted quite good, especially given the current food shortage in the Nine Provinces. Many cultivators would take the edible parts of insects after killing them to nibble as snacks.

When Lu Ye was guarding Jinglan Lake Pass, he had done such things alongside the soldiers.

On the battlefield, the Insect Matriarch's screeching became more urgent. It already sensed something was amiss. Only until now did it realize how erroneous it was to lead Lu Ye to this battleground.

Its original intent was to use the insect race bodyguards to deal with Lu Ye, which was a rational starting point because it couldn't block Lu Ye's intrusion. However, it severely underestimated Lu Ye's strength and failed to slay him in the first instance.

This triggered everything that followed.

Ultimately, it was still Lu Ye's cultivation at Level 4 that proved too deceptive. Even the human race cultivators of Nine Provinces would suffer without knowing Lu Ye's background, let alone an insect race.

Chapter 1126 Blood River Expansion

As time passed, the size of the Blood River expanded.

The continuous influx of vibrant life force was the source of this change. Originally, when Lu Ye simply activated the power of the Talent Tree, the absorbed life force could quickly be converted into his own foundation. However, after the Blood River spread out, the absorption rate suddenly increased. Even the Talent Tree couldn't keep up with converting this massive energy.

The excess life force had nowhere to go and accumulated in the Blood River, allowing its size to grow, with surging torrents.

As the size of the Blood River grew, it covered a wider range and absorbed life force even faster. This cycle formed a positive loop.

Even as the executor of the Blood River, Lu Ye was shocked by the accumulated life force within it. But at this point, he could only move forward without turning back.

The most urgent issue to resolve now was the Insect Matriarch. Only by dealing with it could they complete the extermination of the Insect Race and consider the future.

The Nine Provinces cultivators finally had a moment to breathe.

Thanks to the battlefield environment that Lu Ye had created, they no longer needed to face the frantic attacks of the Insect bodyguards constantly. Furthermore, under Lu Ye's comprehensive surveillance, each person could make some adjustments at the appropriate time. Although this reprieve was short before returning to battle, it was much better than the previous conditions.

This way, those at Level 9 were able to sustain their combat capabilities much longer.

Outside the Blood River, the Insect Matriarch lamented and raged. At this point, it had a foreboding sense, yet the battle had developed to a point where it couldn't turn back. All its fury was merely impotent barking.

One day later, the massive Blood River filled one-tenth of the underground space, like a scarlet dragon, rolling and writhing.

Two days later, the proportion of space filled by the Blood River reached thirty percent, and the scarlet dragon began to swell. Now, the Blood River looked more like a bloodlake.

Three days later, the Blood River occupied the majority of the space...

The Insect Matriarch retreated. Although this was its home ground, amusingly, as the Blood River continued to expand, it kept backing away. It knew that once it fell into the Blood River, nothing good would come of it.

By the fourth day, the vast underground space had less than twenty percent of space unfilled by the scarlet.

The constant expansion of the Blood River greatly increased the space in which the Nine Provinces cultivators could move, making their situation considerably safer. It could be said that as long as Lu Ye was willing, he could hide anyone where no Insect bodyguards could find them, further facilitating the Nine Provinces cultivators' recovery.

It was at this time that the Insect Matriarch suddenly waved its claws and charged straight towards the Blood River.

It knew it couldn't delay any longer. Sooner or later, its territory would be completely filled by the Blood River, and that time wasn't far off.

It aimed to rush into the Blood River in a desperate gamble. If it could find and kill Lu Ye within the Blood River, it could regain the initiative in this battle.

The dozen or so Level 9 cultivators fighting it tried their best to stop it, but how could they? The Insect Matriarch wasn't afraid of any harm; its still-vast life force allowed for swift recovery from injuries. Such reckless impact soon sent it crashing into the Blood River.

A dozen people followed suit, but once inside the Blood River, they lost sight of the Insect Matriarch amidst the crimson – even their Divine Sense deployment was seriously hindered.

Fortunately, they soon received an audio transmission from Lu Ye. With their minds at ease, each person sat down and began to recover their strength.

After days of continuous intense fighting, they were physically and mentally exhausted; even if the Insect Matriarch didn't rush into the Blood River, they wouldn't have lasted much longer.

Within the Blood River, under Lu Ye's guidance, figures began to surround the Insect Matriarch's location.

The strong enemy was now trapped; what followed was the classic strategy of "closing the door to beat the dog."

Everyone was filled with sighs. After a grueling battle, the situation had taken an unexpected turn once Lu Yiye joined.

By now, everyone realized that if Lu Yiye hadn't suddenly charged in, they likely would have faced complete annihilation.

They had underestimated the foundation of the Insect Matriarch initially, thinking they could use their own methods to deplete its life force and secure victory. But now it seemed that even if they fought to the death, they wouldn't have been able to do anything to the Insect Matriarch.

If they died here, they feared they would end up like those fallen Insect bodyguards, turned into nourishment for the Insect Matriarch...

This was the most unacceptable thing.

And if they died, it would undoubtedly be a significant blow to the entire Nine Provinces cultivation world.

Finally, the scarlet filled the entire underground space. By now, the Talent Tree absorbed life force in an all-around, three-dimensional manner, with vast amounts of life force pouring into it each moment.

During these days of fierce underground battles, the Nine Provinces Divine Sea Realm cultivators outside were also trying to find solutions.

Previously, some of them followed Lu Ye into the underground passage to support the Level 9 cultivators; however, they retreated soon after due to the overgrowth of flesh walls.

So, although they were anxious and worried about the evolving battle below, no one dared to rashly advance without figuring out a solution to the flesh wall problem.

The tragedies that had befallen several Divine Sea Realm cultivators, who perished within the growing flesh walls, served as a serious warning.

The situation changed on Lu Ye's fifth day underground.

The Divine Sea Realm cultivators outside discovered that the flesh walls congesting the passage were rapidly shrinking and dissipating.

No one knew the cause of this change, but it offered a glimmer of hope.

When the situation is at a stalemate, unchanged equals the deepest despair. As long as there is change, it is good.

Initially, the flesh wall's shrinkage and dissipation speed were not fast, but as time passed, the shrinkage and dissipation became faster and faster.

A large number of Divine Sea Realm cultivators hurried deeper through the underground passage.

Until finally, they were blocked by a thick layer of flesh wall.

It was clear that on the other side of the flesh wall lay the battlefield of the Level 9 cultivators, as chaotic spirit force fluctuations emanated from within.

What shocked them further was the presence of an existence with such an immense life force, it was terrifying to sense it.

They naturally assumed that this immense life force was the opponent of the Level 9 cultivators...

Little did they know, it was a gigantic Blood River filling the entire underground space.

The people engaged in the final battle with the Insect Race were naturally unaware of the changes in the flesh wall within the passage outside. If they knew, they might deduce that the Insect Matriarch was at its last gasp.

Its life force was severely depleted, making it difficult to maintain the existence of the flesh wall, which could only continue to envelop the final battlefield.

What an ironic situation, the once immense life force was its greatest reliance, yet now it has become the means for the enemy to turn the tide.

Amidst the fierce battle, Level 9 cultivators noticed other changes.

The Insect Race bodyguards were noticeably fewer.

Originally, no matter how many they killed, new bodyguards would continuously emerge, forcing them to join another battle immediately after finishing one, even if the Blood River's cover allowed a brief rest, it wasn't long.

But now, the rest times were longer, and fewer Insect Race bodyguards were being killed.

A voice rang out from within the Blood River: "Lu Yiye, what's the situation now!"

The speaker was an unknown cultivator from one of the provinces.

Soon after, Lu Ye explained: "The Insect Matriarch is probably on its last legs, everyone, give it your all!"

The Level 9 cultivators in battle felt something, how could Lu Ye, overseeing the entire battlefield, not notice?

Due to the massive loss of life force, it was difficult for the Insect Matriarch to hatch enough bodyguards of the Insect Race, and even its own injuries weren't recovering as rapidly as before.

Previously, it healed its injuries instantly, returning to perfect condition, but now it required more and more time.

Laughter erupted from a certain blood-red spot: "This is the best news I've heard in my life!"

After several days of bitter fighting, from hopelessness to victory within reach, even a group of Level 9 cultivators couldn't help feeling elated.

It wasn't easy; with their cultivation level, there were virtually no opponents for them within the Nine Provinces, yet so many of them joined forces, relying ultimately on a young man's remarkable secret techniques and strategy, taking days to wear down the Insect Matriarch to this extent. It was truly not easy.

"If that's the case, let's finish it all in one last strike!" someone shouted.

Lu Ye's voice rang out again: "My seniors, please wait for one hour, adjust yourselves as much as possible, and recover; we've come this far, there's no need to rush."

"As young as he is, he does things reliably, so we'll listen to you!" someone responded.

Silhouettes either stood or sat all over the Blood River, taking out elixir pills to swallow, recovering as much as possible.

Some were not at leisure, as someone still needed to checkmate the Insect Matriarch, and despite a large reduction, the bodyguard numbers hadn't completely vanished, so they still needed handling.

Yet, with Lu Ye's coordination, almost everyone received some period of rest.

An hour passed in a flash, and the final battle commenced.

Over two hundred Level 9 cultivators, except for dozens handling the newly hatched Insect Race bodyguards, the rest followed Lu Ye's guidance to the Insect Matriarch's location.

Days of pent-up fury erupted at that moment.

Such a large scene of Level 9 cultivators acting together was spectacular, their dazzling array of secret techniques on display, spirit force surged, gun beams, knife gleams, and sword shadows rampant, the blood-colored river waters churned into a raging torrent.

In an instant, the Insect Matriarch's body became tattered, with half of its dozen claws broken.

It screamed and resisted, but it was to no avail.

At the wounds, the flesh twisted, attempting repair under remaining life force, but its healing speed was no longer as fast, unable to keep up with the damage speed caused by the Level 9 cultivators.

From the moment the final battle started, the Insect Matriarch's body was never whole again!

Chapter 1127 A Little Problem

By this point in the battle, Lu Ye didn't have much left to do. Even if he withdrew, the Nine Provinces cultivators, with their numbers and strength, could still slay the Insect Matriarch.

But he didn't remain idle.

The severed limbs and flesh of the Insect Matriarch contained an enormous amount of vitality. If left unchecked, it would inevitably be absorbed by the flesh wall and re-transform into energy to be injected back into the Insect Matriarch's body.

Thus, Lu Ye controlled the Blood River's surge, wrapping every chunk of severed flesh and limb, allowing the roots of the Talent Tree to penetrate them, absorbing and devouring freely.

In this way, the Insect Matriarch's vitality continued to deteriorate significantly.

The relentless warfare caused the Insect Matriarch's originally bloated form to become more slender, with its self-healing speed slowing down progressively.

At one moment, when attacks from all directions simultaneously erupted, the Insect Matriarch's body was blown apart, the Blood River's undertow swept its pieces toward different directions.

Under the frenzied impetus of the Talent Tree's power, the remaining vitality within the fragments was extracted and injected into the blood-red force.

Yet the Insect Matriarch remained alive, its remaining head with two scarlet eyes emanating a venomous and cruel light, a fierce will sweeping across the surroundings, echoing a sharp voice in nearly everyone's mind.

"Damn humans, one day you will pay the price!"

The voice gradually faded away, along with the dimming of the Insect Matriarch's eyes.

Within the Blood River, silhouettes stood resolute. The long battle kept their spirit force unable to calm, but more unsettling was the current state of mind.

No one expected that the Insect Matriarch could communicate.

Although everyone knew previously it had high spiritual intelligence, high intelligence didn't necessarily mean it could communicate. Until its dying Mental Consciousness transmission, everyone realized this was a truly wise creature.

Yet, it had no intention of communicating with the human race from the beginning to end, only casting a malicious curse before death, clearly knowing the situation at this juncture left no room for reconciliation, and any communication would be meaningless.

"Is the battle over now?" After a long pause, someone finally asked, this fight was too grueling, although the losses were minor, no one had experienced such a battle, the Insect Matriarch's resilient vitality nearly caused their total defeat.

"That we must ask Lu Yiye." Someone replied.

Lu Ye's voice arose: "The Insect Matriarch has fallen, seniors, we've won this battle!"

Sounds of exhaling echoed, yet there were no cheers or excitement. All were Divine Sea Realm cultivators, and fighting until the end, they had already sensed the impending victory, naturally wouldn't display emotions like the young ones.

Instead, those other Divine Sea Realm cultivators who finally made it here, upon hearing this dialogue, couldn't help but cheer joyously.

"We've won, we won!"

Before, they traveled through passages to this location, blocked by a thick flesh wall, unable to advance. With the death of the Insect Matriarch, the hindering flesh wall naturally withered away and disappeared, yet glancing around, a huge Blood Orb filled the entire battlefield, looking extremely eerie, leaving them hesitant to venture deeper, and still puzzled by what this Blood Orb actually was.

Deafening cheers erupted, victory's joy continuously spread to the back ranks, and then transmitted outside through countless messages.

The Nine Provinces cultivator army waiting outside the insect hive erupted completely.

Soon after, the entire Nine Provinces began to boil.

The insect disaster, lasting several years, was finally completely resolved today, marking a day destined to be recorded in history.

This revelry will last for an unknown duration before subsiding.

Deep underground, the supporting Divine Sea Realm began their orderly retreat, the Level 9 cultivators also prepared to withdraw from this battlefield.

The great battle was over, yet much follow-up remained to be handled, requiring their appearance.

The sect master keenly detected some abnormalities: "Yiye, has your secret technique... gone out of control?"

In theory, with the Insect Matriarch dead, Lu Ye's Blood River Technique should dissipate or retract, but the pervasive blood-red aura still enveloped the entire battlefield, causing the sect master some unease.

Upon hearing this, everyone frowned.

There's no doubt, Lu Ye was the greatest hero of this battle, be it the Haotian Alliance or even Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, none wanted anything unpleasant occurring at this moment.

Previously unnoticed due to engrossment in the victory, once the sect master pointed it out, they quickly sensed the discrepancy.

A secret technique's loss of control could pose varying degrees of problems, but the scale of Lu Ye's technique was too large, if truly out of control, the consequences wouldn't be favorable.

Though the war was won, the greatest hero might not end well, spreading news wouldn't sound good.

"A slight issue, but it's not major." Lu Ye responded.

Indeed, no major issues, mainly too much vitality had accumulated within the Blood River, making it temporarily impossible for him to retract the Blood River into his body.

Of course, directly giving up is also an option, but in this case, the loss would be huge.

Lu Ye wants to refine all the vitality in the Blood River; this enormous vitality is a rare treasure for him. If he truly refines it, his physique will significantly improve.

Moreover, the Blood Techniques of the Blood Race are mostly performed based on vitality. Accumulating more vitality within oneself will make it more convenient to perform Blood Techniques in the future.

He is currently engaged in such a task, but it requires some time.

"Is there anything we can assist with?" Long Bai has become somewhat familiar with Lu Ye and has high regards for this young man, thus representing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to make a gesture of support. This is the proper attitude towards a hero of merit. One can't attack the greatest hero just because the battle has ended and the alliance between the two major camps is crumbling. Everyone values their dignity; such actions are intolerable. "Let us know if there's anything we can help with."

"City Lord Long's goodwill is appreciated, but this matter requires personal effort; others can't intervene," Lu Ye said while wrapping Amber with the Blood River, sending it to the sect master.

Amber understood the situation and sensibly perched on the sect master's shoulder.

Long Bai nodded, saying no more since he knew that Lu Ye wouldn't let anyone from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge intervene even if help was genuinely needed. At this moment, he would only seek assistance from the Haotian Alliance.

But now, it seems outsiders really can't intervene in this situation.

"Respected seniors, please proceed. The battle has been won, and the countless beings of the Nine Provinces await your good news. No need to linger here." He intends to fully focus on refining the vitality in the Blood River and doesn't wish to be disturbed by others.

Long Bai nodded, "In that case, take care of yourself!"

He said nothing more as the over two hundred Level 9 cultivators swiftly departed through the passage they found under Lu Ye's guidance.

Yet one person's presence did not go far; Lu Ye briefly explored and knew it was Nian Yuexian.

She was evidently waiting for him, staying on guard here just in case.

Soon, the expansive underground space became devoid of outsiders' presence, and Lu Ye immediately exerted the power of the Talent Tree to refine the forces within the Blood River.

After refining that drop of Sacred Blood in the Blood Refinement World, Lu Ye obtained the inheritance of the Blood Race, making him more aware of the peculiarities of the inheritance than anyone else. In fact, the ordinary Blood Race members' accomplishments in Blood Techniques were inferior compared to his, only some Sacred Seeds who also obtained Sacred Blood could stand shoulder to shoulder with him.

The information in the inheritance shows that if one can cultivate Blood Techniques to the extreme, they could achieve the degree of Drop of Blood Rebirth. At that point, they would become immortal, resurrection possible even from a single drop of blood.

Previously, Lu Ye was skeptical of this statement because the idea of rebirth from a drop of blood seemed too fanciful. But after the battle with the Insect Matriarch, he was suddenly enlightened, realizing this might indeed be true.

Even if achieving Drop of Blood Rebirth is impossible, it certainly isn't far off.

Take the Insect Matriarch, for instance; with a substantial essence of vitality supporting it, it can instantly recover from any injury, leaving the finest two hundred men of the Nine Provinces helpless. This ability to instantly regenerate wounds is nothing but a rebirth of flesh and blood.

Taking it a step further, it's true rebirth.

Of course, this may be an innate ability of the Insect Race, having nothing to do with the Blood Race. But since the Blood Race's inheritance has such records, they're not baseless.

Lu Ye felt that if he found the time later, he should delve into the Blood Race's inheritance. He dare not imagine achieving Drop of Blood Rebirth, nor covet instant wound recovery. At the very least, if he gets injured in the future, he hopes to recover quicker by utilizing Blood Race secret techniques.

Another point puzzles Lu Ye.

The Insect Matriarch... what realm is it exactly!

If it's said to be Divine Sea Realm, its mental consciousness is stronger than all present Level 9 cultivators, causing significant losses with its Divine Soul Shock. Moreover, its spiritual intelligence clearly gives a feeling of surpassing the Divine Sea.

Its realm is highly likely to not be Divine Sea but beyond Divine Sea Realm.

Otherwise, despite the aid of numerous Insect Race bodyguards, it couldn't possibly possess such immense power, making over two hundred Level 9 cultivators hang their heads in despair.

Even Senior Brother Feng Wujiang doesn't possess such skill.

If the Insect Matriarch were really Divine Sea Realm, it shouldn't be stronger than Senior Brother.

But if it's not Divine Sea Realm, what realm is it?

Lu Ye never considered these things before, but now that he's already at Divine Sea, and given his cultivation efficiency, reaching Divine Sea Level 9 is surely not far off; what road will there be for cultivation then?

He must consider this in advance.

In the Nine Provinces, many Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators, upon cultivating to their limits, start to retreat and seek the mysteries beyond the Divine Sea.

But over the years, no one has achieved any breakthrough.

The Divine Sea seems to be an ultimate limit.

Yet those who reach the end of the Divine Sea clearly feel that there is indeed a path ahead, but they are unable to enter it.

For cultivators who pursue higher cultivation and stronger power, such a feeling is extremely tormenting and uncomfortable.

Chapter 1128 Divine Sea Fifth Layer Realm

If the Insect Matriarch truly exists beyond the Divine Sea Realm, there must be something on it that can be excavated. This is one of the reasons why Lu Ye insists on refining the vitality accumulated in the Blood River. He hopes to discover something through this method.

The Insect Matriarch's vitality is immense and pure. Although during the battle, some of the vitality was used to hatch the Insect Race bodyguards, and some was used for healing, overall, the vitality consumed by the Insect Matriarch should be less than half.

In other words, more than half of the vitality was absorbed by Lu Ye with the help of the Talent Tree and integrated into the Blood River.

However, this part of the power does not entirely belong to him yet; he still needs to carefully refine it to become his own.

This situation is like a farmer who has seized a large amount of grain from the landlord's house. Now, this grain is piled up in his house, and he has to eat it to make it truly his own.

With the immense volume of the Blood River, the power of the Talent Tree has been greatly enhanced. The entire Blood River is filled with the roots of the Talent Tree, and the efficiency of devouring and refining is incomparable to his usual cultivation practice.

As time passes, the volume of the Blood River gradually shrinks.

The vast secret realm of the Insect Race is now silent and still. All the Nine Provinces cultivators have withdrawn, leaving only Lu Ye and his protector Nian Yuexian behind.

The news of the human army's great victory in the secret realm of the Insect Race has already spread, and the entire Nine Provinces is filled with an atmosphere of joy, especially among those common people who have long suffered from the scourge of insects. The prolonged shroud of darkness has finally met the dawn of hope, igniting their excitement.

They no longer need to be trapped in the cities protected by cultivators and will be able to restore their previous peaceful and leisurely lives.

With intentional and unintentional propaganda, the name of Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect, the greatest hero in quelling the insect disaster, resounds throughout the Nine Provinces, truly becoming famous worldwide.

The crafting of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc has enhanced the overall strength of the Nine Provinces expeditionary army by at least twenty to thirty percent. It can be said that the existence of this array disc significantly reduced the casualties among the cultivators, benefiting almost every True Lake Realm cultivator in the expedition.

When everyone knew nothing about the secret realm of the Insect Race, he had already accomplished the feat of entering it alone, bringing back the first-hand comprehensive intelligence.

Later, he contributed the method of refining insect blood, providing the cultivator army with the prerequisites for a counterattack.

In the final battle, when more than two hundred Level 9 realm cultivators were helpless and the battle was in a stalemate, he single-handedly broke into the core of the insect hive, creating an environment suitable for a decisive battle with his own power, coordinating and assisting the Level 9 realm cultivators in successfully slaying the Insect Matriarch, resolving the danger of the Nine Provinces.

This is different from his previous minor skirmishes. In the past, whether in the Spirit Stream Realm or the Cloud River Realm, his actions, no matter how outstanding, were still seen as child's play by truly accomplished cultivators.

But this time is different. The counterattack against the secret realm of the Insect Race was essentially facilitated by him, and the final victory was significantly related to him, even having a decisive role.

After this battle, no one would consider him merely a young rising star in his early twenties anymore. In terms of reputation and prestige, this young man in his early twenties has surpassed ninety-nine percent of the Divine Sea of the Nine Provinces.

The saying 'heroes emerge in times of chaos' applies precisely to someone like him.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge is naturally aware of the source of this propaganda. The saying 'a tree that stands out above the forest' reflects Lu Yiye's enormous role in this great battle, drawing much attention and inevitably some jealousy, potentially leading to secretive actions against him.

Of course, at present, the two major factions are still in a partnership phase, making such incidents unlikely in the short term. But how long can this relationship last? One year, two years, or perhaps three?

Ultimately, the two major factions will break apart, and then they will once again face ongoing confrontation.

By then, even the heroes will be targeted, and with all their power.

Under such propaganda, at least in the short term, Lu Ye's safety can be ensured. Truthfully, the entire Nine Provinces human race owes him a debt of gratitude. Before the situation changes, anyone daring to harm him would be committing a grave offense against the world, incurring collective retribution from the Nine Provinces human race.

While Lu Ye is refining the vitality within the Blood River, the Nine Provinces homeland is also not idle.

Although the secret realm of the Insect Race has been conquered, the insect races inside have been completely eradicated, and even the Insect Matriarch was slain on the spot, there are still many scattered insect races within the Nine Provinces that need to be dealt with.

Perhaps to the cultivators, these scattered insect races do not pose much of a threat, but to ordinary people who have never cultivated, any random insect race can destroy their painstakingly cultivated fertile fields, ruining the crops they have toiled for a year to plant.

Therefore, these insect races must be exterminated completely; not a single one can be left behind.

Nine Provinces cultivators have recently been engaged in such tasks. Within each provincial state, a large number of cultivators are searching and exploring everywhere for any missed insect races, and once discovered, they immediately take action to eliminate them.

This task won't take too long, but the issues faced by the cultivators afterward are the most troublesome.

The rest and recuperation of the common people!

Previously, during the rampant insect calamity, all the common people were gathered into each city, guarded and protected by cultivators to ensure their safety.

Under such measures, within the Nine Provinces, the number of deaths and injuries among the common people caused by insect race attacks remained low, preserving the most fundamental vital energy of the cultivation world.

However, common people need food to survive. In over three years, gathered within cities, they subsisted on stored grain from previous years. Despite their utmost frugality, the surplus grain has long been exhausted.

Cultivators can consume the flesh and blood of the insect race, but the common people cannot. The energy contained in the flesh and blood of the insect race is not something a mortal body can bear.

Many cities have encountered situations where people are starving to death.

Now it's possible to plant new crops, but that takes time. How long can the starving commoners last before the new crops are fully mature?

Information is being compiled in the central hubs of each provincial state, and the many Level 9 cultivators are feeling quite overwhelmed at the moment.

According to current data, if there isn't enough food supply within six months, it is feared that more than half of the commoners could starve to death.

By then, it would be a true human tragedy, and the foundation of the cultivation world would inevitably be shaken.

Is six months enough time for a new batch of crops to grow and mature?

Under normal circumstances, it would be enough, but currently, the entire Nine Provinces is in a state ravaged by the Insect Race. Large areas of land are barren, not only the land but even the once lush mountains now have no vegetation at all, turning into barren hills.

From a bird's-eye view, there is very little greenery visible across the entire Nine Provinces.

Commoners need time to resume farming, so six months is quite pressing.

In the homeland of Nine Provinces, cultivators are tirelessly busy, while in the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Matriarch, Lu Ye's side remains as serene as ever.

Two months have passed swiftly since the Level 9 cultivators returned to the Nine Provinces.

Until one day, the crimson in the core of the insect hive completely disappeared, and Lu Ye, sitting cross-legged, was surrounded by ripples of spirit force, brimming with vitality.

When he initially used the Blood River as support, he significantly enhanced the power of the Talent Tree and took just a few days to absorb the vitality of the Insect Matriarch. However, it took a full two months to refine that immense vitality for his own use.

It can be imagined how immense and terrifying that vitality was.

The harvest was tremendous!

Just as he initially anticipated, after refining this immense vitality, his physique underwent a leap in enhancement.

When his cultivation was still low, he once acquired a few dragon scales, using the blood Qi energy within them to grant his physique a foundation not inferior to cultivators of the same level.

But he was never a conventional physique cultivator, and his cultivation direction was different from physique cultivators. So, as his cultivation gradually increased, this advantage became less apparent. His physique was stronger than typical combat cultivators, but he was starting to trail behind true physique cultivators.

Until now...

After refining the immense vitality of the Insect Matriarch, not only was this advantage reestablished, it was greatly expanded.

Lu Ye didn't know the extent of his current physique's strength, but it was certainly substantial.

Being a combat cultivator with a physique surpassing a physique cultivator, he could now fight freely against strong enemies without worrying too much about getting injured.

The enhancement of his physique was one aspect; the surging vitality within was another gain.

This led to a significant increase in the amount of Essence Blood Lu Ye could condense. Originally, using secret techniques from the Blood Technique, he could only condense three drops of Essence Blood, directly related to his physical and cultivation foundation. The stronger the physique and higher the cultivation, the more Essence Blood one could condense.

Essence Blood has infinite wonders, and it can be said that every secret technique of the Blood Race can be enhanced by incorporating Essence Blood to increase its power.

Previously, when Lu Ye performed the Blood River Technique, he exploded all three of his Essence Blood drops, greatly enhancing the power and coverage of the Blood River Technique, laying the foundation for ultimate victory.

But now, he had nearly a hundred drops of Essence Blood in his body, a staggering change from the mere three drops before.

The enhancement of his physique and the accumulation of vitality were internal changes, often imperceptible to ordinary people.

The noticeable change was the elevation of his Cultivation Realm!

As the Talent Tree refined the accumulated vitality in the Blood River, it also elevated his cultivation to a certain degree at the same time.

It was only natural, as the Talent Tree could burn and refine all external energy for its own use. While increasing its own vitality and enhancing his physique, the reserve of his own spirit force also grew.

Thus, he broke through to the Divine Sea Level 5 realm.

It was quite an unexpected delight.

However, considering the time, even with regular cultivation, his cultivation should have advanced to the Level 5 realm long ago. It was only delayed recently because he was busy with the counterattack on the Insect Race Great Secret Realm.

A cultivation of Level 5 is already quite formidable, constituting the backbone of the Nine Provinces cultivation world. Most Divine Sea cultivators never reach this height in their lifetime.

Chapter 1129 The Blood Refinement World Arrives

The blood-red light receded, all absorbed into his body, and Lu Ye slowly opened his eyes.

He happily sensed the changes within himself. Although his cultivation only progressed by a small level, his actual strength increased more than just that.

Of course, to see how much it has truly improved, he'd need to fight someone and test it, preferably in a life-and-death battle.

But for now, there was no such opportunity.

Getting up and heading to the side, he soon arrived at the entrance to the underground passage and continued forward. Not long after, he saw a figure standing there quietly.

It was Nian Yuexian, who had been guarding him here all along.

Lu Ye solemnly bowed, "Thank you, Senior Sister, for your protection."

Nian Yuexian glanced him over. Although the passage was dim, to a cultivator of the Divine Sea Realm, such dim lighting didn't affect observation.

"Reached Level 5, have you?" Nian Yuexian was slightly surprised, but on second thought, Lu Ye's speed in cultivation had always been this fast.

"The vitality of the Insect Matriarch is immense, hence some gains were made."

Nian Yuexian scrutinized him further, feeling that Lu Ye's changes went beyond mere advancement in cultivation because at this moment, she actually sensed a hint of pressure from him.

As a Ghost Cultivator, she has keen sensitivity. With this feeling, it's likely accurate. In other words, Lu Ye might now have the capacity to fight her!

This left Nian Yuexian somewhat in a daze. When she first met Lu Ye, he hadn't even reached the True Lake Realm. In such a short time, he had become comparable to her.

This speed is far more terrifying than that person's back then.

The Righteous Blood Sect seems to produce some freaks.

Amazed in her heart, she didn't show it on her face and beckoned, "Let's go."

The two moved forward one after another. Nian Yuexian wasn't one to enjoy conversations, and Lu Ye, with things on his mind, remained a little quiet along the way.

He was contemplating whether to inform this Senior Sister Nian about the matter concerning his senior brother.

Now that the insect disaster was resolved, what he had to face next was awaiting the call from Heaven's Augury to head to the Blood Refinement World to safeguard the Righteous Blood Sacred Land.

The side of Mount Tai had already been arranged; at that time, he could surely gather some manpower, but he couldn't solely rely on Mount Tai. He also had to consider other methods.

Nian Yuexian and the sect master would undoubtedly be excellent help; their strength was evident.

The sect master was already aware of the Blood Refinement World situation, but Nian Yuexian wasn't, so it was necessary to give her a heads-up in advance.

Moreover, Nian Yuexian and Mount Tai were both his senior brother's right-hand partners in the past, highly revered by their senior brother. Lu Ye believed that as long as he truthfully informed her, this Senior Sister Nian wouldn't miss the battle in the Blood Refinement World.

Having made up his mind, just as he was about to speak, Lu Ye suddenly frowned.

In the depths of his soul, some mystical senses emerged within him.

Nian Yuexian, who was leading the way, sensed it and looked back with concern, "What's wrong? Did something go wrong with your previous cultivation?"

Lu Ye shook his head, "No!"

Nian Yuexian earnestly said, "Your cultivation is advancing too quickly; if there's a problem, don't hide it."

Lu Ye replied, "There really isn't a problem, just... let's get to the top first."

Seeing him like this, Nian Yuexian said no more and sped up considerably.

The further they ascended, the more apparent Lu Ye's sensations became. He vaguely sensed the reason but still needed to confirm it with his own eyes.

After a bit, the two burst out of the insect hive.

At that moment, the night was deep. Lu Ye rose into the air, stood mid-air, and gazed at a particular section of the starry sky.

In that piece of stellar space, one star was exceptionally bright. Compared to two months ago, its change was more than significant, and it seemed to have grown larger.

This was Lu Ye's fourth time observing this star.

The first unintentional discovery was due to a debate between two cultivators stationed at Jinglan Lake Pass. One noticed the change in this part of the sky — originally 17 stars, an extra appeared. At the time, Lu Ye didn't pay it any mind, for besides some bored cultivators, who would notice changes in one star among countless others?

The next two observations were also unintentional; each time, that star grew brighter, but Lu Ye didn't think much of it.

Until this time, among the Myriad Stars, it was the brightest!

Lu Ye came to an understanding: it's not a star but an entire continent.

That is the Blood Refinement World!

Because he had once refined a drop of Sacred Blood from the Blood River within the Blood Refinement World, theoretically, he had some connection with it.

It was just that previously the distance was too far, coupled with his insufficient proficiency in the Blood Path, making it difficult to sense the existence of the Blood Refinement World.

But now, the Blood Refinement World is continuously approaching the Nine Provinces, getting closer and closer.

With two months of refining, Lu Ye's proficiency in the Blood Path has significantly improved, turning this layer of perception into reality.

The Blood Refinement World has actually arrived, and at precisely this time!

In an instant, numerous thoughts surged in Lu Ye's mind, things he couldn't figure out before suddenly became clear, and matters that troubled and distressed him vanished without a trace.

Not to mention, ever since the return from the Blood Refinement World, he had been pondering a question, which was when Heaven's Augury would send him back to the Blood Refinement World and how many people he could take with him. This question determined whom he had to ally with and whether he should use the tokens bestowed by the elders.

But now, it seems that his worries were unnecessary; everything is under the control of Heaven's Augury.

When the two domains are close enough, the Nine Provinces cultivators can directly enter the Blood Refinement World using the Heaven's Augury Pillar, without him having to exert effort in gathering manpower. At that time, the scenario will surely be the entire Nine Provinces supporting the Blood Refinement World.

Also, this precise time point, right after the Nine Provinces cultivation world resolved the Worm Disaster, seems too coincidental.

It's not just this that's coincidental; before, he and the sect master also realized many coincidental things, but it was difficult to delve too deep.

Now it appears that the Nine Provinces' Worm Disaster seems to be just a rehearsal for larger-scale warfare!

On the whole, the counterattack against the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm did not encounter much difficulty, even the final battle became uneventful because of Lu Ye's involvement.

But the appearance of the Nine Provinces Worm Disaster led to the most direct result.

Which was the comprehensive alliance and cooperation of the two camps that have been at odds for thousands of years!

Having had this experience before, and with the remnants of this alliance and cooperation, if another cataclysm befalls that is about to sweep across the Nine Provinces, the two camps will be far more experienced and able to quickly integrate their strength, unlike the previous sluggishness.

Based on this result, looking back, the emergence of the Worm Disaster might not be a sudden natural disaster but perhaps intentionally caused by some consciousness.

If it weren't for this Worm Disaster, the two camps would still be at odds, and when a disaster greater than the Worm Disaster descends, even if they hastily cooperate, it might be too late.

Only a calamity such as the Worm Disaster, which swept across the entire Nine Provinces, could force the two camps to put aside their mutual enmity and turn to cooperation, putting it into action.

Of course, many losses inevitably occurred during this process, but to cure a chronic illness, strong medicine is required. From the result, the current situation in the Nine Provinces is entirely qualified to face a calamity greater than the Worm Disaster.

The timeline also aligns with Lu Ye's speculation.

First, he was sent by Heaven's Augury to the Blood Refinement World, where he witnessed various events and personally participated in the defense of the Righteous Blood Sacred Land. Simultaneously, the Worm Disaster erupted in the Nine Provinces domain, the Great Secret Realm of the Insect Race opened, and nine portals led to the Nine Provincial States.

When he returned from the Blood Refinement World to the Nine Provinces, he brought back the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, investigated the situation in the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm, and also obtained the method of refining from Mount Tai, bringing the counterattack swiftly onto the daily agenda and into action.

And now, he clearly felt the approach of the Blood Refinement World!

From beginning to end, there has been an invisible force driving the development of events.

One could even say, Mount Tai giving him the method of refining insect blood, wasn't it also a hint in the unseen? Mount Tai himself might not have realized this.

When Lu Ye initially sought him out, it wasn't for the method of refining insect blood, but to confront him and inform him about the senior brother and the Blood Refinement World, to win over his support and prevent him from causing trouble in secret, but in the end, he fortunately acquired something crucial to the counterattack against the Insect Race's Great Secret Realm.

A fortunate coincidence... is also a hint in the unseen.

The many clues seem chaotic, but if one personally experienced it all, one could clearly perceive things others cannot detect.

"What's wrong?" Nian Yuexian looked at Lu Ye in confusion, unable to understand why he was staring at the stellar space with such a solemn expression.

"What can you see, Senior Sister?"

"Stars?"

Although Nian Yuexian's cultivation surpassed Lu Ye's, her Ocular Power was also limited; she could not see as far, and naturally did not know what those bright stars represented.

Lu Ye couldn't see either, but he could feel it.

The Blood Refinement World should still be quite far from the Nine Provinces, but as time passes, it will inevitably get closer and when that happens, there will surely be a large-scale collision between the two domains.

Lu Ye is very clear about how powerful the foundation of the Blood Refinement World is; purely in terms of cultivators, it likely has a deeper foundation than the Nine Provinces, as the Blood Race is vast in number and cultivation is simpler compared to the human race. The Blood Refinement World also has many Sacred Seeds, each with unfathomable strength.

Right now, not many in the Nine Provinces can contend against a Sacred Seed.

But if the strength of the Nine Provinces and the Righteous Blood Sacred Land are integrated, then their strength should be more evenly matched.

The number of cultivators in the Righteous Blood Sacred Land is indeed not much, but those senior experts whose cultivation is in the Transformation Realm are not to be underestimated.

The accumulated experience and wisdom over the years have given almost each of them strength comparable to a Sacred Seed.

Moreover, in the confrontation of the two domains, the battlefield must never be in the Nine Provinces; otherwise, it will be catastrophic for the Nine Provinces.

Having already suffered through years of the Worm Disaster, it needs time to recuperate; should such a calamity happen again, there would likely be no liveable place for the mundane people of the Nine Provinces.

Chapter 1130 The Evolution of the Nine Provinces

The Blood Refinement World is approaching the position of the Nine Provinces, a world-shaking collision between the two domains is inevitable. At that time, it will be a race war between the human race and the Blood Race.

The Insect Race is merely an appetizer before the great war.

The battlefield cannot be placed in the Nine Provinces, so it must be set in the Blood Refinement World. In other words, the cultivators of the Nine Provinces need to take the initiative to strike!

Just like when they saved the shattered Unparalleled Continent.

At that time, Lu Ye, Ying Wuji, and others were the vanguard of the Nine Provinces. The establishment of four Heaven's Augury Pillars connected the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury with the Unparalleled Continent, which led to the subsequent support of the Cloud River Realm army.

History is astonishingly similar, but the opponent faced this time, in terms of quality and scale, is not comparable to the Corpse Race of the Unparalleled Continent. The disaster of the Corpse Race was limited to the Cloud River Realm level, but this time it involves the Divine Sea Realm.

The challenge is undoubtedly more severe.

Realizing this, Lu Ye knew that there were many things to be busy with.

At the very least, the Nine Provinces need to know what the impending crisis is.

"Let's go." Lu Ye called out, taking the lead and flying towards the portal leading to the Nine Provinces mainland. Nian Yuexian tilted her head to look at him, sensing the heaviness on his mind, but since he didn't speak, she didn't ask any more questions.

They sped ahead all the way.

The place where they were earlier was the core area of the Insect Race Great Secret Realm. Now, to reach the portal, they had to cross half of the realm, but both of them were very fast, so it wouldn't take much time.

However, after a short flight, Nian Yuexian suddenly exclaimed in surprise, "What is that?"

Lu Ye was deep in thought about how to let the Divine Sea Realm of the Nine Provinces understand the intelligence of the Blood Refinement World. Distracted, he responded instinctively, "What?"

"Over there!" Nian Yuexian pointed in a direction.

Lu Ye turned his head to see a swirling mist, gathering but not dispersing, slowly rotating like a large vortex.

This left him somewhat stunned because there had been no prior intelligence indicating the existence of such a mist vortex here.

To know, during the third phase, the entire forces of the Nine Provinces were spread throughout the Insect Race Great Secret Realm, plowing through this world from its edges to its center. It was a carpet-like sweep. If there were any peculiar findings, it would have been reported, and the cultivators of the Level 9 wouldn't have done nothing.

Since nothing was discovered, it indicates that it wasn't there before.

The sudden appearance of such an object naturally invites suspicion.

Lu Ye's figure flickered as he flew towards that direction, Nian Yuexian closely following. Soon, they arrived above the mist vortex, looking down and expanding their Mental Consciousness.

Quickly, Nian Yuexian's expression turned skeptical: "Is this... a portal?"

From afar, it wasn't apparent, but on closer inspection, one could clearly sense a different environmental aura emanating from the vortex's center.

Such situations typically indicate another world.

Just like the nine portals leading from the Insect Race Great Secret Realm to the Nine Provinces. Standing in front of them, you would feel some of the Nine Provinces' auras.

The principle is the same, only the portal's form differs.

Lu Ye's expression became peculiar, as the aura emanating from it gave him a very strong sense of familiarity, and the mist forming the vortex looked extremely familiar.

If this were indeed so, then the place this mist vortex led to would be familiar to him.

It couldn't be, could it? Yet, on second thought, it seemed not only possible but highly probable.

Because that place indeed experiences Insect Race invasions periodically, and during his time in the Cloud River Realm, he was fortunate enough to partake in one such battle, gaining a large amount of battle merit and exchanging for much Soul Cleansing Water, which he has used ever since.

Previously, he wasn't sure where those invading Insect Races came from, but if they were from the Insect Race Great Secret Realm, it seemed plausible.

As far as he knew, everyone in that place would usually fall into slumber, only awakening when the Insect Race invaded, using a unique Undying Body to engage the Insect Race in battle.

Thus, this portal might not exist all the time but appears at certain times. It's not surprising the Nine Provinces cultivator army hadn't discovered it.

Things were becoming somewhat coincidental, to the point where Lu Ye smelled something familiar...

This was clearly an invitation!

In that case, there was no reason not to accept the invitation.

"I'll go check it out. Senior Sister, stay here." Lu Ye said, stepping forward. Whether things were as he thought could be known with a look.

Nian Yuexian didn't speak, she just expressed her stance through her actions, closely following Lu Ye.

Seeing this, Lu Ye didn't stop her and directly threw himself into that swirling mist.

Indeed, there was a feeling of passing through a portal.

But he didn't enter the world Lu Ye had speculated about; in a trance, his mind soared rapidly.

This sensation was something Lu Ye had experienced several times, so he wasn't panicked, just guarded his mind carefully, observing silently.

At this moment, he was in a peculiar state, where he couldn't feel his own existence; his entire being seemed to transform into a unique and grand perspective, overlooking everything.

The first thing that caught his eye was a massive, grayish-brown planet.

On that planet, there were raging storms, tsunamis, earthquakes, and an extremely harsh environment in which no life, not even plants, could easily survive.

Though it was clearly an extremely unfamiliar planet, Lu Ye had a sudden realization that this planet was the Nine Provinces!

When he returned from the Blood Refinement World, he had observed the Nine Provinces once from stellar space, but in comparison, it wasn't hard to see that the Nine Provinces he observed last time was far smaller than this planet.

What era's Nine Provinces was this? Lu Ye was somewhat perplexed, especially since the environment was so harsh. If the Nine Provinces had always been like this, not to mention the group of cultivators, even ordinary people would struggle to exist.

Just as he was pondering this, time sped up visibly, and there were some noticeable changes to the Nine Provinces' environment.

The frequency of those natural disasters decreased, and there was more vitality on the land.

First, green covered the grayish-brown, becoming full of life, and then some simple life forms appeared.

During this process, the flow of time was incredibly fast; Lu Ye could clearly sense this. He quickly realized that the Nine Provinces he was observing was from an extremely ancient era, not the Nine Provinces he lived in now.

An invisible force was demonstrating the changes of the Nine Provinces to him.

Lu Ye was greatly shocked and focused more intently on observing. Such a unique experience wasn't something just anyone could encounter. Although it might not bring him any tangible benefits, merely broadening his horizons was unparalleled by anything.

In a moment of distraction, in an era so ancient beyond knowing, humanity was born on the Nine Provinces. They ate raw meat and drank blood, surviving with difficulty. During this period, the environment of the Nine Provinces was still unstable. Humans not only had to face many fierce beasts but also many natural disasters.

Yet they continued to persist and reproduce resiliently.

After countless years, a group called cultivators began to appear in the Nine Provinces, and as time passed, the number of cultivators grew, and their levels increased.

Lu Ye watched them rushing back and forth on the land of the Nine Provinces, fighting incessantly, seeing their continuous growth, and then... they burst out of the Nine Provinces and entered the vast stellar space!

The moment the first cultivator broke out of the Nine Provinces and entered stellar space, Lu Ye was immensely shocked.

Because currently, no cultivator within the Nine Provinces can achieve such a feat; this is a power beyond the Divine Sea Realm.

In other words, those humans who burst out of the Nine Provinces are cultivators who have transcended the Divine Sea Realm, reaching a level now bitterly pursued by the Nine Provinces Divine Sea Realms!

If those in the Divine Sea Realm were to see such a sight, they'd likely go mad!

They have been exploring the path of cultivation, yet they didn't realize that in a very ancient era, the ancestors of humanity had already taken this step.

But... since humanity had already taken this step, why is it that the current Nine Provinces is dominated by the Divine Sea Realm? And even the subsequent cultivation techniques have been severed?

What kind of significant upheaval happened in the history of the Nine Provinces that turned a cultivation world capable of producing cultivators who could rush into stellar space into one now confined to its domain?

Lu Ye suddenly remembered something.

It was that the current Nine Provinces cultivation world generally believes that long ago, the Nine Provinces had a period of immense glory because nowadays, whether on the Nine Provinces itself or the Spirit Stream battlefield and Cloud River battlefield, there are many opportunities and even inheritances yet to be discovered.

Where did these opportunities and inheritances come from? They couldn't have just appeared out of thin air. But the historical records of the current Nine Provinces only span two to three thousand years; anything beyond that is entirely unknown, with no texts to consult.

So the cultivation world unanimously believes that before the current cultivation era, there were other eras of the Nine Provinces, and those opportunities and inheritances are relics of even earlier eras.

This is a bold speculation, without anyone who can prove its truth.

But Lu Ye now knows it to be true.

The Nine Provinces indeed had a gloriously brilliant past, but due to some unknown upheavals, it transformed into its current state. As to what that upheaval was, all he needs to do is continue observing to find out.

More and more cultivators broke out of the Nine Provinces and entered stellar space, and it seemed that the ancient Nine Provinces cultivation world suddenly burst into an era of explosive growth.

Those cultivators who broke out of the Nine Provinces began exploring the mysteries of stellar space and becoming increasingly powerful in the process.

But disaster followed...

If the grayish-brown Nine Provinces that Lu Ye observed was like a stubborn rock, then the Nine Provinces he saw now, after countless years of accumulation and development, is like a fragrant pastry.