

Humanity 191

Chapter 191 My Family's Healing Cultator is Very Terrifying

Madam Yun's wings rune tattoo she had inked on Lu Ye's back had come in handy as Lu Ye had unexpectedly soared into the sky. The three Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were clearly startled and obviously hadn't anticipated Lu Ye possessing such an ability.

For a moment, a red light that was Lu Ye flashed across the sky, with three differently colored spirit lights trailing behind him, creating long, luminous trails.

Rune tattoos are not something every low-level cultivator could possess. Across the entire Nine Provinces, the number of spirit runes masters wasn't considerable, and those capable of inking rune tattoos on low-level cultivators were even fewer. It could be said that in the entire Nine Provinces cultivation world, there were no more than twenty such spirit runes masters.

Madam Yun was one of them! If not for the sect master's sake, she wouldn't have easily made a move.

Lu Ye flew dozens of meters before the sense of danger behind him gradually dissipated. Glancing back, he saw that those people had withdrawn their Spiritual Artifacts, obviously indicating that Lu Ye had escaped their attack range.

Weapon control in combat had its limits, and for several Level 7 cultivators, thirty meters was their maximum distance. Beyond that, their connection with their Spiritual Artifacts would be severed.

Seeing Lu Ye escaping, the three looked at each other unsure whether to pursue him. Lu Ye had just killed two of their magic cultivators, which indeed made them wary, but Lu Ye's cultivation level had also been revealed—it was only Level 6. Furthermore, two other Haotian Alliance cultivators had been seriously injured.

At this point, the best choice was to pursue them and not give the enemy a chance to breathe.

However, the small island across was someone else's territory; rashly chasing into it wasn't a good move. If someone had set a trap there...

Not to mention, if just a few Haotian Alliance cultivators were lying in ambush, they would be in trouble, although this possibility was not great.

After hesitating for a moment, the three consulted briefly and decided to let the ghost cultivator sneak in to scout the situation.

Among the six systems of cultivation, ghost cultivators excel at stealth and assassination. However, since all the cultivators Lu Ye had encountered were not highly cultivated, even if some were ghost cultivators, this characteristic wasn't very distinct. When cultivation is low, there isn't much difference between ghost and combat cultivators.

Only when those ghost cultivators' cultivation was sufficient would their advantages start to reveal slowly.

However, as everyone knows, ghost cultivators are the fastest; therefore, the heavy responsibility of scouting the enemy necessarily fell on that ghost cultivator, even though he was somewhat reluctant. At this moment, there was no better strategy available.

With the cover of his two companions, the ghost cultivator successfully infiltrated Lu Ye's island. After a distant scouting, he soon brought back a good news and a bad news.

The good news was that there indeed was one more person on the other side, but that person was also just a Level 6 cultivator.

The bad news was that the person was a healing cultivator, currently attending to the injuries of those two injured Haotian Alliance cultivators!

Upon hearing this feedback, the physique and combat cultivators were taken aback. They couldn't figure out which sect's governor and deputy governor, both Level 6, would include a healing cultivator among them.

It is well known that while healing cultivators might master other branches, because they spend substantial time studying medicine, among cultivators of the same level, healing cultivators are the weakest.

In the Spirit Stream Defense Battle, healing cultivators almost never appear. At such a place and time where fighting the enemy is commonplace, insufficient strength invariably leads to death; what use then is bringing a healing cultivator? To sew people into stitched corpses after they are chopped into a dozen pieces?

Thus, the three from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could indeed not understand which broke-down sect would have such astonishing tactics.

But they knew they could not wait any longer. With a healing cultivator on the other side, once those two severely injured Haotian Alliance cultivators received medical attention, their combat strength would recover, turning it into a four-against-three situation!

The decision was made immediately; the three from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge swiftly moved towards the opposing island, while planning to let the ghost cultivator engage Lu Ye. They had a deep understanding of Lu Ye's methods and knew not to treat this Level 6 cultivator as an ordinary one.

They did not expect the ghost cultivator to kill Lu Ye, but to hold him off while they dealt with the three Haotian Alliance members. Even if Lu Ye could fly, it would still be hard for him to escape death in a three-on-one battle.

Meanwhile, Hua Ci, who was tending to the wounds of two Haotian Alliance cultivators, glanced at Lu Ye beside her.

Lu Ye understood immediately.

"Have they come?" asked the physique cultivator.

"They have!"

The physique cultivator stood up with difficulty, grasping his big shield spirit artifact, and sighed inwardly. It seemed inevitable that he had to face this predicament. He smiled at Lu Ye, "It seems I have dragged you into this. I'll do my best to hold them off."

The female cultivator also stood up, holding two dagger spiritual artifacts in her hands.

Although she had received treatment from Hua Ci, there was too little time, and the most Hua Ci had been able to do was to stop the bleeding for them.

The female cultivator seemed to want to say something to Lu Ye, but eventually, she did not speak. Instead, Lu Ye slowly drew the saber from his waist and said indifferently, "No need to fight them head-on. If they dare to come here, this will be their grave."

The physique and female cultivators were surprised and did not understand where he got such confidence. Although they had four people on their side, their chances of winning were not high.

"My healer is very formidable!"

After speaking, Lu Ye gripped his Boulder Mountain Saber, and in his field of vision, the figures of the three from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge charged towards them. Before the people arrived, three streaks of flowing light had already swept forth.

The burly physique cultivator bellowed, positioning himself in front of the others and planted his spirit artifact big shield on the ground. As he channeled spirit force, a thick barrier emerged on the shield, protecting all four of them behind it.

The sound of clanging rang out, each impact causing the physique cultivator to stagger slightly, yet he stood his ground as if rooted to the spot, immovable.

As the enemy continued their assault, the barrier of the big shield spirit artifact began to fracture. Meanwhile, Lu Ye and the female cultivator had already charged out to the left and right.

The female cultivator threw one of her dagger spiritual artifacts, also employing the Weapon Control Path to attack the opponent, forcing the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge combat cultivator to activate his own spiritual artifact in defense.

At the same time, Lu Ye also activated his magic and spells, launching an attack at the ghost cultivator.

The scene was bustling with activity, with the fluctuations of spirit force rising and falling one after another.

Hiding behind the big shield spirit artifact, Hua Ci slowly raised her hand, and as the spirit force was activated, she formed a magic spell with her fingers.

The next moment, the expressions of the three from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge changed drastically, simply because the spirit force within their bodies suddenly became obscure and sluggish, causing their strength to plummet instantly, and the ferocity of their attacks severely diminished.

Not only that, all three of them felt as if something was burrowing out from their seven orifices, making it difficult to breathe and obstructing their vision. As those things grew, their spirit force rapidly drained away.

This scared the trio immensely.

Lu Ye had already reached the ghost cultivator, and his long saber came down, splattering blood...

Thirty breaths later, the battle ended when one of their physique cultivators smashed the head of the opponent's physique cultivator with a big shield spirit artifact.

Lu Ye returned his saber to its sheath, and Hua Ci looked calm, while only their own physique cultivator and female cultivator looked at her with complex expressions.

Lu Ye had mentioned before that their healing cultivator was terrifying, and they hadn't thought much of it, only wondering how terrifying a healing cultivator could possibly be? People's understanding of healing cultivators was always just about saving lives and aiding the injured.

Only at this moment did they realize that this healing cultivator was truly terrifying!

They didn't even clearly see what had happened, only knowing that on their way over, the three from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge suddenly had many small mushrooms sprouting from their seven orifices, followed by a significant drop in their strength, and then their own group effortlessly cut down the trio like chopping melons and vegetables.

They had never heard of such strange methods in this world, and although their respective sects also had some healing cultivators, none could compare with the one present!

The two vaguely felt that this gentle-tempered female healing cultivator must have had some rare adventure or inheritance; otherwise, it made no sense for her to possess such terrifying abilities.

"You should tend to your wounds," Lu Ye said, beginning to clean up the battlefield.

Hua Ci looked at the two and asked softly, "Which of you would like to go first?"

The physique cultivator and female cultivator looked at each other, then both said in unison, "He!"

Seeming to sense something, Hua Ci smiled sweetly, "Don't worry, I won't plant mushrooms in you."

The physique cultivator awkwardly scratched his head, "Junior Sister Lann should go first, I can still hold on."

As the three of them healed and recovered on one side, Lu Ye collected the storage bags and spiritual artifacts from the ground and dragged the bodies of the three to the seaside to discard them.

Afterward, he ran to another small island, cleaned up the belongings of those previously killed, and dealt with the bodies using the same method.

One incense stick's time later, Lu Ye returned with a strange expression, holding something in his hand.

"Junior Brother Yiye!" The female cultivator had finished healing and was out of danger, but her injuries would still take some time to fully recover.

"Senior Sister Lann!" Lu Ye looked at her with a smile, "We meet again."

Although he had saved her before, due to the urgency, there had been no time to catch up until this moment.

This female cultivator was none other than Lann Yudie from Zixia Mountain. Over two months ago, when Lu Ye's identity was exposed, and numerous cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were hunting him, it was Lann Yudie who first approached him with people from Zixia Mountain and thereafter protected him all along the way.

During that period of fleeing, Lu Ye had received protection from many people, but what stood out the most was Lann Yudie.

Firstly, she was the first to find him, and secondly, they had spent the longest time together. Other protectors sometimes had just made contact with Lu Ye when they inevitably had to confront the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

When he last parted ways with Lann Yudie, she and some members of Beidou Sect were being surrounded by people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, but Lu Ye had deliberately exposed his whereabouts, drawing away many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

He had later communicated with Lann Yudie to confirm her safety.

However, Lu Ye didn't expect to encounter her in the Spirit Stream Defense Battle. Her presence here implied that she was likely holding the position of Governor or Deputy Governor.

"Thank you, Junior Brother, for saving my life," Lann Yudie said earnestly.

Lu Ye shook his head, "If it weren't for Senior Sister's constant protection that day, where would I be today? It's I who should thank you more."

"Then let's call it even," Lann Yudie said with a slight smile.

Before Lu Ye could respond, Hua Ci, who was on the side tending to the physique cultivator, blinked her innocent eyes, "Didn't you tell me last time that saving a life should be repaid with a promise of marriage?"

"Ah? Last time?" Lann Yudie looked at Lu Ye in surprise.

Lu Ye frowned darkly, "Don't listen to her; this healer of mine loves talking nonsense."

Chapter 192 Come Prepared

He had exchanged names with the physique cultivator who was receiving medical treatment. The other person was Gao Tai, a governor from an 8th grade sect in Dingzhou.

Upon learning Lu Ye's identity, Gao Tai was astonished, "So you're Lu Yiye from Righteous Blood Sect. The battle at Golden Light Peak two months ago really caused quite a stir."

Lu Ye was now too lazy to correct others' reference to him; some reputations had spread so far that they couldn't be denied even if he wanted to.

Lann Yudie was the Deputy Governor, and Gao Tai was the Governor. Originally, two others had accompanied them. However, in the previous skirmish with several Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, those two had already fallen in battle, and their belongings were still with Lu Ye, who immediately let them identify the items and returned the storage sacks of the deceased.

Though they had narrowly escaped death, the demise of their comrades left Lann Yudie and Gao Tai quite despondent.

After communicating with them for a while, Lu Ye learned that they were lucky to have teamed up from the start. Together, the four of them had managed to kill a few Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, until they encountered those people just now.

There were four of them, but six on the opposing side. With similar levels of cultivation, the opponents clearly had the upper hand; if Lu Ye had not suddenly appeared, both of them would have perished there.

"Do you two recognize this item?" Lu Ye said, tossing a bone fragment to each of them.

Lann Yudie and Gao Tai examined it and both shook their heads. The former asked, "What is this?"

"I don't know either." Lu Ye toyed with two other bone fragments in his hands, "Found them on the other side."

He had previously collected two fragments, and when he went to clear the battlefield just now, he had incredibly found two more. One was from a magic cultivator he had ambushed and killed, and another from another Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator's corpse who had been killed before Lu Ye arrived; it lay among three corpses on the ground.

After sharing his discovery, Lann Yudie and Gao Tai both looked surprised, "Are you saying that you've found such bone fragments from members of four different sects?"

"If those two weren't from the same sect, then it's indeed four sects!"

"What in the world is this?" Lann Yudie activated her spirit force and tried to infuse it into the fragment, but got no response. She squeezed it hard and even chopped it with her dagger a few times, yet it couldn't be cut through.

"Never seen before, it might be an unknown spirit material," guessed Gao Tai.

"But why would it appear on people from four different sects?" noticed Lann Yudie, seeing the problem.

Lu Ye also wanted to know the reason but couldn't find an answer. Previously, Hua Ci had guessed that the two Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators might have some blood relation, but now it seemed this conjecture was unreliable; it made no sense for four people to have a blood relation and also join four different sects.

Eventually, he had to put it aside for the time being. He planned to ask his fourth senior brother, who was worldly-wise and likely to have a clue.

He let Lann Yudie and Gao Tai recover from their injuries, while Lu Ye kept a vigil and sent a message to his fourth senior brother. As for Hua Ci, she had gone out to plant mushrooms again. At the moment, the scope of the small island was manageable, but if it grew too large, she couldn't possibly plant mushrooms everywhere and could only focus on a specific area.

Fourth senior brother hadn't replied yet; Lu Ye guessed he might be fighting with someone. He wasn't worried about it, though, as during these days, he had gathered more knowledge about the cultivation world and knew about the Spirit Stream Ranking, and that his fourth senior brother was the tenth-ranked powerhouse on that list.

They said the Governor from the Loyal Heart Sect was the top monster in the Spirit Stream Ranking. With these two together, few in the Chess Sea could pose a threat to them.

After waiting a moment, he got a response.

"Was just fighting with someone. What's the matter, junior brother?" Fourth senior brother's tone was relaxed; clearly, his opponent hadn't fared well.

Lu Ye then detailed his findings and asked about the bone fragment, not expecting an answer before he described it thoroughly; yet, fourth senior brother had already spoken of the fragment's characteristics first.

"You have one too?" Lu Ye was somewhat shocked.

"Just found one."

Suddenly, Lu Ye felt uneasy; if the same fragments were found on different Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators and appeared in different locations within the Chess Sea, it surely indicated something ominous.

"I've never seen this thing either. I'll go ask around and let you know if I find anything," said fourth senior brother.

"Alright!"

After ending the transmission, Lu Ye stroked the bone fragments in his hand, thought for a moment, then placed them in his storage sack.

Four hours later, another small island drifted towards them. It was smaller than theirs, seemingly less amalgamated.

However, once they had converged, Lu Ye discovered that the newcomers were Haotian Alliance cultivators, only two of them, and both were injured, appearing to have been through a fierce battle.

When they reconvened, they were overjoyed to discover that Lu Ye had a healing cultivator with him.

They had already braced themselves for a desperate fight, since in their current condition, encountering any cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would surely be disastrous. However, luck was on their side, and they not only ran into Haotian Alliance members but also found a healing cultivator who could save lives and help the injured.

After Hua Ci treated the injuries of the two men, they were profoundly grateful.

With that, six cultivators gathered on the small island, greatly increasing everyone's sense of safety. Even if they faced a group of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, they were not without the power to fight back, and should an encounter occur, it was possible that they might have the greater numbers.

Meanwhile, across the entire Chess Sea, a fierce battle erupted on every island, differing in scale. Each conflict ended with the complete obliteration of one group of cultivators.

Looking over the situation in the entire Chess Sea, it was undeniable that the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side had an absolute advantage. Many of their cultivators had formed groups, while those from the Haotian Alliance had not managed to unite with their allies in significant numbers. Most encounters were with hostile cultivators; even if they won a battle, another would be awaiting them.

As the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators continuously joined forces, they often created scenarios where they outnumbered their opponents. This caused even heavier casualties among the Haotian Alliance, leaving them with little ability to resist once they were discovered.

Half a day later, a large battle broke out. There were six on each side, an equal number, but overtly, their side was at a disadvantage.

Lu Ye and Hua Ci were both at Level 6, but the other four were injured. Although they had been treated by Hua Ci, they would need several days to recover fully.

After a brief skirmish, Lu Ye's group was completely defeated and retreated towards the back of their own island, pursued relentlessly by the six from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, whose momentum was fierce.

The result... was a complete mess!

When those six stepped into the mushroom area Hua Ci had cultivated, their demise was already sealed.

Even though Lann Yudie and Gao Tai had seen such a scene once before, they were still somewhat taken aback. The two Haotian Alliance cultivators witnessing it for the first time were utterly horrified.

Frightening as it was, their strikes were unabated.

The battle was such that everyone had their share of kills, and all faces were smiling brightly, their appreciation for Hua Ci deepening even more.

Having a healing cultivator stationed at the rear in such a place was incredibly reassuring, not to mention that this healer could also weaken the enemy. Hua Ci played a pivotal role in their easy victory in this battle.

After recounting the spoils of war, no one took any; everything was handed over to Hua Ci. Being able to kill the enemy and earn merit and the support of Heaven's Augury Pillar was profit enough; no one felt right splitting the spoils.

Hua Ci tried to refuse, but everyone insisted strongly, so she could only accept with a smile.

After this battle, they all recognized Hua Ci's importance. After consulting with Lu Ye, they ultimately decided that in each battle hereafter, one person would be specifically tasked with protecting Hua Ci closely, which really made Lu Ye feel the difference in treatment.

But that was also something he was glad to see. After all, Hua Ci's abilities were somewhat lacking, and having someone to protect her meant she could be safer.

After this great battle, they naturally began to heal and recuperate.

It was at this time that a message arrived. Lu Ye checked and saw that it was from his Fourth Senior Brother.

"Quickly get rid of those bone fragments. Those things can influence the islands in the Chess Sea, making the islands of those who possess the fragments attract and approach each other. People from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge are using these fragments to continuously join forces. This Spirit Stream Defense Battle is going bad for the Haotian Alliance!"

Seeing this message, Lu Ye was momentarily stunned. He had felt that those bone fragments were peculiar, but had never imagined they could have such wonderful effects.

According to the information revealed by his Fourth Senior Brother, these bone fragments could actually influence the islands in the Chess Sea, making the islands of those who held the fragments gradually come together and join forces, enabling the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to exponentially increase their ranks like a snowball.

Combining this with all that he had already faced, Lu Ye immediately judged that his Fourth Senior Brother must be right. The four bone fragments he had acquired, belonging to different powers of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, had converged in the Chess Sea. It might be partially due to luck, but it was very likely due to the influence of the bone fragments on the islands.

If that was indeed the case... then this Spirit Stream Defense Battle really was disastrous for the Haotian Alliance.

"Where did these bone fragments come from? Haven't they been seen before?" Lu Ye sent a message asking.

"It seems that about a few decades ago, a member of a sect from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge accidentally discovered them in the Chess Sea. Originally belonging to a powerful sea demon beast, these remains were taken back and, somehow, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge figured out how to use these remains by turning them into bone fragments.

Taking advantage of this battle, they distributed them among the various large and small sects," replied Fourth Senior Brother anxiously, "Little Junior Brother, be very careful, and try to join with other Haotian Alliance members as much as possible. Hold out until the islands merge, and then I will come to find you!"

"There isn't too much danger on my side, be careful yourself, Senior Brother," Lu Ye replied.

After ending the message exchange with Li Baxian, Lu Ye's brows were tightly furrowed.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had undoubtedly come prepared this time. Until now, news of these bone fragments hadn't leaked, and it was only when the Spirit Stream Defense Battle began that Ten Thousand Demons Ridge suddenly made their move, clearly having planned for a long time.

Chapter 193 Two Treasures

Perhaps in the past, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had prepared for defense battles, but because the terrain was not Chess Sea, those bone fragments did not come into play.

Bone fragments are not any kind of spirit material, even if cultivators from the Haotian Alliance had captured them before, they wouldn't take them too seriously.

This time, the defensive battle is within the Chess Sea, and the well-prepared Ten Thousand Demons Ridge naturally holds a tremendous advantage.

If the situation is truly as such, then it is certain that Fourth Senior Brother is in grave danger, because the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge came with premeditation and would obviously not be content with just killing some Level 7-8 junior cultivators. They'd be more willing to target those Core Circle Governors and Deputy Governors.

These people are the future pillars of the big sects. If all were to perish here, it's not to say that the Spirit Stream Realm's talents would be completely wiped out, but for the next few decades, there would inevitably be far fewer figures to shoulder the heavy responsibilities.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge is playing a grand game of chess!

Even now, with the function of the bone fragments exposed, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side feels no fear, for within the Chess Sea, the merging and attachment of Chess Islands is beyond human control. Everyone who enters here can only passively wait for their Chess Island to merge with another, and then partake in bouts of ferocious combat.

Before all the Chess Islands combine into one vast provincial state, even a powerful being like Li Baxian cannot possibly leap over the sea to flee to another Chess Island in times of crisis, for flying over the sea consumes far too much spirit force, something Lu Ye has experienced deeply.

Thus, those holding the bone fragments from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge naturally possess a huge advantage.

After conveying the message received from Li Baxian, everyone was shocked; no one had imagined that the bone fragments could have such miraculous effects.

"Fourth Senior Brother told me to quickly discard the bone fragments, otherwise they would lead us to converge with the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who possess the bones," Lu Ye said, taking

out the few bone fragments and fondling them in his hands, seemingly with no intention of throwing them away.

"What does Junior Brother think?" asked Lann Yudie, looking at him.

"What do you all think?" Lu Ye countered.

One of the two Haotian Alliance cultivators who arrived later said, "Senior Brother Li is unaware of our situation here. His proposal certainly stems from concern for Junior Brother Yiye's safety, which is understandable.

We now have six people, and with the methods arranged by Sister Hua Ci, even if we really encounter people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, as long as there are fewer than ten of them, we can fight. If the bone fragments truly have that kind of effect, I believe we shouldn't discard them. On the contrary, we should take advantage of them and let them lead us to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's people!"

After he finished speaking, he turned his head and looked around.

His fellow sect members naturally nodded in agreement.

Lann Yudie and Gao Tai exchanged a glance and also nodded.

Everyone looked at Lu Ye, who said with a smile, "Since nobody objects, then each person can take one piece. I don't know if the effects will become stronger with more pieces."

As he spoke, he distributed three of the four bone fragments in his hand, so that each person from the big sects held one.

He said solemnly, "Right now, it's certain that many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge have already joined forces. The Haotian Alliance side has probably suffered considerable losses. If we can kill more of the enemy, we can reduce our own casualties. By doing so, when all the Chess Islands eventually merge, we'll have the capital to contend with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge!"

Lann Yudie nodded, "Junior Brother's words are timely."

Gao Tai suddenly felt a sense of honor and mission, "So you're saying, the heavy responsibility of saving the Haotian Alliance falls upon us now?"

Upon hearing this, the expressions of the other two turned serious.

Lu Ye chuckled, "It's not that exaggerated; there will always be people from the Haotian Alliance who are lucky enough to meet each other. Regardless, let's all put in more effort together!"

All of them nodded, feeling the heavy weight on their shoulders.

"Rest for the time being; I'll keep guard," Lu Ye said, and immediately flashed to the highest point of the small island.

Two hours later, another small island appeared within Lu Ye's vision, and he immediately sent out an alert. Those who were healing and recovering all stood up at once, looking into the distance. They couldn't make out the situation on that island, nor could they tell which faction it belonged to.

But no matter which faction those coming might be from, everyone was already prepared for battle.

After a brief discussion, a fresh plan to lure the enemy deep into their territory was hatched.

Lann Yudie and Gao Tai were tasked with drawing out any potential enemies, while Lu Ye and the others would retreat to the rear of the small island.

If those who arrived were Haotian Alliance cultivators, they would of course be warmly welcomed. If they were from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, then Lann Yudie and Gao Tai would lead them into pursuit. If they dared to chase them, they would inevitably pass through the mushroom area arranged by Hua Ci, and then it would be time to adapt to the situation.

The reason Lann Yudie and Gao Tai were chosen to lure the enemy was mainly because Gao Tai was a physique cultivator, tough-skinned and sturdy. Even if he took a few hits, it wouldn't be fatal. With Hua Ci supporting from behind, as long as he wasn't killed on the spot or seriously injured, there was an opportunity for treatment after the fact.

In short, Gao Tai was responsible for taking a beating.

And Lann Yudie was tasked with being as beautiful as a flower...

The sight of such a delicate and graceful female cultivator fleeing in front, especially with bloodstains on her body, would likely trigger the pursuit desire of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

The plan was proposed by Lu Ye and received unanimous approval from everyone, except Lann Yudie, who seemed to harbor some hostility toward Lu Ye.

Once the plan was drawn up, everyone immediately set about implementing it.

Lu Ye, along with Hua Ci and three others, retreated to the rear of the island, while Lann Yudie and Gao Tai continued to stand at a vantage point to watch.

During the wait, accompanied by a booming sound, the ground shook and trembled as two small islands collided with each other.

Lu Ye concentrated his senses, and soon, there were spirit force fluctuations coming from over there, along with the whistling sound of magic and spells being cast.

Shortly after, Lu Ye checked the battlefield marking, conveying the information from Lann Yudie, "Five people, from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge!"

Five people meant at least three sects were involved. It was possible that one person had fallen in battle. Even if Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had some plans in place, real combat wasn't simply about having more people to ensure a safe retreat.

When death was certain, whether it be Ten Thousand Demons Ridge or Haotian Alliance members, both could erupt with a determination and resolve to perish together with the enemy.

Of course, that kind of determination and resolve would be greatly diminished after being weakened by Hua Ci's mushrooms.

Thunderous noises kept coming from the front. Very soon, Lu Ye saw the figures of Lann Yudie and Gao Tai fleeing in disarray toward this side. They weren't together but had split into two different paths.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators pursuing them were extremely cautious, constantly observing their surroundings while on the chase, afraid of being ambushed.

But if they dared to step foot on this Chess Island, all their caution would be for naught.

Hua Ci's arrangements might not cover the entire island, but all key locations had her planted mushrooms. Unless those cultivators could maintain flight at all times, it was inevitable they'd inhale some spore powder.

Upon seeing Lu Ye and the others, the pursuing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators wore expressions that said, "Just as expected," but after sensing that both Lu Ye and Hua Ci were only at Level 6, their tense moods relaxed quite a bit.

On the surface, six against five didn't clearly indicate who had the upper hand, but apart from Lu Ye and Hua Ci, who were unharmed, the other four were all covered in blood, obviously injured.

While the five hesitated whether to attack, Lu Ye and his team had already fiercely charged forward, forcing the other side into battle.

Spiritual Artifacts flew out, colliding and clashing in midair, creating a symphony of metallic sounds as explosions of spirit force erupted in light, one after another.

Because Lu Ye's side had one person staying close to protect Hua Ci, and he himself at Level 6 had yet to master weapon control, the exchange favored the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Just when the confidence of the five from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was solidified, the tide turned dramatically. The momentary obscurity in their spirit force made their Spiritual Artifacts difficult to control and greatly reduced their might. In an instant, Lann Yudie and the others knocked down three spirit lights.

By the time Lu Ye charged up to a cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, that person, with a face full of fright, tried to back away but failed to block the blade light coming head-on.

Blood sprayed and agonizing screams rose and fell in succession.

Twenty breaths later, the battle had ended. Lu Ye shook the fresh blood off his long blade, sheathed it, and called out to Gao Tai, "Senior Brother Gao, accompany me to take a look on the opposite island."

"Sure!" Gao Tai quickly agreed, and the two went to investigate together.

Although they felt it was unlikely for the opposition to have left anyone behind, it was always better to be cautious. An oversight leading to casualties on their own side would be the most costly mistake.

Lann Yudie and the rest stayed behind to clean up after the battle, handing over the spoils as usual to Hua Ci, leaving her torn between laughter and tears. She had no idea how many storage sacks she would accumulate after the Spirit Stream Defense Battle.

She wanted to share some of the spoils, but no one was willing to accept them, as everyone knew that their ability to fight so effortlessly was all thanks to Hua Ci's efforts. Without her methods, even six against five might have resulted in casualties.

In contrast, now nobody was injured and they hadn't even consumed much spirit force. Who wouldn't like such a battle? This further solidified their determination to protect Hua Ci.

Meanwhile, after a thorough inspection by Lu Ye and Gao Tai confirmed no Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were hiding on the other side, they returned to their own island.

Afterward, Lann Yudie, accompanied by Hua Ci, went to the opposite island to make similar preparations.

As the islands expanded, the places needing Hua Ci's attention grew in number, so she couldn't cover the entire islands. She could only choose suitable locations, and such tasks consumed a lot of spirit force. Fortunately, the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes Lu Ye had constructed earlier were working, allowing her to sit down after each arrangement and recover swiftly.

Especially as the islands continued to grow, nature's spiritual energy became denser and denser. The spiritual energy on the island now was almost double that of the Righteous Blood Sect's base.

Hua Ci was busy. Contemplating this, Lu Ye then set up a larger range of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes where everyone rested, which consumed six-tenths of his own spirit force.

Seeing Lu Ye's technique, Gao Tai and the others were utterly astonished.

Only then did they realize that both members from the Righteous Blood Sect were treasures.

Hua Ci could save lives and heal, cultivate mushrooms to weaken enemies, and that was already quite something. But Lu Ye could also easily construct Gathering Spirit Runes, greatly simplifying everyone's recovery process, and they wouldn't have to worry about conserving spirit force in future battles.

There was a sense of wonder. Just what kind of divine sect was the Righteous Blood Sect?

Chapter 194 Cover Armorer

Time passed, and as our island merged with other smaller islands, battles frequently erupted.

Lu Ye and his companions continued to follow their previous battle plan, always sending Gao Tai and Lann Yudie out first to lure the enemy deep before surrounding and annihilating them. Though the tactic had grown old, it remained highly effective.

It wasn't that no one saw through their simple trick, but even if they did, what could they do? Unless the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators refrained from pursuit, as long as they dared to chase, it would be a one-way trip.

Occasionally, they would also encounter cultivators from their own side.

The merging and attachment of these islands in the Chess Sea seemed to follow a principle of proximity, with the closest islands gravitating towards each other, also influenced by those strange bone fragments attracting each other.

After three days, more than twenty Haotian Alliance cultivators had gathered on our island. By this point, it had become very rare to encounter any solitary cultivators.

Whether from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge or the Haotian Alliance, the weaker parties had already been wiped out. Like the sand sieved from the waves, those who survived were cultivators who had banded together into small groups.

A small group of more than twenty people was not a modest number, and this also made battles much simpler. Even when facing more Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, the Haotian Alliance side did not show any signs of fear.

With Hua Ci anchoring the rear, the cultivators on our side fought unflinchingly, unconcerned about injuries. Hua Ci would tend to their wounds after the battle, and with the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes established by Lu Ye, there was no need to worry about spirit force exhaustion.

As a result, our cultivators fought like tigers swooping down the mountains, leaving their Ten Thousand Demons Ridge counterparts doubting their life choices, wondering if they had been injected with chicken blood.

The area of the small island gradually expanded, and Hua Ci stopped going out to plant mushrooms since it had exceeded her limit of control.

She was now a high priority for protection, always accompanied by two cultivators, and even Lu Ye, when going into battle, would have Gao Tai closely following him, ready to sacrifice himself at any moment.

Although the two from the Righteous Blood Sect had the lowest cultivation, in such an environment, their help to the Haotian Alliance side was too significant for anyone to dare let anything happen to them.

A verdant glow flickered, and a ticklish sensation spread; Hua Ci was healing Lu Ye.

This time, they encountered a tough opponent. When another small island merged, they discovered that the gathered Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators amounted to more than thirty people.

That number was frightening, arguably unbeatable within the Chess Sea at this stage; anyone encountering them would find themselves outmatched.

Those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators must have formed such a scale after merging through several islands, killing all in their path and strutting boldly.

The result was that as soon as they assaulted our island, they fell into misfortune. More than ten of the thirty were killed within moments, and the survivors fled in disarray, leaving a few more bodies behind as they retreated to their island.

Lu Ye and the others naturally pursued them, but the enemy had actually set up traps on that side, causing some casualties on our team.

The situation immediately stalemated, with neither side daring to set foot on the other's island easily. As a result, each side fielded several eloquent speakers who hurled insults across the divide, arguing loudly and incessantly.

But such bickering was no solution. Our side had the advantage in numbers, and with a healing cultivator at our rear, after some deliberation, we decided on an assault.

Battles in the Chess Sea can't be prolonged too much, because no one can be sure when another island might merge. If it's allies, it's a cause for celebration; but if it's the enemy, the predicament only worsens as each battle requires some recovery time.

After two forceful attacks, although no one on our side died, several were injured, and we were compelled to cease hostilities.

"We can't delay any longer. With those bone fragments at work, the next encounter will likely be with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. It will only become more disadvantageous for us," stated a governor from an 8th grade sect.

This was not him being alarmist but a statement of fact. Over the past three days, although Lu Ye and his people had also gathered more than twenty allies, they had encountered Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators more frequently, with the chances of encountering them in each island merger being around seventy percent.

This undoubtedly was the influence of the bone fragments, affecting the movement direction of the islands.

"There's an array cultivator on the other side. Although the formations he sets up are still rough, their power is not to be underestimated. We have to find a way to kill that array cultivator."

"That guy is heavily guarded by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge people. Killing him is going to be tough!"

Several individuals discussed while recuperating, but they couldn't come up with an effective plan. They were tied up in knots. Of course, if they disregarded the losses and charged, they could win with their current numerical advantage, but at the cost of an unknown number of lives. No one wanted to take such a risk unless absolutely necessary.

Lu Ye glanced at a thin cultivator next to him, who was repairing a palm-sized spider. The spider looked incredibly lifelike, almost indistinguishable from a real one, but in fact, it was not a living creature but a mechanical contraption.

The slender cultivator was the governor from Thousand Contraptions Pavilion, named Loo Yushan.

The Thousand Contraptions Pavilion was a unique sect throughout the Nine Provinces, as it inherited the path of the cover armorer.

Apart from the six main cultivator classes, there were also some minor streams with long or newly-emerging legacies. Without exception, these streams were niche and didn't conform to the mainstream cultivation trends, so they generally didn't scale up.

The sect master previously had a double-horse carriage, where the horses pulling the cart seemed alive, a creation of the cover armorer, but it was destroyed by an ambush while escorting Lu Ye back to the Righteous Blood Sect.

The sect master had mentioned to Lu Ye that he might have the chance to encounter a cover armorer in the future.

And here was Loo Yushan, an actual cover armorer, skilled in creating various mechanical contrivances. Lu Ye's impression of cover armorers had been limited by that double-horse carriage; he had thought that their creations were, for the most part, just for assistance.

...

However, it wasn't until he fought alongside Loo Yushan that he realized his understanding of cover armorers was somewhat biased. Their creations could indeed kill enemies, and their power was immense.

Loo Yushan possessed a Spiritual Artifact, which, if replaced with the Thunder Dragon Cannon, had a very straightforward mode of attack. It drew in spirit force from Spirit Stones, compressed and gathered it, then released it in a burst!

Lu Ye had witnessed firsthand a Level 7 combat cultivator being struck by a Thunder Dragon Cannon, only to have half of his chest vanish. Such a brutal attack, even his Defense Spirit Runes couldn't withstand.

But as ferocious as it was, there was a significant drawback to using it. The build-up time was too long, making it easy to dodge. So, in a big battle, Loo Yushan wouldn't act unless necessary, but once he did, it was earth-shattering. Also, the Thunder Dragon Cannon consumed a lot, a single shot would use up four Spirit Stones.

The mechanized creations of cover armorers were extremely intricate. They largely relied on external forces, so high-level cultivators rarely saw cover armorers in action. However, that didn't mean cover armorers had no future. A talented cover armorer could still cultivate to profound realms, such as the Pavilion Master of Thousand Contraptions Pavilion, who was in the Divine Sea Realm.

It's just that the sect's grade was only 8th grade because there were too few disciples in his sect.

At this moment, Loo Yushan was repairing a mechanical spider, a kind of mechanized creation. It had no killing power and was only used for scouting enemy positions. The situation on the island opposite was detected by such mechanical spiders.

When his healing was complete, Lu Ye casually picked up a mechanical spider to examine it. Loo Yushan glanced at him and smiled slightly, "Is Junior Brother Yiye interested in this thing?"

"I've never seen it before."

"Cover armorers are a small faction with few members. It's normal for Junior Brother not to have seen them."

"Does Senior Brother have many of these creations?"

"About a dozen or so," Loo Yushan said heartily. "If Junior Brother wants, take them to play with."

Lu Ye then took one and walked toward Hua Ci.

Hua Ci looked at the spider in his hand with a wary face, her whole body's hair standing on end, though she tried to keep her composure, "What for?"

"Take a look at this."

Lu Ye tossed the spider to her, but Hua Ci didn't catch it, and it landed directly on her chest.

Looking down at it, Hua Ci stood motionless, her face turning deathly white at a visible speed, her body beginning to tremble slightly.

"Are you scared?"

Lu Ye picked up the spider again, looking at her in surprise.

"Not scared," Hua Ci's voice had changed.

Lu Ye nodded, "Senior Brother Loo has a dozen or so of these things. I'm thinking, if you can plant the mushrooms inside them, and then let Senior Brother Loo send them to the other side when the opportunity is right..." He clenched his fist in front of Hua Ci and then released it: "Boom!"

Since the enemy dared not come over, why not send the mushrooms to them? The effect would be the same. If this method worked, future battles wouldn't be limited to luring the enemy deeper; they could also take the initiative to attack. Of course, this required Loo Yushan to have enough mechanized creations.

"Will it work?"

The Governors who were discussing how to kill those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators also cast their gazes over, and Loo Yushan stopped his work.

Hua Ci took a deep breath, reached out and took the spider from Lu Ye's hand, and said calmly, "I'll try!"

Her fingertips touched Lu Ye's hand, and Lu Ye felt her skin was very cold...

A moment later, Hua Ci said, "It's possible, but I don't know if Senior Brother Loo can still control this thing."

No sooner had she spoken than Loo Yushan's spirit force surged, and with a flicker of his mind, the spider in Hua Ci's hand suddenly came to life, its fuzzy legs scraping across her palm.

With a smack, the spider hit Lu Ye's face. He was covered in a face full of spore powder, turning him grey, and even the intricate spider was shattered to pieces.

Everyone around stared at the scene in astonishment.

Hua Ci laughed with feigned confidence, "Slipped..."

Lu Ye wiped his face, looking at her expressionlessly.

Only Loo Yushan, extending a trembling hand, lamented, "My eight-legged friend!"

The plan was feasible!

They immediately set to work. There was a younger sister on Loo Yushan's side, and both had many small mechanized creations. Hua Ci planted mushrooms in each, and by the time she was done, she was nearly spent.

Chapter 195 Taking the Initiative

...

The battle had already begun, with over twenty of our own people pushing forward. Physique cultivators were in the lead, followed by combat cultivators, and behind them were magic cultivators and ghost cultivators. Hua Ci was at the very end, with two cultivators inseparably by her side, shielding her from any possible attacks.

The prowess of magic and spells and weapon control began to reveal itself as the two sides clashed from a distance, fighting fiercely with spirit force swirling tumultuously.

Lu Ye and Loo Yushan stood at the commanding height of their island, not participating in the fight—the two had a more important mission. At that moment, Loo Yushan sat cross-legged in front of Lu Ye, his spirit force surging as he controlled his spider creations to stealthily infiltrate the enemy's Chess Island.

Pretending to launch a strong offensive was merely a way to divert the enemy's attention and facilitate Loo Yushan's movements; otherwise, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators would easily detect those peculiar spiders, especially since there were hardly any living creatures on Chess Island.

Lu Ye was here both to protect Loo Yushan, who was busy controlling the mechanical creatures, and to wait for the right moment.

The opposing array cultivator must be killed; otherwise, even if Hua Ci's methods were effective, their side would still suffer losses.

He observed for a moment before turning his head to look out at the sea, where another Chess Island was drifting over. It would probably merge with this one in the time it took an incense stick to burn.

It was not clear whether the newcomers were friends or foes, so delaying was not an option. If that island brought several dozen more Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, their side would inevitably face a pincer attack.

The residual waves of the battle grew increasingly fierce until, at a certain moment, Loo Yushan opened his eyes and stood up: "Everything's in place!"

Lu Ye nodded, "Let's move."

He stepped forward, his hands supporting Loo Yushan's arms, while fiery red spirit force flowed behind him, forming wings as they soared into the sky and darted toward the battlefield.

Behind the Formation, Hua Ci sensed the spirit force fluctuations behind her. She turned her head back and saw Lu Ye flying over with Loo Yushan, their eyes meeting in a fleeting nod.

In the blink of an eye, Lu Ye had carried Loo Yushan across their own formation. This scene also caught the eyes of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, causing them consternation and dismay.

While they did not know what the Haotian Alliance was planning, it was clear that something big was about to happen. Several streaks of light immediately changed direction, heading towards Lu Ye, but they lost their power before they could get close.

The range of a Level 7 cultivator's weapon control was limited; how could Lu Ye possibly venture so easily into someone else's attack range? It could be said that, in the state of activating his wings rune tattoo, he was invincible.

Loo Yushan, who was being carried in front of him, felt nervous for a while, but when he realized the enemy couldn't reach them, he calmed his mind and pinched the magic spell in his hands, muttering lowly, "Explode!"

Inside the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp, the lurking spiders exploded one after another, shocking everyone there, as no one knew what had just happened.

But after the spiders had exploded, they did not inflict any damage on them.

Just as they were confused and suspicious, Hua Ci made her move. A visible ring of greenish energy emanated from her, booming outward in all directions, passing over their own cultivators and enveloping the enemy cultivators.

Dozens of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were thrown into disarray because at that moment, their spirit force became as sluggish and intractable as before, not flowing smoothly. They had encountered this situation the last time they entered the enemy's Chess Island.

They had suffered heavy casualties in that battle before returning to their own island, where they spent great effort to clear the poison that had invaded their bodies and restore the flow of their spirit force.

They were already wary of recklessly entering the small islands of their opponents, always staying on their own Chess Island, but even so, they couldn't avoid the enemy's tactics.

In an instant, several streaks of weapon control light were shot down.

At the rear of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp, a man in green observed the situation with a grave expression, holding an array disc in his hand, ready to trigger the might of the Formation he had prepared in advance as soon as the Haotian Alliance people entered a certain area.

He had an ominous feeling that today might not end well, but even on the brink of death, he wouldn't let the Haotian Alliance have an easy time. At any cost, he would drag a few of them down with him.

However, at that moment, a tremendous sense of crisis enveloped him. He looked up sharply, only to see a bright point of light blooming in the sky, growing brighter as time passed. Within a short time, it seemed to transform into a small sun.

The sense of crisis was emanating from the sky.

"It's that cover armorer!" a cultivator by his side exclaimed.

Previously, Loo Yushan had obliterated the chest of a Level 7 cultivator with one shot, an event fresh in the memories of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. They saw that sun-like light blooming and immediately knew who was preparing to attack.

They also saw the cover armorer being carried by someone with a pair of fiery red wings, the spirit force streaming behind him.

"Don't let him get close!" another voice called out, as two streaks of light came flying towards him. Moving swiftly, they were ready to strike like a tempest the moment Lu Ye dared to approach.

But Lu Ye simply carried Loo Yushan and stopped outside the attack range of their weapons control, letting those two streaks of light move as fast as they could, but unable to harm them in the slightest.

A vicious smile gradually appeared on Loo Yushan's face as, after a few moments of concentration, the bizarrely shaped Spiritual Artifact in his hands was fully charged.

"Thunder Dragon Roar!" Loo Yushan roared.

...

...

A bright light descended from the sky, transforming into a column that directly bombarded the direction where the array cultivator was, any spirit force weapons in its path were instantly blown away.

As Loo Yushan leveraged the power of his Spiritual Artifact, the array cultivator sensed danger and hurriedly dodged to the side. Meanwhile, a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge physique cultivator standing close, wielding a shield-like Spiritual Artifact, stood firm in front of him like a mountain, the spirit runes on the shield glittering as spirit force was fueled into it.

However, the intense brightness was still overshadowed by the descending column of light.

The powerful fluctuations of spirit force gradually faded, and from the sky to the ground, particles of light scattered like fireflies were extinguished.

Looking again at the area enveloped by the column of light, the shield of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge physique cultivator was full of cracks, and shattered with a clatter. At the same time, the physique cultivator spewed out a mouthful of fresh blood, and fell to the ground with a thud.

The array cultivator in green robes was not injured but was thoroughly shaken by the forceful impact.

No sooner had he staggered to his feet than a figure descended from the sky, followed by the bright gleam of a knife flashing before his eyes.

Not far away, Loo Yushan fell to the ground with a thud, spitting out the dirt in his mouth. Watching Lu Ye charging into the enemy's flanks, he grimaced in pain, "That's too harsh!"

After firing his cannon, Lu Ye left him behind immediately. If it wasn't for his Level 7 cultivation and his ability to travel through air, that fall could have been fatal.

Despite his complaint, he harbored no resentment. He knew Lu Ye wanted to kill the array cultivator as quickly as possible. Hastily climbing up, he took his Thunder Dragon Cannon and rushed forward.

However, after just a few steps, he saw Lu Ye shoot up into the sky, blood spurting from his body, several streaks of light relentlessly chasing him from behind.

"Got him!" Lu Ye roared.

"Kill!" Gao Tai bellowed from the Haotian Alliance ranks, the first to rush forward. The enemy array cultivator was dead, their formations lacking control and now rendered useless, creating no further concerns.

The battle quickly ended. Without their array cultivator and having their strength diminished by Hua Ci, outnumbered as well, how could the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side stand a chance? They fell one after another, soon utterly eradicated.

It was another exhilarating victory. Aside from a few injuries, there were no fatalities, with Lu Ye being the most severely wounded.

Using his ability to fly, he infiltrated the enemy's rear lines, and despite successfully eliminating the array cultivator, was also injured by several other Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. Fortunately, the injuries were superficial and not life-threatening.

"Keep fighting, don't stop! Another Chess Island is approaching."

As soon as Lu Ye finished speaking, the group understood his ploy; the magic cultivators immediately began casting spells, and the rest used their spirit force weapons, attacking with great fervor, and the clangs of combat and the fluctuations of spirit force resounded far and wide.

Lann Yudie and two others hid nearby, scouting the situation.

Moments later, the ground shook as two Chess Islands collided.

Some time passed, and then word came from Lann Yudie's end; there was no need to pretend any longer. The newcomers were from the Haotian Alliance, and there were more than ten of them.

The two groups joined forces, and the numbers on their side surged to nearly forty.

However, these ten or so new arrivals were in a much worse state than Lu Ye's group. Almost everyone was injured, their clothes soaked with blood, and some of them were gravely injured, almost at death's door.

Upon learning that there was a healing cultivator on their side, the ten-plus individuals were all overjoyed. Hua Ci treated their wounds one by one, based on the severity of their injuries.

With battlefield markings present, communications within the Chess Sea were swift. By now, almost all the Haotian Alliance cultivators knew that Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had come prepared with the intent to slaughter the Haotian Alliance cultivators en masse.

But even with this intelligence, the Haotian Alliance couldn't change the overall situation. Now, all of them clung to one hope: to merge with the Chess Island where the Righteous Blood Sect was, because rumors spoke of healing cultivators there who could heal wounds, and several powerful Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, which allowed rapid recovery.

But with which side their Chess Island would merge was utterly beyond their control. What most Haotian Alliance cultivators could do was stick together, hoping to minimize casualties in combat. That way, when encountering enemies again, they would have the strength to resist.

It goes without saying, the Chess Island where Lu Ye and his companions were had disrupted the deployment of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to a certain extent.

If it hadn't been for their elimination of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, these small groups from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would undoubtedly have continued to grow and converge, and any Haotian Alliance cultivators encountering them would face certain death. As the enemy grew stronger, the advantage of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would snowball.

By killing the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, they were not just eliminating enemies; they were significantly preventing the demise of many of their own cultivators as well.

Gao Tai had joked about them carrying the heavy responsibility of saving the Haotian Alliance, but the situation was indeed slowly moving in that direction.

With the successful collaboration, Lu Ye and the others became more flexible in their tactics, no longer passively waiting but fully capable of taking the initiative when needed.

For that purpose, Loo Yushan from Thousand Contraptions Pavilion and his junior sister were urgently crafting small mechanical creations.

Chapter 196 The Final Merger

On the tenth day of entering the Chess Sea, the number of cultivators gathered on Chess Island had exceeded one hundred, and the vast island was already too large to see its end.

By the fifteenth day, the number of people temporarily swelled to two hundred.

The explosive growth was mainly due to the fact that each batch of surviving Haotian Alliance cultivators was not small in number, the least being around a dozen, and the most being up to thirty or forty.

As the numbers grew, so did our own strength.

However, correspondingly, the battles also became more intense. As our own numbers were gathering, so were those from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and no longer were there small-scale skirmishes

between a few individuals as seen at the start. Now, when a large battle broke out, the sky was filled with the light from magic and spells and flying weapons.

According to the information that Lu Ye currently held, the merging between the chess islands generally lasts from eighteen to twenty days. During this period, the scattered chess islands across the Chess Sea would slowly converge into a large provincial state.

Once this provincial state formed, some rare heavenly materials and earthly treasures seldom seen in the outside world would appear, possibly originating from those unexplored Chess Islands.

After the formation of the provincial state, it would last for about ten days before once again fracturing into countless Chess Islands. By that time, the Spirit Stream Defense Battle would come to an end, and any surviving cultivators would be sent back to the residences of their respective sects.

Fifteen days had already passed, and in a few more days, the merging between the chess islands would reach its final stages. Once the provincial state was formed, the confrontation between the cultivators of the two camps would become even more fierce, because now everyone could only passively wait. However, once the merging of the Chess Island was complete, they could take the initiative to attack.

Preparations by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would also truly come into effect at that moment.

In these days, news from various parties was exchanged and communicated, and bad news would occasionally arrive, relaying that Chess Islands occupied by Haotian Alliance cultivators had been attacked and wiped out to the last man.

If the Haotian Alliance cultivators on the periphery suffered too many casualties, then once the provincial state formed, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could take advantage of their superior numbers to sweep the Haotian Alliance out of the game, and with enough time to search, they could even kill every single one of the Haotian Alliance side.

The situation on the periphery was not optimistic, and it was even less so in the core areas.

At least on the periphery, there's the Righteous Blood Sect, with two of their members as the core support, propping things up. But the cultivators in the core areas weren't so fortunate. When they fought, there was no one to help weaken the enemy's strength for them.

If they were injured, there was no one to help them heal; if their energy consumption was too great, they could only rely on consuming elixir pills or sit in meditation to recover.

After several brutal, major battles, even those Level 8-9 cultivators who had cultivated Heaven Rank techniques had suffered significant casualties.

Two days later, the number of cultivators on the island had increased again, reaching as many as three hundred people. From one of the smaller islands that had merged over, there were up to seventy cultivators from the Haotian Alliance.

Upon learning that this Chess Island was where the cultivators of the Righteous Blood Sect were, the seventy-plus people were overjoyed, as if they had found their own family. They even made a special effort to come over and get acquainted with Lu Ye and Hua Ci.

With over three hundred people, our side became unprecedentedly strong and everyone eagerly awaited the final merging of the Chess Island. Only then could the Haotian Alliance cultivators who had not yet converged come together and find a glimmer of hope for survival.

The awaited day finally arrived.

When the Chess Island they were on suddenly shook and accelerated in one direction, the expressions of all the cultivators on the island became solemn, as everyone realized that the final merging had begun.

At this moment, across the entire Chess Sea, the Chess Islands, which were originally difficult to count, had already merged into large islands. These islands were now being drawn in the same direction by some force. Along the way, islands began to merge and cling together, forming even larger islands.

Some of these islands had people on them, others were uninhabited. Those uninhabited small islands all seemed small, as if they had never undergone merging, but without exception, they all contained some

precious heavenly materials and earthly treasures, some of which were even unique products of the Chess Sea.

And somewhere on a Chess Island, there also was an island, not small in size, with a fruit tree growing at its highest point. The tree bore nine palm-sized blue flowers, whose scent filled the air even ten miles away.

The visible spiritual energy of nature formed a vortex, converging on these nine blue flowers, and beneath their petals, the beginnings of fruit started to grow.

It was foreseeable that such a tree would inevitably attract a struggle between the strong from both camps, and a great battle was destined to erupt here.

The Chess Island hadn't yet completely finished merging, but Lu Ye's side had already started fighting, because on their merging path, nearby Chess Islands had attached themselves to it, and simultaneously, two Chess Islands, one to the left and one to the right, were perfectly sandwiching Lu Ye and his fellow cultivators' island in the middle.

Both of the sandwiching islands had a gathering of around a hundred people each, and without waiting for Lu Ye and the others to ascertain which camp the two sides belonged to, the cultivators from the left and right had already charged over.

Both sides belonged to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and having made contact with each other and exchanged information, they determined that the one caught in the middle was from the Haotian Alliance, so they had no reason for courtesy.

Our cultivators saw this and thought it was a good turn of events, immediately becoming invigorated.

Ever since our numbers had surpassed one hundred, our side had been the one to take the initiative in every major battle.

There was no choice; with our increased numbers, the enemy couldn't just recklessly attack us anymore, and even the best actor couldn't lure them deep into our territory. The enemy only needed to send a few people to scout this side and they would know something wasn't right.

When taking the offensive, even with Hua Ci leading the array, there were always some inevitable casualties. Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators weren't easy to deal with; like the Haotian Alliance, they too had experienced many battles and feared not death.

It had been many days since anyone dared to attack, rendering all the extensive preparations made by Hua Ci useless.

So this moment, even though they were caught in a pincer attack from left and right, everyone was far from panicked and even a little excited. Each person's face showed eagerness, as they quietly gathered their spirit force.

Too many wolves, too little meat, at this time it was a competition of sight and speed. Killing the enemy's Governor not only yielded merits but also allowed for taking over the blessing of the opponent's Heaven's Augury Pillar. However, if you killed a Deputy Governor, you would only get merits, with a big difference between the two.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators on both sides were coordinating well, and their momentum was also full. In contrast, their own lines were standing in groups of threes and twos, without any special formation, appearing like a disorganized mob.

As usual, it was the collision and confrontation between the magic and spells and the weapon control spirit light that began the battle, and it was with this exchange that the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge realized that something was wrong.

There were unexpectedly too many people from the Haotian Alliance!

Their sides combined were still fewer than their opponents, but the battle had already begun, and there was no room for retreat now, so they could only grit their teeth and persist.

Luckily, they soon discovered that there was no unified command and coordination on the Haotian Alliance side, so even though they had the numbers, they weren't gaining the upper hand in the battle.

This reassured the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side, and they attacked with even more vigor.

What they didn't know was that the majority of the Haotian Alliance's three hundred cultivators were focusing their attention on a gentle-mannered woman, which was why they seemed to be lacking in combat power.

This woman, named Hua Ci!

Around Hua Ci, the number of people responsible for protecting her had increased to five, one physique cultivator, one combat cultivator, one magic cultivator, one ghost cultivator, and a cover armorer, who was Loo Yushan's junior sister.

As Hua Ci raised her jade hand, her magic spells changed, and a green halo burst forth sweeping across.

The more than three hundred people from the Haotian Alliance seemed to have received some kind of command as their offensive suddenly intensified!

With exclamations of shock coming from both sides, a large portion of the spirit light from the controlled weapons in the sky was shattered! The spirit light of their own controlled weapons blasted into the enemy camp following the momentum, and the physique and combat cultivators at the forefront were covered in blood, and more than a dozen died on the spot.

"Thunder Dragon Roar!" The diminutive Loo Yushan shouted with great momentum, her Spiritual Artifact emitting a strong pillar of light blasting into the midst of the enemy crowd, not knowing how many she had killed but her expression suddenly turned delighted.

"Kill!" Gao Tai roared furiously and was the first to charge out again, the big shield Spiritual Artifact in his hand erecting a barrier to withstand the attacks of the cultivators, as he sprinted forward with large strides.

Behind him, one combat cultivator after another burst forward like fierce wolves, their aura fearsome, lacking only a pair of red lights floating in their eyes.

Lu Ye followed close behind him without a step's delay.

Moments later, Gao Tai collided with an opposing physique cultivator, like two giant rocks smashing together, the shield Spiritual Artifact let out a thunderous blast, and spirit light loomed.

Both sides were forced back several steps, a clash that proved to be an even match.

But Gao Tai was smiling because as he retreated, the combat cultivators who had charged out behind him had already darted to either side.

The face of the opposing burly physique cultivator turned to horror; despite frantically activating his spirit force and the power of his Spiritual Artifact, as the combat cultivators passed by him, several streaks of blood still sprayed from his body before he knelt on the ground.

The physique cultivators at the very front of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side all faced a similar fate.

The defensive system of the front-line physique cultivators had been breached; what was left was a bloodbath.

Lu Ye had just charged towards a panic-stricken magic cultivator when a streak of weapon control spirit light attacked from the side, puncturing a big hole in the magic cultivator's head!

Lu Ye's swung sword was immediately retracted.

Such things were common, and after several big battles, despite the heated fighting, the actual kills were few. With the advantage in numbers now, each battle left some without any gains.

Immediately, he set his sights on the next target, a combat cultivator who was fleeing towards the rear. He raised his hand and cast the Fire Phoenix Technique, staggering the man, with his back scorched and blackened, then he followed up with a swift strike of his sword.

Looking at the two red lights that fell onto the back of his hand, Lu Ye finally took a long breath. In the current situation, snatching a kill really wasn't easy.

Like a collapsing mountain, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side retreated, leaving countless corpses along the way, with the remaining dozen or so being chased to the seaside. Seeing they had nowhere to run, they actually jumped into the sea one after another.

A mass of unknown shadows surged up from beneath the water, engulfing these few people.

"No!" a Haotian Alliance cultivator stretched out his hand, thumping to his knees on the ground, eyes red and face filled with sorrow.

If uninformed people saw this scene, they would probably think that the people who jumped into the sea were his relatives.

"Why... Why would you rather kill yourselves than let me do it?"

Damn it, another fruitless battle!

Chapter 197 - Winning Glory for the Sect

Lu Ye and the others had finished their battle, and the same was true on the other side; they collected the spoils of war and counted the casualties. Those injured voluntarily went to Hua Ci for treatment.

The battle had resulted in many enemies killed, and the casualties on their own side were not significant.

Lu Ye sent a message to his Fourth Senior Brother, asking about his situation.

Previously, because Chess Island had not fully merged, there was no way to travel between them, but now as the final merging had begun, once all the Chess Islands merged into a single provincial state, the previous restrictions would no longer exist.

Lu Ye's message was mainly to ask his Fourth Senior Brother whether he wanted to join him, as his own situation was temporarily very safe, and he even had the capacity to suppress the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

If the situation was not good for Fourth Senior Brother, joining him would undoubtedly be a good choice.

However, Lu Ye was at the outermost periphery, so if Fourth Senior Brother came over, his cultivation would definitely be suppressed by Heaven's Augury.

In the Spirit Stream Defense Battle, no matter what the terrain, Heaven's Augury always had such harmonization and suppression, especially since the cultivation levels of the governors from the big sects varied greatly. Take Lu Ye and his Fourth Senior Brother as examples.

Lu Ye was at Level 6 cultivating an Earth-class technique, while Fourth Senior Brother was at Level 8 cultivating a Heaven Rank technique. The gap in cultivation was more significant than just two levels. In actuality, it was a full five levels of difference.

Because being at Level 9 in Earth-class techniques was only equivalent to Level 6 in Heaven Rank techniques, both had opened the 180th orifice.

The gap in cultivation was too large, and without Heaven's Augury's harmonization and suppression, a powerful being like Li Baxian could easily overwhelm any cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in the outer circle.

After waiting for a while, Fourth Senior Brother finally replied, telling Lu Ye to rest easy and go with the flow. He was still busy with some matters and would find Lu Ye after he had finished.

Above the vast Chess Sea, streams of light chased after stars and moons as they swept across the sea surface, with a gourd-shaped Spiritual Artifact at the forefront. On the gourd, Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were seated. Both were injured. Feng Yuechan, pale-faced, leaned on Li Baxian's shoulder, occasionally coughing lightly, indicating that her injuries were severe.

The streams of light following the two were not numerous, only about a dozen or so, amounting to just over twenty people.

After ending the communication with Lu Ye, Li Baxian breathed a sigh of relief. He had always been worried about Lu Ye's safety, and knowing now that Lu Ye's situation was very good, naturally, he relaxed.

However, his own situation was not good. As Lu Ye had previously thought, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had come with a plan and naturally would not be satisfied with just killing some level 7-8 governors. They wanted to kill leading figures of the Haotian Alliance like Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan.

If they killed enough, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could dominate the confrontation between the two camps in the coming decades.

In the past twenty days, inside the inner circle, the Haotian Alliance side suffered huge losses, with even Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan getting injured.

They had encountered a group of powerful fighters from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Outnumbered, they had no choice but to flee their current Chess Island.

Under normal circumstances, this act was tantamount to suicide, for flying over the sea consumed too much spirit force. Even for Li Baxian and his company, it was risky to guarantee reaching the next Chess Island before their spirit force was depleted.

But now, all the Chess Islands were in the final stages of merging, converging towards a central point, so they took the gamble. With some luck, they might find a landing spot before their spirit force ran out, assuming, of course, it wasn't already occupied by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators—otherwise, it would mean certain death.

"Brother, I fear I won't make it much longer," Feng Yuechan's weak voice rang out, her breath thinning, "Brother, it was great to have met you in this life."

Li Baxian's expression was solemn, and he sighed, "Don't talk nonsense."

"I can feel it... Brother, I want to return to the sect."

"I will take you back to the sect!" Li Baxian said, his head bowed low.

"After we return to the sect... cough cough... let's get married!"

Slap...

Li Baxian smacked his hand on Feng Yuechan's smooth forehead in response.

Feng Yuechan touchingly covered her forehead, "I'm about to die, and you're still hitting me?"

Li Baxian gave her an annoyed look, "Do you think I don't know that before coming here your mother made you wear a treasure garment?"

Feng Yuechan's face turned red, "I wore it inside, how did you know, brother?"

"Ah, there's a Chess Island over there, we're saved!" Li Baxian suddenly brightened up as he looked in one direction. Following his action, the gourd-shaped Spiritual Artifact carrying both of them flew toward that Chess Island, closely followed by the dozen or so streams of light behind them.

A massive buzzing sound continued without pause; when the entire Chess Island finally stopped, the last merger was completed.

Looking down from high above, the checkerboard of islands on the Chess Sea had disappeared, replaced by a single massive province. Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators from all around the province had gathered and began to act almost simultaneously.

According to their prearranged plan, they started purging the periphery of the land, groups of unequal numbers moving either clockwise or counterclockwise to search for traces of Haotian Alliance cultivators.

Not just on the outskirts, but even the cultivators from the inner circles of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge did the same. In a moment, the entire province seemed to turn into a gigantic millstone, driven by the power of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. Once they found traces of Haotian Alliance cultivators, the crushing force of the millstone would pulverize any enemy they encountered.

Before the final consolidation of the province, the 300 Haotian Alliance cultivators on the Chess Island where Lu Ye was located also began to devise their next plan.

Now, Lu Ye and his people were faced with two choices. One was to stay where they were. After all, this was a place that Lu Ye and others had managed for over twenty days. Not to mention, Hua Ci had made various arrangements here, and Lu Ye had constructed more than a dozen huge Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes to facilitate killing enemies and recovery.

Thus, waiting here provided a significant advantage, whether it was for other Haotian Alliance members to come join them or for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge foes to fall into their trap.

However, if they chose to stay, then the scattered Haotian Alliance cultivators would face greater danger because currently, their group had the highest number of Haotian Alliance cultivators. If they did not take action, other smaller groups would certainly face annihilation by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

They did not know how many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were still alive, but it was certain they outnumbered the Haotian Alliance.

Therefore, the second choice in front of their group was to take the initiative to strike while searching for the enemy, thereby absorbing more of their own cultivators to strengthen their power.

All who had come to participate in the Spirit Stream Defense Battle were governors and deputy governors from various big sects. Even if they had not participated in such large-scale operations before, they had enough insight and foresight.

So after only a brief discussion, they almost unanimously agreed.

That was to forsake the various advantages of this location and launch a proactive strike! This was not only about saving others but also about self-preservation. Otherwise, once Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had cleaned up the outskirts, they were bound to launch an attack on this location. By then, it wouldn't just involve a couple of hundred people—a couple of thousand might be possible.

Once the plan was set, the more than 300 people were divided into over thirty squads, each consisting of about ten people who cooperated and moved closely connected.

Choosing a direction, the group of over 300 people thundered out.

At the same time, messages were sent out to inform those scattered small groups of their movement trajectory, directing them to find opportunities to come and join them.

Naturally, Lu Ye and Hua Ci were in one team, as were Lann Yudie and Gao Tai, along with the siblings Loo Yushan. The others present were responsible for closely protecting Hua Ci.

Everyone was sprinting at full speed, except for Hua Ci and Loo Yushan's sister, who each rode on a mechanical wolf with a leisurely demeanor.

These mechanical wolves were the siblings' creations, using Spirit Stones and some spirit force for transportation. These weren't especially fast, but neither were they slow; their advantage was in conserving physical strength.

Lu Ye somewhat regretted not bringing Amber inside. Previously, he was concerned that having Amber with him would easily reveal his identity, but who knew beforehand that the terrain for this Spirit Stream Defense Battle would be the Chess Sea. In the Chess Sea, whether or not identities were exposed seemed to matter little.

After all, it was just moving between merging islands, where encounters meant life or death battles.

Hua Ci's mechanical wolf was hung with storage sacks, over a hundred in total, and that was after she had firmly declined more. If she hadn't been so insistent on not taking more, she might now have several hundred.

This Spirit Stream Defense Battle had been extremely profitable for Hua Ci. It wasn't just about the storage sacks. Most of the cultivators from the big sects had received her medical treatment, and what she had earned even more of was their goodwill.

As an independent cultivator, she was little known previously, but one Spirit Stream Defense Battle had made her known to many big sects' governors and deputy governors. Just by walking the battlefield of Spirit Stream afterward, she could receive protection from any sect.

Of course, Lu Ye was the same; his construction of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes greatly facilitated the recovery of their fellow cultivators.

The achievements of the two were not under the shadow of the Righteous Blood Sect, but were earned through their own abilities, which also brought honor to their sect.

"Thirty li ahead, some brothers from the Haotian Alliance are being pursued and are heading toward us. All squads, prepare for battle!" a roar suddenly came from ahead.

With the province fully formed and the sun hanging high in the sky, it was easy for cultivators to determine each other's locations with vague orientations and communication methods.

"Beat them to a pulp!" someone shouted out.

Suddenly, a burst of noises erupted, the group of Haotian Alliance cultivators descending like bandits down a mountain.

They hadn't covered the thirty li because as they were approaching each other, only about ten or so li later, Lu Ye felt fluctuations of spirit force ahead, suggesting that the Haotian Alliance cultivators being pursued were resisting their enemy's attacks.

Being pursued naturally didn't bode well, but with the arrival of their own cultivators, the situation quickly reversed.

The pursuing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, seeing the tide turn, exchanged blows hastily, abandoned some corpses, and turned to flee.

The pursuers turned into the fleeing, and the fleeing turned back to pursue, making the scene extremely lively for a moment.

Lu Ye and Hua Ci exchanged a word, and his body shot out like an arrow, passing one Haotian Alliance cultivator after another. Within moments, he caught up with the fleeing enemies, led with magic and spells, toppled them, and after a swift slash, left without even time to collect the spoils, continuing the chase.

Chapter 198 - Went Around in a Circle

Kill the enemy, regroup, set off, kill again, regroup...

The number of people in our team continued to grow; around the outer perimeter, all Haotian Alliance cultivators who received the news were converging towards this area. Some made it successfully, while others encountered ambushes, suffering heavy losses.

The Spirit Stream Defense Battle had never developed like this before.

In previous Spirit Stream Defense Battles, even when cultivators from the same camp cooperated, at most they would form a squad of no more than ten people. After all, with more people, many things could become chaotic, and it wasn't easy to distribute the spoils of war, the good things found, and merits and such.

But this time, under the pressure created by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, the entire Haotian Alliance had been mobilized.

A proper Spirit Stream Defense Battle was forcibly turned into a war by both sides' cultivators.

In the beginning, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge didn't realize the severity of the situation. The active troops of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were all advancing triumphantly, sweeping everything before them. In their minds, with the role played by the bone fragments, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had already gained absolute superiority.

After the final merging of the provincial state, all they needed to do was to wipe out the remaining enemies, and the entire provincial state would be theirs.

However, as time passed, and messages were continuously relayed and fermented, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge suddenly found that there was a Haotian Alliance squad with hundreds of cultivators, continuously sweeping around the outer circle. Multiple Ten Thousand Demons Ridge squads had encountered them, each time suffering heavy casualties.

The situation was different from what they had expected. Not only had Ten Thousand Demons Ridge failed to control the situation, they were instead being beaten into a retreat.

Squads of varying numbers from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge also began to converge, but by now, gathering enough manpower to contend with the Haotian Alliance was obviously no longer possible.

After several days of extermination and slaughter, the original numerical advantage of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had vanished. Around the perimeter, it was the Haotian Alliance that now had the numerical upper hand.

The situation eventually evolved into both sides' cultivators chasing and fleeing around the outer perimeter of the provincial state.

On the sixth day after the formation of the provincial state, the weary Haotian Alliance cultivators stopped. The number of cultivators in our camp had already reached a thousand.

These cultivators were not only from the original outer areas but also those who had run out from closer to the inner circle. Their cultivation could be Level 8, Level 9, and there were even those who had switched to cultivating Heaven Rank techniques...

Recently, their days had not been easy. Under the pursuit and killing by the strong cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, they had made a sorry escape. Hearing that their own camp was doing well in the outer circle, they came to seek refuge. Of course, everyone welcomed them.

Although under the tuning of Heaven's Augury, these cultivators with profound cultivation, once in the outer circle, could display strength that was not much different from everyone else, having one more person always meant additional strength.

Otherwise, relying solely on the survival rate of the outer circle cultivators at present, it would have been impossible to exceed a thousand in number.

The numbers continued to increase, as Haotian Alliance cultivators continuously ran out from the inner parts of the provincial state. In past Spirit Stream Defense Battles, these high-level cultivators would only operate in areas where they could fully utilize their strength and would not easily go to areas where low-level cultivators were active.

This is the same reason why cultivators of Cloud River Realm and True Lake Realm generally would not force their way into the Spirit Stream battlefield.

Cultivation is difficult. If you die at the hands of an enemy of the same level, you can only blame your lack of skill. But if you are carelessly killed by someone with much lower cultivation, death the dying cultivator would not rest in peace.

Within the Spirit Stream battlefield, there had been a precedent where a True Lake Realm strong cultivator was slain by someone from the Spirit Stream Realm, resulting in that sect losing face and becoming a laughingstock within the cultivation world.

Right now, the Haotian Alliance was pursuing a group of about six hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators—the only ones left from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge on the outskirts.

The reason they stopped was that some intelligence had been relayed by ghost cultivators who were temporarily acting as scouts.

Among the six factions of cultivators, each had their strengths. Ghost cultivators were the fastest runners and were adept at infiltration, assassination, tracking, and so on. Naturally, the tasks of scouting the enemy's intelligence and tracking their movements fell on the ghost cultivators.

Furthermore, the Haotian Alliance's forces had expanded to a thousand people. Considering this was a war, a temporary decision-making circle was elected by the people several days ago. This circle was made up of nine individuals, representing the Nine Provincial States.

The strength of these nine people was no stronger than others, and it was all about the prestige of their sects and their own connections. Eight of them came from 7th grade sects, with the only exception being Lu Ye who came from a 9th grade sect, representing Bingzhou, and also had the lowest cultivation.

But no one objected because the current situation the Haotian Alliance found itself in could be said to have developed step by step around the two people from the Righteous Blood Sect. Without Lu Ye and Hua Ci's various ingenious methods, the Haotian Alliance might have long lost the capital to compete with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

At this moment, the nine individuals gathered in one place, standing at a high point, looking into the distance.

A young-looking cultivator said, "According to the intelligence transmitted by the ghost cultivators, quite a few people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge have also run over from the inner circle to join them. Right now, their numbers are around eight hundred, and they're regrouping. It looks like they intend to fight us in a decisive battle."

In recent days, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was truly infuriated. Somehow, their great advantage had turned out like this, and they were being chased by the Haotian Alliance like dogs, which was extremely frustrating.

Seeing that the remnants of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge left on the outskirts no longer had the strength to contend with the Haotian Alliance, the inner circle cultivators couldn't sit still. They pulled together some manpower to join their lower-level cultivators, preparing to confront the Haotian Alliance. After the two squads merged, they had a number around eight hundred.

With that, the difference in numbers between the cultivators of the two factions wasn't that significant anymore. Even though the Haotian Alliance had some advantages, in an actual battle, they wouldn't be able to gain much ground.

Moreover, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge weren't just waiting idly on their side. They would be setting up various measures as well, such as having array cultivators set up formations. As long as they had enough time, they could establish all kinds of formations on that side, wait comfortably, and reduce the disadvantage of having fewer numbers.

If the Haotian Alliance dared to attack, they would surely suffer heavy casualties.

Under normal circumstances, neither side would dare to make any rash moves in such a situation.

But the ghost cultivators discovered another interesting thing, which was the position Ten Thousand Demons Ridge currently occupied.

After the young man finished speaking, he turned his head toward Lu Ye, "Junior Brother Yiye, don't you find that location somewhat familiar?"

Lu Ye was already using his full Ocular Power to observe that direction, comparing the terrain around him, and even considering the position of the sun overhead. He nodded and said, "That's the very Chess Island we were on before!"

He and Hua Ci had arrived at the Chess Sea and appeared there. They had stayed for nearly twenty days, so they were more familiar with the location than anyone else. Many times, they had stood on the high points there to observe their surroundings.

"Does that mean we've circled back to where we started?" A short-statured man rubbed his head.

The young man smiled, "Exactly, we've come full circle."

"I get it!" another woman's eyes shone, "It's the Spirit Gathering Array that Junior Brother Yiye left behind! These Ten Thousand Demons Ridge bastards have been fleeing all this time and have expended a lot of energy. Suddenly finding such a feng shui treasure ground, of course they wouldn't want to leave. Staying there, they would recover faster, no wonder they dared to stop."

Lu Ye had a strange expression on his face. After the final merging of Chess Island, they had decided to take the initiative and attack. The various measures he and Hua Ci had set up were all left on the island. Unexpectedly, these measures now served as a reason for the enemy to stay.

This was truly a case of ignoring the open gates of heaven to break through the nonexistent doors of hell!

If the people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge continued to flee, the Haotian Alliance really wouldn't have much chance of doing anything. But of all places, they chose to stay there.

"Junior Brother Yiye, you have really made a great contribution this time!" the female cultivator exclaimed excitedly.

"My friends, the time has come for us to elevate the might of our Haotian Alliance," the young man's demeanor became solemn, "We should not delay. I think we should immediately initiate an attack on them. What do you all think?"

What else could they think? Everyone agreed, and the sooner the better, for if they delayed, the enemy's preparations would become increasingly formidable.

This battle might be the last large-scale clash between the two factions. The number of participants could approach two thousand. If everything went smoothly, then in the outer circle, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wouldn't have the strength to stand against the Haotian Alliance anymore.

To inflict as much damage on the enemy as possible, they would need to plan carefully.

The nine of them gathered and discussed plans, when Lu Ye suddenly checked his battlefield marking and received a message.

A moment later, he frowned, "Everyone, that may be a trap over there."

"What do you mean?" they all looked towards him.

"My Fourth Senior Brother just sent me a message. He found a group of about three hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators lurking in a jungle, seemingly waiting for something. Judging from their position, they are only about twenty li from us! And those people are likely to have gathered from the inner circle."

Upon hearing this, they exchanged glances, immediately realizing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's intentions.

The message came from Li Baxian, so it was unlikely to be incorrect.

If three hundred reinforcements from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge arrived during a major battle, they could easily catch the Haotian Alliance off guard.

"Have they discovered the arrangements we left behind?" They immediately thought of this possibility.

Lu Ye pondered for a moment, then shook his head, "That's unlikely. The mushrooms Hua Ci planted are real mushrooms, and even if the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge notice them, they wouldn't think too much of it as Hua Ci's measures have not been exposed.

Moreover, even if they do sense something unusual about the mushrooms, with Senior Brother Loo's mechanisms in play, we could still compensate in time. So, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge is simply looking to calculate against us."

"In that case, let's use their plan against them!"

Soon, a plan was developed. Lu Ye also contacted Li Baxian to keep an eye on that three-hundred-strong troop and communicate with him at any time.

Li Baxian had no objections; after all, he also came to seek refuge with Lu Ye. When he first entered the Chess Sea, he had stated that he would find Lu Ye after the provincial state was established. At the time, he thought he would be able to protect Lu Ye, but events had unfolded in an unexpected manner.

Now running to Lu Ye, he actually needed Lu Ye's protection, which made him, as a senior brother, feel slightly embarrassed.

Chapter 199 - Turning the Tables with a Stratagem

The Haotian Alliance sprang into action, splitting their forces into three groups—one advancing and two flanking from the left and right sides. Thus, they were able to form a semi-encirclement.

They left a gap on purpose, firstly because circling to the rear was unrealistic, and secondly because they feared pushing too hard might provoke the enemy's fighting spirit. The basic principle of encircling three sides and leaving one open was well understood by everyone.

As movements began on this front, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge immediately noticed. However, they showed no intention of fleeing, but rather rubbed their hands in eagerness, preparing to redeem their previous shame.

With strategic troop placements, the forces from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge quickly formed a tight fighting formation, ready for battle.

The cultivators from the three divisions of the Haotian Alliance slowly reached their predetermined positions and quietly waited.

A dazzling pillar of light suddenly shot into the sky—it was Loo Yushan's Thunder Dragon Cannon—also serving as the signal. The moment the roaring sound erupted, thousands of Haotian Alliance cultivators charged forward in breathtaking might.

Magic and spells collided with weapon control in midair. The Haotian Alliance took the upper hand quickly due to their numerical superiority, though the advantage wasn't too drastic, it did bring a certain level of suppression to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

As time passed, and also partly by intentional retreat from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, the encirclement began to tighten. The cultivators from both sides finally clashed, squad against squad, entangled in a fight difficult to disentangle.

Lu Ye and Hua Ci remained at the very back, not participating in the battle. They were waiting, waiting for a message.

If it indeed was a trap set up by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, then the message should arrive soon.

While the cultivators from both sides were engaged in fierce combat, Lu Ye felt a twitch in his battlefield marking. He looked down to check and then nodded at Hua Ci, "It's our turn!"

His fourth senior brother had sent a message that three hundred thousand Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, ambushed twenty miles away, had already moved out. It was clear they intended to strike while both groups were locked in battle, tearing through the Haotian Alliance's formation to join forces with their own cultivators.

By achieving a breakthrough on one front, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could continuously enlarge their advantage and subsequently inflict heavy losses on the Haotian Alliance.

This was also why the attacked Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators appeared weak—a deliberate act, firstly because Haotian Alliance indeed had the numerical advantage and secondly to facilitate the unfolding of their next move without giving the Haotian Alliance any glimpses of hope.

Of course, the current situation was still uncertain whether they could make it in time...

Amid flickering light, Lu Ye and Hua Ci unfurled a pair of red and green wings at their backs and soared into the sky, quickly crossing the front lines to reach the central area where they silently hovered.

In a moment, many of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators turned their gazes toward them. In a place where no one could fly, the sudden appearance of two Haotian Alliance cultivators flying up naturally drew much attention.

The people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge immediately sensed something was wrong and attempted to attack Lu Ye and Hua Ci with flying weapons, but the weapons fell short before they could get close.

The enemy was flying too high.

Lu Ye drew his sword, channeling spirit force covertly, standing in front of Hua Ci. His task was simple: to ensure Hua Ci's safety while she executed her skills.

After sensing briefly, Hua Ci confirmed that the arrangement she had left here was effective and nodded, "It has begun!"

She took a deep breath, her chest heaving heavily, and then a verdant halo swept out in all directions, engulfing the majority of the battlefield in an instant.

Shouts of alarm immediately rose from below. As Hua Ci's technique took effect, many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators realized something was wrong. The spirit force within their bodies suddenly became muddled, as if afflicted with symptoms of pill poison, causing many to experience a significant drop in strength in a very short time.

Under normal circumstances, such a condition might not have mattered much, but they were currently engaged in a life-or-death struggle with the Haotian Alliance cultivators.

What had been an evenly matched battle decisively tipped due to one side's sudden change in spirit force.

Within moments, screams and the sounds of blood and limbs being severed rose and fell below, as numerous Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators met their demise.

"It's that woman! Quickly, kill her!" shouted a seriously injured Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator, who was then instantly beheaded by an enemy.

A soft whistle sounded as an arrow, not controlled by a weapon, shot upward from below. Someone wielding a bow-shaped Spiritual Artifact took aim and fired an arrow at Hua Ci.

However, this arrow was split in two by Lu Ye's sword before it could reach her.

Sss, sss, sss...

The archer below was skilled, his fingers moving continuously as one after another arrow chased them like shooting stars. Lu Ye wielded his longsword, repelling the incoming sharp arrows, numbing his wrists with each impact.

Seconds later, the bow-wielding cultivator was hacked into pieces by several Haotian Alliance members rushing over.

The green halo cascaded in waves, expanding outward. Hua Ci had set many layers here over many days, but never before had she continuously activated her abilities like this.

The number of participants in this battle was unprecedented, and she could only exert her full strength to resolve the fight quickly.

In just the time it took to drink a cup of tea, Hua Ci's face began to pale. At a certain moment, she softly gasped, "Lu Ye!"

Lu Ye quickly turned around, embraced Hua Ci's waist, and with her in tow, they dashed toward the edge of the battlefield. Their flaming red wings flapped, and they instantly escaped from the combat zone.

Hua Ci was not seriously harmed, only exhausted. Her spirit force was nearly depleted. However, before she left, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had already begun to collapse.

The site initially gathered eight hundred cultivators, only two hundred fewer than the Haotian Alliance, but now the gap had widened beyond five hundred. It was evident how dreadful the losses of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had been in just a short time.

The surviving cultivators hastily fled through a gap towards the rear. At this moment, the speed of escape was crucial. It wasn't necessary to be faster than the enemy, being faster than one's comrades sufficed. The Haotian Alliance wouldn't pursue them to total annihilation; there would always be some who slipped through the net.

An incense stick's time later, the battlefield was littered with corpses, and the air was thick with the stench of blood. Less than a hundred of the thousand Haotian Alliance cultivators had fallen. The cultivators regrouped, not chasing those who had fled but instead turning their direction towards the central region of the provincial state.

In that direction, a force of three hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators was rushing to provide support. Earlier, they had received intelligence that the Haotian Alliance had taken the bait and was engaged in fierce combat with their forces, prompting them to hurry to the scene.

Twenty miles, with their pace, they were soon close to the battlefield. However, when they looked up, they saw no comrades, only a horde of frenzied Haotian Alliance cultivators charging towards them.

The three hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were stunned.

Where were their eight hundred comrades?

Only now did they receive the information from those who had escaped. Of the eight hundred, only over two hundred remained alive and were still fleeing. They were told to also run quickly.

The supporting cultivators were nearly spitting blood in anger. This battle was a trap they had set. If the Haotian Alliance dared to enter, they were supposed to suffer. However, the eight hundred men had been routed without much resistance, displaying utter incompetence.

While they wanted to kill those who fled, they knew the grimness of their own situation. Although all of them were from the inner circle with higher cultivation, they couldn't utilize their strength advantage here; numbers were the key to victory!

Three hundred against nine hundred; even a fool would know they couldn't win.

Thus, without a moment's hesitation, the three hundred cultivators who were rushing to the battlefield immediately turned around to flee.

They didn't need to escape too far, just a few dozen miles. The Haotian Alliance's forces couldn't pursue them further because the deeper they went, the stronger the cultivators could become. Most of the pursuers from the Haotian Alliance were low-level cultivators, pursuing them would be tantamount to suicide.

However, they had not gotten far when suddenly a massive formation roared into existence, enveloping them. The formation's lethality wasn't extremely strong, but its power weighed down their bodies, making their movements sluggish.

In great alarm, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators looked around and saw a petite female cultivator standing on a large tree, smiling as she watched them. In her hand, an array disc emitted a dazzling light.

"Feng Yuechan!" someone exclaimed, their face turning pale.

One Feng Yuechan was not enough to terrify them, but wherever she appeared, Li Baxian was definitely somewhere close, along with a group of other powerful Haotian Alliance cultivators.

Sure enough, a low shout rang out, "Sword Array!"

As the words fell, the formation burst forth with streams of sword light, slicing back and forth, drawing trails of blood.

This formation, jointly established by Feng Yuechan and Li Baxian, was hastily formed, and while not very powerful, Li Baxian had integrated all his flying swords into it, significantly increasing the formation's lethality.

Suddenly, more than thirty Haotian Alliance cultivators appeared out of nowhere, displaying their abilities to their fullest, greatly delaying the escape of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

With a rumbling sound, nine hundred Haotian Alliance cultivators were hot on their heels. Seeing this, the cultivators trapped within the big array showed faces of despair.

The zipping sounds of magic and spells enveloped the formation, and someone suddenly laughed loudly: "I killed a Level 9 Heaven! Hahaha, I've made it big today!"

The killer was merely a Level 7 cultivator, far below a Level 9 Heaven in terms of the number of spiritual orifices—almost two hundred in disparity. Normally, such a powerful adversary would be beyond his capability, yet in this peculiar situation, defeating the strong as the weak became reality.

A Level 9 Heaven, certainly a governor from a big sect's Core Circle, would never have imagined dying at the hands of such a weakling.

It wasn't just one powerful individual being killed by weaker ones. Many of the three hundred from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge who had mastered Heaven Rank techniques were seeing their life forces wane one by one. The Haotian Alliance low-level cultivators might realize to their astonishment that their merit had suddenly spiked by dozens of points.

Seizing the favorable situation, Li Baxian raised his arm and shouted, "Men, it's time for revenge!"

Saying so, he was the first to raise his sword and charge forward, with other fierce-eyed, murderous cultivators following him closely.

They had been stifled for too long, and now, they could finally unleash their fury.

Chapter 200 Let Brother Take a Look

A fierce battle took place—out of the three hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who came to support, fewer than fifty escaped, many of the fallen were governors from the core circle of big sects, even Yan Xing, ranked second on the Spirit Stream Ranking, was severely injured and had to flee in embarrassment.

Yan Xing was also unlucky. Since his last encounter with Li Baxian at the Spirit Stream battlefield, he realized he could not seek revenge with his own strength alone. The defense battle of Spirit Stream was an excellent opportunity, so he kept a close eye on Li Baxian's whereabouts.

After the formation of the provincial state, he immediately collaborated with other powerful figures from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to pursue Li Baxian, just in time for this battle, and was unwittingly

caught in it, then lectured by a group of low-level cultivators he would not normally take a second look at.

This was a victory for the Haotian Alliance, and also a carnival for the low-level cultivators—the battle perfectly exemplified the strength in numbers!

After the great battle, the Haotian Alliance side, under the leadership of the strong from the core circle, only took a brief moment to regather before splitting into two groups to continuously search and clear out enemy cultivators from the outside in, and as the news spread, more and more powerful figures from the core circle joined in.

Originally they had been pushed to their limits by the people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, yet unexpectedly, the situation turned around, and the low-level fellows from their side put up a strong fight.

Before the integration of the provincial state, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side had a numerical advantage, both in high-level and low-level cultivators, even if the team formed around two core members of the Righteous Blood Sect could not bridge the gap in the numbers.

In such a situation, if Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were determined, the living space for the Haotian Alliance would only get smaller and smaller, and it was not likely that they could annihilate the Haotian Alliance before the Spirit Stream Defense Battle, but aiming to eliminate eighty to ninety percent was still hopeful.

This could achieve the initial goal set by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side, and for the next few decades, the Haotian Alliance would lose many pivotal figures, no longer able to compete with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

But ultimately, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was complacent. In a situation of great advantage, everyone was somewhat lax, or to say, no one expected that there would be such an invincible team of low-level cultivators, invulnerable in battle.

This group swept through the outer circle of the mainland in just a few days, making the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side flee in disarray, and in the final confrontation, they slew a large number of high-level cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side.

Thus, the favorable situation was rewritten.

Now, the number of low-level cultivators is definitely an advantage for the Haotian Alliance, and far exceeds Ten Thousand Demons Ridge; in terms of high-level cultivators, the numbers might not differ much, after all, in the previous twenty days, the Haotian Alliance side also suffered significant losses.

But on the whole Chess Sea mainland, the situation of the Haotian Alliance has been completely revitalized, and now it's the Haotian Alliance's turn to hammer the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

"Junior Brother, this time you and Sister Hua Ci have really made our sect proud. The old man will probably wake up laughing from his dreams," Li Baxian's voice rang out.

After the previous battle, he and Feng Yuechan did not participate further, but found Lu Ye, who was currently protecting Hua Ci.

As he spoke these words, his face was full of smiles, seemingly happier than if he had accomplished such a feat himself.

"It's mostly Hua Ci's merit," Lu Ye responded vaguely as he chewed on dried meat. In truth, the most he could do was to provide the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes for their cultivators to recuperate, while Hua Ci was not only able to heal people but also to help kill enemies.

Li Baxian turned his head to glance at Hua Ci, who was quietly speaking with Feng Yuechan, and he nodded slightly: "Sister Hua Ci's merit is the greatest, but yours is not small either." He then winked at Lu Ye: "Where did you pick up this sister? Pick up a few more when you go back."

Lu Ye's cheeks bulged, taking big bites.

Li Baxian patted him on the shoulder: "With you in the sect, I feel much relieved! Come on, let's go treasure hunting."

Lu Ye suddenly became interested, hurriedly swallowing the food in his mouth, where a visible lump slowly slid down his throat: "What treasure are we hunting?"

"Don't know, it depends on luck," Li Baxian said with a light smile, handing over his wine gourd to Lu Ye, who looked around, opened the gourd, and took a gulp, instantly feeling a burning sensation in his belly, and a wave of dizziness rushing to his head, causing him to stagger.

In a panic, he switched his Cultivation Technique to Bestial Gluttony Feast, the buzzing sound from his stomach neutralizing the alcohol.

It took him a moment to steady himself, shaking his head: "Pretty strong!"

He tossed the wine gourd back to Li Baxian, knowing that he could not drink more than a sip, that was his limit.

Li Baxian laughed heartily.

Though they were searching for treasures, they couldn't really find anything good anymore; perhaps there were many heavenly materials and earthly treasures before, but as cultivators from the two camps continuously roamed and sought, any good items had been taken.

Along the way, only Hua Ci, with her skills as a healing cultivator, managed to find quite a few medicinal herbs, accompanying her was a mechanical wolf, a gift from Sister Loo Yushan, hung with storage sacks.

Two hours later, the leading Li Baxian suddenly stopped, glanced in a direction, and smilingly said: "Junior Brother, can you kill at Level 8?"

Lu Ye, not understanding why he suddenly asked this, pondered briefly: "I should be able to."

"Really can kill?" Li Baxian was somewhat surprised. At Golden Light Peak, Lu Ye at Level 5 had once said he could fully commit to killing a Level 7, and indeed, he proved capable, though he had not killed a Level 7, he fought forty-three battles consecutively, and in the last battle, he even killed a Saintess of the Sacred Fire Order who had crippled her own spiritual orifice.

Now at Level 6, Li Baxian just recalled what Lu Ye had said that day and casually asked, not expecting Lu Ye to actually give such an answer.

"Do you know that once a cultivator reaches Level 7, with each increase in the realm, the improvement in strength grows even more?"

"Yes," Lu Ye responded.

Li Baxian took a serious look at him, nodded, and said, "Then let your elder brother see for himself."

When Lu Ye was utterly confused, he saw Li Baxian look in a direction and say, "Are you coming out on your own, or should I force you out?"

With those words, Feng Yuechan's figure fluttered, and he descended in a direction, stabilizing his stance before locking his gaze with Li Baxian on the same spot.

Lu Ye followed their gaze, but saw nothing—there was only a large rock.

However, what shocked him soon occurred—next to the large rock, with a twist in the air, a gaunt figure appeared. It was a somber-looking young man with a hooked nose and a face so gloomy it almost seemed to drip water.

Who knew what technique he had used to perfectly conceal himself there; had it not been for Li Baxian's keen perception, even if Lu Ye had stepped over the rock, he wouldn't have noticed him.

"Whoops," Li Baxian chuckled, "It's you!"

It seemed they knew each other.

"The Flowing Cloud Sect has no grievances with the Loyal Heart Sect and Righteous Blood Sect, and we did not partake in the battle at Golden Light Peak either. Li Baxian, state any terms you have—I only seek a way to live," the somber young man spoke.

Li Baxian scratched his chin, chuckling lightly, "The Flowing Cloud Sect did not participate because it was declared war upon, wasn't it? Moreover, you are from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and I am from the Haotian Alliance, our factions are naturally opposed. Didn't your old man ever tell you that differing factions are reason enough for conflict?"

The young man's tone grew tense, "Must it be this way?"

As he spoke, his gaze shifted briefly to Lu Ye and Hua Ci, obviously attempting to use the two as leverage. While his strength was undoubtedly strong, what could he do against Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan? This couple was always inseparable, provoking one was as good as provoking both, and no one dared to offend them.

Currently, a great number of cultivators from the Haotian Alliance were tirelessly searching for traces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. The further inward, the less safe it was, and he had initially intended to flee to the outskirts because the safest place in the provincial state right now was the outer circle. Who would have thought he'd encounter Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan here?

This stroke of bad luck was truly like getting choked by water when drinking.

Li Baxian looked at him with a smile, "Shall I show you a way out? Will you take it?"

"What?"

Li Baxian clapped Lu Ye on the shoulder, "Fight my junior brother here. Win, and you're free to go!"

Both Lu Ye and the young man were taken aback.

Only then did Lu Ye understand what his fourth senior brother had meant by his earlier question.

The young man's face showed no joy, but instead he angrily said, "Are you insane, Li Baxian? If I hurt or kill this kid, could I still leave?"

He had heard about the incident at Golden Light Peak and had deeply experienced the Righteous Blood Sect's protective nature. That True Lake Realm powerhouse had said he would storm into the Spirit Stream battlefield and he did, frightening a group of low-level cultivators with injuries from the Soul-Destroying Divine Lightning.

In the Nine Provinces, which other big sect's True Lake would enact such dishonorable deeds?

Only the Righteous Blood Sect would.

Thus when Li Baxian asked him to fight Lu Ye, he felt not just displeasure but like he was being mocked.

"There's an old saying, 'When under the roof, one must bow their head.' It seems you're somewhat unclear about your own situation!" Li Baxian's eyelids slightly lowered.

Over there, Feng Yuechan's hand surged with spirit force, tossing a fireball-like object up and down in her hand...

With a twitch in the corner of his eye, the young man knew that if he refused, he would immediately face assault from the top two of the Spirit Stream Ranking—this would be a melee of a sword cultivator and a magic cultivator, truly leaving him no escape.

"If I win against this kid, will you really let me go?"

"I guarantee it on my junior brother's reputation!" Li Baxian patted Lu Ye's shoulder again.

Lu Ye frowned, wondering why it had to be on his reputation. From another perspective, did his fourth senior brother not have much credibility? This was a big problem.

"Don't play such juvenile tricks, there's also Feng Yuechan to consider,"

"For her... I guarantee it on my junior sister's reputation!" Li Baxian pointed at the innocently smiling Hua Ci.

The young man said, "Please swear by Heaven's Augury."

"Enough talk!" Li Baxian shouted angrily. "If I tell you to fight, you fight. Why so much useless chatter? Be careful, or I might end you with a single sword!"

The young man was utterly aggrieved.

"Why put on such a humiliated look for others to see? Fight my junior brother here; if you're lucky, you might even take a backer down with you. Isn't that what you're hoping for?" Li Baxian sneered, revealing the true desire in the other's heart.