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### Chapter 241 Two Pairs of Siblings

Sitting on the rock, Lu Ye checked the storage sack in his hand, which was not very full yet still had a decent amount—about thirty or forty Spirit Stones worth of items.

Not every cultivator was as wealthy as he was, who had on this occasion taken from his base several hundred elixir pills and several hundred Spirit Stones in his storage sack, though there were few Spirit Talismans. As his cultivation improved, those low-level Spirit Talismans were of little use to him now.

Both he and Amber increased their cultivation through consuming elixir pills. At this stage, the daily consumption for a man and a tiger was about thirty or forty pills. It could be said that Lu Ye had almost become sick of consuming elixir pills, having thought more than once that it would be great if the elixir pills came in different flavors.

Thus, even though Lu Ye had quite a few elixir pills with him, it would not last long.

This was one of the reasons he didn't wait to advance to the Level 8 realm before coming to the inner circle; the consumption for cultivation was too great. Continuing like this, it would only be a matter of time before he exhausted all his resources. Although Hua Ci had many elixir pills, he could not keep taking from her indefinitely.

Compared to him, most cultivators were actually quite poor, having few avenues to acquire cultivation resources beyond their monthly stipend from their sect. Whatever elixir pills and Spirit Stones they obtained were generally used up in cultivation, rarely having any surplus.

Compared to Lu Ye's previous gains from fighting in the outer circle, his situation was undoubtedly better now, since the cultivators in the inner circle possessed higher cultivation levels and richer bases.

"Lu Ye!" Yiyi called softly.

Lu Ye looked up and saw a man and a woman approaching. Observing their spirit light, they were evidently two Level 8 cultivators.

"Fellow Daoist, over here!" The man was still several tens of feet away when he called out, revealing the gloss of his battlefield marking as he spoke, "Hao Ren of Silver Light Island greets you."

A good person? Lu Ye raised his eyebrows.

The good person stopped several feet ahead and pointed at the woman beside him: "This is my younger sister, Hao Qing."

Lu Ye nodded slightly.

Silver Light Island lay adjacent to the Sky Supporting Sect base, both being 6th grade powers of the Haotian Alliance, and were the nearest inner circle sects to the Righteous Blood Sect.

Lu Ye chose the Sky Supporting Sect as his entry point into the inner circle firstly because its cultivators had troubled him at Golden Light Peak, and secondly, he hoped to find an opportunity to connect with Silver Light Island and see if he could establish an alliance with their governor.

If possible, then in the future when Righteous Blood Sect cultivators entered the inner circle, they could affiliate with Silver Light Island, saving them much travel.

However, he had no interaction with the cultivators of Silver Light Island and had not seen either the governor or deputy governor in the Chess Sea, guessing they might have died.

Unexpectedly, he encountered two from Silver Light Island here.

Although both Hao Ren and Hao Qing were Level 8 cultivators, their manner was quite courteous.

They had just witnessed how Lu Ye had fought fiercely; even though they were one level higher than Lu Ye, they dared not act arrogantly. Ultimately, interactions between cultivators were still based on strength.

"Lu Ye!"

The siblings, Hao Ren and Hao Qing, paused. That name... sounded so familiar.

They couldn't help but size Lu Ye up and down...

They had heard that Lu Yiye always had a snow-white big tiger with him, but they didn't see any snow-white big tigers, just a cat-sized white one.

That's not a cat.

But this cultivation level... on Golden Light Peak, that Lu Yiye was a Level 5 realm. It didn't make sense for him to have ascended to the Level 7 realm in just a few months?

"Fellow Daoist, are you from Righteous Blood Sect?" Hao Ren asked, although he felt it unlikely.

"Indeed."

Hao Ren's pupils constricted, "Could it be that Fellow Daoist is that Lu Yiye?"

Lu Ye felt a twinge of sadness inside while Yiyi behind him stifled her giggles with her hand.

"Yes, I am that Lu Yiye!"

"Oh my!" Hao Ren slapped his thigh, his expression turning eager, "So it really is Fellow Daoist Yiye. I've long admired your great name! In the battle at Golden Light Peak, you brought great honor to the Haotian Alliance. You made us yearn and feel ashamed by comparison."

Hao Qing also showed admiration in her eyes.

Hao Ren continued to shower praise, clearly holding Lu Ye in high esteem. Indeed, after the battle at Golden Light Peak, all the major sects of the Haotian Alliance glorified the event to motivate their lower-level disciples, proclaiming, "If a Level 5 can achieve such a feat, even if you cannot, you should strive in this direction."

Even the embarrassed forces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge propagated the battle, their motive being to encourage their disciples to strive harder. Failure is not fearful; what's fearful is having your backbone broken by failure.

It can be said that, in the Nine Provinces cultivation world, among the low-level cultivators, the name Lu Yiye of Righteous Blood Sect was indeed as loud as thunder.

This left Lu Ye feeling somewhat helpless, thinking that perhaps he should adopt a pseudonym for future engagements on the battlefield—it wasn't convenient for his actions if everyone knew his origins upon just reporting them.

"I've been too caught up just talking. I truly didn't expect to meet Fellow Daoist Yiye here. Please forgive my rudeness," Hao Ren said, patting his head.

"No harm done."

"Who is this?" Hao Ren looked at Yiyi, who was standing behind Lu Ye. He had witnessed Yiyi's performance in the battle just now. Her ability to appear and disappear magically, as if diving into the earth, carried a hint of ghostly cultivation yet was distinctly different. At least, ghost cultivators couldn't dive into the ground so effortlessly.

"This is my junior sister, Lu Yiyi!"

"What a coincidence!" Hao Ren laughed heartily.

On his side, he was accompanied by his sister just as Lu Ye was, which could be considered a kind of fate in itself. Moreover, both being part of the Haotian Alliance, they felt a sudden affinity for each other.

Upon hearing Lu Ye introducing her in such a manner, Yiyi's eyes curved into crescent moons, and she greeted them generously, "Nice to meet you, Senior Brother Hao, Sister Hao."

Her honeyed words were indeed endearing, and Hao Qing responded with a smile.

"Have you two traveled all this way here on some particular mission?" Hao Ren suddenly asked with a solemn expression.

"Just strolling around. What about you?"

Hao Ren didn't believe his casual excuse of just wandering. People from the Righteous Blood Sect idly wandering into Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's territory clearly spelled trouble.

There were reports that someone from the Sky Supporting Sect had confronted Lu Yiye at the battle of Golden Light Peak, and he had heard that Lu Yiye was somewhat vengeful...

"My sister and I are here for the Purple Cloud Flower," Hao Ren said, pointing to the purple flower bud beside him.

He then explained further.

This mission was assigned to him and his sister by their sect. Although Silver Light Island was isolated and housed many exotic plants rare on the mainland, finding specific types native to the mainland was not easy.

A senior in their sect needed a Purple Cloud Flower to prepare some medicinal syrup, and as it was not available on Silver Light Island, they had asked the disciples to keep an eye out for it on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

They found it here and planned to wait until the flower was fully mature before they made their move to seize it. However, Lu Ye suddenly showed up and cut in.

"Would Fellow Daoist Yiyi be willing to part with it for one hundred and twenty Spirit Stones?" Hao Ren said somewhat sheepishly.

"Since we've met by fate, and as it's Brother Hao's mission, you can have it,"

Lu Ye was still keen on establishing a connection with people from Silver Light Island. Previously, without any contacts, it wasn't appropriate to just show up at their doorstep. Meeting Hao Ren and his sister here seemed like an opportunity.

"That won't do," Hao Ren quickly refused. "You slew the enemies, and taking this would be improper."

Seeing his firm stance, Lu Ye understood that giving away something so directly when they had just met wouldn't be appropriate either. If it were him, he wouldn't feel comfortable accepting such a benefit for no reason either.

"Then let's make it a round figure, one hundred Spirit Stones."

"That would be very good," Hao Ren agreed immediately.

One hundred and twenty Spirit Stones was the reward given by their elder for completing the mission. Still, should they manage to complete their mission, they would also receive sect contributions, which could be exchanged for cultivation resources. So, even if they gave all one hundred and twenty Spirit Stones to Lu Ye, they wouldn't be at a loss.

After asking Hao Ren, he learned that the Purple Cloud Flower would need about a day more to fully mature.

He had killed four cultivators from the Sky Supporting Sect here, and he didn't know if that would attract more people. Moreover, as the flower bloomed, its fragrance would spread further, and anyone passing nearby would surely notice something.

Just to be safe, Hao Ren and his sister Hao Qing hid in ambush while Yiyi also took cover, leaving Lu Ye boldly sitting alone beside the Purple Cloud Flower.

It was the same hiding spot behind a large rock where Hao Ren and his sister concealed their presence.

"Brother, he asked about the location of the Sky Supporting Sect's mines earlier. What's he planning?" Hao Qing suddenly asked.

Just now, Lu Ye had asked them about the location of the Sky Supporting Sect's mines. As a native of Silver Light Island and neighbor to the Sky Supporting Sect, Hao Ren naturally knew and marked it on Lu Ye's ten-part map.

"What else would he do? He's definitely up to something!"

"Just the two of them?" Hao Qing was surprised.

The mine was garrisoned by no fewer than dozens of Sky Supporting Sect cultivators, including definitely some at the Level 9 realm. The notion that just the two of them thought to stir trouble was not just audacious but somewhat foolhardy.

"Let's advise them later," sighed Hao Ren. Although Lu Ye could slaughter an eighth-level ghost cultivator as easily as butchering a chicken, if truly ambushed by many, his fate wouldn't be promising. It would be a pity for someone from the Righteous Blood Sect to die so senselessly.

"Someone's coming!" Hao Qing suddenly shouted, her gaze fixed in one direction, her heart lifting.

But she saw that it was just a streak of light swiftly passing by, apparently just crossing the area.

The situation between the inner and outer circles was clearly different. In the outer circle, it was rare to see cultivators flying through the air, but in the inner circle, it was another story. Once cultivators reached the realms of Level 8-9, they could control weapons to fly, so in the inner circle, it was common to encounter cultivators traveling swiftly through the air on controlled weapons.

However, they generally didn't dare to fly too low, as that would make it easy for enemies on the ground to launch a surprise attack. This streak of light was about sixty to seventy yards above the

ground, which was a relatively safe distance. Even in case of an attack, they could quickly drop down to face the enemy.

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Before his strength was substantial enough, even cultivators of Level 8 or Level 9 would not engage in fights in the air— the risk was too great, and battling while controlling Flying Spirit Artifacts made it difficult to fully exhibit one's strength.

If someone carelessly destroyed one's Flying Spirit Artifact, they might even plummet from the high skies and die...

This wasn't a joke; such incidents had indeed occurred, and not just once.

This situation only improved after a cultivator switched to cultivation with a Heaven Rank technique. By then, a cultivator's control over their spirit force would greatly enhance, satisfying the dual needs of weapon control-flying and combat.

The one who flew past in the air was a Level 9 cultivator; this was evident from his spirit light.

Although Hao Ren and his sister Hao Qing were both at Level 8, they did not wish to provoke such an opponent and thus concealed themselves as much as possible. Fortunately, by observing the trajectory of the person's flight, it seemed he was just passing by accidentally and not targeting this specific area.

This allowed them to breathe a sigh of relief. As long as Lu Ye was careful on his side, they should not be exposed amidst this remote and forested mountain range.

Since the other party daringly flew over the Sky Supporting Sect's territory, it was likely a cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and if not a member, then certainly someone related to the Sky Supporting Sect.

Exposure would certainly lead to a grand battle.

—Zing...

The sound was not very loud, but the sharp ringing noise that arose was powerful, resembling the instant motion of drawing a longsword from its sheath.

Hao Ren and Hao Qing exchanged glances, a bad feeling arising in their minds.

Looking towards the direction of the passing fleeing light, that party had also heard the noise and was quickly descending.

As the fleeing light descended, the figure standing on the Flying Spirit Artifact slowly became visible.

With a brief glance, Hao Ren's expression grew solemn; he recognized the person—it was a cultivator from the Sky Supporting Sect named Yuan Guang.

Yuan Guang was recognizable because he had been the Deputy Governor of the previous Sky Supporting Sect's stronghold, but the last Spirit Stream Defense Battle saw Ten Thousand Demons Ridge suffer a significant loss which led to many governors and deputy governors from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge being held accountable and then removed from their posts.

Governors of 5th-6th grade powers were mostly Level 9 cultivators, as that level of cultivation was deemed sufficient. Only in 4th grade sects, because the territory bordered the Core Circle, would the governors be those cultivators who had switched to Heaven Rank techniques.

Yuan Guang was a formidable character who definitely possessed a Heaven Rank technique but had not yet switched his cultivation technique due to an insufficient number of opened orifices.

However, the number of his opened orifices was definitely more than two hundred.

Hao Ren did not understand where Lu Yiye found such confidence to provoke such a strong adversary; that drawing of the sword just now was clearly deliberate.

At this moment, next to the Purple Cloud Flower, Lu Ye sat calmly, quietly watching Yuan Guang who was descending.

He did not attack immediately as he was unsure of the other's alignment.

But soon, Lu Ye was certain.

Because when Yuan Guang saw the four corpses lying in a pool of blood, his expression turned very ugly, his face even twitched slightly. He asked in a deep tone, "Did you kill these people?"

—Boom...

No sooner had Yuan Guang spoken, than Lu Ye had already pounced in front of him, a saber slashing downward.

As expected of a Level 9 cultivator, his reaction was extremely fast; he wielded a longsword in front of himself, blocking Lu Ye's attack.

At such close range, eye to eye, Yuan Guang roared furiously, "You're seeking death!" He was also secretly shocked by the speed and strength of this Level 7 cultivator, feeling a numbness in his hand from catching the saber with a cultivation two levels higher than his opponent's.

Is this a combat cultivator or a physique cultivator? Even a Level 9 physique cultivator wouldn't have such strength, right?

He scrutinized his opponent as if seeing Lu Ye's features clearly for the first time.

"Yiyi!"

As Lu Ye cried out lowly, the Boulder Mountain Saber suddenly burst forth with blinding brilliance, as if a sun had risen upon the blade.

Yuan Guang, having not anticipated this turn of events, was instantly blinded by the dazzling light, momentarily unable to see! Unruffled, he hurriedly retreating backed, but then an invisible force suddenly descended from the sky, heavy as a mountain, involuntarily making him crouch lower.

The transition of Sun Blaze and Hefty Weight spirit runes caught him entirely off-guard.

The battle methods of a battle runes master were indeed cunning and unpredictable. The spirit runes that Lu Ye currently mastered were not many, yet he was already managing to bring about some remarkable effects through their transformation.

It was hard to imagine how difficult it would be to deal with those well-known battle runes masters whose wide array of techniques were virtually indefensible, often leaving their foes clueless about how they died.

This surprise had greatly shocked Yuan Guang. He slapped the storage sack at his waist and as a stream of light flew out, his spirit force surged, disregarding any loss to himself, his longsword cleaving forward repeatedly with more flashes of sword light.

A dizzy sensation arose. When his vision finally cleared, Yuan Guang was shocked to find himself in a completely changed environment. What was once a lush, overgrown mountain had now transformed into a rugged stoneland.

This is...

"An array diagram?" Yuan Guang exclaimed.

Meanwhile, noticing the commotion and rushing to support, the Hao siblings also widened their eyes as they looked at the spiritual artifact in front of Yiyi.

"Array diagram?"

An so-called array diagram is crafted by a highly skilled array cultivator working hand in hand with a spirit force cultivator; the array cultivator sets up the array, while the spirit force cultivator refines the

diagram. This process might also require the help of a strong spirit runes master. The refinement is complex and consumes very precious materials.

In the past, Hao Ren had only heard of the existence of array diagrams but had never seen one, as they were simply not objects that Spirit Stream Realm cultivators could possess.

Not to speak of them, even the entire Silver Light Island didn't possess a single array diagram. However, today, he had seen one in the hands of a Spirit Stream Level 6 cultivator and truly had his eyes opened.

His heart was shocked. The Righteous Blood Sect, indeed, even in decline, proved mightier than many, possessing even an array diagram, and they even entrusted it to a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator to use, without fearing it would be lost.

In fact, he was mistaken. This array diagram was not an object from the Righteous Blood Sect.

The Righteous Blood Sect did not have any array diagrams...

This was Madam Yun's object.

Knowing that Lu Ye was to enter the inner circle, Madam Yun was quite worried about his safety, especially since Lu Ye had caused such a stir at Golden Light Peak and it was very likely to attract targeting from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side.

She had already designated Lu Ye as her direct successor, and as a top-notch spirit runes master, how could she not prepare good things for Lu Ye?

Thus, she gave this precious Nine Worlds map to Lu Ye. This object's value exceeded that of a spiritual artifact and could already be classified as a spirit treasure.

Other than this Nine Worlds map, there was another item, but that thing was useless in combat.

Considering Lu Ye's insufficient cultivation, Madam Yun had sealed ninety percent of this spirit treasure's power, leaving only ten percent, otherwise neither Lu Ye nor Yiyi, with their cultivation levels, could hope to activate this Nine Worlds map.

But even with only ten percent of the spirit treasure's power, Yiyi couldn't fully unleash it, yet it was enough for self-protection.

Yiyi didn't understand formations, and Lu Ye was only slightly knowledgeable about them, but it didn't matter. The Nine Worlds map is an array diagram, but it also is a spirit treasure. There's no need for Yiyi to understand any array formation; she just needs to pour her spirit force into it to exhibit some of the Nine Worlds map's potential.

The reason it's called the Nine Worlds map is because this array diagram contains nine different terrains in mini spaces, which when triggered, can draw people into the array diagram. Eight of these mini spaces are sealed, leaving only one with a chaotic rocky terrain available for use.

This is an actual existing terrain. When refining the Nine Worlds map, Madam Yun found such a terrain in the Nine Provinces, used her powerful path of spirit runes to peel it off, and then refined it into the Nine Worlds map. The other eight terrain mini spaces were formed in the same way.

Right now, the Nine Worlds map floated in front of Yiyi. Her spirit force surged, continuously pouring inside.

From an outsider's perspective, this Nine Worlds map looked like an ink splash landscape painting with a chaotic rocky terrain depicted, where pillars of varying heights stood boldly; the ground was covered with yellow sand, exuding a desolate artistic conception.

And at a certain position within the painting, two small figures were confronting each other, one of whose demeanor and figure clearly bore a resemblance to Lu Ye.

And another figure, greatly resembling Yuan Guang.

"An Inner Array Diagram!"

Hao Ren gulped down some saliva.

Array diagrams are divided into outer array diagrams and inner array diagrams. If an outer array diagram is set up, the area it covers will have layers upon layers of formations. If an enemy steps inside, it will activate the power of the formations, injuring or even killing the enemy, making it the prime choice for setting an ambush.

An inner array diagram, like this Nine Worlds map, pulls the enemy into the array diagram to activate the formations inside and eliminate them.

Each array method has its own roles; as for which one is more precious, that's difficult to compare. Overall, looking across the entire Nine Provinces, array diagrams are few because refining them is so troublesome.

The most famous is an array diagram called the Mountain and River Map, which is the sect-guarding treasure of a 1st grade sect in Tianzhou. It has sealed rivers and mountains refined by a Divine Sea Realm strong cultivator inside it, each capable of unleashing powerful abilities to eliminate enemies, with incredibly terrifying power.

This map was accumulated bit by bit over thousands of years by that sect, not the work of a single generation.

The Nine Worlds map was refined alone by Madam Yun. Naturally, its power couldn't compare with the legendary Mountain and River Map, but even if it could only exert a tiny bit of its power, it was enough for Lu Ye and Yiyi to use at the moment.

In the array diagram, the figures representing Lu Ye and Yuan Guang had already begun to clash, and faint spirit force fluctuations transmitted from the inside of the array diagram. To an onlooker watching the scene on the painting, it seemed like two ink figures were fighting, which was quite comical. However, the combat within the array diagram was extremely perilous.

"We siblings can help," Hao Ren collected his thoughts and quickly spoke; he finally understood why Lu Ye had actively provoked a passing Level 9 cultivator—because he had this trump card.

As long as he and his sister entered the array diagram, it would be three against one—Yuan Guang would undoubtedly die!

He thought this was Lu Ye's plan, but Yiyi shook her head. "Lu Ye hasn't asked for help, it's not necessary yet, thank you both."

Hao Ren said no more and peered into the array diagram.

Chapter 243 As Long as My Knife is Sharp Enough

In Hao Ren's brother and sister's field of vision, the two figures within the array diagram were clearly engaged in weapon control combat, standing a certain distance apart with dark traces crisscrossing between them.

Inside the array diagram, amidst the jumble of rocks, Lu Ye and Yuan Guang were about thirty-five zhang apart. Sword flashes shuttled back and forth between the two, occasionally colliding, emitting dazzling sparks.

At this moment, Yuan Guang was shocked, having realized his predicament.

He had been drawn into an inner array diagram; recalling his recent experience, it must have happened when he was briefly blinded by the bright light. Although he had promptly activated his weapon control and sword flashes to protect himself, his opponent had obviously been well-prepared. Moreover, as a cultivator of an Earth-class technique at the Spirit Stream Level 9, how could he withstand the might of the array diagram?

The situation was dire!

Since it was an array diagram, there must be someone operating it besides this enemy before him. Just now, he had heard the young man utter something about "yi-yi." Hence, at least two opponents were involved—one was the young man before him, the other being the operator of the array diagram, yi-yi...

The young man before him was only at Level 7, yet in the brief encounter, Yuan Guang felt the difficulty in handling him. Not to mention the burst of speed and strength the young man had shown in a flash, even the might of his weapon control was not something ordinary at Level 7 could match.

In terms of speed, distance, or power, it was almost on par with him at Level 9.

If that was all the ability the opponent possessed, then he could manage. Now, the critical issue was guarding against that "yi-yi"; the opponent would undoubtedly try something surreptitiously.

What he did not know was that Lu Ye had chosen to use the array diagram against him, intending to duel him one-on-one.

In the Mirage Realm, he had killed some Level 9 cultivators emerging from the mist. He wanted to see what difference there was between the Mirage Realm's Level 9 and the real Level 9, which was also the best way to measure his own strength.

Furthermore, he wanted to coordinate with Yiyi in using the Nine Worlds map. Although he had given it to Yiyi after obtaining it from Madam Yun, he had never used it against an opponent - using it more would help in getting familiar with this spirit treasure.

With Yiyi's current strength, maintaining the operation of the array diagram was not too problematic in the short term. If she had to manipulate something in secret... she could, but her power would drain quickly.

All things considered, Yuan Guang was perhaps overly worried.

As the two weapons clashed, the sound of metal clinking endlessly ranged. Lu Ye, his longsword strapped to his waist, stared into the air, appearing fully engaged. In reality, he was observing the gap between his and his enemy's weapon control.

There was indeed a gap; by Lu Ye's estimation, the might of his weapon control was similar to that of a typical Level 8, slightly inferior to Level 9. This was evident from the frequency of the collisions between the sword flashes; he could keep up at first, but gradually, he was overwhelmed, his spiritual artifact barely managing to defend, hardly able to counterattack.

While he was observing, Yuan Guang made up his mind on the other side, deciding to ignore "yi-yi" and strike down the young man before him first.

A clear sound of sword singing erupted, Yuan Guang's spirit force surged around him, and his longsword slashed repeatedly, as he called out lowly, "Sword Stream Three Thousand Blades!"

Sss sss sss...

Several whip-like sword flashes slashed towards Lu Ye across a distance of thirty-something zhang, incredibly fast. Simultaneously, Yuan Guang himself charged towards Lu Ye, continuously swinging his longsword as he sprinted.

The number of sword flashes increased!

In his mind, the young man was "utterly focused" on wielding the might of his controlled weapon, utterly unable to block his attack. If the young man was distracted in defending, even better: his opponent's controlled spirit artifact was no match for his own anyway; once distracted, certainly even weaker, then he would demonstrate his skills.

Being able to use other techniques while controlling a weapon was a basic skill of a cultivator at the Spirit Stream Level 9.

After layers of sword flashes came the rapidly advancing figure of Yuan Guang. The distance of thirty-something zhang was quickly closed.

Lu Ye, looking at the clash of the two spiritual artifacts, lowered his gaze; his sharp eyes seemed to pierce through the sword flashes, discerning Yuan Guang hidden behind.

With a slap to his storage sack, a flash of light shot out, moving incredibly fast, constantly creating a melodic din as it tore through the sword flashes.

"!" A shocked expression appeared on Yuan Guang's face as he maneuvered his longsword to block the sweeping attack of the light.

Two weapon controls?

He almost doubted if he was seeing things.

Normally, a Level 7 cultivator, even if capable of executing weapon control technique, had to dedicate their whole mind and body to the task and could hardly do anything else.

To control two weapons required immense control over one's spirit force, and also a very powerful focus, to multitask like that.

To manage two weapon controls, one must at least convert to cultivating a Heaven Rank technique, and not every cultivator who did so could achieve this.

Weapon control might look effortless, but it actually depended highly on talent, and more wasn't always better, as controlling too many spiritual artifacts increased the burden on oneself.

At the Spirit Stream level, only Li Baxian had perfected weapon control to an extreme, rumored to simultaneously control a hundred flying swords, true or not.

Beyond him, even those who shifted to cultivating Heaven Rank techniques at Level 9 didn't control many weapons. The more instruments one controlled, the more dispersed their power would be; it was often better to concentrate power.

But what did he see? A Level 7 cultivator who could control two Spiritual Artifacts!

Moreover, the power of each controlled artifact was nearly the same, which meant that controlling two did not cause any dispersion of power.

The plan for a surprise assassination had failed, and before he could marvel at the other's talent, Yuan Guang immediately concentrated his mind. The longsword in his hand trembled, creating bursts of sword flowers, and occasionally he slashed out sword qi, cutting through the surrounding streamers of light.

He was at Spirit Stream Level 9; the idea that someone would rely on controlling artifacts to kill him was absurd!

As he was thinking this, Lu Ye suddenly began walking toward him step by step.

Could it be... A shocking thought emerged in Yuan Guang's mind, but he quickly dismissed it as impossible. Controlling two artifacts at once was exaggerated enough; this kid must have exhausted his spirit force. His actions were merely a way to exert pressure on himself!

The slash that came directly at him completely shattered that ludicrous thought in his mind.

Only at this moment did Yuan Guang realize there was a reason why someone at Level 7 dared to face him alone. While controlling two artifacts, he could still engage in close combat!

In the chaotic stone forest, lights swirled, figures interchanged, and the constant clang of metal echoed. In a brief exchange, Yuan Guang was pressured into a forced retreat step by step.

It wasn't that he wasn't strong, but the methods of this Level 7 youth were too cunning; he had to guard against not only the other's cleaving slashes but also the swirl of controlled artifacts around him, and the longsword's force being sometimes light, sometimes heavy, speed varying, left him overwhelmed.

What was worse, the opponent's blade was sharp to an excessive degree. He had been careless and got cut once, dulling the luster of the treasure armor he wore significantly, which startled him.

This close-fitting treasure armor, which he had spent a significant amount of Spirit Stones to buy from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, had excellent defense—none at Spirit Stream Level 9 could hope to break through it.

Yet after taking one strike from his opponent, he distinctly felt his treasure armor grieving.

There's no sun in the Nine Worlds map, yet there is light, and the terrain of this chaotic stone forest isn't large, only a few square miles -- making it one of the smallest in size among the nine types of terrains.

The whole small space, apart from the chaotic stone forest, which is the same as the terrain in reality, had clusters of dark halos swirling in the sky and around the perimeter of the terrain. It seemed as if a child had dripped ink there; the halos twisted and changed, harboring great peril. Should one accidentally fall into it, no one knew what the outcome would be.

Within this few square miles, Lu Ye and Yuan Guang were fiercely combating each other. Hardly thirty breaths had passed since the fight began, and Yuan Guang completely fell into a disadvantage. A prestigious Spirit Stream Level 9 was pressured by a Level 7 to the point where there was hardly any respite, the bitterness in his heart greater than if he had swallowed Huanglian.

He genuinely regretted it: just passing by should have been enough, but what did he come down here for after hearing the sounds? Curiosity killed the cat.

Now ensnared and with a bad situation on hand, this would lead to his death sooner or later.

Unless he could capture the young man opposite and force "Yi Yi" to let him leave.

Thinking this, facing the relentless thrust from Lu Ye, Yuan Guang steeled his heart, neither dodging nor evading, but simultaneously thrusting his sword towards Lu Ye's wrist.

He intended to endure the cutting strike. Protected by his treasure armor, his life was not in danger, but if he could sever the opponent's tendons, he could capture him, and that was his way out!

Young man, this world is perilous. If your sect elders haven't taught you, let me teach you, Yuan Guang thought silently.

Clang...

The longsword aimed at Lu Ye's wrist was blocked by Defense Spirit Runes.

Yuan Guang's body stiffened abruptly on the spot, acute pain spread across his chest and abdomen as he distinctly perceived his lung being pierced. His eyes widened, failing to understand how his opponent had broken through his treasure armor and pierced his body.

The opponent's blade was indeed sharp, but not to such an extent.

Moreover, what was that thing that emerged at the opponent's wrist and blocked his sword?

Face-to-face, with their eyes locking, Lu Ye's gaze remained calm. Trading injury for injury was all too familiar to him; he used to do it often, so the moment Yuan Guang made his move, he knew exactly what the other had in mind.

Yuan Guang was at Level 9, indeed a formidable force. Up until now, Lu Ye had been successfully blocked with every slash he made, only managing to land one lucky hit without much effect.

Lu Ye was looking for an opportunity, planning on a slow and steady approach until Yuan Guang provided him with this opportunity.

In the instant he struck with that slash, the Boulder Mountain Saber wasn't enhanced by one Sharpness spirit rune but two.

There were some leaves on the Talent Tree that didn't serve a specific function but served as connections. These could no longer be called spirit runes; they were rather techniques, techniques of using spirit runes.

Lu Ye used this technique, instantly activating both Sharpness runes, using them as a foundation to connect and blend the two Sharpness spirit runes together.

The opponent had treasure armor; I have Sharpness. If one isn't enough, then two will do! As long as my blade is sharp enough, any defense is like paper!

Chapter 244 Sky Supporting Sect's Vein

The Talent Tree offered numerous techniques for connections, from which Lu Ye greatly benefited.

His rapid progress in the study of the Path of Spirit Runes with Madam Yun was closely linked to the knowledge of these techniques he had received.

Initially, when he obtained these techniques, he didn't know how to use them, but after studying and observing with Madam Yun, Lu Ye slowly figured them out.

Two types of Sharpness could be connected using this special technique, thus unleashing stronger lethality.

In simple terms, the two connected Sharpness could be considered as two restrictions. It meant that the moment Lu Ye wielded his saber, two additional Sharpness-enhancing restrictions appeared on the Boulder Mountain Saber!

This allowed him to pierce directly through the robustly protected treasure armor. In the instant Lu Ye struck, all the spirit force clinging to the saber turned exceedingly sharp.

A stab passed through the chest, and Yuan Guang was not dead yet. He thrust his sword towards Lu Ye's face, but suddenly, a surge of spirit force erupted from his chest, followed by needle-like spirit force piercing through his body, turning him into a hedgehog.

Cactus!

This was a new Cactus Spirit Runes that Lu Ye had acquired after letting the Talent Tree devour ten portions of Earth's Core Fire a while ago. It had no other use; once formed, it would instantly produce spikes of spirit force based on the spirit runes, though they wouldn't last for too long.

Normally, this spirit rune was useless, but if it formed inside an enemy's body, the lethality was terrifying.

For any cultivator, even those wearing some protective Spiritual Artifacts, the inside of their bodies remained vulnerable.

In the past, even if Lu Ye stabbed someone, as long as it wasn't a critical hit, he generally couldn't kill them, but now it was different. A stab while activating the Cactus Spirit Runes could immediately riddle the enemy's body with holes, leaving them either dead or crippled!

It must be said, this was an extremely malicious spirit rune.

The spirit force spikes quickly disappeared after forming, as the Cactus Spirit Runes dissipated, but the wounds they left would not disappear.

Yuan Guang's Longsword stalled just before Lu Ye's eyes, unable to advance further.

When Lu Ye drew his sword, he kicked out, sending Yuan Guang flying.

Clang...

With its master no longer directing it, Yuan Guang's controlled weapon also fell, and Lu Ye reached out, retrieving his own two Spiritual Artifacts.

An intense feeling of rejection transmitted from the surroundings, and Lu Ye knew Yiyi was activating the Nine Worlds map.

Everything blurred before his eyes, and then he was standing in front of Yiyi, with Yuan Guang's corpse lying not far away.

Hao Ren looked at Lu Ye with a complex expression, his mouth moving as if he wanted to say something but didn't know how, falling silent for a moment.

It was Hao Qing who couldn't help but praise him, "Fellow Daoist Yiye, you really are... so amazing!" The somewhat trembling voice indicated that the praise was heartfelt.

The siblings had stood by Yiyi's side and watched that battle from beginning to end. Although the way the array diagram depicted the fight made it appear somewhat comical and completely failed to convey

the deadly seriousness of the combat, the final result was Lu Ye killing Yuan Guang, whose body lay beside them, blood pooled all around.

Everyone knows that some top sect cultivators can kill enemies above their level, but overtaking one or two levels in cultivation was unheard of.

From Lu Ye's unscathed appearance, it seemed that he hadn't exerted his full strength in this fight.

This point, however, was where they were mistaken; Lu Ye hadn't held back at all in this fight. He used every method he should have used, but unfortunately, Yuan Guang's choices in the final moments were somewhat puzzling; otherwise, he wouldn't have died so quickly and could have at least fought Lu Ye for a while longer.

That he was unharmed was because Lu Ye had accumulated a lot of experience fighting cultivators in the Mirage Realm, thereby hardly making any mistakes – all thanks to the lessons from his repeated brushes with death.

For instance, the sword flashes Yuan Guang had unleashed, Lu Ye had encountered more than once in the Mirage Realm. Had he not gained experience there, he would have been flustered at first sight of such sword flashes.

In comparison, the Level 9 of the Mirage Realm was quite similar to the Level 9 of the real world in terms of strength.

With this in mind, Lu Ye looked at Yiyi, his eyes seeking her consent; Yiyi nodded lightly, indicating she was all right.

Using her strength to activate the Nine Worlds map was a bit of a stretch for her, but luckily she only needed to keep the map running, and the energy consumption was still bearable.

After this battle, Hao Ren and his sister undoubtedly had a new understanding of Lu Ye's strength and felt much more at ease. After all, they were in the territory of the Sky Supporting Sect, and they feared being discovered by a Level 9.

Now it seemed that if a Level 9 did come here, it was tantamount to delivering death.

As Lu Ye and Yiyi needed to recover, Hao Ren and his sister took the initiative to stand guard nearby.

Time passed, and night turned into day.

The fragrance of the Purple Cloud Flower became denser and the bud began to slowly bloom, finally reaching full maturity.

Hao Ren took out a hundred Spirit Stones and handed them to Lu Ye, then Hao Qing carefully picked the Purple Cloud Flower and placed it in a wooden box that had been prepared earlier.

With the silver exchanged and the transaction completed, it could be considered a pleasant cooperation. For Lu Ye, these hundred Spirit Stones were a windfall. Although not a large amount, it was enough for him and Amber to use for cultivation for a few days.

"Brother Yiye, earlier you asked about the location of the Sky Supporting Sect's mines, are you planning to go..." As Hao Ren spoke, he gestured across his neck with his hand.

"Does Brother Hao have any good advice?"

Hao Ren hurriedly waved his hand, "It's not advice I dare to offer, just that there are quite a few people there, and it might be too risky for Brother Yiye and your sister to go like this..." He didn't know how to continue; he wanted to say it was reckless but feared it would cause displeasure.

"I will adapt according to the situation."

Hao Ren said, "If you don't mind, how about my sister and I join you?" Had he not seen how Lu Ye killed Yuan Guang, Hao Ren would never have dared to make such a suggestion; but having witnessed firsthand that even Yuan Guang was no match for Lu Ye, Hao Ren felt this task might be feasible, just with some caution.

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow, "That would naturally be for the best."

He was not surprised that the Hao siblings would join in. Since Silver Light Island bordered the Sky Supporting Sect, conflicts were inevitable, and the cultivators from Silver Light Island would certainly be pleased to see someone stirring trouble on the Sky Supporting Sect's side.

Lu Ye had not sought their alliance earlier primarily because they were not familiar with each other, and also because others might not be willing to take the risk.

However, since Hao Ren had brought it up, it was a different matter. Both siblings were Level 8 cultivators, and their power was not to be underestimated.

Through conversation, he learned that both siblings were ghost cultivators, adept at the Path of Concealment.

Only then did Lu Ye understand how they dared to venture into the territory of the Sky Supporting Sect in search of the Purple Cloud Flower—they were ghost cultivators.

Before reaching Level 7, ghost cultivators are similar to combat cultivators, but after reaching Level 7 and being able to communicate with the Netherworld, they can fully exploit the advantages of their sect. Among all the sects, physique cultivators have the strongest bodies, magic cultivators are skilled in magic and spells, combat cultivators are valiant, and healing cultivators heal wounds and save lives.

Ghost cultivators are hard to guard against because they are fast and specialize in assassination and concealment; their sect is also the most likely to defeat enemies of a higher level.

If one is approached by a ghost cultivator without notice, even if their cultivation level is higher than the attacker's, the outcome may still not be favorable.

Correspondingly, ghost cultivators are as fragile as magic cultivators and they can never cultivate magic and spells. Communicating with the Netherworld comes at a price, as the spirit force within a ghost cultivator is no longer pure; it is a strange power that grants them all sorts of incredible abilities.

Originally, Lu Ye's plan was to find where the Sky Supporting Sect's cultivators gathered and then find a way to lure them out. As a Level 7 cultivator from the Haotian Alliance, just by showing his face there, he was sure to attract attempts on his life.

In that case, he would fight one if one came, and if two came, he would take out both. If too many came, he would simply run away.

In any case, he would make it as troublesome as possible for them.

He was there for revenge, and had no intention of discussing righteousness or morality with his enemies.

Now with the Hao siblings joining him, it would be even more convenient to act. Luring snakes out of their holes always requires bait, and Level 8 ghost cultivators were undoubtedly suitable bait, especially since this bait came from Silver Light Island.

After discussing the plan, they finalized it.

The group of four headed in the direction of the Sky Supporting Sect's mines.

As Level 8 cultivators, they could barely manage weapon control-flying, but not to mention the spirit force consumed by flying, being so conspicuous in enemy territory was also inappropriate.

Thus, the four of them traveled swiftly by foot. Fortunately, the Sky Supporting Sect's mines were not too far from their location, about two hundred li away, just thirty li outside of the Sky Supporting Sect's station.

Each sect controlled resources that were not too far from their own stations, as defending distant resources without sufficient power was impractical.

This was also a standard for forces when choosing a location for their stations; they would first scout out the resources within the territory before deciding the location of their station.

After traveling for a day, by nightfall, the four of them had reached their destination.

This location was sixty li from the Sky Supporting Sect's station and thirty li from the mine.

They did not act immediately but took some time to rest.

At midnight, Hao Ren stealthily set off. Lu Ye watched him walk away, blending into the darkness not far off. Even when Lu Ye concentrated spirit light in his eyes, he could not spot Hao Ren's trail.

This was the unique skill of ghost cultivators. Hao Ren's cultivation level was still not high enough to achieve complete concealment, but concealing his spirit light was no problem at all.

Once a ghost cultivator reached the Cloud River Realm, tracking their movements would be even more challenging, making a powerful ghost cultivator a formidable opponent who could strike without warning at the most unexpected times and places.

Of course, the concealment of ghost cultivators was not unbreakable; they could still be exposed if attacked. Moreover, as one's cultivation level increased, one's perception also strengthened, providing a faint, indistinct sensation of lurking dangers.

After waiting for less than two shichen, suddenly two streaks of light burst out from the direction of the mine. One to the left and one to the right, they rushed directly towards them. Both individuals were Level 9 cultivators, and one of them appeared to be a magic cultivator, continuously casting spells while flying, striking downwards with impressive force. The other, though not invoking any spells, was also harnessing the power of weapon control, a pale golden light moving through the woods.

#### Chapter 245 Luring the Snake Out of Its Hole

According to the information provided by the siblings Hao Ren, places like the mine veins under the Sky Supporting Sect's control definitely have Level 9 cultivators as guards, and not just one—there are probably about three or four, since the mine's range is quite large, and one Level 9 cultivator can't cover it all.

Once his tracks were exposed there, it would inevitably lead to a pursuit.

Now, it seemed that the situation was almost as previously anticipated; Hao Ren had drawn over two Level 9 cultivators from there.

What needed to be done now was quite simple—figure out a way to kill those two Sky Supporting Sect cultivators!

In the night sky, those two pursuing figures were extremely noticeable, constantly closing in on the direction where Lu Ye was located.

While these two were still three miles away, Hao Ren rushed up to Lu Ye, making Lu Ye marvel at his speed; after all, he was a ghost cultivator, and his speed was truly fast!

Even the two Level 9 cultivators using weapon control-flying couldn't catch up with him.

However, at the moment, Hao Ren's neck bore some strange patterns that Lu Ye had seen before on Lann Yudie, probably the result of activating some secret technique to increase his speed.

His complexion was slightly pale, and he looked dust-covered and disheveled.

Nodding slightly to Lu Ye, Hao Ren walked to the predetermined spot and suddenly disappeared.

No sooner had he left than the figures of the two cultivators using the Flying Spirit Artifacts arrived not far in front of Lu Ye, with a surge of light speeding directly at Lu Ye—it was the glow of weapon control.

Lu Ye looked up and felt that the power of this guy's weapon control was not as good as his own, and his aura of spirit light wasn't very bright, clearly having consumed quite a few elixir pills; this Level 9 cultivator was notably weaker than Yuan Guang.

"It's not that ghost cultivator!" the magic cultivator who hadn't made a move suddenly spoke.

The light from the weapon control shifted slightly, grazing past Lu Ye's cheek and bringing a gust of wind that stung his face. Throughout, Lu Ye hadn't moved at all, as if he had been stunned.

In fact, Lu Ye was confident he could either dodge or block the strike, so he made no superfluous movements.

The one who attacked Lu Ye seemed to be a combat cultivator, as he was standing on a saber.

Cultivators flying with weapon control could choose specialized Flying Spirit Artifacts, or they could choose their own combat weapons; the two were different.

Using specialized Flying Spirit Artifacts undoubtedly offered a more comfortable flying experience because the space was larger, the speed faster, and the flight smoother, but comparatively, the energy consumed was also greater.

As with this combat cultivator using his own combat weapon for flight, the experience wasn't as good as the former, but it had the advantage of conserving spirit force.

Moreover, some combat weapons are not very suitable for flight; swords and sabers still work fine, as flying with sword control or saber control could still look elegant, but if originally using something like a Wolf Fang Club, the posture of weapon control-flying might be slightly awkward to the eye.

Choosing specialized Flying Spirit Artifacts or using one's own combat weapon ultimately depended on one's financial capability.

This was similar to when cultivators reached Level 7 and had to choose which weapon to use for combat; some cultivators' weapons were good for close combat and also for mid-range control.

Cultivators' expenses for cultivation were substantial, including the daily consumption of elixir pills and cultivational Spirit Stones—it all cost money.

At lower levels of cultivation, they would also need to buy Spirit Talismans for protection.

Upon reaching Level 7, many cultivators needed to buy weapon control artifacts.

At Level 8, they needed to purchase Flying Spirit Artifacts.

At Level 9, they needed to buy Heaven Rank techniques...

Thus, most cultivators at the Spirit Stream Realm led very hard lives, finding it difficult to accumulate wealth.

Specialized Flying Spirit Artifacts were not cheap, costing at least two to three hundred Spirit Stones. The better the Flying Spirit Artifacts, the more expensive they became, costing thousands to tens of thousands of Spirit Stones.

Although Lu Ye had not yet reached the stage of flying with weapon control, he still knew quite a bit about these things.

So, seeing the combat cultivator flying with the saber, he could tell that this guy was broke, and immediately lost much interest in him; even if he killed this person, there wouldn't be much of value in his storage sack.

On the other hand, the little boat that magic cultivator was standing on looked rather exquisite and might be worth some money.

Both were suspended in mid-air, looking down on Lu Ye, who appeared to have been scared stiff. The combat cultivator spoke in a deep voice, "Have you seen a Level 8 ghost cultivator?"

Lu Ye remained silent; he was now considering how to bring the opponent down as the other was floating in mid-air and his previously prepared traps wouldn't work.

Not receiving an answer, the combat cultivator grew impatient and asked again, "Which side are you on?"

Still, there was no reply.

"Then you can go die!" The combat cultivator snorted coldly; a cultivator who couldn't even declare his side was definitely an enemy, so he decisively prepared to strike.

While saying this, the spiritual artifact in his hand trembled slightly, brimming with killing intent.

Lu Ye extended his hand and took something out of his storage sack, tossing it onto the ground!

"Hm?" The combat cultivator's eyes lit up; even before the item hit the ground, he dove down to catch it, because what Lu Ye had thrown was a Flying Spirit Artifact.

For a combat cultivator so poor that he could only fly with sword control, a Flying Spirit Artifact was undoubtedly very appealing, especially since it was thrown by a Level 7 cultivator. In his eyes, the item was clearly the counterpart's way of bribing for his life.

The item belonged to Yuan Guang; after Lu Ye had killed him and opened his storage sack, it had become his spoils of war, and now it was put to good use.

The combat cultivator grabbed the Flying Spirit Artifact in a flash and upon closer inspection, realized it seemed familiar, as if he had seen it somewhere before.

Of course, it was familiar; Yuan Guang and he were both Level 9 cultivators and also fellow cultivators at the Sky Supporting Sect, definitely acquainted with each other. He had seen Yuan Guang's Flying Spirit Artifact before and had even ridden it with Yuan Guang.

Before he could figure it out, the area around him twisted and transformed, suddenly revealing a scene of a chaotic stone forest. Once the stone forest disappeared, the combat cultivator vanished along with it.

This sudden change startled the magic cultivator, but something even scarier was about to happen.

The spirit force surged below, and two beams of Liu Guang shot towards him at extremely high speed, each filled with murderous intent. As they crossed each other, the two beams seemed to morph into a pair of scissors...

The magic cultivator was cautious, and even though his strength surpassed Lu Ye, he hovered thirty meters away all the same, wary of the possibility that the Level 7 cultivator might suddenly attack using weapon control; he had suffered from such a tactic before.

So after a brief shock, the magic cultivator calmed down, thinking that his usual careful caution was indeed rewarding, "I am indeed steady."

Thirty meters—beyond the reach of any Level 7 cultivator's weapon control. There was no way the opponent could harm him.

With two light sounds, the magic cultivator's Flying Spirit Artifact was violently shaken, immediately becoming unstable. As Lu Ye made his move, he spurred his spirit force, ready to use his magic spells, but the shock disrupted his concentration, interrupting the spell he was about to cast as he hurriedly stabilized his Flying Spirit Artifact.

Falling from this height, even if he didn't die, would leave him half-dead; his small stature wasn't as robust as a physique cultivator's.

His mind a mess, he thought, "Who the hell told me a Level 7 cultivator's weapon control wouldn't exceed thirty meters? This is way beyond thirty meters, at least thirty-five meters."

A surge of searing heat rushed up from below. Just as he stabilized, his Flying Spirit Artifact suffered an even more violent shock than before, this time from Lu Ye executing the Fire Dragon Technique!

Under the night sky, a huge fire dragon collided with the Flying Spirit Artifact, flipping it over directly.

Accompanied by a cry of alarm, the magic cultivator fell from mid-air. Two beams of Liu Guang wrapped around him, weaving to the left and right, but they failed to kill the magic cultivator because a considerably thick spirit force barrier suddenly emerged around his body.

This was a lifesaving magic spell that every magic cultivator cultivated!

His body swayed left and right under the impact of the two beams of Liu Guang, dizzy and disoriented, but as long as the spirit force barrier held, his life was not in danger.

Seeing this, Lu Ye felt even more that he needed to embed spirit runes on his weapon control; without the augmentation of Sharpness spirit runes, the power of weapon control just wasn't formidable enough.

The magic cultivator's spirit force barrier was indeed impressive, but if Lu Ye were to attack with a sabre—if the Boulder Mountain Saber was augmented with Sharpness, it would only take three or five slashes to break through it. If augmented with two layers of Sharpness, maybe only one or two slashes would suffice.

Unlike now, his weapon control's Liu Guang banged against the opponent's spirit force barrier making loud, impressive noises, but in reality, it was only mildly irritating for the other party.

He complained to himself, unaware that the magic cultivator was actually terrified, not just because he was falling from mid-air, but more importantly because he saw that under the attack of two weapon-controlled beams, his own spirit force was draining away like floodwaters breaching a dam!

Utilizing the impact from the weapon control, he stabilized his form and hastily used the Travel Through Air Skill.

This spell allowed one to float in the air for a short time. Dong Shuye had once performed it in front of Lu Ye, only to be disoriented by Lu Ye's fire quail hit.

Magic cultivators generally do not use weapon control to kill enemies—not because they can't, but because it's unnecessary. Their spells can hit enemies from great distances, and using weapon control also divides their attention and limits their attack range. Thus, for a magic cultivator, the Path of Weapon Control is rather superfluous.

However, once a magic cultivator reaches Level 7, they can cultivate some more powerful spells, just as Lu Ye had cultivated the Fire Dragon Technique. Hence, after reaching Level 7, a magic cultivator's strength greatly enhances too.

After executing the Travel Through Air Skill, the Level 9 magic cultivator breathed a sigh of relief. It was embarrassing to be put in such a disarray by a Level 7, but now that he had stabilized the situation, all he needed was to increase his altitude, widen the distance, and resume weapon-controlled flight to take control of this fight!

Then the Level 7 would be just a target.

Being humiliated by a Level 7 was an insult. He decided to teach the opponent a lesson, letting him know the terrifying fury a Level 9 magic cultivator could unleash when angered!

With spirit force surging, he ascended upward, stepping back onto his Flying Spirit Artifact...

Looking down, however, there was no sign of the Level 7 cultivator below.

Where did he go? In his panic, he had not specifically paid attention to the opponent's movements, and now he had no idea where the other had gone.

A sudden fluctuation of spirit force came from above his head; the magic cultivator looked up and his scalp tingled.

Chapter 246

The enemy who should have been on the ground was now above him. Under the glow of the full moon, the person behind him had a pair of fiery red wings flowing with spirit force fluttering gently. The long saber in his hand was climbing with spirit force, and he swiftly slashed down at him!

Impossible! As he plummeted towards the ground, the magic cultivator screamed inwardly.

Boom...

Dust flew as the magic cultivator's body heavily crashed to the ground, feeling as if many of his bones were broken, and a mouthful of fresh blood spurted out.

The spirit force barrier that could have blocked a Boulder Mountain Saber's strike, enhanced with two Sharpness Spirit Runes, also dissipated into nothingness—not because it was sliced open, but because the magic cultivator no longer had the strength to maintain it.

In order to dodge the might of Lu Ye's weapon control just a moment ago, he had flown a bit too high, nearly forty meters from the ground, which led to him falling and nearly killing himself.

Darkness filled his vision, unable to see, and his ears buzzed. Blood Water seeped from the orifices of the magic cultivator, and in such a state, he was truly on the brink of death.

Lu Ye drifted down lightly beside him, retracted his wings behind him, reversed the long saber in his hand, aimed straight at the magic cultivator's heart, and stabbed down.

The magic cultivator's body tensed up instinctively, grabbing onto the blade of the Boulder Mountain Saber with both hands, his eyes full of unwillingness.

He was a Level 9 magic cultivator; had he died in a mutual combat, it would have been due to his lack of skill or being outclassed by his opponent. But after facing Lu Ye, a Level 7, not even a single magic or spell had been cast before he was bewilderingly killed—how could he be willing to accept that?

But unwillingness changed nothing.

His straightened body crashed back to the ground once more, a red light flew out— the Level 9 magic cultivator... dead!

Lu Ye pulled out the long saber and walked step by step to where the combat cultivator had disappeared. As if he'd broken through a weak barrier, the scenery around him twisted, and the next instant he was back in the familiar rocky forest terrain.

At this very moment, the battle here was tense. The Hao siblings, Hao Ren and his sister, one was up close battling with the combat cultivator, the other manipulating a controlled weapon from not far away to interfere, working seamlessly together, leaving the combat cultivator infuriated.

One-on-one, the Hao siblings were no match for this combat cultivator, but with their cooperation, the combat cultivator was no match for them.

Among cultivators of the same level, there are differences in strength.

Lu Ye had already observed that the spirit light of this combat cultivator was not very bright, far inferior to the Yuan Guang whom he had killed.

If Yuan Guang had faced the Hao siblings, he might have been able to take on both, but clearly, this combat cultivator did not have such ability.

Fighting with frustration and suddenly seeing Lu Ye appear out of nowhere, the combat cultivator was alarmed.

Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't have taken a Level 7 seriously, but at that moment his situation was dire, and he could not afford another enemy.

He wondered where his magic cultivator comrade had gone! Why hadn't he killed this Level 7?

Fiery red Liu Guang shot out from Lu Ye's hand toward the combat cultivator, while nonchalantly chewing on an elixir pill...

He didn't know when it became a habit, but after a battle, he wanted to eat some elixir pills, even if the consumption wasn't large.

This combat cultivator from the Sky Supporting Sect was now trapped inside the Nine Worlds map, fighting desperately like a cornered beast, doomed to die, even without his intervention; the Hao siblings would be able to deal with him.

So, Lu Ye did not choose to go forward but instead supported with his controlled weapon.

He and the Hao siblings had a cooperative relationship; naturally, he couldn't hoard all the benefits. That kind of cooperation, rooted in the idea that "everything is mine," was destined to be very fragile.

The tinkling sounds of metal rang out, with the light from the two controlled weapons constantly circling the combat cultivator, striking him unexpectedly. Although Hao Qing was a woman, her combat style was as fierce as any man's. Her actions were extremely fast, her Spiritual Artifact almost a blur in her hands, managing several times to target the combat cultivator's vitals while he was distracted. After a dozen breaths, the combat cultivator was grievously wounded, his clothes stained with fresh blood.

Another twenty breaths went by, and with Hao Ren's controlled weapon piercing through the back of the combat cultivator's head, the battle was over.

A point of red light drifted from the body of the combat cultivator, landing on the back of Hao Ren's hand.

Hao Qing quickly gathered the spoils of battle.

A strong sense of rejection emanated from their surroundings, and in an instant, the three were back in their original location, with two additional corpses on the ground. Yiyi stood not far away, holding the Nine Worlds map.

"Thrilling, hahaha!" Hao Ren laughed loudly.

The siblings had decided to join Lu Ye in creating chaos only after seeing his technique, uncertain whether they would actually succeed or not.

But now, with two Level 9 cultivators from the Sky Supporting Sect dead and no casualties on their side, both were greatly emboldened.

"Let's go!"

Lu Ye grabbed the Amber on his shoulder and threw her on the ground, where she quickly reverted to her original form. He mounted the tiger, pulled Yiyi up behind him, and Amber ran swiftly towards the mining area of the Sky Supporting Sect.

The Hao siblings meanwhile blended into the surrounding darkness, invisible, but their faint presence revealed they were not far off.

Luring the snake out of the hole only works once; there would not be a second time.

The cultivators of the Sky Supporting Sect were not fools; two Level 9 cultivators had gone out, but not only did the enemy not perish, they even returned. The cultivators left to guard would only need to investigate a little to learn the fate of those two Level 9s, and at that time they would send a message back to their headquarters.

Earlier, Hao Ren had already scouted out that there were a total of three Level 9 cultivators from the Sky Supporting Sect guarding that vein. Two had been lured out and killed, leaving only the last one to stay behind.

...

Therefore, as long as this remaining Level 9 cultivator is dealt with, there will be no more Level 9 cultivators in the mining area. With Lu Ye's current strength, he would naturally be able to do as he pleases, as long as he can retreat before the Sky Supporting Sect catches on.

The key now is to kill the opponent.

As he moved forward, three miles away from the mining area, Lu Ye dismounted from the tiger's back, and Amber shrank to the size of a house cat before jumping onto his shoulder. As for Yiyi, she scouted ahead, searching for the location of that Level 9 cultivator.

Hao Qing and her brother were nearby to coordinate, just waiting to find that last Level 9 cultivator so they could join forces with Lu Ye for a powerful ambush.

As Lu Ye took a step, he inhaled softly, and a spirit rune spread silently over his body. In an instant, all his traces were gone, along with Amber who was perched on his shoulder.

Breath-concealing.

It was one of the spirit runes he got along with Cactus.

There was a type of Spirit Talisman called Breath-concealing Talisman, which Lu Ye had used before when he was rescuing Amber. He used to keep a few on him because they were very useful in certain situations.

Like right now!

However, ever since he obtained the Breath-concealing Spirit Runes from the Talent Tree, those talismans became redundant.

Actually, Lu Ye wished he could get his hands on spirit runes that could hide his physical form. If he had such runes, he could completely vanish, becoming as elusive as a ghostly cultivator—not just concealing his presence but becoming truly undetectable.

Looking up, he saw faint lights shining from the mining area, scattered and disorganized. These were the lights coming from the various mine entrances.

This reminded Lu Ye of the days he spent mining in Evil Moon Valley...

He originally thought that becoming a cultivator would free him from the crude labor of mining, but it turned out that even as cultivators, some still had to mine.

Not just the Sky Supporting Sect, but all the big sects were the same. The resources produced by their territories were one of the sources for the cultivators' daily cultivation, and none would give up easily. The sects were not so affluent as to be able to do without mining.

The big sects had thought about hiring mortals to mine in the past, since the numbers of mortals were not few in the Spirit Stream battlefield. However, mines often contained dangerous beasts or were attacked by enemy sect cultivators, situations in which mortals had no means of protecting themselves and often suffered heavy casualties.

After several such occurrences, no mortals dared to mine for the cultivators anymore.

Left with no choice, the cultivators had to do the work themselves.

It could be said that almost everyone who had mingled in the Spirit Stream battlefield, whether from a big sect, a small family, or as an independent cultivator, was skilled in mining.

In the storage sacks of cultivators, one could typically find a pickaxe or other quirky mining tools.

Less than a mile away from the mining vein, Lu Ye, moving forward without a sound, suddenly came to a halt.

A subtle sense of crisis emerged, as if someone had set their sights on him.

Without any hesitation, Lu Ye channeled his spirit force into his right eye, where a complicated spirit rune swiftly formed.

In an instant, his perspective changed.

Under the enhancement of the Insight Spirit Rune, he could see things he normally couldn't—the surroundings lost their reality, reflected instead of by varying thicknesses of luminous lines or bands, constantly twisting and changing. These were the glows of nature's spiritual energy.

The function of the Insight Spirit Rune was to clearly observe the flow of spiritual energy and the changes in spirit force.

His gaze swept across the area, and when it circled back, it settled on a point to his left. There, the flow of spirit force was amiss, with one area noticeably denser than the surroundings, outlining a human figure!

The figure rushed towards him at an incredible speed and was upon him in the blink of an eye.

In that moment, a heavy sense of crisis enveloped Lu Ye, making the hairs all over his body stand on end.

The Boulder Mountain Saber was unsheathed in an instant, and with the enhancement of Sharpness Spirit Runes, he slashed forward.

With a clang, a dagger appeared out of nowhere, blocking Lu Ye's strike. Following that, a figure materialized before Lu Ye's eyes.

It was a short man with a tuft of a goatee, whose spirit light revealed him to be a Level 9 cultivator!

And he was a Level 9 ghost cultivator at that, otherwise there would be no explanation for his eerie abilities.

Was this the Level 9 cultivator left behind to guard the place?

Lu Ye had no time to think further as he withdrew his saber and stabbed straight forward.

The opposing ghost cultivator looked surprised, as he hadn't expected his movements to be so easily detected by a Level 7 cultivator, let alone be preempted by the attack.

The strike he had unleashed was powerful and heavy, making his tiger's mouth split despite his hasty response.

As Lu Ye lunged with another stab, the ghost cultivator hurriedly raised his Spiritual Artifact to defend.

Just then, Amber, who had been crouching on Lu Ye's shoulder, suddenly let out a roar. The air distorted, and visible shockwaves crashed into the ghost cultivator, who felt as if he had been harshly struck by an invisible hammer, causing his head to buzz and leaving him dizzy for a moment.

#### Chapter 247 What's Wrong with the World

In recent times, Yiyi had grown tremendously, and Amber had also grown significantly. It is important to note that Yiyi's strength is directly linked to Amber.

Previously, when dealing with Yuan Guang, Lu Ye had intentionally wanted to test his own combat power, so Amber did not make a move.

It was not until this moment, facing a Level 9 ghost cultivator, that Amber ferociously roared.

Long ago, Lu Ye had discovered that Amber possessed some unique abilities. He had asked Yiyi whether Amber could perform magic and spells, to which Yiyi replied that Amber could not.

As Amber's strength increased, its unique abilities gradually revealed clues. These were indeed not any magic and spells but rather seemed like a talent awakened from its bloodline.

Its roar did not cause physical harm, but it had a great impact on the spirit.

The Level 9 ghost cultivator in front of Lu Ye was caught off guard, his mind buzzing for a moment. Although he quickly recovered due to the difference in their strengths, it created a perfect opportunity for Lu Ye.

The Boulder Mountain Saber pierced into the chest of the ghost cultivator but, unfortunately, did not penetrate his body. The ghost cultivator immediately bent forward and retreated swiftly, dodging the lethal strike.

Lu Ye, seizing the advantage, closed in and attacked. The long saber, fueled by spirit force, fell like a fierce storm.

A series of clanging sounds followed, and the ghost cultivator's face gradually filled with fear as the violent force from the Spiritual Artifact was more than he could withstand.

Furthermore, the speed at which the opponent struck was ridiculously fast.

This brief encounter left his palms bleeding profusely.

Suddenly, a killing intent erupted from both sides: it was the Hao siblings who were coordinating the attack. Since the beginning of their cultivation, the siblings had always been inseparable and in perfect harmony, making their collaboration flawless.

The Sky Supporting Sect's ghost cultivator was terrified and shocked. He had only been aware of Lu Ye and did not expect two other people nearby, and from the same sect.

Being a ghost cultivator himself, he knew well the consequences of being ambushed by fellow ghost cultivators. In a panic, he surged his spirit force and crouched down.

With two soft swishing sounds, blood spurted as the Hao siblings revealed themselves simultaneously, each leaving a deep, bone-exposing wound on the ghost cultivator.

The ghost cultivator staggered back, still unstable, as a bright slash of saber light met him head-on - he couldn't block it anymore as his arm had gone numb.

With the Boulder Mountain Saber descending, the head of the ghost cultivator flew up, blood spurting from his neck.

Together, the three of them took less than the time of one incense stick to slay the ghost cultivator!

Lu Ye picked up the opponent's storage sack and rushed towards the source of the light.

The Hao siblings quickly followed him.

"What happened? Why is there the sound of a beast roaring?" Someone suddenly came out from the mining tunnel, likely having heard Amber's roar and stepping out to investigate.

They ran straight into Lu Ye and the two others.

"You are..." The man was still puzzled when the Hao siblings had already struck, their weapons flashing and piercing through the man's body, drawing forth two gouts of hot blood.

Passing the man's corpse, Hao Qing collected his storage sack without stopping.

The mining tunnel was not dark, illuminated by torches around. As they entered the mining tunnel, any Sky Supporting Sect cultivators they encountered were swiftly slain.

In this mineral vein, dozens of cultivators usually mined the ores year-round, mostly ranging from Level 6 to Level 8, with higher cultivation levels being rarer. As for Level 9, they did not need to mine the ores but simply needed to guard the vein. Even among inner circle sects, the number of Level 9 cultivators at each sect was not high.

All three Level 9 cultivators guarding the vein had already died, so as long as Lu Ye and the others were not surrounded, they were in no great danger.

Moreover, the three Level 9 cultivators had died too quickly, without even sending out a message. This meant that the cultivators still laboring in the mine were completely unaware of the impending danger.

Lu Ye and the Hao siblings had already split up at a fork in the tunnel, which also increased their efficiency in killing enemies.

However, even the most covert killings will eventually be exposed. One incense stick's time later, a miserable scream echoed from somewhere in the mine, alerting the nearby Sky Supporting Sect cultivators. As messages started spreading, the cultivators quickly realized a horrifying fact.

That was, many of their fellow cultivator's marks had disappeared.

The disappearance of these marks undoubtedly indicated their death, and what made them more anxious was that the marks of the three Level 9 cultivators guarding the place had also disappeared.

Panic began to spread, all the surviving cultivators started fleeing the mine, while sending messages back to their base.

At the Sky Supporting Sect's base, Governor Zou Qi and Deputy Governor Yuu Hongbao were alarmed. The two quickly left their cultivation places and discovered, upon meeting, that the situation was far worse than imagined.

Not only had the three Level 9 cultivators guarding the vein died, but Yuan Guang had also died at some unknown time...

Although the cultivators' marks enabled them to ascertain each other's life and death status, nobody regularly checked these day-to-day, only noticing them when communication was needed.

"It must be Silver Light Island's doing!" Yuu Hongbao ground his teeth.

It's no wonder he thought so. In a short time, so many people, including three Level 9 cultivators, were killed. Other than Silver Light Island, who they had always had tensions with, who else could it be?

However, Yuu Hongbao couldn't understand how, including Yuan Guang, the four Level 9 cultivators hadn't even had time to send a message before dying.

Given this, the personnel Silver Light Island had deployed this time must be considerable, and among them, either Luo Fu or Qih Shi, these two treacherous villains, must surely be involved.

"Brother, should we send support to the mining vein?" Yuu Hongbao spoke up.

"The situation there is not clear yet."

Zou Qi wanted to provide support as well, but nobody knew exactly what the situation was like there. If Silver Light Island had launched a large-scale operation, recklessly sending support could simply serve their purposes.

As he spoke, Zou Qi looked outside the garrison, under the dark curtain of the night, it seemed as if endless dangers were lurking...

This kind of encirclement and rescue operation had been done by them and by the Silver Light Island before; after clashing for so many years, each knew the other's cunning plans all too well.

"Send a message to the disciples at the mine to escape quickly, save as many as you can!"

Zou Qi quickly made a decision.

Yu Hongbao knew that this was the only option, and immediately, along with Zou Qi, sent out message after message while gathering all the cultivators at the garrison to brace themselves for dawn.

Only when daylight broke could they know if there was an ambush from Silver Light Island outside.

Meanwhile, hundreds of miles away at the Silver Light Island garrison, Luo Fu and Qih Shi sat opposite each other, unknowingly bearing the blame, each holding black and white pieces in a game of Go.

Earlier, when the Hao siblings decided to act with Lu Ye, they had informed Luo Fu.

Learning that Lu Ye had killed Yuan Guang with his Level 7 cultivation, Luo Fu was so shocked that he couldn't recover for a long while.

Even if he were to duel Yuan Guang one-on-one, he wouldn't dare say he could definitely win, let alone kill him, considering the latter was a former Deputy Governor of the Sky Supporting Sect, possessing real strength.

A task he couldn't achieve, yet a Level 7 cultivator had done it? Even if a magic array had helped, such strength was indeed terrifying.

When Hao Ren decided to act with Lu Ye, Luo Fu actually didn't agree, thinking it risky to jump around in someone else's garrison, but considering the Hao siblings were ghost cultivators, skilled in escaping and hiding, he didn't stop them.

He was aware of the Hao siblings' strength; together, they could battle any average Level 9 cultivator.

He had thought that Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect would surely return from the Sky Supporting Sect's mine empty-handed, and might even get chased down. He had already sent a message to the Hao siblings, asking them to invite Lu Yiye to their garrison if possible.

From some very covert channels, he had heard some very peculiar rumors...

But as message after message came back from Hao Ren, he was bewildered...

What was happening to the world? It felt somewhat different from the cultivation world he knew?

"How are things?" Qih Shi asked while placing a piece on the board.

"It's complicated..." Luo Fu didn't know how to explain.

If he didn't know Hao Ren's character, he would almost suspect that the latter had been captured by the Sky Supporting Sect and turned to send back false information to deceive him.

Qih Shi frowned and said, "Are Hao Ren and the others in danger?"

Luo Fu shook his head and named three people.

Qih Shi asked, "Are they three Level 9 cultivators from the Sky Supporting Sect?"

"Yes."

"Are they chasing and trying to kill Hao Ren and Lu Yiye?"

"They are dead! Now the Hao siblings are following Lu Yiye, killing their way into the mine of the Sky Supporting Sect. They kill individuals and pairs alike, tsk tsk, Hao Ren said that they've turned the place into a river of blood."

"Bullshit!" Qih Shi couldn't help but curse aloud.

"I also think it's bullshit," Luo Fu said with a wry smile. "Then I sent a message to Hao Qing, and she said the same."

Qih Shi's eyes widened, "They've taken over the Sky Supporting Sect's mine?"

"Seems like it."

"Impossible!" Qih Shi said, hastily contacting Hao Qing.

After a moment, the reply he received was no different from what Luo Fu had previously stated. He suddenly felt a sense of unreality, as if everything around him was intangible. He hesitated, "Could it be that Hao Ren and his sister were captured?"

Clearly, he and Luo Fu had come to the same conclusion.

But he soon shook his head, "If they were captured, they would likely have terminated their lives. They wouldn't disgrace their sect."

Yet... That four people had taken over the Sky Supporting Sect's mine was too bizarre.

"The Sky Supporting Sect must think now that it was our doing," Qih Shi thought of another crucial point, "and with the mine in trouble, they will definitely send people to pursue Hao Ren and the others."

Luo Fu nodded, "This is an opportunity!"

Without further explanation required, Qih Shi, catching on quickly, dropped the piece in his hand and said, "I'll gather the troops!"

Moments later, in front of the Heaven's Augury Hall plaza, hundreds of cultivators gathered, their cultivation ranging from Level 6 to Level 9. Most of them were disciples from the Sky Supporting Sect headquarters, some were independent cultivators who had joined, and others were from different sects affiliated with this place.

But whether they were independent cultivators who had joined or from other sects, once they came to the garrison of Silver Light Island, they had to follow orders.

Nobody knew why the Governor and Deputy Governor had summoned them in the dead of night, but everyone had a sense of an impending storm. There was no fear, only excitement; such large-scale operations were dangerous, but correspondingly, they were also good opportunities to earn merits.

The higher the cultivation, the greater the demand for merits.

Shortly after, Luo Fu threw out a large boat, and hundreds of cultivators boarded. With the cultivators working together, the boat took off swiftly toward the direction of the Sky Supporting Sect's garrison.

Chapter 248 Quasi-Flood Dragon

In the mine, Lu Ye received a message from Hao Ren, "Brother Yiye, it's time to pull out!"

The surviving cultivators of the Sky Supporting Sect had been alarmed, and the news must have already reached their base. This place was only thirty miles away from the Sky Supporting Sect's base. If they didn't leave now, it would be difficult to escape once the Sky Supporting Sect sent reinforcements.

Lu Ye also knew that it was not wise to linger, so he did not seek further combat. Under Yiyi's guidance, they exited through one of the mine's openings.

The mine's exits were numerous and everywhere, mainly to facilitate escape. Mining in the Spirit Stream battlefield was not safe, and if there were fewer exits, it would be easy to be blocked. Therefore, the mines of every sect generally had many entrances and exits.

This made it easier for Lu Ye, as he did not have to retreat the same way he came.

Upon bursting out of the mine tunnel, a bird-like call was heard not far away. Lu Ye grabbed the Amber and threw it to the ground, letting it revert to its original form, mounted its back, and charged toward the source of the sound.

In no time, he had regrouped with Brother Hao and Sister Hao and they began to flee frantically.

The group had initially thought that after kicking a hornet's nest, they would certainly be pursued, and Lu Ye had already made plans: if not many people came, he would join the Hao siblings in a counterattack, but if there were a lot, he would split from the Hao siblings and continue to escape using his Wings, drawing the enemy's attention.

The speed of the Wings was very fast, typically not something that Level 9 cultivators using weapon control-flying could catch up with.

Yet, after escaping for a while, there had been no sign of pursuit from behind, much to everyone's astonishment.

An hour later, the hurried trio and one tiger stopped on a small hillside; there were no pursuers, no need to flee anymore.

Hao Ren opened his mouth and said, "Brother Yiye, we seem to have got something wrong."

"What?"

"The people from the Sky Supporting Sect probably won't come to pursue and kill us," he had communicated with Luo Fu a moment ago, and this conclusion was Luo Fu's.

"How so?"

"Look... we first killed three of their Level 9 cultivators, then broke into their mine. From the Sky Supporting Sect's perspective, there must have been a large number of cultivators who came to their disadvantage; otherwise, there's no reason for them to suffer so many casualties without even a message sent back before those three Level 9 cultivators died. With such worries, coupled with the dark night, they wouldn't dare to mobilize recklessly. Now they're most likely huddled within their base's big array."

Upon hearing this, Lu Ye realized that things might really be as Hao Ren had said.

Only they knew what was going on their end; the Sky Supporting Sect didn't. With the loss of three Level 9 cultivators guarding the mine and the mine having been captured, the Sky Supporting Sect would definitely have suspicions, and indeed, they wouldn't dare to attack recklessly in the dark.

"Bro, have you become smarter?" Hao Qing looked at Hao Ren with a face full of surprise.

Hao Ren gave her a glance and naturally didn't tell her it was Brother Luo who said so.

"But we can't let our guard down. After daybreak, the Sky Supporting Sect will definitely send people to investigate the mine. By then, they will probably be able to understand the truth."

It would be interesting to see what their reaction would be when the Sky Supporting Sect finally realized that the raid on the mine was not by a large group of people, but just a few.

Aboard the ship-shaped Flying Spirit Artifact, the leading Luo Fu ended communication with Hao Ren, his expression enigmatic...

The Sky Supporting Sect had not sent out a pursuit, and this was quite frustrating. He had mobilized all the available hands from the sect. Surely, they could not just enjoy the night scenery and then head back? His mind was choked with worries.

After the duration of one incense stick's time, Lu Ye, riding Amber, and led by the Hao siblings, arrived in front of a lake.

The night breeze swept over, causing ripples across the lake, as if even the air had become clearer.

Now certain that no one from the Sky Supporting Sect was in pursuit, everyone's mood relaxed. Earlier, when they had been killing the Sky Supporting Sect cultivators in the mine, Hao Qing had gotten a lot of blood on her, sticky and uncomfortable, so their main reason for coming here was to clean up.

Lu Ye didn't particularly care.

Hao Ren set up a bonfire and took a large piece of beast meat from his storage sack to roast over the fire, demonstrating his skill in this craft.

Lu Ye glanced toward the water's edge not far away where Hao Qing stood muttering to herself, then suddenly she threw something large into the lake with a loud splash, creating waves in the water.

Seeming to notice Lu Ye's confusion, Hao Ren explained, "They say there's a quasi-flood dragon in this lake that relishes Blood Food. However, it doesn't generally harm people, so cultivators who come here for water or to rest just need to throw some Blood Food into the lake."

"A quasi-flood dragon?"

"I've never seen it. It's probably a very long snake, I guess."

Lu Ye and Amber both remembered the tender, white snake meat, which made their stomachs growl with hunger.

Hao Ren laughed, "There are legends everywhere in the Spirit Stream battlefield. Who knows if they are true or false. As far as I know, it seems no one has ever seen that quasi-flood dragon, probably just exaggeration."

Moments later, Hao Qing came back clean, her hair still wet. The roasted beast meat was ready, and they shared the meal.

After the hectic night and the intense battle earlier, they were understandably tired. Lu Ye and the Hao siblings began to meditate and rest, with Yiyi in charge of keeping watch.

During his cultivation, Lu Ye inspected the condition of his spiritual orifice. Half a month ago, he had opened it up to one hundred and thirty-five orifices. Now he only needed to open one more orifice to reach one hundred and forty-four, at which point he would be at the Level 8 cultivation.

Higher cultivation wasn't always a good thing. For example, when he killed Yuan Guang, he received twenty-seven points of merit. If he had been at Level 8 and killed Yuan Guang, he would have received only eighteen points.

...

This was one of the reasons he didn't wait to advance to Level 8 before running to the inner circle—his Level 7 cultivation might be a bit lacking, but the merit earned from defeating enemies above one's level was truly substantial.

Lu Ye then took out the storage sacks he had previously seized to unlock them.

Storage sacks can't carry too much, but thanks to Madam Yun's instruction, his lock-picking skills were growing daily, and it didn't take much time to open a storage sack.

While he was busy, Amber, who had shrunk in size, hopped onto his leg and nudged his belly with its head.

Usually, when Amber acted this way, it was for one thing.

Lu Ye understood and took out the Scale Armor. Amber leaned in and took a fierce suck, swallowing a bloodline visible to the naked eye.

As expected, Amber fell over stiffly... its body emitted a faint red glow that mingled with its natural golden demon Qi to shine brilliantly.

Ever since obtaining the Scale Armor from the Dragon Spring at Hundred Peaks Mountain, Amber would occasionally suck on it, and Lu Ye would always place it in the Spirit Gathering Array during his cultivation. But even after such a long time, the blood Qi in the Scale Armor had barely diminished.

This indicated the richness of the blood Qi contained within it.

Second Senior Sister Shui Yuan had studied the Scale Armor but couldn't identify it, only guessing that there must be some secret hidden beneath the Dragon Spring.

Lu Ye planned to revisit the Dragon Spring when his cultivation was strong enough. He vividly remembered that while undergoing the Dragon Spring Body Tempering, two gigantic blood-red pupils suddenly appeared in his mind.

Putting away the Scale Armor, Lu Ye continued to unlock the restriction lock on the storage sack.

On the lake surface, ripples appeared out of nowhere, followed by layer upon layer of silent waves spreading outward. In a short time, the ripples became dense and countless. Moments later, a solitary horn emerged from the water, with dark shadows moving underneath—it seemed that some massive creature was passing by.

"Lu Ye!"

Yiyi, who was on alert, softly called out.

Lu Ye heard the urgency in her voice; he quickly looked around and immediately locked eyes with two oily green pupils. Each slitted pupil was the size of a washbasin, distinctly visible even in the dark night.

Upon meeting that gaze, a tremendous fear and sense of danger sprang up in Lu Ye's heart...

On a closer look, he could vaguely make out some features of the owner of those eyes—a gigantic snake head with a lump of flesh that seemed to be a horn, its body covered in dense snake scales. On either side of its abdomen, there were bulges, as if something was about to grow out from there.

He couldn't see how long it was since most of its body was underwater, but it was at least as thick as a large water barrel.

As their eyes met, Lu Ye didn't dare to move. He could feel that this creature was probably on the same level as the Little Gray back at his base, both on the verge of the maximum capacity that the Spirit Stream battlefield could accommodate. Even powerhouses like Feng Yuechan and Li Baxian couldn't defeat them in single combat.

Luckily, the giant snake didn't immediately attack after appearing; instead, it just stared at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye had no idea why it was staring at him.

"Brother Hao, Brother Hao!"

Lu Ye called softly.

Hao Ren, unaware of what had occurred, replied, "What's wrong?"

"What did you say was in this lake again?"

"A quasi-flood dragon, ah!" Hao Ren suddenly cried out in terror, as he too saw the immense pair of eyes. Hao Qing, by his side, was startled,

But his reaction was quick. He swiftly pressed down on Hao Qing who was about to leap up and maintained an awkward pose—kneeling on one knee with his body bent forward.

Cold sweat slowly rolled down everyone's foreheads as the atmosphere grew heavy.

None of them dared to move, all aware that the quasi-flood dragon was not to be trifled with. Any inappropriate action could provoke it, and they might not live to see the next day's sun.

"Brother Hao, didn't you say that the thing in this lake was just an exaggerated rumor?"

Just a while ago Hao Ren had mentioned the quasi-flood dragon in the lake, and now Lu Ye had encountered it. He wasn't sure whether to feel honored or unlucky.

Hao Ren's voice trembled: "I've never seen it myself, either. My sister and I have come here several times, and it has never appeared."

"Think of something, it keeps staring at me for some reason."

"Yes, let's think of something." Hao Ren took a few deep breaths to calm his panic, "That's right, it likes blood food. Everyone must stay still. I'll get something for it to eat; maybe it's just hungry."

As he spoke, Hao Ren slowly stood up.

Meanwhile, Lu Ye's attention was at its peak, ready to soar into the sky at the slightest sign of trouble from the quasi-flood dragon.

He hadn't fled at first sight of the quasi-flood dragon, mainly because he feared provoking it, which could put Hao Ren and his sister in grave danger.

But if the quasi-flood dragon did have any ill intentions towards them, then other than flying away, he had no other choice.

Chapter 249 Sky Supporting Sect's Misfortune

Hao Ren slowly stood up, plucking up his courage to take some beast meat from his storage sack.

Basically, every cultivator's storage sack would have some food, mainly to be prepared for emergencies.

He lifted the meat and then tossed it toward the quasi-flood dragon.

The quasi-flood dragon remained unmoved.

He threw a few more pieces, but still there was no response.

"It's no use, Brother Yiye..." Hao Ren's forehead dripped with sweat.

Lu Ye let out a soft sigh and said, "Brother Hao, you guys go first. It's been staring at me and probably won't bother with you."

"But what about you?"

"I have my own ways of escape."

After a moment of hesitation, Hao Ren gritted his teeth and said, "Then you be careful, Brother Yiye."

As he spoke, he signaled Hao Qing with his eyes, and the siblings tiptoed away.

The quasi-flood dragon indeed paid no attention to them, not even casting a glance their way, which left Hao Ren and his sister feeling both suffocated from being ignored and inexplicably relieved.

They didn't stop until they had retreated a hundred zhang away and then suddenly merged into the darkness.

At this moment, Lu Ye was pondering a question: just what did the quasi-flood dragon see in him?

According to Hao Ren, he and his sister had come to this place several times and never encountered the quasi-flood dragon, yet Lu Ye had been targeted on his first visit.

Something was amiss.

Lu Ye thought back on his previous actions and then raised his hand to grasp Amber, who lay stiffly on his lap, lifting it to his side.

The quasi-flood dragon's eyes followed the movement.

Lu Ye then moved Amber to the other side.

The quasi-flood dragon's eyes followed again.

It was confirmed, the quasi-flood dragon's interest was not in him, but in Amber. It was only because Amber stayed with him and the quasi-flood dragon's eyes were so huge, he had initially misjudged and thought he was the target.

Amber was a demon beast, which might be why it caught the quasi-flood dragon's attention, but Lu Ye felt that a bigger reason was likely the blood Qi within the Scale Armor.

If it were just because of Amber, the quasi-flood dragon should have appeared as soon as Lu Ye and the others came here. In fact, it only showed up after Amber had consumed the blood Qi from the scales. In other words, it was lured out by the scale armor Lu Ye had taken out.

The scale looked like it could be from a dragon or a snake, and since the quasi-flood dragon's true nature was a type of snake demon, the blood Qi from the scale inevitably had a great attraction to it.

However, to be certain, further verification was needed.

"Yiyi."

"Hmm."

"Take the things and go underground!"

As Lu Ye spoke, his hand reached into the storage sack, and the next moment, he took out the Scale Armor and tossed it to Yiyi. Simultaneously, spirit force surged through his body, and a pair of fiery red wings unfolded on his back and he soared into the sky.

The moment Yiyi caught the Scale Armor, she melted into the ground.

The quasi-flood dragon, which had remained still up until that moment, suddenly stirred to action; almost at the instant Lu Ye took to the skies, the huge snake head violently smashed into the spot where Yiyi had just been. Dust flew everywhere, and the ground was left with a large crater from the impact, strong gusts spreading in all directions. Lu Ye's figure swayed as he quickly widened the gap between them.

After soaring a hundred zhang high, he looked down to see a massive creature pounding the ground below, seemingly trying to uncover Yiyi hidden beneath.

Demon Qi billowed, the sound was terrifying, and the continuous booming was relentless to the ears. Each strike shook the ground, and in a short period, the place where Yiyi had been transformed into a large crater about ten zhang wide and several zhang deep.

Indeed, it was because of the Scale Armor! Seeing this, how could Lu Ye not realize his previous guess was correct?

Whether the scales were from a dragon or a snake, they definitely had a great significance to the quasi-flood dragon; otherwise, there was no reason for it to be drawn out.

For a monster like it, having grown to the limits of what the Spirit Stream battlefield could accommodate, it normally resided at the bottom of the lake, never showing itself, because it had no more room to grow. To put it nicely, it was lonely at the top; realistically, it was simply waiting to die.

But obtaining that Scale Armor would change the situation. It was called a quasi-flood dragon because it was only one step away from a flood dragon metamorphosis; its instincts told it that with the Scale Armor, it could transform into a flood dragon! Then it could break through the containment of Heaven's Augury and leave this prison that bound it.

Not far away, Hao Ren and his sister, who had already fled from the lakeside, watched the commotion from afar and couldn't help but swallow hard.

They didn't know how Lu Ye had provoked the quasi-flood dragon, to cause it to erupt so fiercely.

Fortunately, Lu Ye's figure was clearly visible, so they didn't need to worry about his safety.

Suspended in the sky, Lu Ye looked down. There was no need to worry about Yiyi; if she went underground, then even if the quasi-flood dragon was strong, it had no way to deal with her unless it also had the ability for ground evasion.

Now all he needed to do was figure out how to shake off the quasi-flood dragon.

To shake off the quasi-flood dragon was actually quite simple; the monster was tracking the blood Qi in the scales. So, as long as he isolated the Scale Armor so it couldn't sense it, that would suffice.

In short, store it in the storage sack! This was the quickest and most effective method. Lu Ye raised his hand to touch the battlefield marking on his body and sent a message to Yiyi.

Yiyi followed his instructions and put the Scale Armor into her storage sack.

The quasi-flood dragon that kept bombarding the ground immediately went crazy, its roar even more terrifying.

After struggling for a while and no longer sensing the presence of the Scale Armor, the quasi-flood dragon begrudgingly changed its direction and swam towards the lake, incessantly flicking its snake tongue and with demon Qi swirling around it uncontrollably, a clear sign of its inner turmoil.

Just as the quasi-flood dragon was about to re-enter the lake, Lu Ye suddenly thought, what if he could lure this monster to the Sky Supporting Sect's grounds... what then?

It was probably an existence on the same level as Little Gray, and if possible, the cultivators of the Sky Supporting Sect would surely be moved to tears of gratitude.

Lu Ye's trip to the inner circle served two purposes: to hone himself and to avenge the battle at Golden Light Peak, intending to kill as many Sky Supporting Sect cultivators as possible under the premise of ensuring his own safety.

But now, it seemed his ambitions could be greater?

The prerequisite was that he could lure the quasi-flood dragon there.

"Yiyi, take out the item and then run!" Lu Ye sent a message to Yiyi.

"Okay." Yiyi didn't ask any questions and took the Scale Armor out of the storage sack again.

At the lakeside, the quasi-flood dragon that was about to dive into the water immediately sensed something and straightened up its body, swiftly sweeping in a direction with its nearly sixty-foot-long body moving at an incredibly fast speed—it was estimated that even Amber at full speed couldn't outrun it.

The direction the quasi-flood dragon was pursuing was exactly where Yiyi was fleeing. From this, it seemed that it could indeed sense the direction where the blood Qi in the Scale Armor was located.

Such a powerful demon beast that defied reason indeed had sharp senses.

Moreover, it was too fast; Yiyi couldn't shake it off at all.

One hour later, the quasi-flood dragon stopped. Again, it slammed the ground, but it was Yiyi who, under Lu Ye's instructions, kept burrowing deeper into the ground.

The reason for this was that Yiyi was not as fast as the quasi-flood dragon, so Lu Ye wanted to test how large the quasi-flood dragon's sensing range for the Scale Armor was.

Yiyi's ground evasion had its limits; the deeper she went, the more severe the interference from the underground fields became. That omnipresent force field was similar to the type of origin magnetic field pervaded by origin magnetic ore, both with the effect of imprisoning spirit force. Therefore, the deeper Yiyi went, the less strength she could exert, and once all her spirit force was confined, she would be trapped deep underground forever.

One hundred zhang deep was Yiyi's limit; at that distance, the flow of her spirit force was nearly halved. Going any further would be dangerous, especially for a Spiritual Body like hers.

After a short while, Yiyi sent a message: "How about now?"

"It's fine now."

Even though Yiyi had burrowed to a depth of one hundred zhang, the quasi-flood dragon still hadn't given up; the ground where Yiyi was located had already been dug into pits more than thirty feet deep by it.

At this rate, if Yiyi were to stay still, it would take less than two hours for the quasi-flood dragon to dig her out.

"Keep running, I'll direct you." Lu Ye sent another message.

"Understood."

Soon, under the guidance of Yiyi hiding underground, the quasi-flood dragon began to move. As it passed, one tree after another was uprooted, and clear crawl marks were left on the ground.

Lu Ye corrected Yiyi's direction and, upon confirming the direction was correct, turned into a shadow, withdrew his Wings, and dropped Amber, who had recovered, onto the ground.

Hao Ren and his sister rushed over, both looking clueless.

"Brother Yiye, what's the situation now? Where is Sister Yiyi?"

Lu Ye mounted the tiger's back and said, "Yiyi is safe. Right now... it's hard to say, I can only tell that the Sky Supporting Sect is probably in for some bad luck."

"The Sky Supporting Sect is in trouble?" Hao Ren couldn't grasp the situation for a moment, but after glancing in the direction the quasi-flood dragon had left, he immediately realized, "Is the quasi-flood dragon going to the Sky Supporting Sect's base?"

"If nothing unexpected happens, yes!"

"Why would the quasi-flood dragon go to the Sky Supporting Sect's base?"

"Maybe it's in a bad mood today, and feeling particularly murderous? Brother Hao, this is where we part ways."

After Lu Ye finished speaking, Amber dashed out in the direction the quasi-flood dragon had gone, leaving Hao Ren and his sister even more bewildered.

The quasi-flood dragon was definitely going to be led to the Sky Supporting Sect's base; the creature now thirsted for the blood Qi in that Scale Armor and would not give up easily.

And there were probably many cultivators gathered at the Sky Supporting Sect's base now, especially since he and Hao Ren had just raided their mining vein and killed quite a few of their people.

The sky was still dark, and the Sky Supporting Sect's people didn't dare to come out to investigate at that time, so they could only wait until dawn.

But they probably couldn't imagine that what would come their way after waiting was a quasi-flood dragon!

Hundreds of cultivators gathered, bristling with a murderous aura, ready for battle. But when the quasi-flood dragon came, there was no need for words—the scene was bound to become very lively.

Lu Ye wasn't sure if the quasi-flood dragon could break through the protective array of the sect, but he was the one who stirred up the muddy waters, so naturally, he wanted to join in the excitement.

Hao Ren and his sister were one level higher in cultivation than him, but in such chaos, two Level 8 ghost cultivators would struggle to protect themselves, so Lu Ye didn't plan to invite them.

It was best to part ways here after all, they were but passing acquaintances.

If the quasi-flood dragon couldn't break through the sect's protective array, it didn't matter; as long as there was conflict between the two sides, and the Sky Supporting Sect suffered casualties, it was all the same to Lu Ye, who wasn't averse to making things worse. In the end, he would lose nothing.

#### Chapter 250 The Quasi-Flood Dragon Attacks

Staring vacantly in the direction where Lu Ye had departed, Hao Ren's mind was somewhat muddled; the situation had changed too fast, and he was having trouble keeping up with the pace.

"Brother, why would the quasi-flood dragon run toward Sky Supporting Sect's territory if it's in a bad mood?" Hao Qing couldn't understand.

"Perhaps the people of Sky Supporting Sect have provoked it before?"

"That makes sense!" Hao Qing nodded in realization.

"My foolish sister..." Hao Ren said with a pained expression, "The quasi-flood dragon was clearly lured there by Brother Yiye, what does its mood have to do with anything."

Hao Qing was extremely shocked, "How was it lured over there?"

Hao Ren thought to himself, how would he know? But it must be Lu Yiye's doing, as it made no sense for the quasi-flood dragon, which had never shown itself before, to act so out of character today.

He quickly sent a message, "The quasi-flood dragon has appeared, suspected to be lured by Lu Yiye, heading toward Sky Supporting Sect's territory."

On the large ship Spiritual Artifact that housed hundreds of cultivators from Silver Light Island, Luo Fu was debating whether to continue forward or to return the way they came. He had assumed that the mining veins attacked by Sky Supporting Sect would show some reaction, but Sky Supporting Sect was unexpectedly maintaining their position, leaving him very uncomfortable.

Hundreds of people had been brought out, thinking they could take advantage of the situation for a big score, but Sky Supporting Sect was giving them no chance at all.

Once it was light, Sky Supporting Sect would surely check the mining veins, but once day broke, their large group couldn't hide anymore. If discovered, Sky Supporting Sect would certainly retreat into their residence, making the trip futile.

As Luo Fu was frowning in indecision, he suddenly received a message from Hao Ren.

After a brief investigation, his expression turned to one of astonishment. He recognized every word on the message, but when put together, he couldn't make sense of it.

What do you mean by "the quasi-flood dragon has appeared"? Isn't that thing a mythical monster? How has it been lured to Sky Supporting Sect's territory by Lu Yiye? Could Lu Yiye have such capability?

Could this be someone trying to fool me?

After pondering, he sent a message, "Junior Brother Hao, speak the truth, have you been captured by Sky Supporting Sect?"

"Senior Brother Luo, I'm telling the truth! I can hardly believe it myself, but I saw it with my own eyes, and I have no choice but to believe it! I'm telling you, that quasi-flood dragon is twenty zhang long, as thick as a water tank, with two eyes like lanterns, and it even has a horn on its head, extremely ferocious."

"Was it Hao Qing who got captured?"

"..."

By the lakeside, Hao Ren was getting frustrated. After thinking it over, he sent another message, "Silver Light Island cultivators Hao Ren and my sister Hao Qing have not been captured by Sky Supporting Sect or anyone else. If what I've just told Senior Brother Luo has any falsehoods, may the heavens strike me with thunder and deny me a peaceful death. I respectfully ask for Heaven's Augury to bear witness!"

After waiting a moment, a message from Luo Fu came back, "You're still alive?"

"Senior Brother Luo, you have to believe me!"

"I believe!"

Having made an oath by Heaven's Augury, how could Luo Fu not believe it.

The existence of the mythical quasi-flood dragon was real, and it had been lured toward Sky Supporting Sect's territory by Lu Yiye! This was a godsend opportunity.

On the deck of the large ship, Luo Fu gave the invigorated command, "Full speed ahead!"

The large ship that had been creeping along slowly like a turtle suddenly buzzed with vibration, wrapped in a thick spirit light, and swiftly headed in the direction of Sky Supporting Sect's territory.

In the territory of Sky Supporting Sect, the square of Heaven's Augury Hall was packed with the Governor Zou Qi, Deputy Governor Yuu Hongbao at the helm, and hundreds of cultivators, all seething with killing intent.

At this very moment, a few cultivators with pale faces stood in front of Zou Qi and Yuu Hongbao, reporting their recent ordeal.

They were the ones who had fled back from the mining veins. Although Lu Ye and the siblings Hao Ren and Hao Qing had entered the mining veins, there were so many tunnels that it was really impossible to kill all the Sky Supporting Sect cultivators, and naturally, some had escaped.

The survivors who made it back weren't very clear on what had actually happened. They only knew that the mining veins had been attacked, many had died, but the perpetrator's identity and the number of attackers were unknown; they only knew there weren't many who attacked the mining veins.

After questioning by Zou Qi and Yuu Hongbao, they didn't get much useful information and could only instruct the survivors to join their ranks.

"What do you think?" Zou Qi turned to Yuu Hongbao.

"These dozen or so people managed to escape without being ambushed. Either there are no ambushes outside our territory, or whoever is ambushing us has really big ambitions."

Zou Qi nodded, agreeing with the assessment.

Normally, if there were ambushes outside, these dozen people would not have been able to escape back to safety. Now that they had returned unscathed, it meant the enemy was fishing for bigger fish with a long line.

They had to stay calm during this time. Sending out more cultivators rashly would undoubtedly result in heavy casualties.

"Let's wait for daylight. It's already the hour of mao, and it will be light soon," Zou Qi said, turning to glance at the dark night sky, as if he could see the endless dangers hidden within the darkness.

It was no wonder Zou Qi and Yuu Hongbao thought this way. The main reason was that the three Level 9 cultivators guarding the mining veins didn't even send a message before their deaths, and even Yuan Guang, their brother, died inexplicably.

This gave them the illusion that the force striking at Sky Supporting Sect this time had deployed a large number of powerful individuals. Otherwise, it made no sense for four Level 9 cultivators to die so mysteriously. They worried that it might be a joint attack by two nearby Haotian Alliance forces.

...

They were battling their wits against thin air on one side, oblivious to the danger approaching from another direction.

Under Yiyi's lead, the quasi-flood dragon advanced toward the Sky Supporting Sect's settlement with astonishing momentum, followed by Lu Ye riding on Amber in hot pursuit.

Time slipped by, and the darkness slowly receded as dawn's light crept across the sky.

The hundreds of cultivators from the Sky Supporting Sect, having prepared for a long time, were only waiting for Zou Qi's command to charge out of their settlement and strike back at the attackers.

"What's that noise?"

Zou Qi suddenly frowned, vaguely sensing the ground shaking and a distant rumbling sound.

Yuu Hongbao immediately lay on the ground, his ear pressed against the earth, listening intently, his expression gradually turning grave: "Something very big is rapidly approaching!"

"The quasi-flood dragon!" Zou Qi's voice trembled.

"What?" Yuu Hongbao raised his eyes to look at Zou Qi, only to see him staring fixedly in one direction, the corner of his eyes twitching uncontrollably.

He quickly got to his feet and followed Zou Qi's gaze, only to be stunned by the sight.

The entire Sky Supporting Sect's settlement was petrified, as from that direction, a twenty-zhang-long giant snake demon was twisting its body and rushing forward with a thunderous charge toward the settlement.

The quasi-flood dragon lived in a lake within the Sky Supporting Sect's territory, and the Sect knew more about this ferocious beast than others. While outsiders thought the tales of the quasi-flood dragon were exaggerated, the Sect knew its existence was real; decades ago, some of the older generation cultivators witnessed it swallowing the essence of the moon during the night.

Over the years, the Sky Supporting Sect had considered taming this ferocious beast to become their sect-guarding demon beast, but never succeeded. After several attempts and the loss of quite a few people, they gave up.

Nobody expected that today this ferocious beast would suddenly charge toward the Sky Supporting Sect's settlement. Judging by its aggressive demeanor, it was clear that it came with ill intentions!

What was going on?

Zou Qi's first thought was that this must be the handiwork of Silver Light Island, but he quickly dismissed that idea – if Silver Light Island had such ability, they would have decimated the Sky Supporting Sect long ago instead of waiting until now.

With no time to ponder why this divine dragon-like monster had left its usual habitat, Zou Qi called out for the disciples to increase the protective array's power while he secretly prayed that the creature was merely passing by and would soon leave.

But prayers proved futile as the quasi-flood dragon continued its path without the slightest deviation. Under the gaze of hundreds of Sky Supporting Sect cultivators, it collided with the barrier of the protective array at high speed.

Boom...

The loud crash echoed, sending visible shockwaves in all directions from the point of impact. The protective array's screen dimmed significantly, rippling outwards.

The dimmed screen of the array brightened again as the Sky Supporting Sect's cultivators desperately bolstered the array's power.

Inside the array, the hearts of the Sky Supporting Sect's cultivators beat violently with the impact, and many instinctively crouched down, as the violent tremors caused some buildings within the settlement to rustle.

Outside the protective screen of the array, the quasi-flood dragon's twenty-zhang body reared up, its head raised high and tongue flicking out, its green pupils reflecting the panicked faces around it.

Its body leaned back slightly, transforming into a bow-like shape.

Seeing this posture, Zou Qi's heart sank – this was a very bad sign.

As expected, the quasi-flood dragon crashed down once more.

Boom...

Another earth-shattering collision occurred, this one even more violent than the first. The initial collision had been the result of the quasi-flood dragon's charging momentum; it had not been entirely intentional. But this time, it was a deliberate attack, and the force was incomparable.

The Sect Protection Array's screen dimmed even further before brightening again.

Boom boom boom...

The continuous battering shook the very air, throwing the entire Sky Supporting Sect's settlement into chaos. The mood of the cultivators fluctuated with the dimming and brightening of the Sect Protection Array's screen.

The quasi-flood dragon, as if insane, kept battering the Sect Protection Array. No one knew why it was doing this. Although the Sect Protection Array could hold for a short time, it would inevitably break if the assault continued. The several hundred cultivators present would be no match for the quasi-flood dragon's slaughter.

Zou Qi and Yuu Hongbao were already inquiring within the sect to see if anyone had recently provoked this ferocious beast but found no useful clues.

The only one privy to the situation was currently peeping from behind a slope five miles away; Lu Ye had followed the tracks of the quasi-flood dragon in a rush to get here, only to see it slamming into the Sect Protection Array, acting as if it harbored a deep grudge against Sky Supporting Sect.

Steady!

Lu Ye communicated with Yiyi to check on her situation. Hearing that she was fine, he felt relieved.

At first glance, the Sect Protection Array appeared to be a hemispherical screen covering the settlement, but in reality, it was spherical, with half above the ground and half below, to guard against underground attacks.

Even if Yiyi could move underground, she couldn't bring the Scale Armor into the Sky Supporting Sect's settlement. But she did not need to bring it inside; she only had to hide somewhere underground.

For the quasi-flood dragon, which craved the blood Qi from the Scale Armor, anyone daring to hinder it was an enemy. If the Sky Supporting Sect's protective array stood in the way, it would smash it to pieces!