

Humanity 321

Chapter 321 The Sky Cleared, the Rain Stopped

Six hours later, Lu Ye had completed nearly twenty trials and passed the eleventh level of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda. The spiritual energy in the room once again became as dense as mist, and then a palm-sized glow appeared before his eyes.

Looking at the floating glow before him, Lu Ye's eyes twitched.

The glows he had received before were only the size of a fist, and each experience had been extremely unpleasant. Now that it had grown to the size of a palm, the experience would undoubtedly be even worse.

Lu Ye faintly felt that if he truly absorbed and digested the information contained within this glow, he would probably reach his limit.

Even though his psyche was tougher than that of an average Spirit Stream Realm cultivator, he couldn't withstand such torment.

But the reward was right in front of him, and he couldn't just ignore it, especially since this was the return on his hard effort of three Shichen.

With clenched teeth, he reached out to grab the ball of light and pressed it into his forehead.

The next moment, Lu Ye's body became stiff, his vision went dark, and he almost passed out. Struggling to remain conscious, Lu Ye hurriedly absorbed and digested the information.

Gradually, he recovered.

Several Shichen later, he lay exhausted on the ground, without the strength to even move a finger.

This was it, he had truly reached his limit.

Every time he absorbed the reward from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, it impacted his psyche. Once or twice he hadn't felt much, but after eleven consecutive times, his mind was now somewhat numb, his thoughts were blank and chaotic, and he didn't want to think about anything.

Even though the spiritual energy in the surroundings was dense, making it an excellent opportunity for cultivation, Lu Ye had no desire to move at all.

He just wanted to lie there until the end of time.

He instinctively felt that he had forgotten something, but he simply couldn't muster the energy to think deeply about it.

After an unknown amount of time, a bitter taste spread in his mouth, followed by a cool sensation that quickly spread through his mind, stimulating his stagnant thoughts into motion, and even the fatigue on his psyche rapidly dissipated, becoming vibrant and energetic.

Lu Ye instantly regained his senses, blinked, and belatedly realized that he had grabbed something with his hand and placed it near his mouth.

He quickly got up and looked down to find, just as he had thought, that he was holding the jade vial containing the Soul Cleansing Water. The bitter taste in his mouth was due to him drinking the Soul Cleansing Water.

He then remembered the thing he had forgotten before his thoughts became chaotic, which was to take the Soul Cleansing Water.

He had been told by Shui Yuan that this elixir could be directly consumed, although it would work better if concocted with some other herbs to make a pill. Consuming it directly was somewhat wasteful.

The rewards of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda impacted the psyche, consuming the power of the psyche, so the Soul Cleansing Water should be useful.

This idea had occurred to him before his thoughts became chaotic, but at that time, he had not been in the state of mind to think further about it.

Although he had not thought about it, his body instinctively responded.

The Soul Cleansing Water kept working, sweeping away the fatigue in his psyche.

The sky cleared, the rain stopped, and I was on my way again!

Looking at the Soul Cleansing Water in the jade vial, Lu Ye felt a pang of regret; he had drunk about seven or eight drops just now.

Hurriedly securing the jade vial, Lu Ye started to stimulate the spirit force within his spiritual orifice to construct Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, absorbing the spiritual energy in the room to replenish his own consumption, while taking out some jerky from his storage sack and chewing vigorously.

His spirits were high, but the physical exhaustion couldn't be replenished by the Soul Cleansing Water. To continue progressing in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he needed to quickly restore his physical strength.

Slowly, he completely recovered, and then began to stimulate his spirit force to attack the spiritual orifice barrier.

Generally speaking, each time he passed the trials of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, after digesting and absorbing the benefits the pagoda granted him, Lu Ye would open a new spiritual orifice, reaching the time limit to proceed to the next level.

After breaking through these eleven layers, Lu Ye had already opened over ten orifices.

This was an unexpected delight. Although he knew there were such benefits after breaking through the pagoda, he had not anticipated the spiritual energy to be so rich, which was even faster than his ordinary cultivation pace for opening orifices.

About one hour later, the time limit arrived, and Lu Ye entered the twelfth level.

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Yooi Xiao and Bai Qian felt like they were going crazy.

When Lu Ye completed ten levels in five days, causing a resonance in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, both thought that this guy must have reached his limit and would probably come out soon.

But what happened next blew their minds.

Lu Ye continued to maintain his pace of overcoming two levels a day, rushing upward, and each level continued to trigger a resonance in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

Before the 15th level, Bai Qian contacted Zhao Li about every half-hour, asking him to use the imprint in the battlefield marking to confirm whether Lu Ye was dead or alive.

After the 15th level, the two of them became completely numb.

Whatever! The kid from the Righteous Blood Sect had already made such a fuss—how much worse could it get?

In comparison to the two of them, the array cultivators of the Tianyan Sect went crazy.

Because they had witnessed a miracle, an unprecedented miracle. There was still no answer about the identity of the challenger, but it no longer mattered; to the array cultivators of the Tianyan Sect, whoever was challenging the pagoda was already akin to a god-like being.

In just ten days, to continuously challenge twenty levels without rest and to cause the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to resonate with every level—how could this be achieved by human effort?

Each resonance benefited the Tianyan Sect's array cultivators in more or less significant ways, and it can be said that, during these ten days, the proficiency of Tianyan Sect's array cultivators generally improved.

On the 21st level, inside a deadly large array, Lu Ye dodged the various attacks generated by the array while probing its reality to find the big array's flaws.

He had realized that, at this place—the Hundred Arrays Pagoda—every ten levels, the difficulty saw a significant increase, unlike the formations he had encountered before.

He was secretly glad that he had taken the time to eat and replenish his strength during each rest interval, otherwise he would have struggled to keep up.

The various attacks derived from the big array were not very strong, but they were frequent, forcing Lu Ye to find ways to dodge. Otherwise, relying solely on activating the Defense Spirit Runes to defend would be a burden due to the consumption of his own spirit force.

Planting array banners towards all directions, it took a total of sixteen array banners for Lu Ye to find a flaw in this array. He activated the Insight Spirit Runes to confirm it, and once sure, he genuinely began the array destruction.

Another incense stick's time later, the big array stagnated and then shattered with a thunderous collapse.

The second challenge followed immediately.

Since ancient times, countless array cultivators have challenged the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, but even those cultivators whose cultivation was much higher than Lu Ye's had not been able to cause the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to resonate for twenty consecutive levels, not to mention ten consecutive levels.

This was because the rewards granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda were immensely shocking to a cultivator's psyche. The better the reward, the greater the impact. Only those strong cultivators who had reached the Divine Sea Realm could withstand the continuous impact of these rewards.

Yet how could cultivators of the Divine Sea Realm come here to challenge the Hundred Arrays Pagoda?

The Hundred Arrays Pagoda of the Tianyan Sect was only the first part, suitable for array cultivators of the Spirit Stream Realm and Cloud River Realm to challenge.

Compared to other array cultivators who came to challenge, Lu Ye had his own advantages.

Firstly, regarding spirit force, after finishing a challenge, array cultivators needed to spend a significant amount of time assimilating the benefits granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda before they could focus on restoring their consumed spirit force.

Sometimes, array cultivators were even forced to pause their assimilation to prioritize restoring their spirit force, as lacking sufficient spirit force would undoubtedly make it difficult to continue.

Lu Ye did not need to do so; as he digested and absorbed the benefits granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, the spirit force he consumed was already replenished with the help of the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, and he even had extra time to practice opening new spiritual orifices.

This was something no other cultivator challenging the array could compare with.

Another advantage, naturally, was the Soul Cleansing Water.

No one had ever brought Soul Cleansing Water to challenge the array like Lu Ye did. This substance, mainly used to enhance one's Soul Power, was extremely rare and sought after throughout the Nine Provinces, even by strong cultivators in the Divine Sea Realm.

No one used it to recover from mental exhaustion.

Yet Lu Ye did just that, and more than once. Whenever he felt mentally exhausted, he would immediately consume a drop of Soul Cleansing Water to refresh his psyche and quickly become invigorated again.

Replenishing spirit force was not a problem, and with his psyche never exhausted, Lu Ye could exert his utmost effort on each level, achieve the best results, receive rewards from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to enhance his own Array Path, and then move on to the next level.

This formed an exceptionally beneficial cycle.

Indisputably, the price paid was somewhat high—if those Divine Sea Realm strong cultivators knew what Lu Ye was doing, they would certainly be furious, since even they greatly coveted this precious wasteful usage of the substance, which was downright outrageous.

But for Lu Ye, it was worth it.

No matter how excellent a treasure was, its real usefulness lay in its function; unused, it would not reproduce.

Moreover, with two-and-a-half bottles of Soul Cleansing Water in his possession, using half a bottle for the Hundred Arrays Pagoda was hardly a significant loss.

This was originally brought from Xianyuan City.

Five days later, Lu Ye had successfully cleared the 30th level, once again causing the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to resonate.

With the experience from before, Lu Ye knew that the difficulty of the 31st level would see another significant increase. Therefore, within the 30th level, he did not rush to practice opening spiritual orifices but focused on recovering himself and even took a short nap to fully refresh his spirit.

Outside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, the cultivators of the Tianyan Sect truly went mad. The number of cultivators gathered in the valley had more than doubled.

Previously, those who had come were array cultivators, because only array cultivators could gain enlightenment from those resonances. But after the news spread, even cultivators who had not

practiced Array Path came to watch the excitement, all eager to know who the formidable person causing the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to resonate thirty consecutive times was, and more eager to know if he could extend his previous brilliance, for in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda of Tianyan Sect, only three levels remained.

Chapter 322 - 320 The Last Three Layers

In the valley, Yooi Xiao and Bai Qian stood side by side, their previous numbness replaced by shock and disbelief.

Lu Ye had been studying Array Path with Bai Qian all this time, and Bai Qian knew very well the level of his array cultivation skills.

He had told Yooi Xiao that, with Lu Ye's level of skill in array cultivation, breaking through ten layers in one go wouldn't be too difficult, considering the first ten layers weren't very challenging. If he could gain enough benefits within the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, it was even possible for him to break through several more layers.

This was a very fair assessment; after all, Bai Qian had many years of experience in array cultivation and was skilled in judging talent.

Yet, the reality was that Lu Ye had crossed thirty layers in just half a month!

It wasn't a misjudgment on his part; the problem was that Lu Ye had acquired too many benefits inside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

Bai Qian found it hard to imagine the immense benefits Lu Ye must have gained in the pagoda to have improved his array cultivation skills so significantly in such a short period.

If Lu Ye's level in array cultivation was considered to be one before entering the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, then the level he exhibited now had reached five, which was a fivefold improvement!

With the immense rewards granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, such a leap in ability shouldn't come as a surprise. After all, Lu Ye triggered the resonance of the pagoda thirty times in succession; not to say that there won't be others in the future, but he is undoubtedly unparalleled in the past.

What puzzled Bai Qian beyond comprehension was how Lu Ye, a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator, could endure it all! Even if he had consumed Soul Cleansing Water before and his psyche was more robust than that of an average Spirit Stream Realm cultivator, it shouldn't have been possible for him to persist.

Such a foundation for his psyche was stronger than even his, a True Lake Level 9 cultivator, and even if he were in the same position, he wouldn't be sure he could have held on until now.

It was quite perplexing.

It had to be said, the old man had really missed the mark.

After repeatedly consuming Soul Cleansing Water, Lu Ye's psyche was comparable to some of those in the Cloud River Realm, but it certainly did not reach the level of the True Lake Realm.

The reason he was able to hold on was that he was willing to spend what it took; every time his mind grew weary, he would consume a drop of Soul Cleansing Water, and his exhausted psyche would instantly rejuvenate.

While he couldn't match the upper limit of a True Lake Realm psyche, he was able to dispel his fatigue with the help of Soul Cleansing Water, something that no one else could replicate.

"What a pity," Yooi Xiao suddenly exclaimed softly. "If Lu Yiye were a disciple of our own sect, how wonderful that would be! With the talent he has shown in array cultivation, he could definitely lead the Tianyan Sect to glory. A 5th grade is nothing; as long as he continues to grow, even a 1st grade is within reach!"

Upon hearing this, Bai Qian knew what Yooi Xiao was regretting and shook his head, "There's nothing to pity. If he truly was a disciple of our sect, our sect wouldn't be able to withstand such turmoil."

Not to mention anything else, just the fact that this young man from the Righteous Blood Sect had visited the Tianyan Sect's headquarters once, and the headquarters had been breached by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. If he were a disciple of our sect, then the Tianyan Sect might not be able to firmly stand in the Spirit Stream battlefield in the future.

Without access to the Spirit Stream battlefield for our disciples, their pace of cultivation would inevitably slow down significantly.

The strength of a sect has never depended on a single person.

"That makes sense. In that light, it's actually a good thing that the Righteous Blood Sect is only Ninth Grade," Yooi Xiao quickly understood the critical point.

Because they were Ninth Grade, their headquarters was on the outermost perimeter and was not an easy target. Unlike the Tianyan Sect, if several powers of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge launched a full-scale attack, they were basically able to withstand it.

So no matter how much Lu Ye stirred up trouble outside, the headquarters of the Righteous Blood Sect remained as impregnable as ever, not to mention they had a fierce bird standing guard.

Bai Qian was already messaging Zhao Li, with a simple phrase: "Alive or dead?"

Although he felt that it was unlikely for that young man to have just died like that, he couldn't help feeling a bit anxious.

Zhao Li quickly replied, "Alive, Great Elder. I want to go to the area of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda. In three more layers, Brother Yiye will emerge, and when that happens, we won't be able to keep the news of his survival a secret. There's no point in me continuing to hide."

"Then come over."

"Thank you, Great Elder."

Zhao Li replied joyfully and soon appeared in the valley where the Hundred Arrays Pagoda was located.

Seeing him materialize, some cultivators who were unaware of the true situation were taken aback since there were rumors that Zhao Li and that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect had both been poisoned to death, and the Seal Envoy from the Righteous Blood Sect had made a huge commotion; consequently, the Tianyan Sect suffered a considerable loss of face. But now it seemed that the rumors weren't quite accurate; Zhao Li was clearly alive and well.

If Zhao Li was fine, what about Lu Yiye? Could he also be alive?

At that moment, a number of sharp-minded cultivators sensed a whiff of conspiracy.

Zhao Li didn't concern himself with others; he merely sought out a few familiar junior brothers and sisters to ask about the situation, then found a place to sit cross-legged, while also sending out messages.

Soon, a group of people gathered around him.

Before attempting the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, Lu Ye had shared some plans with him, so if everything went smoothly, once Lu Ye returned from the pagoda, they would have to act. As the governor of the Tianyan Sect's headquarters, he needed to make arrangements early to avoid any last-minute rush.

And Zhao Li had been looking forward to this for a long time!

As he was discussing with the people around him, a humming sound suddenly filled the air, followed by an invisible force sweeping across the entire valley.

"Level 31!" gasps of amazement arose.

The array cultivators quickly sat up straight, using the resonance of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda to enlighten themselves.

Within the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, Lu Ye took a deep breath.

Although his Array Path skill had improved a lot since he first entered the pagoda, the challenge of Level 31 still posed some difficulties for him. It took him three Shichen just to pass five challenges.

He had thought that he wouldn't receive much in the way of rewards this time, but the outcome was a surprise; he actually received more than before.

This led Lu Ye to faintly suspect whether the amount of the rewards from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda was related to his initial Array Path skill level when he first entered the tower.

Based on his initial Array Path skill level at the time of entry, it was absolutely impossible for him to pass the challenge of Level 31, let alone Level 20.

But since he had fought his way here, the Array Path knowledge he demonstrated far exceeded his initial level, so naturally, his rewards would not be inferior.

Verifying this was simple, he just needed to hold back a little in the next level.

In the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, passing a challenge on any level counts as a successful completion. The more times you complete it, the greater the reward will be. If Lu Ye only completes a challenge once on the next level, and the reward does not decrease, then it proves his conjecture is correct.

However, Lu Ye does not plan to do that.

Passing the various challenges in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda is a way to enhance his Array Path skill. With such an opportunity at hand, there is no need to forsake it just to confirm a guess.

Do your best, and leave no regrets.

Half a day later, he passed Level 32, absorbed the rewards granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, used the Soul Cleansing Water to remove fatigue from his psyche, then opened another orifice. When the time limit arrived, he entered Level 33.

This level was the final level of the Tianyan Sect's Hundred Arrays Pagoda. After passing this level, there would be no more challenges. If he wanted to further hone his Array Path skill, he would have to wait until he advanced to Cloud River and entered the Cloud River battlefield.

Looking ahead, Lu Ye was slightly startled.

What appeared before him was a protective array covering a vast area! The scale of the array was comparable to the size of the inner circle sect headquarters. Breaking through such an array was definitely not going to be easy. In fact, this was the largest and most difficult array he had encountered in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda thus far.

Lu Ye did not know whether this was a coincidence or if being inside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda meant his thoughts could be reflected in some way.

The reason he came to the Tianyan Sect to study the Array Path was exactly to break such protective arrays. Only by breaking through the protective array could he take over the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge headquarters and plunder the enhancements from the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

This was indeed a good opportunity to get started.

With limited time, Lu Ye did a quick reconnaissance, planted array banners one after another using their power to sense the direction of the spirit force flow in the big array, thus determining the approximate locations of the array nodes. He then gradually narrowed the search to pinpoint the precise locations of the nodes.

After half a Shichen, the location of the first node was determined. Lu Ye activated the Insight Spirit Runes to confirm there was no mistake before continuing his efforts.

Having located the first node, it was not difficult to find the second. Within the time it took to drink a cup of tea, the second node was located, followed by the third, the fourth...

After busying himself for more than two Shichen, the positions of all sixteen nodes in the big array were confirmed.

This showed that the array was constructed from sixteen array bases. It was the same as the protective array at the Righteous Blood Sect headquarters, and it was the best array that could be purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

However, while the arrays were the same, depending on the concentration of nature's spiritual energy at the array setup location, the power the array could exhibit varied.

Generally speaking, the richer the nature's spiritual energy, the stronger the array's power.

This array's power was undoubtedly several times stronger than the one at the Righteous Blood Sect, unrelated to the concentration of spiritual energy. This was a setup by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, inherently so.

Lu Ye maneuvered his Flying Spirit Artifact, flying around the perimeter of the big array, placing a banner at each node's location.

After all thirty-two banners were set up, he finally stopped, reached out for a banner before him, took a deep breath, and was surging with spirit force as he poured it into the banner in his hand.

In an instant, the other thirty-one banners all levitated. Spirit light emerged on the banners, all starting to resonate and connect with each other.

As Lu Ye's spirit force continued to pour in, the invisible force generated by the resonance between the banners began to suppress the circulation of the big array's spirit force.

The spirit force of the protective array was always flowing, something Lu Ye had observed before. It was because of this that the protective array could continuously repair itself and provide protection.

To put it simply, the spirit force of the protective array was like flowing water. What Lu Ye needed to do now was to turn this flowing water into still water, completely suppressing the flow of the spirit force. Only then would he have a chance to break the array.

Otherwise, unless the array's stored power was exhausted, he would never be able to breach it under the array's self-repair.

With his spirit force rapidly depleting, Lu Ye did not know if he could break the array on his own. But as this was the last challenge, and as it was closely related to his subsequent plans, he was naturally going to give it his all.

Chapter 323 - 321: Two Glowing Lights

Fortunately, this big array was unhosted, otherwise Lu Ye would have had no point in trying. An array with someone in control and one without are two different things altogether; if someone controlled the array, its variations would be plentiful, and with his current strength, Lu Ye simply couldn't make suitable adjustments.

But an unattended array was different. It was unchanging and susceptible to being targeted.

As he continued his actions, the flow of spirit force within the array seemed to slow down a little, but this was far from sufficient.

Spirit force consumption wasn't trivial, so Lu Ye quickly took out a bottle of Breath Fruit wine and downed it, and stuffed several elixir pills into his mouth to continuously replenish his spirit force.

Time slowly passed, and the flow of spirit force in the array gradually slowed down, giving Lu Ye, who was making persistent efforts, a glimmer of hope for breaking the array.

After a long while, the speed at which the array's spirit force flowed had fallen to less than half of what it was before. At this point, Lu Ye clearly felt an even greater resistance. The array banners in his hands felt as heavy as a thousand jun, and he could feel a significant force pushing back from them.

The depletion of his spirit force accelerated, even as Lu Ye consumed Breath Fruit wine and ate elixir pills relentlessly but struggled to fully compensate.

A crackling sound echoed, and the hard-pressed Lu Ye fixed his gaze just to feel a chill in his heart because a fine crack had appeared on the array banner in his hand.

Relying on the thirty-two array banners to suppress the flow of the array's spirit force was akin to battling against the entire array. Even though the array was unattended, its intrinsic depth was still present. The impact caused by the flow of spirit force was immense, resulting in damage to the array banner.

Lu Ye grew anxious. If the breakthrough failed because of the array banner, it would be a terrible pity.

The array banners were made by him, but the materials were provided by Bai Qian. Bai Qian, who had received the Soul Cleansing Water from him, naturally provided the best materials. Even so, they were now struggling to hold up.

Crackling noises ensued; more cracks appeared, and the carefully crafted array banners seemed to become fragile like porcelain, ready to shatter at any moment.

Lu Ye quickly increased the infusion of his spirit force.

Now was the time to give it his all.

His spirit force drained away like water gushing through a breached dam, but his efforts finally paid off. The flow of the big array's spirit force was rapidly suppressed, and within just a few dozen moments, it completely stalled.

Lu Ye's face reddened as he fumbled in his storage sack and, with a raise of his hand, four streams of light flew out.

The four Spiritual Artifacts circled halfway up in the air and then, with the speed of lightning, bombarded the positions where the array's nodes were located.

As the attacks struck, a light flashed over each Spiritual Artifact, augmented by Sharpness spirit runes.

Lu Ye's eyes were fixed on the spot where the attacks landed, his heart lifting, and he even forgot to breathe.

After a brief standoff, a snapping sound rang out, and a dense network of cracks appeared at the points struck by the artifacts, quickly spreading outward.

With a crash...

As if an immense mirror had shattered, the entire protective array broke apart loudly, and with it, so too did Lu Ye's thirty-two array banners!

The array banners, crafted just half a month ago, turned into pieces amidst this trial.

Even Lu Ye himself was thrown backward by the shock of the array's spirit force being dispelled instantly, landing heavily on the ground.

Scrambling up, Lu Ye gasped for air, his pale face showing a trace of contentment.

He had broken a protective array with his own power, and not by easily targeted methods like before, but genuinely broken it!

Although this array was unattended, greatly reducing the difficulty of breaking it, if he were to actually assault the encampments of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge forces, he wouldn't need to go to such lengths to dismantle an entire array.

From this day on, no protective arrays at the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge encampments on the Spirit Stream battlefield could stop his advance.

He wondered what the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would think when they learned of this, hoping that by then, no one would be gone.

The shattered array banners were a minor issue; he could simply carve another set when he found the time.

What made Lu Ye somewhat distressed was that his spirit force was nearly depleted, and there probably wasn't much time left, possibly not enough to pass the next challenge.

He was satisfied.

Lu Ye sat down cross-legged; since he couldn't pass the next challenge anyway, he might as well not bother with it and take this opportunity to rest properly.

But, to Lu Ye's surprise, after the protective array was broken, there was no second challenge.

Normally, after passing one challenge, another would follow immediately, giving no respite. But this time, for some reason, it was different.

While Lu Ye was full of suspicion, a palm-sized glow suddenly floated down before his eyes. Although this glow wasn't as large as the previous ones, its color was much more intense.

One could imagine that the benefits contained within this glow must be extraordinarily vast.

Had he passed the thirty-third level's challenge? Lu Ye was momentarily stunned before realizing that the thirty-third level's challenge consisted solely of that one protective array, with nothing else.

This was indeed a pleasant surprise.

And it looked like his prior speculation was correct: the rewards granted by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda were related to the initial level of Array Path expertise when entering the pagoda. Since his expertise wasn't very high when he came in, even passing just one challenge on the thirty-third level had earned him extremely generous rewards.

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Another clump of luminescent light drifted down, and though its color wasn't as dense, it was the size of a washbasin.

Lu Ye's expression grew increasingly solemn.

Such a massive clump of luminescence was unprecedented, and if it were to imprint itself in one's mind in an instant, wouldn't it be deadly?

Moreover, to receive two clumps of light after surpassing the thirty-third layer's test was unlike any previous instance.

As he was contemplating this, the washbasin-sized luminescence fell to the ground and dispersed.

Clang clang...

Something scattered all over the ground.

This luminescence, different from previous rewards, didn't contain vast knowledge of array paths; instead, it enveloped various objects.

Lu Ye focused his gaze and discovered poles of pitch-black array banners! After a quick check, there were precisely thirty-two of them.

Was this also a boon bestowed by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda?

Lu Ye was somewhat astonished; he had never heard of obtaining array banners as a reward for challenging the Hundred Arrays Pagoda. For all those array cultivators who came before, the benefits they had received were all intangible and beneficial to their mastery of array setups, nothing like being given array banners.

But this was precisely what Lu Ye needed at the moment.

He had originally planned, upon getting out, to spend some time at Tianyan Sect's training square crafting a new set of basic array banners. Since he had already made one set before, it wouldn't take much time to create another, and he would make it even better.

Now, with the reward from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, it saved him some trouble.

Without investigating these array banners further, a set of basic array banners was precisely thirty-two; through different combinations and connections between the banners, it was enough to meet the needs of array setup and destruction within the Spirit Stream Realm and even the Cloud River Realm.

At first glance, these array banners were extraordinary. There was no rush; he could study them carefully when he had time.

After securing the array banners, Lu Ye then reached out towards the luminescent light before him.

Even after experiencing it more than thirty times, and even though his psyche was much more resilient than when he first entered the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, the experience was always miserable.

Outside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, the cultivators waiting with bated breath sensed the unique vibration, felt the enlightenment from the resonance of the pagoda, and broke into cheering that rose and fell in waves.

They were here to witness the birth of a miracle, the making of history that would likely be recorded in the annals. Although they still did not know the identity of the one who challenged the pagoda, this was Tianyan Sect, and they were array cultivators. They shared in the glory!

Yooi Xiao and Bai Qian exchanged a glance, both letting out a long sigh of relief.

At last, it was over!

The pair had been on tenterhooks here for half a month, no longer needing to endure the torment of suspense.

They were shocked at Lu Ye's abilities, but still harbored some resentment deep down; the darn kid had caused such a fuss. With all his talent, he should just continue making a fuss. Tianyan Sect's Hundred Arrays Pagoda only had thirty-three layers, and if he wanted to continue, there would be nowhere for him to do so.

That said, both of them were filled with immense envy.

Righteous Blood Sect had taken on a fine disciple indeed! With such a disciple, how could the sect not prosper in the future? Moreover, the kid was not strictly an array cultivator. Even a fool could see his purpose in cultivating array paths. If he were to continue solely on the path of arrays, who knew how high he might rise?

The days ahead for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would likely not be easy! Not to mention, the entire Spirit Stream battlefield would surely see a significant change.

This made Yooi Xiao feel somewhat dazed as he remembered some events from decades past. In that era, it seemed that a disciple from Righteous Blood Sect had set the trend for the Nine Provinces. Wherever the flag with a red base and golden flames went, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would retreat three feet.

In that era, Righteous Blood Sect was at its zenith!

Was the pattern and splendor of the past about to reemerge?

Yooi Xiao felt relief on one account; during Veteran Thang's last visit from the Righteous Blood Sect, he had made a pact of alliance in secret with Thang.

The cheering in the valley gradually subsided, and the array cultivators began using the resonance of the pagoda to comprehend the essence of the Array Path. Cultivators who were not array experts craned their necks in anticipation, looking towards the direction of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, all eager to know the true identity of the person challenging the tower this time.

After a painstakingly long wait, the great doors at the base of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda were pushed open, and a figure stepped out from within.

Many didn't recognize the young man emerging from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, but there were some who identified him, mildly surprised yet feeling it was within reason.

If Zhao Li, who was thought to have perished, was still alive, there was no reason for Lu Yiye of Righteous Blood Sect to have died.

Lu Ye hadn't expected that so many people would have gathered in the valley, which usually was quiet, and that even Yooi Xiao and Bai Qian, among others, were waiting for him. Not just them, but also some True Lake Realm cultivators from Tianyan Sect, clearly high-ranking members of the sect.

"Sect Master Yooi, Veteran Bai," Lu Ye stepped forward and saluted.

Bai Qian replied with a smile and a nod, looking friendly. Regardless of how anxious and skeptical he'd been while Lu Ye was facing the challenges within the pagoda, the outcome was now clear before his eyes. The young man standing before him might not be high in cultivation, but he couldn't be regarded as a mere Spirit Stream Realm cultivator any longer.

Moreover, Lu Ye had previously gifted him with eight drops of Soul Cleansing Water, tangible benefits indeed. With those Soul Cleansing Waters, both he and Yooi Xiao had a chance to advance to the Divine Sea Realm, raising the grade of Tianyan Sect a notch.

Chapter 324 - 322: Flood Dragon Enters the Sea

"Hard work indeed," Bai Qian said with a smile, looking at Lu Ye. "Go back and rest first."

"Veteran Bai, earlier with Brother Zhao..."

Bai Qian raised his hand to stop him, "I am already aware of your plans. There's no rush today. Our sect headquarters has completely sealed off the area; no information can get out. Go back and rest for a day, let Zhao Li handle the rest, and tomorrow you can act together."

Lu Ye thought for a moment, "Then I'll listen to Veteran Bai."

Bai Qian used his spirit force and enveloped Lu Ye, who soared into the sky and quickly disappeared. The reason he was eager to take him away was not that the Tianyan Sect had any improper designs.

Lu Ye had consecutively challenged thirty-three levels of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, triggering the resonance of the pagoda at every level. Tianyan Sect had many Array Cultivators, and with so many eyes on Lu Ye, they all wanted to come up and discuss the Array Path with him.

If he didn't hurry to take him away, there was no chance of escaping freely.

Bai Qian understood the disposition of these Array Cultivators in his sect better than anyone else.

As expected, seeing Bai Qian taking Lu Ye away, many Array Cultivators who planned to come up for a discussion sighed in disappointment. Some bold ones even chased after Bai Qian, including some from the Cloud River Realm.

"Zhao Li, come with me; the rest of you disperse," commanded Yooi Xiao.

"Yes!" From somewhere in the crowd, Zhao Li responded.

Soon, Yooi Xiao also left with Zhao Li, evidently to arrange some matters. After a long while, the noise in the valley gradually subsided.

However, stimulated by Lu Ye's challenge in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, many Array Cultivators rushed into the pagoda to temper themselves, but how much they gained was uncertain.

Living at Bai Qian's residence, after Lu Ye returned, he had a big meal, took a bath, and comfortably went to sleep. When he woke up the next day, the fatigue he had accumulated was swept away, and he felt light and refreshed.

There was information stored in the battlefield marking. After checking, it was from Zhao Li, stating that everything was ready on the Tianyan Sect side, and even the Alliance Sect was prepared. They were just waiting for Lu Ye to make a big move.

Lu Ye sent a message back, instructing Zhao Li to count the manpower in preparation.

He also messaged Yiyi and Giant Armor to come and join him.

During the wait, Lu Ye examined his own spiritual orifice.

In the first level of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he had advanced to Spirit Stream Level 9, and as of today, he had opened 218 orifices!

He had stayed in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda for about seventeen days, opening a total of thirty-nine orifices, averaging one per level, two a day.

Since the beginning of his cultivation journey, Lu Ye had never experienced such a rapid orifice-opening pace. If the Spirit Stream battlefield had as rich a cultivation environment as the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, it probably would have taken him no more than two to three months to advance to the Cloud River.

But, of course, that was unrealistic. The rich environment inside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda was a reward he earned through trials, and others challenging the pagoda didn't have the same benefits as he did.

This made him look forward even more to the second part of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, but unfortunately, he could not enter at the moment.

Before that, he endeavored to improve his Array Path skills, waiting until he could enter again to potentially see another rapid advancement in his cultivation.

The benefits he received in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda this time were tremendous. Although he absorbed the benefits of every level, the time was limited, and his absorption was merely cursory, far from a complete understanding.

Just cursory absorption had increased his Array Path skills by several times. A complete understanding would elevate it to an even higher level, which required time to settle and accumulate.

He was only twenty-two orifices away from switching to a Heaven Rank technique at the 240th orifice. Under normal cultivation conditions, it would take about a month and a half to achieve this, but he had many tasks ahead and likely not so much time to cultivate.

He took out the set of pitch-black array banners and examined them.

This set of array banners contained many more comprehensive restrictions than the set he had crafted, and the materials were obviously superior. Although Lu Ye was not familiar with heavenly materials and earthly treasures to recognize what materials were used, they were undoubtedly top-notch, being a reward from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

Across the Nine Provinces, these array banners should be some of the best.

While array banners are merely aids in array setup and destruction, the better the quality of the banners, the higher the efficiency of breaking arrays, and the formations arranged would undoubtedly be more stable and powerful.

With such a set of array banners, Lu Ye felt like it significantly enhanced his abilities.

After a while, Lu Ye got up and went outside, where Giant Armor was waiting. Amber was crouching on top of Giant Armor's head, and Yiyi was hiding inside Amber, out of sight.

After half a month without seeing them, Giant Armor didn't have much change, but Amber had grown significantly, and its aura had solidified a lot.

Lu Ye took them to bid farewell to Bai Qian.

The veteran spoke earnestly, "Young Friend Lu, the legacy of the Spirit Stream Realm in Tianyan Sect is now in your hands. Try not to be too impulsive."

"Don't worry, Veteran Bai. Whatever Tianyan Sect has lost, I will help them retrieve it," Lu Ye reassured.

"Go then," Bai Qian said.

Lu Ye bowed and withdrew.

Once outside, Giant Armor brought out his Flying Spirit Artifacts and Lu Ye stood on it. With Giant Armor's manipulation, the artifact transformed into a beam of light and soared into the sky.

Shortly, in front of Heaven's Augury Hall square, Lu Ye could hear Zhao Li's passionate voice from afar, clearly rallying the troops before battle.

With his loud cry, the ear-piercing calls of "Slay!" continually responded.

In front of Heaven's Augury Hall, the murderous aura gathered by hundreds of cultivators from the Spirit Stream Realm soared directly into the sky.

Two months earlier, the territory of the Tianyan Sect was forcibly seized by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, forcing many Spirit Stream Realm cultivators to retreat back to the Nine Provinces sect headquarters. The entire Tianyan Sect was left seething with pent-up rage.

What made the disciples of Tianyan Sect even more frustrated was that since their station had been occupied, Tianyan Sect had been completely sealed off, preventing them from returning to the Spirit Stream battlefield for revenge.

This waiting lasted for two whole months, with no one knowing what the higher-ups in the sect were thinking.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had long since withdrawn. Even if they were not allowed to take revenge now, they should at least hurry to rebuild their station. Otherwise, where would the disciples at the Spirit Stream Realm level go for cultivation? Surely they couldn't all hang around in other people's stations, making a mess of things.

During this period, multiple disciples had submitted petitions to go to the Spirit Stream battlefield, but these were suppressed by Yu Xiao and the council of elders of the Tianyan Sect.

It could be said that after two months of accumulating, the anger of the Tianyan Sect had reached its limit, needing just a small spark to explode.

Only yesterday, many cultivators saw Lu Ye, who was completely unharmed at the Hundred Arrays Pagoda. Some pieces of information gradually started to leak out.

And today, Zhao Li gathered the disciples of the Spirit Stream Realm level here.

Everyone knew, the time for revenge had come!

The two months of lying low were not because Tianyan Sect was afraid, but rather, they were waiting for a crucial method to emerge.

Their minds were agitated.

They were impatient to begin a massive slaughter.

Giant Armor carried Lu Ye down, and hundreds of pairs of eyes looked over.

Zhao Li came forward and said with a bow of his hands, "Brother Yiye, everything is prepared."

Lu Ye stepped forward, his gaze sweeping left and right. He saw faces brimming with fighting spirit and, not far away, Yu Xiao and some of the Tianyan Sect elders floating in the air, to whom he nodded slightly.

"Set out!"

Zhao Li turned around and shouted loudly, "Set out!"

Silently, hundreds of cultivators hurried to Heaven's Augury Hall, using the Heaven's Augury Pillar to enter their station in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

This departure was like a flood dragon entering the sea, causing upheaval in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

The first to go in were the physique cultivators, followed by combat cultivators and then magic and healing cultivators.

Although Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had long retreated, some precautions were necessary. If the people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were ambushed there, having the physique cultivators go first could provide some resistance.

In just a few moments, hundreds of cultivators had already entered the station, and the scouting cultivators quickly reported back that there was no sight of the enemy.

This was normal, as it had been two months since the station was broken into. No matter how arrogant Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was, they wouldn't occupy someone else's station indefinitely, as it held no benefit for them.

Sometime later, in front of the plaza of Heaven's Augury Hall, a large ship used as Spiritual Artifact rose into the air. The cultivators of Tianyan Sect boarded the ship, and under Zhao Li's command, the ship swiftly flew in one direction.

On the deck of the ship, Lu Ye stood shoulder to shoulder with Zhao Li, who, after ending a transmission, spoke, "Canglan Mountain has also set out. The leader is Brother Song Yin, the Governor of Canglan Mountain, as per the plan you laid out earlier, Brother Yiye, we strike Qingfeng Gate first."

"How many people have they brought?"

"They left a hundred to guard their station, and the rest have all come."

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow, "This Fellow Daoist Song truly has courage."

Zhao Li said, "Brother Song has always been cautious. To make such a decisive move, he must have received some hints from above, perhaps related to our sect's station being seized, since our territories are adjacent. When our station was seized last time, Canglan Mountain was quite distressed for a long while."

Two months ago, when Lu Ye had just arrived at the Tianyan Sect's station, he had been poisoned by an undercover agent of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and soon after, several sects from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge joined forces to seize the station.

He had been poisoned while at the Tianyan Sect's station, which implicated the sect itself, yet the station was seized because of his arrival. On this front, it was he who had burdened Tianyan Sect, yet he also suffered heavily, and if it were not for the Soul Cleansing Water, even if Shui Yuan personally intervened, both Giant Armor and Zhao Li might have died.

It was pointless to dwell on who had burdened whom, as the primary culprit behind the scenes was Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

As he had previously discussed with Veteran Bai, whatever Tianyan Sect had lost, he would help reclaim it.

If they wanted to rebuild the station, they needed a lot of sect merit, which could naturally be obtained by occupying the enemy's station and plundering their resources.

He had come to Tianyan Sect to deepen his knowledge of Array Paths so that he could break the protective arrays. Now, he had the capability to do just that.

According to the ten-part map, the location of Tianyan Sect was not ideal, surrounded by three powers from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in a triangular formation—the Qingfeng Gate, Crimson Blood Valley, and Lightning Order, and these were the main forces that had seized the Tianyan Sect's station previously.

The reason for striking Qingfeng Gate first was that this power from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge not only neighbored Tianyan Sect but also Canglan Mountain.

Tianyan Sect was now in a position of having nothing to lose, since their station was already compromised, but Canglan Mountain couldn't afford to lose theirs. Only by dealing with Qingfeng Gate first could they ensure that Canglan Mountain would have no concerns in the subsequent actions.

Chapter 325 You're Not Dead?

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Of course, there was another reason for targeting Qingfeng Gate first: it was a 6th grade power within Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, while Crimson Blood Valley and Lightning Order were 5th grade.

As the first battle after Lu Ye resurfaced from his feigned death, it was better to pick on a softer target, even if this "soft persimmon" might not be quite as soft as they seemed.

The large ship continued on its way, and when it passed by the Tianyan Sect's mines, over a hundred streaks of light flew down from the ship into the mine shafts. After a short while, they returned, many cultivators with bloodstains on them, the result of killing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had been mining resources in their territory.

After the Tianyan Sect's base had been occupied, they sealed off their sect, and there had been no movement for two months. Naturally, the nearby powers of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge didn't want to miss out on the opportunity to plunder resources, so they sent some cultivators there, which now turned out to be an unfortunate move for them.

As the cultivators of Tianyan Sect gradually approached the Qingfeng Gate base, the news began to spread.

It was impossible to hide such a large-scale operation—cultivators always managed to obtain some information about the enemy through various channels.

For enemy sides, it's a common practice to plant ghost cultivators within each other's bases to monitor movements.

The atmosphere at Qingfeng Gate's base became tense at once. The Governor and Deputy Governor urgently recalled the cultivators who were outside, and at the same time, sent out messages to Crimson Blood Valley and Lightning Order for reinforcements.

If it was only Tianyan Sect attacking, Qingfeng Gate wouldn't be afraid. However, not only had Tianyan Sect arrived, but a good number of people from Canglan Mountain had also joined, which put some pressure on Qingfeng Gate.

The combined forces of the two sects made up fewer than a thousand cultivators, but a force of eight to nine hundred was enough for Qingfeng Gate to take seriously.

Honestly, Qingfeng Gate was somewhat puzzled about what Tianyan Sect actually intended to do, because if they couldn't take down the base in a short period, Qingfeng Gate could counter-attack with reinforcements, which would surely mean dire consequences for Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain.

Just as Qingfeng Gate was full of suspicion, a large Spiritual Artifact ship had appeared ten miles away from the base. It stopped advancing and simply hovered quietly in midair.

From the marks on the ship, it was clear that the arrivals were from Canglan Mountain. Being neighbors, the people from Canglan Mountain arrived a bit faster.

After waiting for less than half an hour, another large ship traveling through the air arrived, and the people from Tianyan Sect had come.

The two large ships proceeded side by side, pressing toward the Qingfeng Gate base.

A figure flew out from Canglan Mountain's large ship and landed on Tianyan Sect's ship.

On the deck of the ship, Lu Ye looked at the newcomer—an imposing man with a calm and steady demeanor—none other than Song Yin, the Governor of Canglan Mountain.

Zhao Li introduced the two parties, and Lu Ye and Song Yin exchanged greetings.

Song Yin went straight to the point, "Brother Yiye, Brother Zhao has told me about you, but I still want to ask, how confident are you in breaking the array? And how long will it take for you to break it?"

As Zhao Li had previously said, Song Yin was a very composed person. Even though Zhao Li had repeatedly assured him, he still wanted clarity when he met Lu Ye. The lives of his sect's cultivators were at stake, and even as a Governor, he couldn't be too reckless.

His willingness to join forces with Zhao Li this time was first because he and Zhao Li got along well and he trusted Zhao Li's character, and second because Zhao Li had assured him that Lu Ye could break Qingfeng Gate's protective array.

Zhao Li smiled wryly, "Brother Song, Brother Yiye is someone who has caused thirty-three resonances in a row in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda. He has also led attacks to occupy several other Ten Thousand Demons Ridge bases. Now his Array Path cultivation has greatly increased. Breaking the array will not be a problem."

Song Yin looked at Lu Ye calmly, "I am not knowledgeable about Array Path, but I do know that Qingfeng Gate has already sought help from outside. Crimson Blood Valley and Lightning Order have each dispatched three to four hundred people en route to help. If we delay too long here and the reinforcements from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge arrive, our situation will become unfavorable. The only way to succeed is to break the array as quickly as possible and occupy Qingfeng Gate's base to disrupt Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's plans."

Although he didn't ask further, it was clear that he wanted a straightforward answer from Lu Ye.

"If the array isn't broken within one incense stick's time, the cultivators from Canglan Mountain may withdraw," Lu Ye said.

Zhao Li looked astonished, and Song Yin frowned slightly.

Even though he said he didn't understand the Array Path and wasn't clear what resonating thirty-three times consecutively in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda meant, for a Spirit Stream Level 9 cultivator to aim to break the protective array of a base within the time it took one incense stick to burn down seemed rather audacious.

For a moment, Song Yin couldn't help but think about leaving immediately with his cultivators.

Before coming here, he had heard some rumors about Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect, including some details about the battle at Golden Light Peak. He had admired Lu Ye, but now it appeared that the rumors might not be entirely reliable. This young man in front of him seemed too arrogant.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Song Yin said, "Then I shall wait and see."

An incense stick's time wasn't long; a little wait wouldn't hurt.

He flew back to his own ship, while Zhao Li began to worry. "Brother Yiye, one incense stick's time... can you really break the array?"

Lu Ye knew how he had led the Surreptitious Palace and Soaring Cloud Palace to breach Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain's base; it was somewhat of a trick, not a true array destruction, and such methods could be easily countered.

Even though Lu Ye's Array Path knowledge had improved after passing through the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, breaking an array in the short span of an incense stick still seemed too exaggerated.

Especially since he himself was an array cultivator, he understood the difficulty of the task ahead.

"Can!" Lu Ye replied with firm conviction.

Ten miles was covered in just a moment's time.

...

Two great ships descended, and cultivators from both sects stepped out from within.

Separated by a layer of the array's glowing curtain, the Tianyan Sect cultivators and the people from Qingfeng Gate faced each other, with fire blazing in their eyes.

Two months prior, many among them had faced off in the same manner, only now their positions were reversed.

Although they were besieged, the Qingfeng Gate cultivators did not appear tense because everyone knew that, with just the forces of Tianyan Sect and Qingfeng Gate, it was unrealistic to expect a breach of the grand formation in a short time. Moreover, their reinforcements were already on the way and would arrive before long, at which point the roles in the siege would switch.

Everything changed when Lu Ye stepped forward.

Within the crowd, Qingfeng Gate's Governor scrutinized Lu Ye carefully, even rubbing his eyes, before showing a shocked expression. "You're not dead?"

He obviously recognized Lu Ye.

He had never seen Lu Ye in person but had seen his images. Because Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain had been breached, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had listed Lu Ye as a key target for surveillance. Information and images of Lu Ye were followed closely by many people.

Two months ago, the Seal Envoy of the Righteous Blood Sect had caused a huge commotion in the Tianyan Sect camp, fighting against five adversaries, leading to a fierce battle, during which even the Great Elder of Tianyan Sect had been injured.

That wasn't the end. That very same Seal Envoy had entered the Spirit Stream battlefield with his True Lake Realm cultivation, slaying dozens of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, before finally retreating under the punishment of the Soul-Destroying Divine Lightning.

The sect master of the Righteous Blood Sect personally went to Leizhou, and though there wasn't much achievement, it still made the Divine Sea Realm strong cultivators there quite anxious for a while.

Even Li Baxian, who ranked third on the Spirit Stream Ranking, stirred up a storm of blood and carnage in the Core Circle because of it.

All this happened because Lu Ye was poisoned and killed by a hidden agent of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge at Tianyan Sect's camp, a fact that was confirmed by both the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was overjoyed for a while, relieved of a great concern, no longer having to worry about their camp's grand formation being breached in the future.

Yet now, the person who was supposed to be dead was alive and well!

And he was right there in front of their eyes!

The situation was utterly absurd.

The Qingfeng Gate Governor had a hard time coming to terms with the reality for a moment, but soon he understood what was happening.

Feeling indescribably complicated, he cursed the few individuals from Righteous Blood Sect for their inhuman behavior. Their over-the-top reactions were all too convincing. If it weren't for those excessive reactions from the Righteous Blood Sect, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wouldn't have been able to confirm Lu Ye's death.

What kind of sect was this? From the sect master and Seal Envoy down to the ordinary disciples, they had put on a grand play together, deceiving the entire Nine Provinces. How could they all be so sly and cunning!

While he was internally shocked and cursing the situation, the cultivators from both sects had already begun to organize their troops and set up the array. Under Lu Ye's guidance, combat cultivators stepped forward to a certain area of the protective array, followed by ghost cultivators, and then the magic cultivators. The few healing cultivators stood at a distance, ready to move forward and save people at any moment.

Witnessing this scene, the Governor of Qingfeng Gate's heart skipped a beat, as the enemy's formation was clearly meant for a forceful attack on the grand array.

With the examples of Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain in mind, how could he not be nervous?

But he quickly reassured himself that when Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain were breached, it was Lu Yiye who employed some cunning methods rather than truly breaking the grand array. So, as long as he kept an eye on Lu Yiye and prevented him from any underhanded maneuvering, the issue... shouldn't be too significant!

As these thoughts crossed his mind, Lu Ye stepped forward, looked up at the protective array in front of him, and the spirit light flowed in his eyes, augmented by the Insight Spirit Runes.

When he completed those challenges in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, Lu Ye had merely used the Insight Spirit Runes to confirm some of his deductions, thereby refining his own mastery. Now that he was breaking someone else's grand array, naturally there was no need to hide his skills.

He had activated the Insight Spirit Runes at the earliest opportunity.

A moment later, Lu Ye raised his hand and shot a stream of spirit force, hitting a certain spot on the array's glowing screen.

In the next instant, a Tianyan Sect disciple flew out, stood at that location, and held a pitch-black array banner—the reward he obtained from within the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

At the 33rd layer of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he had broken through a protective array, but it had taken him more than four hours because at that time, he had no external forces to rely on.

The situation was different now, with Tianyan Sect having an abundance of array cultivators. With their cooperation, the efficiency of array destruction would be higher. Moreover, Lu Ye didn't need to break the entire grand array at this moment.

Therefore, on the way here, Lu Ye had asked Zhao Li to round up thirty-one array cultivators and distribute his array banners among them.

As Lu Ye continued to act, one after another, array cultivators with banners in hand took their positions at various locations.

A moment later, all thirty-one individuals were in place.

The Governor of Qingfeng Gate sensed trouble and put away his previous underestimate. He took out the Great Array Jade Cluster and activated it with all his might, bringing the grand array's power to its maximum.

Although he was not versed in the Array Path, even a glance at the current situation told him that Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect had clearly come prepared.

Considering the lessons learned from Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain, he had no intention of repeating their mistakes.

Chapter 326 Crushing Defeat at Qingfeng Gate

All preparations complete, Lu Ye arrived at the last position with an array banner in his hand that he gently waved, causing spirit force to surge.

The other thirty-one array banners immediately resonated, and all the array cultivators wielding them began their work.

Exactly thirty-two array banners adhered to the surface of the big array's light screen, and as the array cultivators, led by Lu Ye, worked their spells, the pitch-black banners merged into the screen at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow.

These array banners, rewarded from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, were a bit easier to utilize than he had anticipated.

Zhao Li and Song Yin, who were watching this scene, were invigorated. Zhao Li, being an array cultivator himself, recognized the significance, while Song Yin, though ignorant of the Array Path, could tell that things were progressing smoothly.

The governor of Qingfeng Gate panicked.

He had never seen such a bizarre tactic before. Holding the Great Array Jade Cluster in his hand, he could clearly sense that some foreign objects had merged into the big array. But when he tried to activate the jade cluster to expel these objects, he couldn't lock onto any targets—it felt as though the foreign objects had already integrated with the big array.

Not only had he never seen it, but such tactics had never appeared on the Spirit Stream battlefield since ancient times.

The cultivation of Spirit Stream Realm cultivators wasn't high; even those seasoned cultivators who had dedicated themselves to the Array Path for decades after losing hope of advancing their cultivation realms, due to their limited cultivation, could only achieve so much. They might be able to break some small-scale formations, but it was extremely difficult to shake the protective arrays at the garrisons, which were enormous constructs.

As the thirty-two array banners merged into the light screen of the big array, Lu Ye, who was holding the main array banner, immediately felt the flow of spirit force in the big array. It was like reaching his hand into a flowing stream.

What came next was simple. Using the power of the thirty-two array banners, he would curb the flow of spirit force in two nodes of the big array. By doing so, the array in that particular area could be broken.

Right, Lu Ye never intended to break the entire big array from the start. Even with his past experience of breaking arrays alone, and now with thirty-one array cultivators to assist him, it would still take a lot of time.

Furthermore, the big array he had broken inside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda had been unattended, unlike the current situation.

He only needed to create a breach in the big array, a gap wide enough for the cultivators of the two sects to burst through.

When storming the garrison at Illuminating Sun Mountain, he had used a similar method. However, his understanding of Array Path had been lacking at the time, so he had chosen to tear through a node of the big array and led Giant Armor and ten physique cultivators to charge into the Illuminating Sun Mountain garrison to seize the Great Array Jade Cluster.

That approach was only feasible when there were not many guards at the garrison. If the Illuminating Sun Mountain had been able to spare a few dozen more men to stay at the garrison, Lu Ye wouldn't have dared to act so recklessly.

If the flowing spirit force on the light screen of the big array were compared to river water, what he was about to do was to construct two dams at one segment of this river by using the power of the array banners, turning the active water into stagnant water, and then directly breaking through this isolated segment.

The array banners hummed, spirit force flowed from Lu Ye, and the thirty-one array cultivators, feeling the feedback from the banners, coordinated with Lu Ye's actions.

The governor of Qingfeng Gate's face changed instantly as he clearly detected abnormalities in the big array. He hurriedly activated the jade cluster, attempting various maneuvers, but to no avail—no matter what he tried, Lu Ye could adjust his countermeasures promptly.

In the area covered by the array banners, the flow of spirit force in the big array visibly slowed down and subsequently stagnated.

The whole process took merely fifty breaths!

"Brother Zhao!" Lu Ye shouted loudly.

Waiting for just that call, Zhao Li immediately roared: "Charge!"

In the next instant, wave after wave of the might of Flowing Light Technique rained down ahead.

With just one fierce assault, the light screen of the big array shattered like a mirror, breaking apart with a crashing sound!

The governor of Qingfeng Gate was stunned.

All the disciples of Qingfeng Gate were stunned.

Song Yin was stunned as well.

When Lu Ye told him he could break the array within the time it took an incense stick to burn, he was utterly unwilling to believe it, thinking Lu Ye was merely bluffing. If not for Zhao Li's sake, he would have wanted to lead his cultivators away right then.

But in fact, it took less than the time to burn half an incense stick from when Lu Ye made his move until the light screen of the big array shattered.

Even the composed Song Yin couldn't help swallowing hard.

A protective array was supposed to be this easy to break? What he had just witnessed completely overturned his understanding.

Although shocked, Song Yin's men did not hesitate. Almost at the moment when the big array shattered, a ferocious battle cry already roared out.

Through the massive gap in the light screen of the big array, the cultivators of the two sects surged in like a flood into the Qingfeng Gate garrison.

The moment both sides clashed, the Qingfeng Gate was quickly overwhelmed, and in an instant, twenty to thirty people fell into a pool of blood, while the rest retreated in panic.

It wasn't that Qingfeng Gate couldn't hold up to the strain; no one had anticipated their protective array to be so fragile.

Before the array was broken, the cultivators of Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain had already positioned themselves in an aggressive formation. The cultivators from each faction took their own spots, and the seven to eight hundred cultivators became one entity. The physically strong physique cultivators held Spiritual Artifacts for defense up front to withstand the enemy's attack, advancing layer by layer inward.

But Qingfeng Gate was far from prepared; they gathered together in a disordered fashion, utterly unprepared for an attack.

Moreover, there was a huge disparity in numbers.

This was why Qingfeng Gate seemed so delicate and vulnerable.

The sounds of battle rose and fell one after another as the cultivators from both sects rushed into Qingfeng Gate's residence without stopping, heading determinedly in one particular direction.

That was the location of Qingfeng Gate's Heaven's Augury Hall.

Merely seizing someone else's territory, although it would yield plenty of benefits, would not permanently weaken the enemy if they were not killed; they could rise again sooner or later.

Therefore, this time Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain not only aimed to seize Qingfeng Gate's territory but also to slay its cultivators—whomever they could kill would be a gain.

The offensive momentum of the two sects' cultivators was unstoppable. Along the way, many from Qingfeng Gate were cut down. Giant Armor advanced in the vanguard, his body swirling with a mixture of spirit force and blood Qi, creating a layer of visible, solid protection. Attacks hastily unleashed by Qingfeng Gate cultivators merely scratched him as if tickling.

This caused his fellow physique cultivators who were charging with him to frequently cast envious glances his way.

At the same moment the great array was dismantled, Lu Ye casually waved his hand to retrieve his thirty-two array banners. As the cultivators of the two sects stormed into Qingfeng Gate's residence, four Spiritual Artifacts became streaks of light, flying back and forth within a radius of sixty yards, bringing forth sprays of blood. Wherever they passed, tiny specks of red light rose from the fallen bodies on the ground and drifted into the battlefield marking on the back of his hand.

Now at Spirit Stream Level 9, Lu Ye's strength had improved from before, particularly his control over weapons, which had increased several times over what it was at Level 8. This was not solely due to the increase in his Cultivation Realm but also greatly due to the enhancement of his psyche's power.

In the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he continuously consumed Soul Cleansing Water to wash away the fatigue of his mind and spirit. But the effect of Soul Cleansing Water was not as simple as relieving mental exhaustion. After using nearly half a bottle of the water, the resilience of his psyche was now unmatched by even an average Cloud River Realm cultivator.

The most evident sign was that Lu Ye now could channel four Spiritual Artifacts without any pressure and even strengthen the four items with double spirit runes effortlessly.

The usual control range of a Level 9 cultivator over their weapons was about forty yards; beyond that, control was no longer possible. However, Lu Ye could now extend his weapon control up to sixty yards.

What did a twenty-yard difference imply? It meant that cultivators of the same realm could not even come close to him without being cut down by his controlled weapons.

Moving through the chaotic battlefield, Lu Ye kept advancing without stopping, his gaze fixed on the governor of Qingfeng Gate.

With the enhancement of the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, he surged forward swiftly.

Qingfeng Gate cultivators trying to escape turned around to block him, but Amber, crouched on Lu Ye's shoulder, let out a tiger's roar. A visible blast of air surged forth, causing those cultivators to wince in pain, seeing stars before their eyes.

Although they quickly regained their senses, they were greeted by the slicing light of controlled weapons and spells cast by Yiyi, who was following close by Lu Ye's side.

Screams arose one after another as more than a dozen Qingfeng Gate cultivators fell, the ground stained red with their blood.

Without pausing, Lu Ye quickly reached the Qingfeng Gate governor. The governor himself was a combat cultivator and, in a state of shock, he summoned his Spiritual Artifact; however, a flash of bright sword light passed before his eyes, and his head soared into the air.

As Lu Ye swept past him, he had already acquired a Great Array Jade Cluster in his hand. He did not rush to refine it but continued to pursue and kill the Qingfeng Gate cultivators.

At this very moment, Qingfeng Gate's Heaven's Augury Hall had fallen into the hands of the two sects. Under the joint strategy of Zhao Li and Song Yin, some were posted to block the entrance, preventing any Qingfeng Gate cultivators from getting close. The rest maintained their previous formation, continuously pressing forward, reducing the escape space for Qingfeng Gate cultivators.

Although Lu Ye had breached a section of the Qingfeng Gate array, it was still operating. After Lu Ye retracted his array banners, the broken section began to self-repair under the array's own process, slowly recovering.

Judging by the pace of recovery, it wouldn't be long before the protective array would be completely restored.

This resulted in the Qingfeng Gate cultivators having only one escape route through that breach; otherwise, there was no way out.

But how could the cultivators of the two sects allow them to escape so easily in that direction?

In the history of clashes between the two camps on the Spirit Stream battlefield, never had there been such a desperate scene where the cultivators who had their residences seized faced such despair.

In the past, even if their residence's grand array had been broken, they could still return to the Nine Provinces through Heaven's Augury Hall. But now, Heaven's Augury Hall had fallen, and the protective array that was supposed to shield them from the elements had turned into their cage.

In an absolutely dire situation, the surviving Qingfeng Gate cultivators did not just wait to die but began to fight back.

However, the numerical disparity was too great.

The Qingfeng Gate had fewer cultivators than the joint forces of the two sects to begin with. Now with some dead and others escaped through Heaven's Augury Hall, fewer than two hundred were left.

How could they possibly stand against a formation of seven to eight hundred cultivators?

Chapter 327 Shocking Bad News

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Even though their side had an absolute advantage, the cultivators from both sects remained calm and composed, maintaining the previous formation throughout.

No one wanted to encounter any mishaps just as they were about to reap the fruits of victory, as that could mean death.

The surviving cultivators of Qingfeng Gate organized several charges against the enemy, yet they were all repelled by the physique cultivators, led by the Giant Armor. During these assaults and retreats, more cultivators were continuously slain, with corpses falling one after another.

Among them, it was Lu Ye who killed the most.

With four weapon-controlled artifacts, an attack range of sixty zhang, and the ability to enhance his own weapons with spirit runes, a single pass through the enemy lines resulted in the death of several enemies.

Towards the end, the stored spirit force in these four Spiritual Artifacts was completely depleted.

One incense stick's time later, when the last cultivator of Qingfeng Gate fell, deafening cheers erupted. Cultivators from both sects shouted and celebrated wildly...

None had ever experienced such a gratifying and comprehensive victory; not only had they occupied the enemy sect's stronghold, but they had almost eradicated the enemy cultivators. This battle would go down in the history of the Spirit Stream battlefield, to be revered by future generations.

Especially the cultivators from the Tianyan Sect, whose pent-up rage over the past two months was finally unleashed. Each one flushed with exhilaration, as if celebrating a festival.

Compared to their ordeal two months prior, today they had thoroughly vented their spite, feeling a sense of clarity and unparalleled satisfaction.

"Clean up the battlefield in the time it takes for one incense stick to burn, get moving!" Zhao Li's shout echoed across the field.

In the plans that he and Lu Ye had devised, Qingfeng Gate was just the first stop; there would be two more to follow.

The Qingfeng Gate had been too careless, resulting in this exceptionally smooth battle. However, with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge now on guard, the next fights might not yield such great spoils.

The cultivators from both sects immediately set to work, scattering to clean up the battlefield.

One incense stick's time was not long, and without haste, it would not suffice.

Lu Ye began refining the Great Array Jade Cluster.

Previously, when they took Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain, they had no choice but to destroy the Great Array Jade Cluster, which allowed the dissolution of the big array. However, the situation was different now; Qingfeng Gate's protective array was intact. By refining the Great Array Jade Cluster and shutting down the array, all he had to do was to dig out the array bases used for array setup, and it would be done.

Buying a set of protective arrays from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault would cost quite a lot of merits.

Zhao Li and Song Yin headed to the Heaven's Augury Hall to plunder the enhancements from Qingfeng Gate's Heaven's Augury Pillar. The former took seventy percent, the latter thirty percent, and of the Tianyan Sect's share, part of it belonged to Lu Ye.

Before setting off, Lu Ye had promised Bai Qian that whatever the Tianyan Sect had lost, they would retrieve for them. Naturally, he intended to honor that promise.

Moreover, according to the previous agreement, the protective array of Qingfeng Gate would belong to him. While the array was not particularly useful to Lu Ye, he could sell it to the Tianyan Sect or the Heaven's Augury treasure vault. Selling it to the former would garner numerous cultivation resources, while selling it to the latter would earn merits—both were feasible options.

Shortly after, Lu Ye activated the Great Array Jade Cluster, shutting down the array, then gathered some helpers to dig out all the array bases and put them into his storage sack.

While they were busily engaged, the news that Qingfeng Gate's stronghold had been taken spread swiftly within the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp and subsequently throughout the Haotian Alliance camp.

The rumor had it that the supposedly poisoned-to-death Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect hadn't died at all. This seizure of Qingfeng Gate was by his hands.

According to the cultivators of Qingfeng Gate who had managed to escape back to the Nine Provinces, Lu Yiye only spent a few dozen breaths of time to create a massive breach in the protective array. What followed was the prepared influx of Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain disciples, catching Qingfeng Gate completely off guard and unable to form an effective defense, ultimately collapsing like a house of cards.

This battle resulted in the destruction of the Qingfeng Gate stronghold and the death of over four hundred Spirit Stream Realm cultivators, with the inner circle cultivators almost completely annihilated.

As the news spread, the Nine Provinces were in shock!

What was shocking was not just that the supposedly dead Lu Yiye had returned to life but also his means of breaching formations.

If one could say that his previous tactics in capturing Fenghua Courtyard and Illuminating Sun Mountain were somewhat crafty and easily targeted, now his techniques had improved more than tenfold. His array destruction technique was solid and uncounterable; If this man launched an assault, no protective array could withstand it.

The big sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, which had just relaxed for two months, were tense once again.

Two months earlier, they had rejoiced upon receiving news of Lu Yiye's supposed death, celebrating the removal of a major threat. Now, it seemed that had been nothing but a ploy.

Lu Yiye was alive and well!

After hiding for two months at the Tianyan Sect headquarters, his mastery over arrays had reached unimaginable heights.

Many array cultivators who specialized in arrays heard the news and outright declared it impossible, as a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator, no matter how talented, couldn't possibly breach a protective array in just a few dozen breaths. Such a feat was unheard of, not only unseen but also unprecedented.

If protective arrays could be so easily dismantled, then what sect could live in peace in the future?

But the reality was right in front of them, leaving no room for disbelief.

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Everywhere in the Nine Provinces was abuzz because of this matter.

Within the Spirit Stream battlefield, the cultivators of the Crimson Blood Valley and the Lightning Order were thrown into panic.

They had been rushing to reinforce the Qingfeng Gate, and were close to reaching the location, planning to coordinate an inside-outside attack with Qingfeng Gate. Unexpectedly, they received shocking news.

The Qingfeng Gate garrison had been occupied!

Nearly all of the Qingfeng Gate's cultivators had been slaughtered!

The leaders of both sects almost thought someone was playing a joke on them. After several confirmations, they realized this was no joke.

The blood in their veins turned ice cold in an instant; there was no need to hurry to Qingfeng Gate's aid any longer. On their way, they turned around and rushed back to their sect headquarters.

With Qingfeng Gate's garrison taken, it would be their turn next—especially for the Crimson Blood Valley, since it was closer to Qingfeng Gate and clearly a target for the next attack.

For a moment, the Crimson Blood Valley's Governor and Deputy Governor were in deep despair. They urgently called for reinforcements while simultaneously sending messages to the Lightning Order, discussing the possibility of having the Lightning Order come to their aid first, since its forces were already on the road. As long as the Lightning Order was willing to support them, there was a great chance of defending the Crimson Blood Valley.

The Lightning Order also understood the principle that if the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold. The leading Deputy Governor was inclined to agree to Crimson Blood Valley's request for aid, but as a Deputy Governor, he did not dare to make the decision on his own and had to send a message back to the sect asking for instructions from the higher-ups.

Soon he received a message in return: the Lightning Order's high officials agreed to support the Crimson Blood Valley. The leading Deputy Governor immediately ordered his cultivators to change course and rush to the Crimson Blood Valley's garrison.

Meanwhile, the Tianyan Sect and the cultivators of Canglan Mountain, having finished cleaning up the battlefield, had already set off toward their next target.

Onboard the Tianyan Sect's large ship, Lu Ye was busy on deck with a group of array cultivators.

Speed is of the essence in warfare.

This side had just occupied Qingfeng Gate's garrison, and word was bound to spread. Once the Crimson Blood Valley was on guard, the next battle wouldn't be as easy.

There was an urgent need to reach the Crimson Blood Valley's garrison quickly and catch the enemy off guard.

Moreover, if his guess was correct, both the Crimson Blood Valley and the Lightning Order should have had reinforcements on the way previously, and at this moment, they were likely retreating. If their own side was fast enough, there was still a chance to catch up with the enemy on the road.

These large ships, capable of carrying hundreds of people and purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault at a steep price, were not slow but not particularly fast either. Their speed was undoubtedly slower than the flying speed of an individual.

Even if the Tianyan Sect's cultivators responsible for controlling the ship went all out, enhancing its speed to a certain limit, it was ultimately finite.

What Lu Ye was doing at the moment was speeding up the large ship.

As he and the group of array cultivators busied themselves, a formation that enveloped the entire ship soon took shape. This formation had no special intricacy; it was built simply around a single, massive Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Rune at its core, with sixteen array banners as the foundation.

Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes could be used to boost oneself or Amber; naturally, they could also be applied to Flying Spirit Artifacts.

However, the ship was too large and Lu Ye alone was insufficient for the task. But, with the aid of a formation, it was different. The role of the sixteen array banners was to stabilize the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes that Lu Ye had constructed on the ship, while also drawing in spirit force from the outside to replenish themselves, ensuring that the spirit runes wouldn't dissipate too easily.

A large number of Spirit Stones were placed at the array banners, with the spirit force from the stones flowing into the great array. As Lu Ye took action, the newly arranged great array buzzed into motion, and intricate patterns emerged, illuminating the entire deck with light.

In the next moment, the Tianyan Sect's ship, which had been going side by side with the Canglan Mountain ship, suddenly surged forward like a feral horse breaking free, shooting ahead with a whoosh. In an instant, it became a small black dot on the horizon.

On board the Canglan Mountain ship, Song Yin was counting the casualties among his cultivators. Noticing something amiss, he turned his head and looked on blankly. He quickly sent a message to Zhao Li, inquiring about the situation.

Onboard the Tianyan Sect ship, hundreds of cultivators were caught off guard by the ship's sudden acceleration, tumbling all over the place. They struggled to regain their footing.

Lu Ye quickly adjusted the formation.

In the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he had set up many formations through each level of trials, but it was his first time setting up a speed-enhancing formation, so naturally, he was somewhat lacking in experience.

Without adjustments, the formation would collapse within half an hour due to overloading.

Gradually, the speed of the ship was reduced a bit, but the operation of the formation began to stabilize. Even at the reduced speed, the ship was now more than twice as fast as its previous full speed.

Zhao Li sent a few messages back to Song Yin, explaining what had just happened, and instructed his disciples to keep a watch in all directions.

An hour later, a cultivator reported seeing a large ship to their front side, clearly headed for the Crimson Blood Valley's garrison.

Zhao Li's spirits soared, realizing his earlier speculation was correct. As they were preparing to attack Qingfeng Gate, reinforcements from the Crimson Blood Valley had indeed been rushing to its aid. However, their side was so efficient that before the enemy's reinforcements arrived, Qingfeng Gate's garrison had already fallen, causing the reinforcements to retreat. Weren't they hurrying after this very purpose—to pursue them?

"Crash into them!"

On deck, Zhao Li issued the command.

Chapter 328 Unfortunate Lightning Order

Following Senior Brother Zhao's command, the Tianyan Sect's large ship charged straight ahead.

The enemy sect had obviously noticed the commotion and a group of cultivators were peering out from the deck, quickly becoming restless.

They had no idea why the Tianyan Sect's ship was so fast and had never experienced such a thing, but seeing such a huge Flying Spirit Artifact bearing down on them still panicked them.

Shouts and commands rang out from the deck as the cultivators in charge of this big ship were ordering their disciples to change course to avoid the collision.

But after a brief attempt, they realized it was useless; the other party was moving too fast.

A cultivator on the Tianyan Sect ship reported, "Senior Brother Zhao, that's not the Crimson Blood Valley; it's the Lightning Order."

"It doesn't matter who they are; just crash into them first,"

"Yes."

They had initially thought it was the Crimson Blood Valley coming to reinforce the Qingfeng Gate, but it turned out to be the Lightning Order; either way, they were enemies that needed to be beaten, sooner or later didn't affect the overall situation.

At this moment, the Deputy Governor of the Lightning Order felt as bitter as if he had swallowed coptis; they were heading to support the Qingfeng Gate, but before they arrived, Qingfeng Gate's site had been occupied. When they retreated, the Crimson Blood Valley urgently called for help, so they changed their route to assist Crimson Blood Valley.

Now they were still en route and had been caught up by the Tianyan Sect.

He racked his brain but couldn't understand why the Tianyan Sect's ship was so fast.

Under his nervous watch, the two ships got closer and closer, and the Lightning Order's ship first showed a protective light screen.

While this protective light screen wasn't as strong as the stationary protective arrays, it still offered some defense.

In contrast, the Tianyan Sect didn't raise a protective light screen immediately, instead, a series of magic and spells burst forth from the deck, striking the enemy sect's large ship.

Only when they were about twenty zhang apart, did the Tianyan Sect's ship hurriedly light up its protective light screen.

Seeing this, the Deputy Governor of the Lightning Order felt a chill in his heart.

Everyone's ship was purchased from the Heaven's Augury Treasure Vault, with similar quality and various performances; the opponent had weakened their defense with several rounds of magic and spells before the collision, clearly having the upper hand.

He cursed the Tianyan Sect for their despicable and shameless tactics, but also knew this was due to his lack of combat experience.

But could he really be blamed?

The Lightning Order had never encountered such a situation before; in fact, no one in the Spirit Stream battlefield had.

Under the gaze of many eyes, the Tianyan Sect's ship's prow viciously struck the rear of the Lightning Order's ship.

A tremendous boom sounded, and cultivators from both sects lost their footing, swaying from side to side, with some falling onto the deck.

The protective light screens of the two ships shattered one after the other, dissolving into sparkles that drifted away.

On the deck, Lu Ye clutched onto the ship's railings, hearing the ship's strained groan next to his ears, followed by a massive shadow looming overhead.

Looking up, it was the hull of the Lightning Order's ship.

At the moment of the collision, because of the high speed, the prow of the Tianyan Sect's ship had skewed into the space beneath the rear of the Lightning Order's ship, lifting it directly.

After another spell of strenuous friction and shaking, the Lightning Order's ship rolled and was thrown off, slanting toward the ground.

A continuous stream of screams came from the other side, followed by figures jumping out, hastily unleashing their Flying Spirit Artifacts to stabilize their forms.

Some cultivators lacked sufficient strength and control over their spirit force, and even though they unleashed their Flying Spirit Artifacts, they struggled to control them momentarily.

There were more than three hundred people on the Lightning Order's ship, but after the ship was lifted and tossed, only about a hundred cultivators flew out, all rapidly escaping toward the direction of the Crimson Blood Valley's site.

On the Tianyan Sect's side, although the ship had violently shaken for a moment,

the ship showed no sign of falling.

The cultivators of the Tianyan Sect soared up and turned around to chase the Lightning Order's cultivators.

Lu Ye led the chase at the forefront.

He was the first to act and he was the fastest.

Before transitioning to a Heaven Rank technique, cultivators typically do not fight in the air because they lack sufficient control over their spirit force; fighting while controlling flying weapons could easily lead to mishaps.

It can be said that cultivators controlling flying weapons could significantly reduce their strength.

This situation improves only after transitioning to a Heaven Rank technique, hence why one often sees cultivators engaged in aerial combat in the core circle.

Lu Ye wasn't much affected; merely controlling "Move-Like-The-Wind" allowed him to maneuver the four weapons easily, even while managing weapon control-flying.

Boosted by the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, his figure transformed into a streak of flowing light, piercing through the escaping cultivators of the Lightning Order, with four controlled weapons darting back and forth around him, accompanied by screams, harvesting the lives of his enemies.

A few breaths later, he came to a halt, turned, and blocked the path of the fleeing Lightning Order cultivators.

"Boom..."

A loud crash came from below and it was only then that the capsized ship of the Lightning Order crashed to the ground. Accompanied by the crash was a burst of firelight and the intermittent screams of agony could be heard emanating from the wreckage of the ship.

Of the more than three hundred people from the Lightning Order, only a hundred managed to escape. What about the other two hundred plus?

They were naturally inside the ship.

Some didn't have time to run; many more lacked the means to. Falling from nearly a hundred zhang in the air, what good end could they possibly have?

It could be said that with this one incident, the Lightning Order lost two hundred cultivators.

"Attack together, kill him!" The Deputy Governor of the Lightning Order shouted angrily. After seeing Lu Ye's speed in flight and his methods of killing, he knew they couldn't deal with Lu Ye if they hoped to survive.

The cultivators from Tianyan Sect might not catch up with them, but Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect was terrifyingly fast; they simply could not shake him off.

What responded to him was a rapidly enlarging streak of fiery-red light in their field of view.

If he had been on the ground, even if Lu Ye had been extremely powerful, he wouldn't dare to face nearly a hundred people alone; that would be no different from seeking death.

But in the air, it was different. Since everyone hadn't cultivated the Heaven Rank technique, Lu Ye, due to his strong psyche and sufficient control over his spirit force, was unaffected in strength. The people of Tianyan Sect, on the other hand, each could only perform up to seventy percent of their usual capabilities.

Moreover, when flying with weapon control, Lu Ye had more room to maneuver and evade.

Simply put, it was almost impossible for the enemy to hit him, but he could accurately kill an enemy with each strike.

He intercepted and delayed in front, continuously killing enemies. Soon, the cultivators from Tianyan Sect also caught up under the lead of Zhao Li.

Completely surrounded, those cultivators from the Lightning Order who had escaped the ship had no way out.

The radiance of magic and spells from weapon control flashed back and forth, displaying the fearless determination of the Lightning Order cultivators.

The battle continued for a while, and the fluctuations of spirit force gradually subsided.

During the earlier attack on Qingfeng Gate, there had been some casualties on both sides, but in this engagement, all the dead were Lightning Order cultivators. No one from Tianyan Sect died; the only injuries were minor ones caused by the shaking when the ships collided.

After the battle, Lu Ye, along with some array cultivators, was busy assessing the condition of the Tianyan Sect's ship.

There was significant damage at the bow of the ship which slightly affected its overall performance, but it was not a major issue.

Rather than continuing forward, they repaired and waited for the people from Canglan Mountain to join them.

The Lightning Order had lost over three hundred people in this encounter, a catastrophic loss indeed. More importantly, with so many people gone, they could forget about holding their position unless they could get reinforcements in time.

But the nearest Crimson Blood Valley was the next target to be attacked and couldn't possibly provide support to the Lightning Order. Relying on Crimson Blood Valley was impractical, and expecting help from an even further Alliance Sect was even less realistic.

At this critical moment within the station of the Lightning Order, the Governor's face was ashen. In just a short span of less than a few dozen breaths, over three hundred marks had been extinguished in his battlefield marking, each mark representing the life of a Lightning Order cultivator.

Those three hundred plus people were originally designated to support Qingfeng Gate and then rerouted to aid Crimson Blood Valley!

No one knew what they had encountered that led to their complete annihilation in such a short time, without a single survivor.

Even before their deaths, not a single message had been sent back.

The Governor, suppressing his sorrow, steadied his mind and sent a message to inquire about the situation at Crimson Blood Valley.

The Governor of Crimson Blood Valley was bewildered.

They were still waiting for support from the Lightning Order to jointly resist Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain, yet the forces of the Lightning Order had been entirely wiped out?

With Qingfeng Gate gone and the reinforcements from the Lightning Order dead, did that not mean they had to fight alone?

Under immense pressure, the Governor of Crimson Blood Valley.

Qingfeng Gate was easily toppled because they were unprepared and caught off guard; Crimson Blood Valley, however, did not plan to retreat despite knowing they couldn't hold their position alone. They thought that as long as they were sufficiently prepared, even if outnumbered, they could still fight the enemy by leveraging their geographic advantage!

In this critical situation, Crimson Blood Valley hastily prepared, with messages shuttling between the station and their sect headquarters.

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The people from Canglan Mountain arrived belatedly, joining Tianyan Sect. Both sects' cultivators set off again, heading towards the station of Crimson Blood Valley.

There had been some casualties on both sides in the previous battle at Qingfeng Gate, but the losses were minor, with less than forty people dead, so the overall strength was not significantly affected.

When the cultivators from both sects arrived with great momentum outside the station of Crimson Blood Valley, the defenders were already in combat readiness. Their deployment and array setup were similar to what had been used when attacking Qingfeng Gate: strong physique cultivators at the very front, followed by combat cultivators and ghost cultivators, with magic cultivators in the rear.

The cultivators from both sects disembarked in succession. With victories from the previous two battles and a numerical advantage, the cultivators from both Tianyan Sect and Canglan Mountain were immensely aggressive. Through the layers of the big array's light screen, they stared down the people of Crimson Blood Valley, with some even blatantly threatening by running their hands across their throats.

In contrast, even though Crimson Blood Valley was well-prepared and resolved to fight to the death, the tension was evident on their faces.

Even before the battle had started, the cultivators from both sides began shouting insults at each other, with a notably high use of expletives involving "mother."

Chapter 329 - 327: The Audacity of Crimson Blood Valley

Lu Ye activated the Insight Spirit Runes to examine the nodes of the great array in Crimson Blood Valley, in keeping with his previous experience, and began working with the array cultivators from Tianyan Sect to break the array.

During this period, cultivators from both sects arranged their troops and set up their formations under the arrangements of Zhao Li and Song Yin.

The governor who controlled the Great Array Jade Cluster in Crimson Blood Valley, although he had heard of Lu Ye's array-breaking methods through some channels, had never witnessed them personally.

Not until this moment did he deeply understand what despair felt like.

No matter how he urged the jade cluster to induce various changes in the great array, he could hardly contain the progress of Lu Ye's array-breaking.

Just as he had heard, in only a few dozen breaths, the spirit force in one area of the great array stopped flowing, and with a fierce attack from the cultivators of both sects, that part of the great array completely shattered.

The cries of cursing from both sides ceased, giving way to a clash of weapon control and magic and spells, and in an instant, a spectacle of colorful lights zigzagged back and forth in mid-air, creating a highly dramatic scene.

Accompanied by cries of agony, the governor of Crimson Blood Valley, who was commanding from the rear, realized something was amiss.

Their physique cultivators were dying too quickly.

As the largest barrier for their cultivators, if too many physique cultivators died, their defensive line would inevitably be broken.

After a brief observation, he quickly saw the truth.

It was Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect, nearly half of the dead physique cultivators were killed by him!

The Liu Guang of four weapons flew under his control, and the physique cultivators targeted by him couldn't resist the might of the weapons at all—each strike was lethal, and the physique cultivators carefully cultivated by Crimson Blood Valley were as fragile as paper under his sharp attacks.

In just a span of ten breaths, the number of physique cultivators at the forefront had already been halved, and without them in front, the casualties on Crimson Blood Valley's side surged, and as time went on, their casualties rapidly increased as well.

In contrast, the enemy's physique cultivators, although also suffering casualties, had a tight defensive line that always remained firm, especially one in the middle whose blood Qi was so robust it seemed almost unreasonable; he personally witnessed a defensive spirit artifact on the opponent being shattered, more than ten strikes hitting him, yet this physique cultivator appeared unharmed.

This guy's body was even stronger than regular defensive spirit artifacts.

The governor of Crimson Blood Valley realized the severity of the issue and knew he had underestimated the opposition this time.

But now escape was impossible, and fleeing at this moment would only give the enemy a chance to annihilate them completely.

He hastily activated the battlefield marking, sending out a message.

The next moment, five figures appeared out of nowhere in Heaven's Augury Hall. Without hesitation, they dashed out and turned into five glows of light, heading straight for the battlefield.

Among these five were both men and women, some young and some old.

They were clearly not Spirit Stream Realm cultivators; some were from the Cloud River Realm, others from the True Lake Realm.

Shui Yuan, acting to support Lu Ye, had forcibly stormed into the Spirit Stream battlefield twice. Crimson Blood Valley naturally wouldn't lack such decisiveness, but such actions required a hefty cost and also carried great risk. Therefore, under normal circumstances, cultivators from the Nine Provinces would not undertake such actions.

But with the sect's base at stake, Crimson Blood Valley could no longer care about the consequences.

The cultivation levels revealed by the five were all at the 8th Heaven level, because they had all ascended to Cloud River using 8th Heaven level cultivation back in the day. At this moment, forcibly entering meant they could only use the peak cultivation they had reached back when they were in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

In this regard, they were inferior to Shui Yuan.

Shui Yuan had ascended to Cloud River using 9th Heaven level cultivation, so the cultivation she demonstrated upon entering the Spirit Stream battlefield was at the 9th Heaven level.

It wasn't that Crimson Blood Valley didn't want to dispatch stronger individuals; it was simply that Crimson Blood Valley had none stronger.

In the Spirit Stream Realm, if one could open all 360 orifices using 9th Heaven level cultivation to ascend to Cloud River, then advancing to Divine Sea Realm was almost a certainty in the future.

But imagine how difficult it was to open all 360 orifices— even disciples from the 1st grade sects couldn't guarantee they could open all 360.

Among the cultivators at the level of the Spirit Stream Realm, very few could ascend to Cloud River using 9th Heaven level cultivation—one in a hundred.

Crimson Blood Valley was just a 5th grade sect, and these five individuals were the most capable they could muster from within their ranks in the Spirit Stream Realm, playing the most crucial roles.

The intense aura from the five pressed in, and Lu Ye immediately sensed it, looked up, spotted the five beams of light, and immediately shouted, "Be careful!"

Perhaps his shout drew their attention, the elder among the five immediately looked over, his eyes flashing with a cold intent to kill.

With the strong support of these five, Crimson Blood Valley immediately stabilized the situation. On the contrary, the attacking rhythm of the cultivators from both sects became disrupted and their previously advantageous position turned into a stalemate, and the resulting casualties significantly increased.

After all, as five combatants of the 8th Heaven level, their combined strength was sufficient to change the course of the battle.

The governor from the Crimson Blood Valley, who had been anxious, breathed a sigh of relief, but Zhao Li and Song Yin were now in a rush of panic.

Moments later, streaks of purple Thunderbolt began to swirl around the five individuals. Everyone's face showed expressions of pain, and one of the women's bodies even trembled slightly, weakening her attacks significantly.

The five of them knew the consequences of killing someone on the Spirit Stream battlefield and had mentally prepared themselves before entering, but knowing was one thing, and having never done it quite another.

They had heard that the Seal Envoy of the Righteous Blood Sect had unleashed a killing spree on the Spirit Stream battlefield, and they all felt they wouldn't be weaker than him. But it was only after they killed their first Spirit Stream Realm cultivator that they realized the matter was not as simple as they had thought.

The punishment of the Soul-Destroying Divine Lightning was not so easy to withstand. Shui Yuan could withstand it because her psyche was special. She could kill dozens of people and still seem untroubled.

This group from the Crimson Blood Valley couldn't handle it, though. They had only killed about twenty people, but they were already at their limit of endurance. They couldn't kill anymore and could only fend off attacks from two sects.

"You all hold them off, I'll go kill that Lu Yiye!" the elderly man gritted his teeth and said, his figure flickering as he pounced towards Lu Ye through the air. The intense pain in his psyche twisted his face into a ferocious expression.

Lu Ye was their main target for this incursion. As long as they could kill Lu Ye, even if the Crimson Blood Valley's post were lost, the major sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would compensate them with enough resources to not only rebuild their post but also to spare.

As the old man wielded his longsword, it was clear he was a combat cultivator. As he pounced through the air, a series of sword flashes struck at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye hastily drew out his Boulder Mountain Saber and shattered several sword flashes, yet his figure was shot up into the air by the immense force.

The old man's killing move arrived instantly. His longsword flicked like a spirit snake's tongue, stabbing towards Lu Ye's heart.

The attack was so fast that Lu Ye almost didn't react. Defense Spirit Runes hastily formed, barely blocking the strike, yet the next moment, a flurry of sword blooms blossomed before his eyes.

The advantage of a powerful psyche showed at this moment. Although Lu Ye could not see the enemy's sword move clearly, he felt a stabbing pain at several vital spots on his body, and a vast sense of crisis surged in his heart. Instinctively, he activated a few Defense Spirit Runes to protect those spots.

As the Defense Spirit Runes shattered, blood spurted from Lu Ye's body, but he was not in mortal danger. His figure plummeted straight down.

The old man's eyes showed surprise. He was using his 8th Heaven level cultivation to kill an ordinary Level 9 cultivator and hadn't managed to succeed immediately, which he found difficult to accept.

His figure shifted, dodging attacks from all directions. His longsword trembled anew, and melding body and sword light almost as one, he stabbed towards Lu Ye who was thrown into the air.

On the Spirit Stream battlefield, although he displayed only the strength of the 8th Heaven level, he indeed possessed the foundation of the True Lake Realm. Even with this one sword strike, not even the strong ones on the Spirit Stream Ranking might be able to withstand it.

Lu Ye truly couldn't block it because the strike was too fast, faster than his reaction limit. Even though he managed to deploy a Defense Spirit Rune in front which could protect most of his torso, it was pierced straight through by the sword.

The longsword entered from below his chest, passing through his body, missing his life by a mere half an inch.

Yet, he had managed to hold his breath at the critical moment, avoiding a fatal blow.

"Brother Yiye!" Zhao Li, who had been keeping an eye on Lu Ye, cried out in shock, while Song Yin ran silently towards him, intending to come to his aid.

However, it was clearly too late.

The old man didn't feel elation from not having succeeded immediately. As long as the enemy wasn't dead, he wouldn't relax a moment. His spirit force surged furiously, flowing along the longsword into Lu Ye's body, aiming to destroy his internal organs.

This move was similar to what Lu Ye did after stabbing his enemies, activating Cactus Spirit Runes; common moments when a piercing wound wasn't fatal, but suitable for minor acts that could cause lingering damage to the opponent.

Intense pain spread, and the flesh around Lu Ye's wounds squirmed. His Boulder Mountain Saber nearly ignited, fiery red spirit force clinging to it. As the saber swung, it flashed with a halo of light, and he looked at the old man who was close at hand, bringing the sabre down with a slash.

The old man frowned, abandoning his original plan. He pulled the longsword from Lu Ye's body, bringing out a spray of hot blood, and positioned his sword horizontally in front of him.

A clanging noise sounded, and sparks flew. A flash of brilliance passed over the Boulder Mountain Saber, reinforced by Hefty Weight Spirit Runes, and it was a double Hefty Weight Spirit Rune embedded by Lu Ye in the Path of Spirit Runes.

The old man's previously confident expression turned to astonishment, because in that moment, the slash from the young man's sabre felt as heavy as a thousand jun!

It didn't feel like just a sabre being slashed down but rather like a small mountain pressing down.

Caught off guard, the longsword in the old man's hand almost flew out. As a combat cultivator, he naturally wouldn't allow such a thing to happen, quickly channeling spirit force to stabilize the spiritual artifact in his hand.

Under immense pressure, he and Lu Ye fell towards the ground, their spiritual artifacts clashing and facing off, looking at each other from close range.

The old man's expression became composed again, watching Lu Ye coldly. There was no denying that the young man's performance was outstanding, even in the eyes of someone from the True Lake Realm, almost flawless. However, the gap in strength was there plainly. Since he had come to kill Lu Ye, whatever the young man did was ultimately in vain.

Then he saw a sun burst open in his field of view...

Chapter 330 Killing True Lake

Lu Ye would not typically activate the Sun Blaze Spirit Runes; when he acquired them, he felt they were a rather peculiar thing. To say they were useless was not entirely true, but to claim they were useful wasn't quite right either.

These spirit runes were only suitable to be activated under certain special circumstances.

Like at this very moment.

Under the influence of the Hefty Weight Spirit Runes, the old man's longsword met Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber, and they were mere inches apart, staring each other down.

What would it feel like to have a sun explode right under one's eyelids?

Lu Ye didn't know, because the moment he activated the spirit runes, he had already closed his eyes.

He was afraid of blinding himself.

The old man from Crimson Blood Valley wasn't so lucky. Although he also hurriedly closed his eyes upon realizing something was wrong, he was a bit late. All he could sense was a continuous change of dazzling colors—yellow, blue, purple, red—causing such a sharp pain in his eyes that tears began to flow.

It felt as if someone had fiercely struck him straight in the eyeball.

The battles of spirit runes masters were always so mysterious and unpredictable; no one knew what strange spirit runes a spirit runes master would use in the next moment. Recently, because Lu Ye had shown his ability to dismantle arrays, everyone had subconsciously overlooked the fact that he had inherited the legacy of a spirit runes master.

But even if they had remembered, it wouldn't have been of any use. In a fight against a spirit runes master, one could only counter every move as it came; reaction speed was the most important.

Lu Ye had seized the opportunity to strike with his saber, aiming for vital spots with every blow. But the True Lake Realm was worthy of its name; even with his eyes closed, the perception power of the old man was incredibly strong. Waving his longsword, he successfully blocked all of Lu Ye's attacks without missing a single one.

The last time Lu Ye activated the Sun Blaze Spirit Runes against an enemy was when he first arrived at the inner circle and encountered a Sky Supporting Sect Level 9 cultivator named Yuan Guang while out in the wilderness.

At that time, he was at Level 7.

After activating Sun Blaze, Yiyi, who had been prepared all along, had sacrificed the Nine Worlds map, capturing him and Yuan Guang inside it to fight a life-and-death battle.

The situation this time was strikingly similar to the last.

Yiyi had always followed closely beside Lu Ye, never leaving his side beyond a three yards radius. Being a magic cultivator, she could attack from a great distance, so standing by Lu Ye's side was no hindrance to striking down enemies.

When the old man from Crimson Blood Valley targeted Lu Ye, Yiyi had thought about intervening to help, but she knew that even her own attacks would not be very effective, so she was constantly looking for the right moment.

When the Sun Blaze Spirit Runes exploded, she understood Lu Ye's plan.

At that moment, she leapt into the air, positioning herself above where Lu Ye and the old man were falling, and she unfurled the Nine Worlds map forcefully above them.

The old man instinctively felt that something was amiss, but at this moment, since he could not see, he had no idea what was happening and was unexpectedly captured by Yiyi into the map without any preparation.

Yiyi leaped away to a distance, avoiding the chaotic battlefield. Amber closely followed to guard her. Then, she spread out the Nine Worlds map in front of her, watching the two figures inside while pouring her spirit force into the spirit treasure.

In the stone forest area of merely a few square miles, where the yellow sand swirled, Lu Ye's figure danced like a fluttering butterfly. Enhanced by the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, he launched swift and fierce attacks at the Crimson Blood Valley old man from various angles. If one strike didn't hit, he would retreat immediately and look for another opportunity.

The clanging and ringing of metal continuously resounded.

The old man's vision had not yet returned, he lowered his body slightly with his longsword slanted towards the ground, occasionally thrusting outwards. Each stab precisely dissipated Lu Ye's assaults.

A mere 8th Heaven level wouldn't possess such daunting abilities, but the True Lake Realm's profound depth granted the old man such capability.

What made the old man somewhat uneasy was the sudden silence around him; for some reason, all the noise nearby had disappeared.

It seemed as if the whole world revolved around just him and Lu Ye.

As Lu Ye launched another swift advance, the old man slightly turned his head, pushing his perception power to the limit. He raised his longsword again, pointing in one direction.

However, the space around him suddenly tightened this time, as if the void itself had turned somewhat solid, causing his sword-raising motion to slow by a fraction.

The old man's expression changed dramatically, and just after that, his blurred vision saw Lu Ye rush forward and slash down with his saber.

The old man's body went flying, a large wound tore from his shoulder diagonally to his lower abdomen, blood pouring from the wound. Before he even hit the ground, Lu Ye had already raised his hand and shot out four beams of Liu Guang at him. Those four rays spun and weaved, turning into a spinning top, slamming fiercely towards the old man.

In this life-and-death moment, the old man flicked his longsword continuously, and the sound of clanking metal spread as the four rays were deflected.

Just as he took a breath of relief, Lu Ye had already closed in for another attack.

Outside the Nine Worlds map, Yiyi's complexion showed a hint of paleness, tirelessly channeling her spirit force into the spirit treasure.

When Lu Ye had first arrived at the inner circle, Yiyi could only maintain the operation of the Nine Worlds map; this was under the condition that Madam Yun had sealed 90% of this treasure's powers.

Beyond keeping the treasure in operation, Yiyi could do nothing more.

But now, things were different; Yiyi could slightly leverage some of the treasure's powers.

The sudden solidification of the space around the old man, causing him to falter in his response, was Yiyi's doing.

It could be said, it appeared as though the old man was fighting Lu Ye alone, but in fact, Lu Ye also had Yiyi, an unseen ally, at his side.

The assistant this helper can provide is the most fatal.

Lu Ye's methods could be guarded against and resisted by the old man, but Yiyi's actions were completely invisible and intangible.

A moment later, within the Nine Worlds map, the old man was gasping for air, his body bearing not many injuries—only three.

But each of these three wounds was extremely severe; the most serious one was a penetrating injury from the right lung, caused by a stab. This injury alone was not deadly, but the destruction wrought by the Cactus Spirit Runes when Lu Ye thrust his blade was terrifying.

The old man's breathing now sounded like an old pair of bellows being pumped.

Staggering to his feet, his blurry vision fixed on the silhouette of the young man walking step by step towards him, coming to a halt one zhang in front of him.

Even at this point, the old man had no intention of sitting and awaiting death; summoning the last bit of strength in his body, spirit force surged violently as he thrust his sword forward.

Simultaneously, Lu Ye charged forward, his Boulder Mountain Saber enveloped by fiery red spirit force.

The two figures crossed each other, Lu Ye flicking the blood off his blade before slowly sheathing it.

A thud from a body hitting the ground sounded from behind.

The cultivators of the Nine Provinces, whether from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge or the Haotian Alliance, mostly shared one common problem: they were ruthless and taciturn. The stronger the cultivation, the more apparent this was, a result of the long-standing continuous confrontations between the two major factions.

For it didn't matter which side someone belonged to; if defeated by the other, there was virtually no chance of survival if they couldn't escape. Begging for mercy was futile.

The ground beneath the old man was dyed red with blood, his eyes wide open, filled with confusion and unwillingness.

To think that with his strong cultivation at the True Lake Realm, having forced his way into the Spirit Stream battlefield, he was supposed to root out Lu Ye, a major thorn in the side for the sect, for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. And yet, he ended up dead at Lu Ye's hands.

This was indeed a death he could not accept.

A wisp of dark red, almost black, light floated out from the old man's corpse and settled on the back of Lu Ye's hand.

This color of light, Lu Ye was seeing for the first time; in the past when defeating enemies, it was usually red light, and the difference in brightness wasn't much.

The variation in light color was clearly due to the old man's True Lake Realm cultivation; even though he could only display the strength of 8th Heaven in the Spirit Stream battlefield, it didn't change the fact that he was indeed from the True Lake Realm.

This kill was essentially a slaying across who knows how many levels.

Lu Ye checked his merit and discovered that his merit points had increased by around seven to eight hundred.

Higher-tier cultivators who forcefully entered the Spirit Stream battlefield couldn't do whatever they pleased. The balance and repression of Heaven's Augury only allowed them to exert their peak fighting ability at the Spirit Stream Realm, and each slaying brought a punishment by the Soul-Destroying Divine Lightning. The more they killed, the harsher the punishment.

Under normal circumstances, high-tier cultivators wouldn't easily enter the Spirit Stream battlefield because the cost was too great.

This time, the Crimson Blood Valley was clearly forced into a difficult position, with their stronghold about to be taken and no external assistance arriving in time. Thus, high-tier cultivators from within the sect had to take action.

Yet, even the strongest old man was still killed by Lu Ye and Yiyi with the aid of the Nine Worlds map.

If this should spread, the Crimson Blood Valley would undoubtedly become a laughingstock.

In the Nine Worlds map, Lu Ye quickly bandaged his own wounds, then collected the old man's Longsword, not seeing a storage sack, unsure if the old man hadn't brought it or didn't need one.

It was most likely the latter, considering the sect masters and Shui Yuan Sister didn't have storage sacks; they had their own methods of storing belongings.

Lifting his hand to grab the old man's mutilated corpse, the scenery before his eyes rapidly shifted, and the noisy chaos once again filled his ears.

Lu Ye looked up and saw the battle raging on not far away.

Crimson Blood Valley had already suffered heavy casualties and was on the verge of losing their stronghold, but with the entry of several powerhouses from the sect, they had managed to barely stabilize the situation.

While Lu Ye was engaged in the fight with the old man, the situation for Crimson Blood Valley worsened again.

The main problem was that the four powerhouses could no longer kill at will; all they could now do was passively defend against the assault of the two sects' cultivators.

The cultivators from both sects clearly noticed this and launched even more unrestrained attacks, infuriating those four people.

They were waiting for the old man to slay Lu Ye. Then, even if they lost their stronghold, it wouldn't matter. But they were fated not to see that happen.

Feathers spread out behind Lu Ye, he shot up into the sky, flying to the clashing sides and dropping the corpse he was carrying.

The torn cadaver of the old man slammed to the ground, splattering a large patch of blood.

The noisy battlefield suddenly went quiet for a moment, followed by a collective disbelief-filled gasps.

"Third Elder!" One of the First Blood Sect's cultivators stared at the corpse that had fallen before him, his eyes shaking violently. Looking up, he saw Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect suspended in midair, gently flapping a pair of fiery red wings behind him, blood seeping through the bandages on his bare upper body, his gaze from high above piercingly cold.

The Third Elder was dead!

No one knew exactly how he died. Too much was happening in this chaotic battlefield, and they could only focus on the enemies right in front of them. They only knew the Third Elder had gone out to find that Lu Yiye, and now, not long after, his body was thrown back by the latter.