

Humanity 351

Chapter 351

Spirit force surged throughout his body, assaulting the spiritual orifice barrier.

Accompanied by a soft sound, the barrier broke open, and the gushing spirit force flowed into the newly opened spiritual orifice.

Since Lu Ye had returned from the inner circle, a full thirty days had passed, and he had finally opened 240 orifices.

It was time to switch his Cultivation Technique.

With a thought, the Minor Circumambulation of spirit force circulating within his body gradually settled, and the flow of spirit force began to quiet down.

With each stagnation of the Minor Circumambulation, Lu Ye's cultivation level fell one level.

From the Level 9 realm down to Level 8, Level 7, until no orifice in his body was circulating anymore.

A cultivator is very vulnerable when changing Cultivation Techniques, just as Lu Ye was now. Although he had opened 240 orifices, since these spiritual orifices were not interconnected and had no systematic arrangement, Lu Ye could only exhibit much weaker strength than before. If stealthily attacked at this moment, there was a ninety percent chance he would perish.

Therefore, cultivators generally choose a secure and safe place when switching their Cultivation Techniques.

After one last review of the route of practice for the Great Sun Glazed Glass Method, Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force, starting from the Root Spiritual Orifice and sequentially penetrating through eighteen spiritual orifices to perform the Minor Circumambulation.

His cultivation recovered to the Level 1 realm.

Then he stimulated more spirit force, starting from the 19th orifice and sequentially passing through to the 45th orifice.

His cultivation recovered to the Level 2 realm.

Then from the 46th orifice to the 72nd orifice, Level 3.

From the 73rd orifice to the 108th orifice, Level 4.

Up to the 144th orifice, Level 5 realm.

Up to the 180th orifice, Level 6.

Up to the 240th orifice, Level 7!

The level of a cultivator's cultivation is directly linked to how many Minor Circumambulation systems are in their bodies. Lu Ye was now using a Heaven Rank technique, having seven Minor Circumambulation systems inside, equivalent to Level 7.

However, to distinguish it from an ordinary Level 7, Nine Provinces cultivators call those who have switched to a Heaven Rank technique as 7th Heaven Level, and henceforth, there are also 8th Heaven and 9th Heaven.

An ordinary Level 7 only opens 108 orifices, but a 7th Heaven Level opens 240 orifices. There's more than twice the number of opened orifices, naturally making the strength vastly different.

Thus, although it seemed that Lu Ye's cultivation had decreased, his strength was much more formidable than before he switched his Cultivation Technique.

Having reached this level of cultivation, if Lu Ye wished, he could choose to advance to the Cloud River Realm at any time. If he did so, he would be the Cloud River Realm member with the weakest foundation, and it would even be difficult to advance to the True Lake later on.

The more spiritual orifices opened before advancing to the Cloud River Realm, the stronger and more potent one becomes. Therefore, even though Lu Ye qualified for the Cloud River Realm, he would not choose this path; his goal was to open 360 orifices before advancing.

He believed he had the capital to do so.

Lu Ye silently felt the changes after switching his Cultivation Technique.

The changes were quite obvious. Although his body had two fewer Minor Circumambulations, the circulation speed of the newly formed Minor Circumambulations was about twice as fast as before. The spirit force flowed in them almost like a surging river.

Moreover, each Minor Circumambulation encompassed more spiritual orifices than before.

With more orifices and the increased speed of spirit force, Lu Ye could unleash stronger and more concentrated power in an instant.

Therefore, switching to a Heaven Rank technique was a qualitative leap for cultivators. Any cultivator who had switched to a Heaven Rank technique could boost their strength by at least twenty to thirty percent, if not forty to fifty percent.

This is the power of a Heaven Rank technique.

Especially since the Great Sun Glazed Glass Method Lu Ye purchased was the most suitable and expensive Heaven Rank technique for him, valued at over five thousand points of merit. There weren't many who could afford such a technique in the entire Spirit Stream battlefield.

The technique not only greatly increased Lu Ye's strength, but as the spirit force flowed through the spiritual orifices within his body, it even had a slight Body Refining effect. Simply put, even if Lu Ye did

nothing but continually operate the technique, allowing the spirit force to circulate within him, his physique would still be somewhat enhanced.

The Great Sun Glazed Glass Method was expensive for a reason.

Taking out a Spirit-Nurturing Pill, he swallowed it without stimulating the Bestial Gluttony Feast, and in no time, the effects of the elixir pill were completely digested.

After switching to a Heaven Rank technique, the speed of refining the elixir pill had also clearly accelerated, which meant an increase in Lu Ye's cultivation efficiency.

Having swallowed a few more elixir pills and examining the changes in his spirit force, he concluded that at the 7th Heaven level, if relying solely on elixir pills, each orifice would require at least forty-five pills, an improvement over the past. However, due to the increased efficiency in cultivation, the time needed to open new orifices hadn't changed much.

This was an advantage Lu Ye had had since starting his cultivation.

Other cultivators slowed down in enhancing their strength as their cultivation increased, because they needed to accumulate more, but Lu Ye's speed in opening orifices not only didn't slow down but even showed a trend of accelerating.

Now, if he dedicated himself to cultivation at his station, opening one orifice a day was absolutely stress-free for him. With a bit more effort, opening three orifices in two days was also possible.

With 240 orifices opened, he was only 120 orifices away from 360. It wasn't far off.

Taking out the Breath Fruit Core, Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force to pour into it, his mind entering that small transitional space.

Cautiously observing his surroundings, thankfully, he didn't see any of those scoundrels from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Hesitating no longer, Lu Ye quickly spent fifty merit points to enter the Mirage Realm.

He wreaked havoc! After advancing to the 7th Heaven level, the enemies in the Mirage Realm felt like none were capable of challenging him.

However, the Mirage Realm had its own ways to deal with him. If one opponent didn't work, then they'd send two; if two failed, then three. In any case, the final outcome was always that Lu Ye was driven out.

Half an hour later, Lu Ye opened his eyes.

The fierce battle in the Mirage Realm had allowed him to experience the various benefits of switching to a Heaven Rank technique, with a significant increase in his own strength and a substantial enhancement in his control over spirit force.

This was undoubtedly good news for a spirit runes master, as an increase in control over spirit force meant that constructing spirit runes would become much easier.

It was time to set off again!

Having stayed for a month, he had avoided enough limelight, and the compensation of resources from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had been settled. Now that he had advanced to the 7th Heaven level, he could not simply stay confined to his base forever.

As for the reaction from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge after his departure... who cares?

After making minimal preparations, Lu Ye returned to the sect headquarters and paid a visit to Madam Yun. When he came back, his storage sack was filled with a large batch of books on spirit runes.

Meeting with Second Senior Sister, who learned of his intention to enter the Core Circle, Shui Yuan did not say much but simply asked him to meet the sect master.

Moments later, Lu Ye stood before the sect master, reporting his purpose.

"In the 7th Heaven already?" The sect master seemed slightly stunned, recalling the first time he saw Lu Ye in Evil Moon Valley, who had just opened his orifice not long before, and on the way back to Mount Ao, he was attacked and forced to send him into the Spirit Stream battlefield. In the blink of an eye, this disciple, nearly picked up from the brink, had already reached the 7th Heaven level.

And he had even stirred up quite a storm in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

"Yes, Disciple thinks it's time to enter the Core Circle."

"What are your plans for this trip?"

"Nothing special, just to walk around and see."

When entering the inner circle, Lu Ye did not affiliate with any sect's base for cultivation, and now he didn't want to tie himself to any particular place even as he entered the Core Circle.

Some people he met previously in the Chess Sea had indeed invited him, but Lu Ye tactfully declined them all.

Given his previous experiences in the inner circle, he knew this trip into the Core Circle wouldn't be peaceful. It was inevitable that Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would constantly monitor his movements, looking for opportunities to target him.

Against this, Lu Ye was fearless.

The sect master coughed lightly, "Yiye, it's like this, didn't I bring back fifty junior brothers and sisters previously? You must also understand the origins of these fifty people."

"I've heard,"

The top fifty ranking disciples from the grand disciple recruitment ceremony of the Three Saints Sanctuary were abducted, and the Sect Master of the Three Saints, Yooi Ganju, even came to Mount Ao to duel with the sect master, which Lu Ye had witnessed with his own eyes.

"As a condition for not pursuing this incident, the Three Saints Sanctuary made a request, and I had no choice but to agree under the circumstances."

"Does it concern me?"

"The Three Saints Sanctuary wants you to affiliate with their sect after you enter the Core Circle. Their current generation of the Spirit Stream Realm is somewhat lacking, and they are not in a good position, so they'd like you to give them some support."

Lu Ye was somewhat perplexed, "They sure are bold."

In a bad situation yet still wanting him to affiliate with them, to Lu Ye, that seemed like a death wish.

The reputation of Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer was not particularly good at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. He had already made psychological preparations to face various targeting once he entered the Core Circle, hence affiliating with any sect would only bring troubles.

This was also his reason for not planning to affiliate with any sect.

What was the Three Saints Sanctuary thinking? Did they think their base wasn't under enough pressure and thus sought more excitement?

"Of course, it's up to you in the end. If you're unwilling, then don't go. As for the Three Saints Sanctuary, I have ways to handle them."

"It doesn't matter; if they want me to go, then I'll go,"

Exiting from the sect master, Lu Ye was still not quite sure what the Three Saints Sanctuary was planning.

Unable to figure it out and unwilling to think more on it, since the Three Saints Sanctuary had made such a request and the sect master had agreed, he saw no need to refuse.

After all, the sect master had snatched back fifty good seedlings from their disciple recruitment ceremony.

For this trip into the Core Circle, Amber and Yiyi would naturally join him, as well as Giant Armor, and Phong Yue.

Originally, Lu Ye planned to send Hua Ci and Phong Yue to a sect base in the Core Circle together. Now that Hua Ci had left, Phong Yue couldn't stay in the outer circle indefinitely, as there weren't many opportunities for her to earn merit here.

Sending messages around, he asked them to prepare.

Lu Ye also contacted his fourth senior brother to inquire about his orifice repair status and learned that his fourth senior brother's damaged spiritual orifices had fully recovered, relieving him at last.

Moreover, his fourth senior brother mentioned that it was fortunate he had bought two portions of orifice repair pills; otherwise, his damaged spiritual orifices would not have been mendable, as the damage had been too severe and a single pill hadn't been effective.

Chapter 352 Loyal Heart of Blue Blood

Lu Ye asked his fourth senior brother when he was planning to advance to Cloud River. The fourth senior brother mentioned that his spiritual orifice had just been repaired and he still needed some time to recuperate, so the specific time was yet to be determined.

After finishing the message with his fourth senior brother, Lu Ye appeared contemplative.

As dawn was breaking, Lu Ye stepped out of his dwelling. Outside, a few figures were waiting—Giant Armor, Yiyi, Phong Yue, and Guk Yang.

Over the month, Lu Ye had seen Giant Armor only a handful of times. He had almost always stayed in his residence cultivating during the day and went out at night with Amber to absorb the moon's essence.

Moreover, at some point, Giant Armor had advanced to the 7th Heaven level.

This was not surprising as he had long possessed the ability to advance to the 7th Heaven but had been suppressing it. Lu Ye faintly suspected that if Giant Armor truly let go now, he could even open all 360 orifices and directly advance to Cloud River.

During this period, Yiyi seldom showed herself. While Lu Ye was learning the Path of Spirit Runes from Madam Yun, she was studying magic and spells under the sect master and cultivating on her own at night.

A month had passed, and Yiyi's aura had also become significantly stronger.

"Fifth senior brother!" Phong Yue called out softly, her eyes full of gratitude.

Previously, when she had applied to Lu Ye to train in the inner circle, she had been heartlessly rejected, which had left her feeling saddened and helpless. In private, she and He Xiyang had cursed Lu Ye relentlessly.

Yet, just yesterday, she suddenly received a message instructing her to return to the sect headquarters to collect some supplies, and today, she would begin her journey to the core circle.

Only then did she realize that she had misjudged Lu Ye. Being rejected from her previous application was not because she was not favored, but rather because Lu Ye had already made arrangements.

"I hear you have many complaints against me?"

"Absolutely not!" Phong Yue declared hastily, "Being accepted by fifth senior brother despite past disagreements, I'm already immensely grateful. How dare I hold any complaints against senior brother?"

Her heart raced—where could the leak have come from?

"If you have complaints, just say them. I am not one who cannot accept criticism," Lu Ye said.

Phong Yue shook her head vehemently like a rattle-drum: "No, no, absolutely not."

Lu Ye looked at her again, then turned his attention to Guk Yang, "I'm leaving this place in your hands."

Guk Yang was there to see them off. Hearing this, he responded, "Rest assured, fifth senior brother, I will take good care of the station."

"Let's go," said Lu Ye.

Lu Ye summoned his spirit ark, Yiyi hid inside Amber, and Amber jumped onto Giant Armor's head. One by one, they boarded the spirit ark.

As the spirit force surged, the spirit ark turned into fleeing light and shot up into the sky. Guk Yang had already opened the big array in advance and watched as the fleeing light disappeared.

Originally, Lu Ye had planned to hand over his position as governor when he returned this time since the Righteous Blood Sect's station was in the outer circle. Now that his cultivation had exceeded the standards of the outer circle, continuing as governor seemed unreasonable.

The reason he had not handed over the position was not that he didn't trust others; managing the station was not difficult, requiring mostly time and energy.

Lu Ye was considering that during his trip to the core circle, he might be able to form Alliance Pacts with some of the core circle sects. Moreover, if he managed to overcome the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge

station in the core ring, he would also need this status to steal the blessings from the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Therefore, for the time being, he could not transfer the position of governor.

After advancing to the 7th Heaven level, the speed of weapon control-flying had greatly improved. With him and Giant Armor taking turns controlling the weapon, the trip to the core circle should not take many days.

On the spirit ark, Lu Ye took out a ten-part map to plan their route forward.

Currently positioned at the very front of the spirit ark, he was followed by Phong Yue, with Giant Armor sitting in a lotus position behind her. Even during flight, Giant Armor did not waste any time in his cultivation, which was an excellent attitude towards cultivation.

Phong Yue was different, located mid-air, she looked around curiously, filled with wonder.

As a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect and currently at Level 8, she could also fly with weapon control. Moreover, as a disciple, she wasn't short of Flying Spirit Artifacts. The trophies Lu Ye had brought back included various spirit artifacts. Once Righteous Blood Sect disciples achieve the requisite cultivation level, they could apply to receive one from the sect.

However, the speed and height attainable by Level 8 weapon control were limited and paled in comparison to the spectacle she was currently witnessing.

Onward, Lu Ye and Giant Armor took turns controlling the flying artifact, and they made no stops along the way.

Leaving the outer circle and entering the inner circle, their journey was smooth and uneventful.

Although it had been a month since Lu Ye had caused quite a stir in the inner circle, there were still signs of nervousness around Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

On normal days, the big sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would seal their arrays tightly, and cultivators dared not venture out for fear of encountering Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer.

Upon crossing the inner circle into the core circle, they had spent ten days on the road.

Lu Ye had long known that the Spirit Stream battlefield was vast, but even with a ten-part map, he did not have a clear understanding of just how vast it was.

Now he had seen it for himself.

With his current speed of weapon control-flying, it took ten days just to enter the core circle from the Righteous Blood Sect's station. This gave a sense of just how vast the Spirit Stream battlefield was.

Upon entering the core circle, he encountered noticeably more cultivators. These cultivators were all high above in the sky, hurrying on their way, apparently in a rush.

But no matter who it was, when they saw the fleeing light from afar, they generally avoided it, because nobody knew whether the approaching person was an enemy or if they could be defeated if they were.

So, although the number of cultivators encountered increased, overall there were still no major incidents.

Another day later, a beautifully scenic spot appeared ahead, with several spirit mountaintops standing tall and a huge valley enveloped by a big array.

It was evidently a sect's headquarters, and also the first destination of Lu Ye's journey.

The fleeing light descended, and a group of three reached the outside of the large array.

A cultivator who detected Lu Ye and his companions watched warily through the array and called out loudly, "Who comes there?"

Lu Ye stepped forward, cupping his fists and saying, "Lu Ye from the Righteous Blood Sect, at your service, Fellow Daoist. I am here to visit my Fourth Senior Brother. Please convey my message."

In fact, he could have directly messaged Li Baxian, but since his previous attempts to do so had failed, it was clear that Li Baxian was not on the Spirit Stream battlefield and must have returned to the Nine Provinces sect headquarters.

"Are you that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect?" The cultivation aura inside the array stiffened, and the cultivator sized up Lu Ye sternly.

"Indeed, I am."

The cultivator hesitated slightly and then said, "Wait here."

With that, he turned and controlled his weapon to leave.

Off to the side, Phong Yue looked around and suddenly realized, "Fifth Senior Brother, is this the Loyal Heart Sect headquarters? Are we going to affiliate and cultivate here?"

If it was the Loyal Heart Sect, that would be great. After all, the Loyal Heart Sect was a 2nd grade sect, and the Fourth Senior Brother Li Baxian was also the Deputy Governor of the Loyal Heart Sect, which meant they would definitely receive plenty of support.

"Fifth Senior Brother, is combat frequent within the Core Circle? Will people often get injured? If no one gets hurt, I'm afraid I won't earn many merits."

Phong Yue began to worry again, her concerns growing: "I'm only at Level 8, and there won't be few healing cultivators in the Loyal Heart Sect, and their cultivation levels are probably higher than mine. Even if people fight and get injured, I might not get many chances to earn merits..."

As she spoke, her voice gradually trailed off, because on either side, Lu Ye and Giant Armor were staring at her expressionlessly. Phong Yue shrank back and closed her mouth.

I really am still the least favored one...

Inside the array, two figures rode their controlled weapons back: one was the cultivator who had left earlier, and the other was a young man in his twenties wearing a green shirt.

The man in the green shirt glanced at Lu Ye, "You are Lu Yiye?"

"Lu Ye from the Righteous Blood Sect, greeting Senior Brother."

The spiritual light around the man was very dense, indicating him as a practitioner of the 9th Heaven level. His cultivation had reached this stage without ascending to Cloud River, clearly wanting to solidify his foundation first.

The man in the green shirt said indifferently, "Your Master Brother isn't here. Don't claim acquaintances at random."

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow; he had already heard from the Second Senior Sister that the disciples of the Loyal Heart Sect were not very friendly towards the Righteous Blood Sect. Seeing it for himself today proved it true.

This was indeed a problem linked to historical rifts.

In the past, the Righteous Blood and Loyal Heart Twin Swords were renowned throughout Bingzhou and echoed throughout the Nine Provinces.

During that era, both the Righteous Blood Sect and the Loyal Heart Sect were 1st grade sects with good relations, nearly as close as wearing the same trousers. Especially since there was a marriage alliance between them, with Wujiang from the Righteous Blood Sect and Qiu Min from the Loyal Heart Sect falling mutually in love, creating a pair of beauties often cited as a wonderful love story.

With this pair as an example, many cultivators from both sects became Dao companions.

However, this harmony could not last forever.

The last battle led by Wujiang involved a large army of cultivators that inflicted heavy losses on many Haotian Alliance sects, especially dealing a serious blow to both the Righteous Blood Sect and the Loyal Heart Sect. The Righteous Blood Sect faced the disaster of near annihilation, while the Loyal Heart Sect's foundation was shaken with countless powerful cultivators dying.

After that battle, the surviving disciples of the Righteous Blood Sect faced various targeted attacks in different battlefields, falling one by one. The sect leader at the time became despondent and, in order to protect the few survivors, decided to expel people like Li Baxian from the Righteous Blood Sect.

Since then, the Righteous Blood Sect stopped recruiting new disciples, gradually declining from a 1st grade sect to a Ninth Grade, almost being removed from the Heaven's Augury.

As for the Loyal Heart Sect, it fell from 1st to 3rd grade, taking twenty years to climb back to 2nd grade.

The details of the event that took place over thirty years ago were unknown to Lu Ye. He only knew that his illustrious First Senior Brother bore a significant part of the blame for the severe losses suffered by the Haotian Alliance in that battle, although he also died in that battle, with not even his bones found.

Since then, many sects that had been on good terms with the Righteous Blood Sect gradually began distancing themselves, especially the Loyal Heart Sect. As new generations took control, they became outright enemies of the Righteous Blood Sect.

The Righteous Blood and Loyal Heart thus fell apart.

Li Baxian was sent to the Loyal Heart Sect when the relations between the two sects had not yet deteriorated, and it was the widow of the Big Senior Brother who actively requested to take Li Baxian, as his age matched that of her child with Wujiang, making him a suitable companion.

As the relationship between the two sects grew strained, Li Baxian's situation in the Loyal Heart Sect also became awkward. If not for the covert care of the Big Senior Brother's widow, he would not have achieved what he has today.

Thus, for Li Baxian, the Big Senior Brother's widow was like a sister and a mother to him.

And her child with the Big Senior Brother was Yuechan, who was now the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking, truly a case of the apple not falling far from the tree.

Chapter 353 Kicking up a Fuss

Lu Ye learned all this from his Second Senior Sister, so he had always been aware that his fourth senior brother's situation at the Loyal Heart Sect was not too good.

The battle in which Li Baxian's spiritual orifice was destroyed indeed involved some top sects from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge causing trouble, but it was not without the tacit consent of the Loyal Heart Sect.

Simply because he was from the Righteous Blood Sect, he was constantly targeted by various sects from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Even though he joined the Loyal Heart Sect when he was very young, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had no intention of letting him go; consequently, even the disciples of the Loyal Heart Sect often suffered from being targeted.

It wasn't until after Li Baxian's spiritual orifice was destroyed that these targeted actions gradually ceased.

Of course, no one knew the exact role the Loyal Heart Sect played in the battle where Li Baxian's spiritual orifice was destroyed; this matter was now impossible to investigate further. All of these were Shui Yuan's conjectures and couldn't be taken as certain.

Regardless, it was true that Li Baxian's situation in the Loyal Heart Sect was not good.

He was nominally the Deputy Governor of the Loyal Heart Sect, but in reality, the Loyal Heart Sect only treated him as a gatekeeper.

His strength was formidable; with him stationed at the base, even those 1st grade sects from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge dared not provoke him without cause.

He rarely had opportunities to leave; most of the time, he stayed within his station.

Unable to leave freely meant he couldn't earn merits. Otherwise, with Li Baxian's abilities, how could he not have accumulated enough merits for an orifice repair pill after more than a decade?

In the previous battle at the Golden Light Peak, Li Baxian left his station without authorization and was confined upon his return to the Loyal Heart Sect, thus he was punished.

Putting aside this historical grudge, let's talk about the present.

Feng Yuechan, because of Li Baxian's sake, sealed her cultivation for over a decade without seeking to advance to the Cloud River Realm, which also caused dissatisfaction among many in the Loyal Heart Sect.

The elders were discontent with Li Baxian, and the younger generation was influenced by this, naturally lacking a favorable impression of him and thinking he was the one dragging down Feng Yuechan.

Outside the big array, as Lu Ye looked at the man in green with an unfriendly demeanor, he spoke up again, "I'm here to see my fourth senior brother, please do me the favor of passing on the message. A few words and I'll be gone."

He came to the Loyal Heart Sect's station, naturally not to seek affiliation for his cultivation.

Knowing that the people from the Loyal Heart Sect had a poor attitude toward disciples of the Righteous Blood Sect, why would he come here to ask for trouble? He just had some things that he hoped to clarify in front of his fourth senior brother.

"What does someone from the Righteous Blood Sect want with our Loyal Heart Sect's fourth senior brother? The Loyal Heart Sect does not have the person you're looking for!"

"Li Baxian..."

"Li Baxian is a disciple of the Loyal Heart Sect, not your fourth senior brother. Do not bring this up again in the future!"

Lu Ye watched him expressionlessly for a while, and the other party returned the gaze without showing any weakness.

As cultivators of the Haotian Alliance, Lu Ye had never encountered such an uncompromising one before; normally, regardless of which sect they came from, if they belonged to the Haotian Alliance, even if they didn't know each other, their interactions would be courteous.

Of course, schemers like Sima Yang were a different story.

Lu Ye raised his hand to touch the battlefield marking on himself and began to search for Feng Yuechan's marking.

In the Chess Sea, he and Feng Yuechan had also exchanged markings, so he could contact her just the same at this time.

Either his fourth senior brother or Feng Yuechan would be in the station.

As long as he could contact Feng Yuechan, he would naturally be able to contact Li Baxian.

Before Lu Ye could find Feng Yuechan's marking, the man in green from the big array shouted impatiently, "The Loyal Heart Sect's station is no place for idlers, leave quickly, or don't blame me for being rude!"

Lu Ye's movement paused, he looked up at the other person, and continued his action, but this time he selected Shui Yuan's marking, "Second Senior Sister."

Although Shui Yuan was at the Nine Provinces sect headquarters, because she was the Righteous Blood Sect's Seal Envoy, Lu Ye could still contact her even across a division of heaven and earth.

"I'm here."

"Help me contact fourth senior brother, tell him I'm outside the Loyal Heart Sect station."

"Okay."

As this round of messaging ended, the man in green from within the big array shouted again, "Aren't you leaving yet!"

Lu Ye activated the Insight Spirit Runes and observed the big array before him. He quickly located a node of the big array nearby, his figure flashed to that node, and he flipped out several array banners from his hand.

Seeing this scene, both the man in green and the cultivator who had previously delivered the message were stunned. Both had the same question suddenly pop up in their minds: what in the world was Lu Yiye intending to do?

As the array banners were placed, Lu Ye urged his spirit force.

The man in green finally realized what was happening. Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer actually intended to break the array, and immediately, he exclaimed furiously, "How audacious, it seems you prefer the penalty to the toast!"

With that, he stepped out of the big array, his spirit force surging around his body in an instant, revealing his 9th Heaven level cultivation clearly. Spirit force gathered before him, and his magic began to take shape rapidly.

However, before he could unleash his spell, a bright flash of a blade passed before him. A stream of fiery red spirit force flowed, shattering the nearly formed spell instantly. His chest felt a stab of pain, startling him into hastily retreating and pulling back into the protective array.

The protective array was capable of blocking outside sect cultivators from entering and exiting, but if one were a cultivator from the sect itself and bore the battlefield marking, they could come and go freely. Thus, when the man in the green shirt entered and exited, the operation of the big array was not affected.

After retreating back inside the array and looking down, his face showed shock because his chest was slashed open, and blood quickly seeped out.

He frantically checked his injuries to confirm that it was just a superficial wound and then he calmed down.

"Senior Brother Woo..." A cultivator by his side called out tensely.

The man in green, Senior Brother Woo, looked up and could not help but bellow, "How presumptuous!"

It wasn't without reason; after Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer forced him back with a single strike, he had actually cut an opening in his home's protective array, as if lifting a curtain, and casually entered.

No one had ever barged into the big array of his homestead without permission before; Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect had set a precedent!

This was a blatant provocation.

Stepping into the array, Lu Ye looked towards Giant Armor and tilted his head as a gesture.

Giant Armor strode forward and followed him inside.

Phong Yue was dumbfounded. The series of shocks had fully woken her from her daydream; her Fifth Senior Brother had not taken her here to affiliate for cultivation—this was clearly a challenge!

This was the territory of a 2nd grade sect, the Loyal Heart Sect!

How audacious and reckless!

Suddenly, two pairs of eyes looked directly at her; it was Lu Ye and Giant Armor who had already walked into the array.

Phong Yue trembled, "I... I... I'll wait for you outside!"

She dared not enter this dangerous place; even ten lives wouldn't be enough if she really ventured in.

Giant Armor turned around and stepped out, his fan-like hand grasping the nape of her neck and lifting her into the array.

Having just steadied herself, intense waves of spirit force surged nearby, followed by an angry, stormy voice: "You dare to ambush me!"

Senior Brother Woo, in his green shirt, was clearly frantic. His original plan to step out of the array and stop Lu Ye had failed as he was forced back by a single strike. He found it humiliating to be so effortlessly repelled given his 9th Heaven level of cultivation facing Lu Ye, a mere 7th Heaven level combat cultivator.

But, being ambushed was something he couldn't help.

Fortunately, he was now fully prepared; as he shouted, numerous magic and spells took shape and enveloped the skies, hurtling towards where Lu Ye and Giant Armor stood.

Phong Yue felt her heart go cold in an instant, watching as relentless attacks bore down on her, and she had no means to defend herself. All she could do was close her eyes and wait for death.

Just as she thought so, a tall figure stepped in front of her, robust blood Qi and spirit force began to stir, accompanied by a series of heavy thuds. The towering figure in front of her vibrated slightly, forming a sturdy barrier.

In that moment, all Phong Yue could see was the figure shielding her from the storm, a sense of security she had never before felt blossomed within her.

Senior Brother Woo, with his 9th Heaven level of cultivation and undoubtedly vast combat experience, had not opted for those powerful magic and spells; because the distance between him and Lu Ye was not great, to deal with a combat cultivator like Lu Ye, he needed to prevail with smaller magic.

Compared to those with immense power, smaller spells had faster casting speed and a higher frequency of attacks, which were most suitable for the current situation.

Then he witnessed an unforgettable scene—Lu Ye's speed suddenly accelerated to the point of leaving afterimages, weaving through the multitude of spells. Almost in the blink of an eye, he had evaded all attacks, and the distance of over a dozen yards between them was closed to just three in a flash.

The long saber, cloaked in fiery red spirit force, swept out a deadly arc, and Senior Brother Woo was overcome with panic. Spirit force surged around his body in a mighty rush to expand outwards in all directions, aiming to push Lu Ye back.

Having fought so many magic cultivators, Lu Ye was already on guard against their tactics.

Spells like this, designed to push close-range enemies away, were similar to the spirit force barriers of magic cultivators, a skill every magic cultivator was proficient in. The closer one was to a magic cultivator, the stronger the repelling force. However, as long as one maintained a safe distance, such a spell was of little use.

His forward charge momentarily stalled, and after waiting for Senior Brother Woo's spell to finish, Lu Ye approached again.

"What rich combat experience, how many magic cultivators has he fought?" Senior Brother Woo inwardly exclaimed. As he saw the other's saber slashing across, he instinctively ducked.

He dared not lift his head—failing to do so would mean losing his head. Then he saw a knee ascending rapidly from below.

The strike seemed as though he had willingly thrust his head towards it.

Bang...

The impact sounded, and Senior Brother Woo spun through the air before crashing heavily to the ground.

Stars danced before his eyes, and his forehead throbbed excruciatingly. Senior Brother Woo suspected his skull had cracked. He scrambled to get up, only to feel a flaming blade pressed against his forehead.

Looking along the blade, he saw Lu Yiye standing calmly to the side, looking down on him from a superior position.

Senior Brother Woo's eyelids twitched. To be honest, he couldn't fathom how he had lost because the fight had been too brief, so brief that he hadn't been able to exert his full strength before being bewilderingly subdued.

Recalling his earlier eagerness to teach the other a lesson, now the tables had turned, and he was the one being schooled.

"Senior Brother Woo!" The 7th Heaven level cultivator by the side called out again.

Chapter 354 I Was Picked Up (Thanks to the reward from Alliance Hierarch pft0)

"If you have the guts, kill me!" Senior Brother Woo gritted his teeth and glared at Lu Ye, his backbone undeniable. With 9th Heaven-level cultivation, losing to a 7th Heaven, and to someone much younger than him at that, there was nothing left to say.

Lu Ye sheathed his saber, spun around, and delivered a side kick to the temple of Senior Brother Woo. The brutal force shattered a hastily formed spirit force barrier. Senior Brother Woo was sent flying again, but this time, he couldn't get up and instead fell unconscious.

Though the fight was brief, the violent eruption of spirit force fluctuations had attracted the attention of the Loyal Heart Sect cultivators. Several figures swiftly approached from not far off.

Arriving on the scene and catching sight of their own Senior Brother Woo lying potentially dead not far off, and three unfamiliar figures within the big array—one of them still holding a saber amidst swirling spirit force.

"Enemy attack!" someone shouted immediately.

In an instant, the entire Loyal Heart Sect encampment was in uproar, with figures from all directions rushing towards the scene.

At the same time as the call to arms, the first few who arrived didn't hesitate to attack Lu Ye. It didn't matter who had come or how they had entered their big array, with Senior Brother Woo beaten as he was, they were the enemy.

The first strikes of weapon control gleamed, continuously tearing through the air.

Lu Ye's longsword tapped rapidly, the Boulder Mountain Saber nearly transforming into a blur of afterimages, precisely deflecting every Spiritual Artifact that attacked, enhanced by Move-Like-The-Wind. His form was as fast as thunder, shuttling back and forth across the area.

The sound of hissing, splashing blood, and muffled groans filled the air.

Even in the Core Circle, the number of 9th Heaven-level cultivators was limited because once cultivation reached that level, significant advancements were hardly possible. Those who hoped to climb to the Spirit Stream Ranking would challenge it, while those with no such hope would usually settle for a while before seeking promotion to Cloud River.

For example, the Senior Brother Woo knocked out by Lu Ye was exactly like that.

This settling period could be as short as ten days or as long as two to three months, depending on the cultivator's choice.

Moreover, even those who made it to the Spirit Stream Ranking wouldn't stay in the Spirit Stream Realm for long.

Thus, a peculiar phenomenon arose: the turnover rate on the Spirit Stream Ranking was exceptionally high, almost changing every few months.

Except for the top three rankers, who were steadfast...

The first few Loyal Heart Sect cultivators to rush over had levels between 7th and 8th Heaven. Given Lu Ye's current strength, dealing with them wasn't too difficult; the only real challenge was their numerical advantage.

The few were repelled, each bearing injuries and their expressions growing increasingly grave.

There was no question about it, as Lu Ye fought, his cultivation level was on full display. They had never seen such a formidable 7th Heaven-level cultivator.

But soon, more Loyal Heart Sect disciples joined in the siege.

Amber roared and showed its true body, which had grown larger than before. Its pale golden demon Qi nearly solidifying around it, its roars causing a few approaching cultivators to become dizzy and disoriented.

Yiyi also dashed forward, releasing magic and spells in all directions. The speed and quantity of her spellcasting were astonishing.

Giant Armor stood silently behind Lu Ye, his hands gathering a large mass of spirit force that materialized into a tortoise-shell-like barrier, raised in front of him, blocking attacks from behind.

More and more Loyal Heart Sect cultivators gathered, and Lu Ye could no longer afford to take initiative. From his supplies box, nine Spiritual Artifacts flew out in succession, sweeping in all directions, their number and craftsmanship breathtaking.

Seen from above, three people and a tiger were now completely surrounded by numerous Loyal Heart Sect cultivators, with the glow of magic and weapon control colliding continuously in mid-air.

The Loyal Heart Sect's offensive surged like relentless waves, assault after assault deflected time and again.

"Surrender or I'll kill her!" a furious roar suddenly came from the sky.

Lu Ye and the others looked up together only to see a Loyal Heart Sect disciple who had inexplicably captured Phong Yue, a longsword at her pale throat, the sharp blade drawing a line of bright red blood.

Phong Yue was clearly frightened.

After a brief silence, Lu Ye and the others retracted their gaze and continued to fend off attacks from all directions, occasionally counterattacking.

The disciple holding Phong Yue was baffled.

Phong Yue, tearful and helpless, said, "Big brother, do I look like I'm with them? They picked me up along the way, boo-hoo."

She regretted deeply why she had followed Lu Ye to the Core Circle, when, with her cultivation level, she should have entered the inner circle.

It was bad enough to enter the Core Circle, but to come directly to the site of the Loyal Heart Sect and kick up such a fuss? Had their Fifth Brother's head been kicked by a donkey?

Now, surrounded and attacked by so many, it seemed likely that they would all die here.

Meanwhile, in the Heaven's Augury Hall, a graceful and handsome figure materialized; it was Li Baxian, who had arrived responding to Shui Yuan's transmitted message.

Junior Brother Lu had come to the Loyal Heart Sect site, and he was delighted. Just as he was pondering how to entertain Junior Brother Lu, he sensed something amiss in the encampment. Disordered spirit force fluctuations were coming from a certain direction, accompanied by sounds of intense combat.

Li Baxian's expression changed, and he immediately flashed out of the Heaven's Augury Hall.

"Senior Brother." Feng Yuechan greeted him as she waited at the entrance to Heaven's Augury Hall.

Li Baxian felt a sense of unease in his heart, and without correcting Feng Yuechan's address, he frowned and said, "Is someone attacking our base?"

It had been many years since he had encountered such a situation. Ever since he and Feng Yuechan both made it onto the Spirit Stream Ranking, the Loyal Heart Sect's base had been as solid as a rock, to the point where even 1st grade sects dared not provoke them casually.

"No." Feng Yuechan grabbed Li Baxian's hand and flew up into the sky with her weapon control.

Li Baxian used his Ocular Power to look ahead, and immediately his expression changed. "Junior Brother!"

The base was not under attack; rather, it was their own junior brother who was being besieged by Loyal Heart Sect cultivators, in a perilously dangerous situation.

As he finished speaking, Li Baxian was about to dash over but was held back by Feng Yuechan.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Has Senior Brother considered why Junior Brother Lu would come to the Loyal Heart Sect and cause such trouble? After all, he is from the Righteous Blood Sect. It doesn't make sense for him to stir up trouble here without a reason," she said.

Li Baxian said, "Saving him is more important."

Though it was strange to him how Junior Brother could have ended up fighting with Loyal Heart Sect cultivators, now was clearly not the time to pursue the reasons; stopping the fight was the logical priority.

"Junior Brother Lu and the others are not in life-threatening danger. Did Senior Brother not notice that our sect disciples are not killing?" Feng Yuechan pointed out.

Hearing this, Li Baxian realized what was happening. He had been too anxious earlier to notice that although surrounded by so many cultivators, if Loyal Heart Sect cultivators truly wanted to kill, Lu Ye and his peers simply would not have been able to withstand the attack.

But the Loyal Heart Sect's cultivators, despite their aggressive tactics, were all aiming to capture Lu Ye and the others alive, which was why they'd managed to hold out till now.

"Was it an order from you?" Li Baxian came to the realization.

Feng Yuechan nodded her head.

"What's going on?" Li Baxian was somewhat puzzled.

Feng Yuechan said, "Senior Brother is such a clever person. Can't you see Junior Brother Lu's good intentions? He came here specifically to find you, probably wanting to tell you something. It just happened that our sect's cultivators were giving him a hard time, and things escalated from there."

Li Baxian's gaze flickered, realizing something. "What did you tell him?"

"I haven't contacted Junior Brother Lu," Feng Yuechan pinched Li Baxian's hand, "There's no need for Senior Brother to show himself. I'll handle this."

Although she had secretly ordered that Loyal Heart Sect disciples must not harm the newcomers, accidents could always happen. She hadn't intervened right away because she wanted Li Baxian to arrive and witness the scene for himself.

With that, she moved swiftly, reaching the battlefield in an instant.

"Stop, all of you!" Floating in mid-air, Feng Yuechan spoke softly yet commandingly.

It must be said, Feng Yuechan, as the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking at the Loyal Heart Sect, held considerable sway there. Following her command, those Loyal Heart Sect disciples besieging Lu Ye and his peers immediately retreated, many bearing injuries, and some even had swollen, bruised faces from being punched by Lu Ye or Giant Armor.

The Loyal Heart Sect disciples were having a tough time, just as Lu Ye was in a miserable state, his body covered in numerous wounds, his clothes soaked with blood.

The sight was wretched, but fortunately, none of the injuries were severe.

As for Giant Armor, he was completely unscathed.

"So many of you attacking a few people, yet this is the outcome. Loyal Heart Sect cultivators, you truly are commendable, living up to the sect's years of teaching," Feng Yuechan said softly, causing the involved Loyal Heart Sect cultivators to feel embarrassed and ashamed.

Despite her orders not to kill influencing the Loyal Heart Sect disciples to hold back, the numerical advantage was clear, and considering the relatively low cultivation levels of Lu Ye and his peers, the outcome was embarrassing for the Loyal Heart Sect cultivators, unable to save face.

"Our sect has been too comfortable for too long with me and Senior Brother Li protecting the base. You've probably forgotten how to fight by now. What would you do if one day Senior Brother Li and I are no longer here and enemies invade? Are you planning to just wait for death?"

A group of Loyal Heart Sect cultivators blushed and bowed their heads in silence at the scolding.

"Outsiders always say that with me and Senior Brother Li at the Loyal Heart Sect base, it is impregnable, but they fail to see the current state of the Loyal Heart Sect. Everyone thinks that with support from above, they can relax in their cultivation. With your current shape, even if you open more orifices and ascend to Cloud River, you would simply be slain on the Cloud River battlefield."

Feng Yuechan then turned her head to another side. "And you! Unable to win a fight, you resort to bullying the weak and taking hostages? Is this what the Loyal Heart Sect has taught you? Treating Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators with all means is one thing, but who are they? They're from the Haotian Alliance!"

The cultivator holding Phong Yue shrank his neck, "Sister, I didn't mean to—"

"Stop making excuses. If you were truly capable, you would confront those you should be confronting. Taking a weak woman as a hostage, and she's a healing cultivator at that—what kind of man does that make you?" Feng Yuechan's words were harsh, causing the cultivator's face to flush red, and he let go of Phong Yue.

Phong Yue quickly jumped aside, gratefully glancing at Feng Yuechan. The Core Circle... so perilous. She wanted to return to the Righteous Blood Sect's base.

Chapter 355 The Dignity of a Physique Cultivator

"Senior Sister, I want to challenge him!"

In the silent atmosphere, the scolded cultivator suddenly raised his hand, pointing to Lu Ye who was munching on a spirit elixir pill, his cheeks puffing with each chew.

"Are you his match?"

"Whether I'm a match or not, we'll only know if we fight!" the cultivator retorted, neck stiff.

Feng Yuechan's lips slightly curled up, "You wish to challenge him, but that also depends on whether he is willing."

As she spoke, she lowered her head to look at Lu Ye.

Their eyes met, and Lu Ye slightly raised his eyebrows, showing a look of inquiry.

Feng Yuechan imperceptibly nodded her head.

The silent communication was completed in that instant, and Lu Ye suddenly realized that this Senior Sister Feng was indeed a remarkable person, clearly aware of his true intention had come to Loyal Heart Sect.

"Alright," Lu Ye nodded.

Feng Yuechan turned to look at a female cultivator standing nearby, "Help him heal."

This female cultivator was likely a healing cultivator, with cultivation not low, probably around 8th Heaven level.

"No need!" Lu Ye said this, tearing off his tattered shirt, hastily wiping off the blood stains on his body before tossing the blood-soaked garment aside. He then raised his Boulder Mountain Saber, pointing it towards the cultivator who wanted to challenge him, "Come on!"

The cultivator bellowed angrily, his spirit force surging around his body, launching an attack with a controlled weapon first as he closed the distance to Lu Ye in a few strides, thrusting a long spear straight at him.

Having seen Lu Ye's various techniques just now, he knew he was no match, so he went all out as soon as he made his move.

Spirit force gathered on the long spear, releasing three flashes of spear blooms in Lu Ye's view, accompanied by the killing intent of the controlled weapon.

With a clatter, the controlled weapon and the long spear were both sent flying, and the cultivator's figure was thrown back as well.

At the same 7th Heaven level, this person couldn't even block a single strike from Lu Ye. As the long spear flew out of his hand, his palms split open, blood spilling forth.

His falling body was caught by his fellow sect members, his arms trembling violently as his eyes filled with disbelief looking at Lu Ye.

He knew he was no match, but he hadn't expected to be defeated so thoroughly. If Lu Ye had really wanted his life, he would have been dead by now.

"Next!" Lu Ye spun his longsword, speaking indifferently.

As his words fell, the cultivators of Loyal Heart Sect were in an uproar.

From Lu Ye's words, it was clear he intended to challenge all of them by himself! Such arrogance was unbearable, especially compared to their previous joint effort defeat against the Righteous Blood Sect, Lu Ye's current defiance was even more intolerable.

"I'm up!"

This time, almost without waiting for Feng Yuechan to speak, a cultivator leapt out.

Yet as he just steadied his stance, his vision blurred, and Lu Ye's face appeared right before his, nearly nose to nose.

Startled, as he was about to disengage and create distance, a powerful blow hit his abdomen, sending him flying back the way he had come, crashing heavily into the crowd.

Lu Ye retracted his kicking foot, expressionless, stood firmly on his spot, while the group of Loyal Heart Sect cultivators gritted their teeth in resentment.

"Those of the 7th Heaven and 8th Heaven shouldn't embarrass themselves. Those of the 9th Heaven, step forward!" Feng Yuechan's voice rang out.

A burly physique cultivator pushed through the crowd, slowly advancing to a spot not far from Lu Ye, his expression grave as he took a defensive spirit artifact shield from his storage sack. With spirit force infusion, the small shield held in his hand suddenly expanded, transforming into a barrier that shielded his entire body.

Then the physique cultivator slightly crouched down, assuming a stance ready to charge, his feet explosively propelled him off the ground, shooting like an arrow towards Lu Ye.

Lu Ye inhaled slightly, and, just as his opponent was about to close in, the Boulder Mountain Saber blazed with firelight, striking the spiritual artifact shield three times.

With each strike, a brilliant flash passed over the Boulder Mountain Saber.

After three strikes, the spirit light on the shield immediately dimmed, and the body of the small shield in the physique cultivator's hand cracked.

With a boom, at the moment of collision, Lu Ye's figure, unable to stop his momentum, was driven backwards, leaving two deep marks on the ground with his feet.

The momentum of the physique cultivator was also halted, and in that instant, he felt as if he had hit a wall, his heart shocked; his opponent's physical strength matched his own!

"Is he a combat cultivator?" he wondered, and before he could finish his thought, the retreating Lu Ye charged forward again, the Boulder Mountain Saber aiming a direct stab at the shield in his hands.

The physique cultivator tried to dodge, but he simply didn't react quickly enough, and could only desperately channel spirit force, holding the spiritual artifact in an attempt to resist.

With a crash...

Under the shocked gaze of everyone, the small shield shattered into pieces, scattering fragments as the thrusting Boulder Mountain Saber pierced into the physique cultivator's chest, penetrating three inches deep.

The smell of charred flesh spread as a muffled groan was heard, the physique cultivator looked down at the Boulder Mountain Saber wrapped in flames, his eyes trembled violently.

Lu Ye withdrew his saber, pulling with it a spray of hot blood. The physique cultivator staggered back, and a healing cultivator hastily supported him; the physique cultivator shook his head, signaling that he was alright. Lu Ye's strike, if a mere inch deeper, would have pierced his heart, but such an injury was minor for a physique cultivator.

The scene fell silent, as they had previously surrounded and attacked Lu Ye knowing he was strong, but they never imagined he would be this powerful.

In a battle between a combat cultivator and a physique cultivator, the best strategy was to create distance and use controlled weapons, because in physical strength, combat cultivators were inferior to physique cultivators, and getting too close could lead to disadvantages.

But what had they seen? A combat cultivator had smashed a physique cultivator's defensive artifact to bits!

A physique cultivator's defensive spirit artifact was their pride!

Now, this dignity had been shattered and trampled on the ground.

The visual impact of this battle was unimaginable for everyone.

After a brief silence, another 9th Heaven cultivator stepped forward, his head slightly lowered, holding a longsword in his hand. His attire marked him as a combat cultivator, but whether he was a sword cultivator was unknown—not everyone holding a sword was a sword cultivator.

This person didn't speak a word, but his speed kept increasing, and within a few steps, he moved as swiftly as a thunderbolt.

When the sword light surged, his figure enveloped in the sword light became one with the sword, turning into a sword flash stabbing toward Lu Ye.

Although this sword seemed unadorned, it was a true life-risking strike. The fierceness almost solidified into substance, making Lu Ye feel as if needles were pricking his entire body.

This person was a genuine sword cultivator!

The sword flash arrived in an instant, and by then, Lu Ye's eyes displayed Insight Spirit Runes; simultaneously, a sturdy Defense Spirit Rune appeared in front of him.

Ding...

A faint sound transmitted as the longsword met the Defense Rune, followed by a continuous clanging. In that instant, the sword cultivator had struck countless times.

Even as Lu Ye diligently operated his spirit force to maintain the Defense Rune, it was covered with cracks.

With a crash, the Defense was shattered, and as the sword light brushed past Lu Ye, he slashed down with his saber.

The two figures stood back to back, motionless.

Everyone's hearts leaped to their throats.

Ssst... A spurt of fresh blood gushed from the side of Lu Ye's neck, where a new wound had formed.

Behind him, the sword cultivator's body swayed slightly before thudding to the ground.

The healing cultivator from Loyal Heart Sect hurriedly came forward to check, only to find that the sword cultivator was simply drained of strength and exhausted, also injured but with no risk to his life, relieving them.

The cultivators of the Loyal Heart Sect looked at Lu Ye with complex eyes. If previously they were just irritated and angry, now there was a hint of respect.

No matter the relationship between Righteous Blood Sect and Loyal Heart Sect or whether Lu Ye was from Righteous Blood Sect or not, a Level 7 cultivator achieving this extent was enough to earn everyone's respect.

Just to realize, the two 9th Heaven cultivators who fought were among the strongest in the Spirit Stream Realm ranks of Loyal Heart Sect, excluding Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan.

The fact that one after another was not his match under such relentless attacks, if not witnessed with their own eyes, would indeed be unbelievable.

Watching the youth standing there, holding a sabre, covered in blood, the many cultivators of Loyal Heart Sect seemed to see a rising star.

Another silently stepped out from the crowd.

Despite their respect and knowledge that such a fight was unfair, today's battle concerned the honor of Loyal Heart Sect, and they wouldn't be content until Lu Ye was beaten down.

"Enough!" Feng Yuechan spoke indifferently, "Isn't this embarrassing enough?"

The cultivator who had stepped forward was silent for a moment, then retreated back into the crowd.

"All of you, go back and reflect properly. The sect spares no resources for you, yet do you truly deserve the sect's offering."

The group of cultivators silently saluted Feng Yuechan, then dispersed with heavy hearts.

Before this day, they had taken pride in being cultivators of Loyal Heart Sect for, although it was a 2nd grade sect, at the Spirit Stream battlefield's base, even the 1st grades of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge dared not provoke them lightly.

This was something no other 2nd grade sect could achieve.

Yet today, they had indeed been struck a blow, as a Level 7 cultivator from Righteous Blood Sect—a mere 9th grade sect—had nearly trounced their 9th Heaven cultivators.

This was a humiliation all must remember.

To wash away this disgrace, they had only to strive harder and strike back.

After the Loyal Heart Sect cultivators dispersed, Feng Yuechan then descended.

"Senior Sister Feng," Lu Ye sheathed his saber and bowed.

"First heal your wounds, then change into clean clothes, and I'll take you to meet your Fourth Senior Brother."

"Okay." Indeed, his current state was hardly suitable for meeting anyone, and though he had seemingly easily taken that sword cultivator's strike, it had nearly sent him to the brink of death.

The sword cultivator had concentrated all his power into that one strike, then collapsed with exhaustion afterward—obviously, it was a secret technique, not something just readily received.

At this moment, Lu Ye's chest was in turmoil, his spirit force swirling uncontrollably, difficult to calm in short order.

If another 9th Heaven cultivator came to challenge him, he would undoubtedly lose.

Feng Yuechan must have seen this, thus stopping the challenge from that third 9th Heaven cultivator. She wanted to use Lu Ye to discipline her own cultivate(...)

Chapter 356 Brothers Chatting

A few moments later, everyone gathered and took their seats in front of a massive wooden post.

The post was flat and smooth, perfectly serving as a dining table.

The table was laden with a dazzling array of dishes, complete with both appealing colors and enticing aromas.

Giant Armor was unceremonious and had already begun to eat heartily.

Lu Ye tasted a few bites, raised his eyebrows, and said with surprise, "Senior Brother's cooking skills are no less than Second Senior Sister's."

Li Baxian smiled, "On ordinary days, I just ponder about what to cook."

Feng Yuechan hummed softly from the side, "Senior Brother is the laziest. It's not easy to eat his cooking usually, today is only thanks to Junior Brother Lu."

"Junior Brother Lu is here, we can't spill my secrets," Li Baxian cajoled, helping Feng Yuechan with a serving of dishes.

"Thank you, Senior Brother," Feng Yuechan smiled, her eyes squinting joyfully.

Li Baxian sighed, not bothering to correct her form of address anymore, and turned to look at Lu Ye, "How are your injuries?"

"It's nothing serious, Senior Sister Feng must have given a heads-up. The brothers from the Loyal Heart Sect all knew how to hold back."

"Then let's have a drink with Senior Brother."

As he spoke, Li Baxian took out several jars of fine wine from his storage sack.

At the table, there was not much conversation; only Li Baxian and Lu Ye chatted off and on casually.

After a full meal, Giant Armor sat idly, rubbing his belly, while Feng Yuechan, along with Yiyi and Phong Yue, cleaned up.

Sitting atop a protruding rock of the Eagle Beak Cliff, Li Baxian and Lu Ye each held a jar of wine, one standing, one sitting, facing the setting sun's afterglow.

"Junior Brother has now entered the inner circle; what are your plans next?"

"I need to go to the Three Saints Sanctuary's premises," Lu Ye replied.

"The Three Saints Sanctuary?" Li Baxian echoed.

"The sect master had previously snatched fifty disciples from the Three Saints Sanctuary, which led their sect master to chase him to our sect headquarters. They even fought a duel," Lu Ye explained briefly.

Upon hearing this, Li Baxian couldn't help but his eyelid twitch, "The old man is really bold, committing such acts. His lifetime of reputation could have been ruined in one fell swoop. It seems he really plans to develop the Righteous Blood Sect properly."

"The compensation from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge arrived recently. The disciples' cultivation expenses are well covered. With enough talent, the sect will keep on improving. Have you thought about coming back?"

Li Baxian chuckled, "What have you heard?"

"I feel it's unfair to you," Lu Ye expressed.

Li Baxian patted Lu Ye's shoulder and sat next to him, "There's not much fairness in this world. Also, whatever you've heard, it's from Second Senior Sister who considers things from my perspective; naturally, she sees only the mistreatment I've faced."

He took a gulp of wine and said slowly, "Not to mention others, but just for the kindness of the Loyal Heart Sect in taking me in, I can't turn my back and tarnish anyone's reputation. Of course, the Loyal Heart Sect now is different from the past, but that doesn't concern me. I just need to do my part."

"The battle where your spiritual orifice was breached... was it related to the Loyal Heart Sect?"

"I've investigated over the years, there's no direct connection. That battle was mainly because I was careless, and also I was too arrogant and young back then. I believed that if the cultivators of the world had ten measures of talent, I, Li Baxian, possessed eleven; everyone else owed me one..."

Even with Lu Ye's calm demeanor, he couldn't help but laugh out loud at this statement, nearly spraying out his drink.

"I hope that you, Junior Brother, can take this as a cautionary tale," Li Baxian advised.

Lu Ye nodded seriously, "I will remember."

"The cultivation world is full of emerging talents; never feel you can defeat everyone. Our eldest senior brother was exceptionally gifted yet still met a tragic end, leaving behind only pity for his wife and Yuechan."

"Speaking of our senior sister-in-law..."

"She's an extraordinary woman, and you'll get to meet her if there's a chance," Li Baxian interrupted.

Before Lu Ye could correct his misunderstanding, he clasped his fists in front of him, thumbs up then curved slightly and moved together, gesturing meaningfully at Li Baxian.

"Senior sister-in-law has shown me immense kindness and even the grace of nurturing."

"So, Senior Brother and Senior Sister Feng are childhood sweethearts, huh!"

"..." Li Baxian was somewhat speechless, then suddenly slapped his thigh, "I got it."

"What?"

"I know why the Three Saints Sanctuary wants you to go to their premises," Li Baxian revealed.

"Why?" Lu Ye had not understood this issue. In his view, if the situation at the Three Saints Sanctuary was not good, they should find ways to improve it. Asking him to help would only be adding fuel to the fire, making their situation even worse.

Li Baxian smiled, "You'll know once you get to the Three Saints Sanctuary. Just not sure if they'll dare to accept you by then."

Lu Ye was left confused.

As night fell gradually, Feng Yuechan brought many fresh spirit fruits, all cultivated by the Loyal Heart Sect itself.

The two brothers enjoyed the spirit fruits and wine, chatting under the moonlight about everything under the sky.

The sun rose in the east, heralding a new day.

Bathed in the morning light, Li Baxian threw down the empty liquor jar and declared energetically, "Junior Brother, I'll be waiting for you at the Cloud River battlefield!"

Lu Ye took a deep breath; his purpose for coming to the Loyal Heart Sect was finally achieved.

He stood up and said, "Brother, you better run fast, as I might catch up to you soon."

"Then you'll have to work hard!"

The two exchanged a smile.

Moments later, outside the Loyal Heart Sect premises, Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan saw him off personally. Lu Ye summoned his spirit ark, taking Giant Armor and Phong Yue, and soared into the sky.

Only when the fleeing light of the weapon control vanished from sight did Li Baxian withdraw his gaze.

"Yuechan, I'm going out."

"Brother, where to?"

"Mad Saber Sect!"

Some grudges had to be settled.

Sword light soared into the sky, veering off in another direction.

During the weapon control-flying, Lu Ye received a message from Feng Yuechan, "Junior Brother Lu, thank you."

Lu Ye smiled and did not reply.

"Lu Ye." Yiyi's figure flashed out, landing in front of Lu Ye, curiously asking, "What did we come to the Loyal Heart Sect for?"

"To see Fourth Senior Brother."

"No." Yiyi shook her head, "Fourth Senior Brother just returned to the sect headquarters a month ago and... if you just wanted to see Fourth Senior Brother, why did you have to fight with the Loyal Heart Sect cultivators and make the relationship so tense? You definitely had some other purpose."

Behind Lu Ye, Phong Yue pricked up her ears. She also felt that Lu Ye had a purpose for coming to the Loyal Heart Sect, although she couldn't fathom it.

"What do you think my purpose was?" Lu Ye countered.

Yiyi tilted her head, saying, "It's precisely because I couldn't figure it out that I'm asking you."

Lu Ye pondered for a moment before speaking, "Fourth Senior Brother's spiritual orifice has long been completely repaired, and he can rise to Cloud River, but until today, he hasn't advanced."

"Didn't you say before that he needed to adjust for a while?"

"What is there to adjust about repairing a spiritual orifice? Moreover, Fourth Senior Brother has been consolidating at the Spirit Stream Realm level for over a decade, there's no need to wait further. He isn't advancing because he's worried about me."

Currently, Lu Ye, from the Righteous Blood Sect, was a thorn in the flesh for all the major powers of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. With Lu Ye's strength, he could be considered invincible in the inner circle, not to mention the outer circle.

But Lu Ye was ultimately going to enter the Core Circle. Inside the Core Circle, cultivators who have converted to the Heaven Rank technique are in abundance. Once the news of his entry spread, he would definitely be targeted in various ways.

Li Baxian not advancing to Cloud River was merely out of concern that Lu Ye couldn't handle this situation, so he wanted to stay in the Spirit Stream battlefield as his solid backing.

This point had already been guessed by Lu Ye when he previously messaged Fourth Senior Brother asking when he would advance to Cloud River.

That's why he had made a special trip to the Loyal Heart Sect, to persuade him in front of Fourth Senior Brother personally.

However, what Lu Ye hadn't expected was that he would be refused entry at the Loyal Heart Sect.

Actions speak louder than words. When the Loyal Heart Sect cultivators showed hostility, he simply took the opportunity to fight, demonstrating his prowess.

With the intervention of Feng Yuechan, his plan went smoothly. With his cultivation at the 7th Heaven, defeating several 9th Heaven level cultivators showcased his strength. He believed Fourth Senior Brother would now feel reassured to leave the Spirit Stream battlefield.

After listening to Lu Ye's explanation, Yiyi finally came to a realization.

"You never mentioned this when we were with Fourth Senior Brother."

"Some things don't need to be stated too clearly."

Li Baxian's statement "I'll be waiting for you at the Cloud River battlefield," let Lu Ye know he had made a decision.

"Um..." Standing not far behind Lu Ye, Phong Yue suddenly called out softly, "I wanted to say, from the very start today, there have been several fleeing lights following us, have we been targeted?"

Lu Ye cast a cold glance and indeed noticed several fleeing lights following from a distance. He immediately changed direction to meet them.

Seeing this, the fleeing lights not only didn't avoid, but even approached. As the distance between them narrowed, one person excitedly shouted, "It really is Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer!"

The great humiliation in the inner circle had almost driven the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge faction to eruption; they had been waiting for this day, to see Lu Ye enter the Core Circle and then make him suffer.

No one expected this day to come so soon!

Now, Lu Ye's life was extremely valuable to those in the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, with many of its top sects already proclaiming that anyone who could kill Lu Ye would receive a fortune to enjoy for a lifetime.

Thus, these people were so excited after they confirmed Lu Ye's identity.

However, just as that person had shouted, he was terrified to find numerous streams of fleeing light blazing towards them from ahead. Despite his best efforts to dodge, he couldn't avoid them. The fleeing lights streaked through like lightning, bringing forth a spray of hot blood, and the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator instantly died, his head crashing down.

Yiyi dashed forward, swiped the storage sack from the man's waist, and also collected the opponent's Flying Spirit Artifacts.

Looking up again, the sky was like a scene of Blood Rain, with every single one of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had followed being killed on the spot. The last one of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who was beheaded had died with eyes wide open, never expecting that his 8th Heaven level cultivation couldn't withstand a single blast of Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer's weapon control, dying in such a bewildered state.

Chapter 357

Lu Ye's actions in the inner circle mainly involved leading the Haotian Alliance's Allied Forces into battle on all fronts. That collective strength, which amassed various sects, greatly diluted the emphasis on Lu Ye's own power. In other words, when one commands such a mighty army, the individual's own strength becomes irrelevant.

As a result, many on the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side had severely underestimated Lu Ye's strength. This was why those Level 7 and Level 8 Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had eagerly rushed to confront Lu Ye upon discovering him.

On that day, the news of Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer entering the Core Circle spread swiftly, causing alarm and anger among those from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

They were alarmed that this fellow's cultivation had improved so quickly that daring to enter the Core Circle surely meant he had switched to cultivating a Heaven Rank technique and that his cultivation level must have reached the 7th Heaven stage.

Their anger stemmed from the fact that it had been just over a month since the peace talks between the Divine Sea Realm camps, and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had only just compensated them with supplies. Now Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer had reappeared, which gave off a sense of destroying the bridge after crossing the river.

Back in the outer circle, he had caused a major battle at Golden Light Peak that caught the attention of the world. It was said that two of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge outposts neighboring the Righteous Blood Sect in the outer circle had been severely damaged to the point where they had not been able to rebuild their outposts to this day.

The situation became even more unbearable upon entering the inner circle. Countless outposts directly or indirectly destroyed because of him reached over a hundred or two, and in the end, Ten Thousand

Demons Ridge had been forced to compensate with supplies, adopting a posture that threatened mutual destruction if the Haotian Alliance did not cease its actions, leading to an unprecedented loss.

Even to this day, the turmoil within the inner circle hadn't fully subsided. The Haotian Alliance sects, which had managed to obtain advantageous positions in certain areas, were relentlessly suppressing the forces from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, making the reconstruction of their outposts an extremely difficult task.

Now that this calamity had entered the Core Circle, who knew what kind of trouble he would stir up next.

The only thing the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side wasn't worried about was Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer forming an Allied Force like he did in the inner circle within the Core Circle.

The situation in the inner circle differed from the Core Circle. Not to mention the vast distances between sect outposts, but there was also a colossal gap in the cultivators' cultivation levels.

The cultivators in the Core Circle were either brash and skilled Level 9s, but most had switched to cultivating Heaven Rank techniques. They were much stronger and more mobile than those in the inner circle, making it easier for them to provide support if needed.

Therefore, it was quite unrealistic for Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer to replicate his actions from the inner circle.

Moreover, the number of cultivators in each outpost in the Core Circle was limited, with a few having up to two or three hundred, while others had around a hundred or two. Pure sword cultivator sects like the Beixuan Sword Sect had only a few dozen members... There was hardly any surplus manpower to follow Lu Ye and form some kind of Haotian Alliance Allied Forces.

Although they weren't worried about Lu Ye copying his moves from the inner circle, they still had to be on guard. Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer had performed numerous astonishing deeds, and no one knew what else he was capable of. So, when the news of his entry into the Core Circle emerged, many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge forces in the circle took action.

One by one, cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge left their outposts and headed towards where Lu Ye had been sighted. Although there was no leader, a consensus was silently forming among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side.

They had resolved that no matter what, they must slay Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer within the Core Circle and not allow him to continue growing stronger.

While news of Lu Ye's entry into the Core Circle was clamoring, another piece of information spread simultaneously.

Yuechan, ranked third on the Spirit Stream Ranking, had been challenged by Li Baxian outside the Mad Saber Sect outpost.

The grudge between these two had persisted for over a decade, and anyone familiar with the Spirit Stream battlefield knew their story. Usually, Yuechan would lie in wait outside the Loyal Heart Sect outpost, hoping to ambush Li Baxian, though she seldom caught him outside.

This time, however, it was Li Baxian who instigated the challenge, which was quite puzzling.

The outcome of the fight was even more unbelievable.

Yuechan died, Li Baxian injured!

According to disciples from the Mad Saber Sect who observed the battle, the match between these two was decided by a single move that determined both victory and death. It was so fast that bystanders could hardly react.

With this battle, Li Baxian reclaimed the top position on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Once the news spread, the Spirit Stream battlefield was shaken, and so were the Nine Provinces.

Li Baxian was the first in history to ascend to such a high rank on the Spirit Stream Ranking with 8th Heaven cultivation, and naturally, he captured significant attention. If not for his damaged spiritual orifice that could not be repaired, his future would have been limitless.

Such a powerful figure whose progress in the Spirit Stream Realm had been halted for over a decade was, to many in the Haotian Alliance, a pity.

But today, his halted progress for over a decade finally surged forward.

The damage to Li Baxian's spiritual orifice had been completely repaired, and not only had he slain his old nemesis of over a decade, but he had also regained the top position on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

There were rumors that before he challenged Yuechan, Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer had visited the Loyal Heart Sect. Combining this with his previous actions in the inner circle where he destroyed the outposts of over a hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge forces and looted countless enhancements...

Anyone could guess that the orifice repair pill Li Baxian used to mend his spiritual orifice was purchased by Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer with a massive amount of merit points and given to him. Otherwise, with one orifice repair pill costing 150,000 merit points, who could afford that?

Now, it wasn't even 150,000 anymore as the price had gone up to 160,000 due to the decreased availability of the pills...

The Heaven's Augury treasure vault exemplified the principle of pricing rarity at its finest.

A day later, the names of Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had both vanished from the Spirit Stream Ranking.

A celebration shared by all under the heavens!

For a long time, Feng Yuechan, Yan Xing, and Li Baxian, these three were the three malignant tumors on the Spirit Stream Ranking!

Each of them had been entrenched in the Spirit Stream Realm for over a decade, perennially occupying the top three positions on the ranking. No matter how talented the newcomers were, they couldn't surpass these three. It wasn't so bad when Li Baxian was hiding his true ability, as striving a bit could still earn them a spot at third place.

But since the battle at Golden Light Peak, when Li Baxian revealed his strength, even third place became a luxury.

Moreover, these three malignancies were all stuck at the Spirit Stream Realm level because of Li Baxian's influence.

Now things have changed for the better. Yan Xing has been killed, and both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan have ascended to the Cloud River Realm, removing the three great malignancies that weighed upon the Spirit Stream Ranking in one fell swoop.

Many from the Haotian Alliance sects felt truly grateful to Lu Ye from the bottom of their hearts, believing that he had salvaged the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Even the forces from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, who were after him at the moment, felt that Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer had done a good deed for once.

Gratitude was unnecessary; the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge faction now would rather tear Lu Ye to pieces, so there was no room for any gratitude.

Liu Guang's weapon-controlled flight streaked across the sky, swift as thunderbolt. Behind Liu Guang, myriad figures wielding various flying spirit artifacts pursued relentlessly, some shouting curses as they chased.

Since Lu Ye's location was discovered, two days had passed. Throughout these days, they had barely stopped, perpetually fleeing for their lives.

They had no choice but to run. The forces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had formed a coordinated pursuit. No matter where they went, the faction from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could accurately track their whereabouts.

Some pursuers had been shaken off, and quite a few Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had been killed, yet nothing could curb the determination of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge faction to kill him. New pursuers steadily joined the chase.

The entire Core Circle was like a pot of hot oil into which a handful of salt had been cast; wherever Lu Ye went, turmoil boiled.

There were also Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators waiting in ambush ahead. Lu Ye evaded them if he could, and if he couldn't, he carved a bloody path through them.

Over these two days, cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had witnessed a myriad of tactics from Lu Ye, which resulted in numerous casualties on their side.

Currently, two dilemmas stood before them that they could not solve. One was that Lu Ye's speed in weapon control-flying was too fast; he obviously had a way to greatly increase the speed of his flying spirit artifact in a short period of time.

The maximum speed a flying spirit artifact could achieve related to both the restrictions and quality embedded in the artifact itself and the cultivation level of the cultivator controlling it.

Although Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had mobilized a large number of people to hunt down Lu Ye, few could compete with him in speed. Even if they could catch up momentarily, they couldn't maintain it for long.

There's no talking of chasing down someone if you can't keep up with their speed. If not so, it wouldn't just be dozens of Liu Guangs following Lu Ye, but hundreds or even thousands.

Even among these dozens of Liu Guangs, some were still falling behind continuously.

If it were just an inability to keep up with the speed, that wouldn't be a big deal. Over these two days, many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators tried to ambush Lu Ye on his path to block him. As long as there was a slight entanglement, the pursuers could immediately catch up.

But in reality, even if some managed to block his path, it didn't help much.

The weapon control of Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer was too fierce.

This guy, with merely a 7th Heaven cultivation level, could actually control nine weapons!

Although there was a huge gap compared to Li Baxian's control of a hundred weapons, controlling nine weapons was still an incredibly impressive feat. What troubled Ten Thousand Demons Ridge even more was the terrifying power of these nine controlled weapons.

There had been a 9th Heaven level physique cultivator blockaded in front, who almost got instantly killed by a concentrated attack from Lu Ye's nine controlled weapons. If not for the physique cultivator's exceptionally strong body, there would have been no escape from that predicament, even with such strength the cultivator still suffered severe injuries.

Controlling nine weapons was one thing, but what was key was that this guy's weapon control distance far exceeded the standard expected at the Spirit Stream Realm level.

Even 9th Heaven cultivators couldn't hold a candle to him.

The power and range of weapon control are related to the cultivator's mental strength, the purity of their spirit force, and their mastery over controlling spirit force.

The cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge found it puzzling: Lu Yiye was merely a cultivator who had just advanced to the 7th Heaven level, so how strong could his mental strength be, how pure his spirit force, and how perfect his control over his spirit force, to allow him to directly use weapon control to kill enemies from around seventy zhang away?

You should know that the maximum distance for a 9th Heaven cultivator's weapon control is generally around sixty zhang. Once it exceeds this distance, the weapon becomes uncontrollable.

A difference of ten zhang in the range limit of weapon control means that whoever faces Lu Ye will be struck by him first, subsequently falling into a passive situation.

In aerial battles, cultivators generally rely on weapon control as their primary method of combat. This invisibly amplified the advantage Lu Ye could hold.

At this moment, Lu Ye felt an immense relief for having consulted his Fourth Senior Brother about weapon control techniques and for taking his advice to buy a supplies box from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

Otherwise, he would have had no way to cope with such a relentless encirclement and chase by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Chapter 358 Three Saints Sanctuary

As Lu Ye entered the Core Circle, the Core Circle erupted into complete chaos.

This place was never calm to begin with, and Lu Ye's arrival undoubtedly aggravated the confrontation between the two major camps. The cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were hot on his trail, blocking and chasing him. Many cultivators from the Haotian Alliance could not resist joining the fray, striking at those isolated Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, which inadvertently relieved some of the pressure on Lu Ye.

The Three Saints Sanctuary was shrouded in gloom, a sense of sorrow hanging in the air.

There was no other reason than Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect was on his way! According to intelligence passed from all sides, Lu Yiye should arrive at the Three Saints Sanctuary's station within two hours.

Two days ago, the Three Saints Sanctuary was actually looking forward to Lu Ye's arrival, because their situation here had not been great. Over the years, they hadn't had a Spirit Stream Realm expert to show for, which led to their disciples being oppressed outside.

If Lu Ye could come to the station of the Three Saints Sanctuary, perhaps it could change their situation.

But when the news came that Li Baxian had repaired his spiritual orifice, advanced to the Cloud River Realm, and left the Spirit Stream battlefield, the Three Saints Sanctuary was dumbfounded.

With Li Baxian absent from the Spirit Stream battlefield and Feng Yuechan also gone, Lu Ye's arrival at the Three Saints Sanctuary's station would bring no benefits, only disaster.

Originally, the Three Saints Sanctuary only needed to face the pressure from neighbouring forces, but now there was more to worry about.

"Senior Brother, what does our sect headquarters say?"

Deputy Governor Shi Lei of the Three Saints Sanctuary asked.

Opposite him, a young man clad in black tight-fitting clothes said, "There are no explicit instructions yet."

This young man was none other than Governor Situ Han of the Three Saints Sanctuary.

"Then what are we going to do?" Shi Lei frowned.

"We invited him, so can we refuse him entry?"

No explicit instructions from the sect meant there were instructions! Situ Han was well aware of this.

Shi Lei hesitated to speak, finally sighing. The sect's station was already in a tight spot, and taking in Lu Yiye would only make matters worse. They may not even be able to hold the station itself, but as Situ Han said, since they invited him, they couldn't turn him away. They would have to swallow the bitter pill.

Both men had unsaid words in their hearts, believing that the Sect Master had undoubtedly made a grave mistake this time.

They had originally thought that inviting Lu Yiye to the station could help them curry favor with the two strong individuals from the Loyal Heart Sect, thus alleviating the station's pressure. But who would have imagined that Lu Yiye would spend a fortune on orifice repair pills for Li Baxian, resulting in both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan advancing to the Cloud River Realm and leaving the Spirit Stream battlefield.

"Send out the order, prepare for battle," Situ Han stood up. Things had come to this point, and there were no other choices. It was nothing more than the possibility of losing the station and the destruction of generations of accumulation. Compared to these losses, the reputation of the sect still had to be preserved. Truly turning away Lu Ye would mean the Three Saints Sanctuary could no longer hold its ground within the Haotian Alliance.

"Understood!"

Moments later, many cultivators from the Three Saints Sanctuary were on high alert, their numbers fewer than two hundred, with only a handful of 9th Heaven level cultivators among them.

After waiting for about one hour, Shi Lei suddenly uttered a low shout, "They're here!"

In the distant sky, a fleeing light approached at great speed toward them. Squinting to see beyond the fleeing light, vaguely more could be seen chasing after it.

In just a dozen breaths, the fleeing light arrived right outside the big array's light screen. The many cultivators of the Three Saints Sanctuary looked up to see a spirit ark shaped like a flying artifact with three figures standing on it. At the front was a youth who looked to be only seventeen or eighteen years old. In the middle was a pale-faced woman, and at the back stood a burly man with his body towering over them, topped with a snow-white big cat crouching on his head.

Situ Han stepped forward, "Is this Junior Brother Lu from the Righteous Blood Sect, Lu Yiye?"

Aboard the spirit ark, Lu Ye replied, "Indeed, it is!"

Situ Han waved his hand to signal they may pass and said aloud, "Come in quickly."

Following Shi Lei's manipulation, a gap opened in the big array, allowing Lu Ye to control his artifact to enter. He gently alighted, extinguishing his fleeing light, followed by Giant Armor who also hopped down, but only Phong Yue remained motionless, slumping on the spirit ark.

Lu Ye turned to look at her, and Phong Yue managed a weak smile, "My legs are jelly..."

The harrowing experiences of the past two days were unforgettable. Phong Yue was only an ordinary Level 8 cultivator; she had never faced such thrilling scenes before.

Along the way, there had been no less than eight hundred, if not a thousand, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators chasing them. They would shake off one group only for another to emerge, a relentless stream of enemies who seemed to harbor deep-seated grudges against them. Many a time, Phong Yue thought they were as good as dead...

Having barely managed to hold on till now, her entire body felt limp.

Lu Ye exchanged glances with Giant Armor, who then deftly lifted Phong Yue by the belt of her dress, holding her in one arm like a small chick.

"Ouch..." Phong Yue uttered a strange sound, her initially pale face flushing red.

Being held up like this was so undignified...

Lu Ye stowed away the spirit ark and turned toward the two men who came to meet them, cupping his fists in greeting: "How may I address the two Senior Brothers?"

Situ Han and Shi Lei introduced themselves.

Lu Ye returned the gestures of greeting.

"After the long journey, Junior Brother Lu, you go rest first. Leave the rest to us," Situ Han gestured with his hand.

It was only until yesterday that Lu Ye finally understood the meaning behind his fourth senior brother's words, "It's uncertain whether they'll still dare to take you in when the time comes." The reason the Sect Master of Three Saints Sanctuary wanted him at the Spirit Stream battlefield's garrison was not because he was considered powerful but because he was closely connected with Li Baxian.

If he encountered trouble at the Three Saints Sanctuary's garrison, Li Baxian would certainly not ignore it, and once Li Baxian intervened, Feng Yuechan would not stand idly by either.

In other words, by winning him over, they would indirectly win over both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan.

This was the ultimate purpose of the condition that the Sect Master of the Three Saints Sanctuary had proposed to the sect master.

However, the Sect Master of the Three Saints Sanctuary hadn't expected that Lu Ye would procure an orifice repair pill for Li Baxian, allowing Li Baxian to advance to the Cloud River Realm.

With that, the condition previously proposed now seemed somewhat foolish. Without Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, Lu Ye's entry into the Three Saints Sanctuary's garrison would only bring endless trouble and disaster. They wouldn't dare to accept him.

But now it seems that the Three Saints Sanctuary is indeed very responsible.

Looking at the nearby Three Saints Sanctuary cultivators, who were emanating murderous intent and waiting solemnly.

Lu Ye waved his hand: "I appreciate the kind intentions of my senior brothers, but I will just rest for a moment using your esteemed place. I will leave soon after."

The situation was somewhat different from what he had initially expected. Naturally, he wouldn't stay to bring disaster upon the Three Saints Sanctuary. With his current situation, going to any Haotian

Alliance garrison would bring endless trouble. The Three Saints Sanctuary, being just a 2nd grade sect with not many strong members in its garrison, would be easily broken if he really stayed; it wouldn't take one or two days.

Neither Situ Han nor Shi Lei had expected Lu Ye to make such a decision.

Situ Han said, "Does Junior Brother Lu realize the predicament he is currently in? Without the protection of a garrison, given Junior Brother's cultivation, I'm afraid the odds are not in your favor."

"If I were to stay, even with the protection of the garrison, how long could it protect me? Senior Brother, rest assured, my strength may not be great, but it won't be so easy for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to kill me. However, there is indeed one thing I'd like to ask for your help with."

"Please speak, Junior Brother."

Lu Ye turned and pointed to Phong Yue, who was held up by Giant Armor: "This is a disciple of my Righteous Blood Sect. Could you allow her to cultivate here at the Three Saints Sanctuary? Her cultivation level may not be high, but she is a healing cultivator. Senior brother need not take special care of her--just treat her as one of your own disciples and provide her with a meal, that's all."

Phong Yue, who was already blushing, hung her head even lower, feeling as if she were a child being sent away by a poor family...

"That is naturally no problem," Situ Han readily agreed. It didn't matter whether Phong Yue was a healing cultivator or not.

Given that Lu Ye had voluntarily chosen not to stay at the Three Saints Sanctuary's garrison, the Three Saints Sanctuary was already feeling quite embarrassed.

"Please establish an Alliance Pact with me, Senior Brother. I need to borrow your sect's Heaven's Augury Pillar."

Moments later, inside the Heaven's Augury Hall, Lu Ye's consciousness connected with the Heaven's Augury Pillar, entering the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

Previously, when he was at the Righteous Blood Sect, he only had a little over two thousand merit points left. After killing some people in the past two days, his merit increased a bit, and he also seized quite a few spoils of war.

Setting aside the supplies for cultivation, he exchanged all other items for merit points inside the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, pushing his own merit points past four thousand.

However, as he continued to act, the four thousand merit points also rapidly diminished, eventually leaving only five points.

It had been a long, long time since he had been so poor, and Lu Ye felt again that these merit points really couldn't withstand being spent.

Upon exiting the Heaven's Augury Hall, Situ Han was waiting outside.

Lu Ye said, "Senior Brother Situ, can you arrange some food?"

During these past two days of fleeing, let alone eat or sleep, he hadn't even had the chance to stop for a moment. Both he and Giant Armor were greatly exhausted. As for spirit force, they could just about maintain it—Lu Ye could consume elixir pills to replenish himself, and Giant Armor had something like a demonic pill, but the physical exhaustion was difficult to recover from.

"Just a moment," Situ Han replied and hurriedly made arrangements.

Shortly after, a lot of food was laid before Lu Ye and Giant Armor. The two immediately gorged themselves as if they were starving ghosts reborn.

As he ate, Lu Ye checked the ten-part map.

He couldn't stay at the Three Saints Sanctuary for long, as that would not only bring trouble to the Three Saints Sanctuary, but he would also lose the initiative.

If he lingered here too long, the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could keep amassing forces, and if they ended up surrounding the Three Saints Sanctuary's garrison, he would be trapped with no way out.

The situation was still manageable at the moment, as not too many people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had arrived. They were gathering several miles away from the garrison. However, as the news spread further, more and more people would converge.

He had to leave before the forces from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge reached a critical mass.

But constantly fleeing wasn't a solution. There's a limit to human endurance, and no one could be certain of any unexpected contingencies on the road ahead.

Therefore, it would be best to strike back at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to a certain degree while fleeing, to let them know the cost of pursuing him.

Lu Ye already had some plans in mind, but to execute these plans, he needed to take advantage of some terrain.

He was inspecting the ten-part map now in search of a terrain that could be utilized.

Chapter 359 Fog-shrouded Mountain

There are many special places within the Spirit Stream battlefield, all of which are fraught with extreme danger, and thus cultivators do not dare approach them lightly.

Some of these places are the strongholds of powerful demon beasts, such as the lake where the quasi-flood dragon once resided, which is in fact a treacherous place.

However, the threat the quasi-flood dragon posed to cultivators was not significant, as long as one did not provoke it and offered it some Blood Food, it was possible to coexist peacefully with the quasi-flood dragon.

But not every demon beast is like the quasi-flood dragon; these beasts are all of Overlord-class existence, and they are difficult for the cultivators of the Spirit Stream battlefield to contend with.

Apart from the strongholds of these Overlord-class demon beasts, there are many naturally formed dangerous places.

Lu Ye was not looking for these perilous places. Although he was now strong enough to kill average 9th Heaven cultivators, entering such dangerous areas would likely be more deadly than fortunate; he naturally would not seek such thrills.

He was simply looking for a terrain that would suit his needs, such as one that naturally obstructed the view from above, or one that would make it easier for him to conceal himself.

Such locations were not hard to find, and he quickly identified a target.

After eating his fill and resting for four hours, Lu Ye finally got up.

Several miles away from the Three Saints Sanctuary's encampment, the number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators gathered here had already surpassed three hundred, with more continuously arriving.

It wouldn't be long before they began their full-scale assault on the Three Saints Sanctuary's encampment.

Inside the big array, Lu Ye bid farewell to Situ Han and Shi Lei, who did not make any insincere attempts to keep him, but simply sighed, "Junior Brother Lu, the Three Saints Sanctuary has let you down."

"Senior Brother Situ is too kind. The Three Saints Sanctuary has already helped us greatly by granting sanctuary to the disciples of the Righteous Blood Sect."

Then he turned to Phong Yue standing to the side, "Don't disgrace our sect."

Phong Yue obediently replied with a downcast face, "Yes."

"I bid you farewell!" Lu Ye bowed with his hands clasped towards Situ Han and Shi Lei, then summoned his spirit ark and boarded it with Giant Armor.

He didn't leave Giant Armor behind mainly because Giant Armor certainly wouldn't want to stay.

The spirit ark emitted a slight hum, transforming into a streak of Liu Guang that shot straight into the sky.

Phong Yue took a step forward and called out loudly in the direction Lu Ye had left, "Fifth Senior Brother, please be extremely careful!"

Phong Yue's feelings toward Lu Ye were very complex. She had previously resented and blamed him, but after Lu Ye accepted her as an official disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect, those feelings significantly subsided. And now, following Lu Ye into the inner circle and staying at the Three Saints Sanctuary's encampment under his arrangements.

If she were still with the Phong family, she would definitely not enjoy such treatment, and she suddenly realized that leaving the Phong family and joining the Righteous Blood Sect might actually be a good thing for her.

Only if Fifth Senior Brother could be a bit nicer to her...

The Liu Guang the spirit ark turned into shot out of the protective array and swiftly raced towards the distance. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators waiting outside pursued en masse. In an instant, the skies were filled with splendid streaks of Liu Guang, and in just a moment, the area outside the Three Saints Sanctuary's encampment was deserted.

To the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, killing Lu Ye was more important than anything else right now. Slaying Lu Ye would not only reward them with an unimaginable bounty, but they would also not have to live in fear as they had before.

Their wariness of Lu Ye had now shifted from his array destruction abilities to his personal strength.

With his 7th Heaven cultivation, he was able to kill 9th Heaven cultivators. If he were to advance to the 9th Heaven, who in the Spirit Stream battlefield would be able to handle him then?

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was not willing to taste the terror of being dominated by a single individual again.

During the pursuit, the gap in cultivation became apparent. Those with lower cultivation and inferior Spiritual Artifacts quickly fell behind, and even those at the 8th Heaven and 9th Heaven level found it difficult to catch up to Lu Ye.

Fortunately for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, they had already fully mobilized to give chase. As long as Lu Ye didn't hide, they were never worried about losing sight of him.

A day later, Lu Ye's figure disappeared from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators' view.

The last sighting was within a vast mountain range, indicated on the ten-part map as Fog-shrouded Mountain.

From the name alone, one could tell that this dense forest was shrouded in heavy fog all year round. If cultivators were to travel through air above, they would see a sea of clouds churning below in a magnificent sight, with only the umbrella-like canopies of trees that reach hundreds of feet tall standing out from the fog, their trunks hidden within the mist.

In the depths of these old forests, fierce beasts resided, but many rare treasures were also hidden.

Therefore, Fog-shrouded Mountain was a famous range throughout the Core Circle, with many cultivators liking to come here to gather medicinal materials or capture some demon beasts.

However, this place also came with its dangers, as there were three Overlord-class demon beasts settled here!

Fortunately, Overlord-class demon beasts possess high spiritual intelligence, and they usually dwell within their own territories. As long as one does not intrude uninvited, it is generally possible to avoid any hostility.

Instead of other places, Lu Yiye chose to enter the Fog-shrouded Mountain, clearly using it to shake off the pursuit of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

How could Ten Thousand Demons Ridge possibly endure this? In an instant, they called for friends and rallied support, continuously adding to the ranks of those in pursuit.

The usually quiet Fog-shrouded Mountain became abuzz with activity in just a few short days, as an unknown number of cultivators ventured deep into it, stirring up almost a bustling commotion.

Due to environmental factors, the cultivators' vision was obstructed when they flew through the air, forcing them to descend and track on foot.

Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's effort was an organized one, with many ghost cultivators proficient in the Path of Concealment scattered throughout Fog-shrouded Mountain, searching for Lu Ye's figure, ready to send a message at the first clue.

As for the others, they split into squads, constantly delving deeper into Fog-shrouded Mountain. The size of these teams varied, but the smallest still included nearly ten people, since any fewer might find it difficult to capture Lu Ye even if they located him.

The distance between teams was kept close enough to ensure they could support each other at any time.

It must be said, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's arrangements were meticulous, and under such organization, a fierce hunt began.

Yul Qi was one of the many ghost cultivators who had delved into the Fog-shrouded Mountain to track down Lu Ye. Looking over the Core Circle, his cultivation wasn't among the highest, but it wasn't low either; he had already opened three hundred and ten orifices, with the cultivation of 8th Heaven and only fifty orifices shy of the 9th Heaven level.

In the beginning stages of cultivation, fifty orifices were not a big deal, and anyone with a bit of cultivation talent could open them. But at Yul Qi's stage, the resistance felt during the orifice-opening process was becoming notably intense.

With more spiritual orifices opened, the barriers within each spiritual orifice grew increasingly robust, making the process more arduous.

One couldn't continuously attempt to open spiritual orifices, for the more attempts made, the more likely the unopened orifices were to get damaged. Once damaged, that spiritual orifice would be considered useless unless repaired with an orifice repair pill.

He knew his limits; unless he encountered some special fortune, unlocking three hundred and sixty orifices in this lifetime was impossible, but he couldn't help feeling reluctant to just advance to Cloud River.

This was the state of mind for most cultivators at 7th Heaven or 8th Heaven. Having reached this point in cultivation, everyone wished to ascend further, and even if they couldn't move to the next level, they would strive to open as many spiritual orifices as possible.

That's because the more orifices they opened, the greater their potential after advancing to Cloud River.

What kept them persevering was something in this world known as a barrier-breaking pill!

Compared to the exorbitant price of 160,000 merit points for a single orifice repair pill, the relatively modest price of 500 merit points for a barrier-breaking pill hadn't changed over the years.

But even for cultivators of the Core Circle, 500 merit points was not so easily earned.

Moreover, cultivators like Yul Qi needed an enormous amount of barrier-breaking pills. Perhaps the first pill could help him open an orifice, but the next one might require two or even three pills. The more orifices opened with the assistance of barrier-breaking pills, the greater the consumption, until the pills had no more effect and a cultivator would reach the end of their journey at the Spirit Stream Realm, with no choice but to advance to Cloud River.

Yul Qi was still fifty orifices shy of 9th Heaven!

One could only imagine how many barrier-breaking pills he would need. It was impossible on his own to accumulate enough merit points for that many pills; pursuing Lu Yiye presented an opportunity.

As long as he could kill Lu Yiye, he would have sufficient capital to open more spiritual orifices.

As a ghost cultivator attuned to the Netherworld year-round, Yul Qi was very confident in his own Path of Concealment abilities, a confidence shared by every ghost cultivator.

He was also fortunate, for he had truly discovered Lu Ye's whereabouts just a few days after entering Fog-shrouded Mountain.

There, by a clear mountain spring, Lu Yiye sat cross-legged on a large rock, with a bonfire blazing nearby. The physique cultivator called Giant Armor was roasting a wild boar, its glistening skin emitting an enticing aroma while the dripping juices crackled over the fire.

And a snow-white, big cat-like demon beast was crouching beside them, gnawing on blood-drenched beast meat.

In that instant, Yul Qi almost failed to suppress the pounding of his heart, for to any Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator, the seemingly seventeen or eighteen-year-old youth before them was like a mobile treasure vault!

Killing him would mean access to a limitless wealth from within that vault.

Glancing at Lu Ye in meditation, then over at Giant Armor grilling meat, Yul Qi silently ridiculed them—given the number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge’s pursuers, these two still had an appetite for a feast.

He took a deep breath to calm his excitement, and then stealthily edged closer to Lu Ye.

For a ghost cultivator, Lu Ye’s current state was more tempting than the golden-browned boar on the spit. If Yul Qi could get within ten feet, he was confident in delivering a killing blow!

He was a ghost cultivator born with the ability to strike down foes beyond his station!

Stepping on the soft fallen leaves without making a sound, Yul Qi worked his years of cultivation to the utmost.

Ten feet, five feet, three feet...

Yul Qi suddenly stiffened, a fine sheen of sweat forming on his forehead, as he realized that behind the boulder where Lu Ye sat, lay a corpse, dressed unmistakably as a ghost cultivator.

Peering cautiously at the face of the corpse, Yul Qi’s head buzzed...

He recognized this ghost cultivator—one from a 2nd grade sect with 9th Heaven level cultivation, far stronger than himself.

Chapter 360 Slaughter Feast

There were no signs of battle around, yet the body of a 9th Heaven level ghost cultivator lay there.

The situation... seemed somewhat complicated.

Then he lifted his eyes to meet Lu Ye’s expressionless gaze...

Cold sweat flowed from Yul Qi's forehead, almost at the moment their eyes met, Yul Qi knew he was exposed.

Although he couldn't understand how he had been exposed.

Logically speaking, a 7th Heaven level combat cultivator like Lu Yiye shouldn't have been able to detect him.

Ghost cultivators were indeed naturally capable of defeating enemies of higher levels, but once a ghost cultivator's whereabouts were exposed, their deterrence undoubtedly diminished greatly.

Without any hesitation, Yul Qi's figure leapt backward, bursting forth with unprecedented speed at that moment.

The hissing sound of tearing through the air arose, as three streaks of light shot towards him in a trigram formation.

He had heard of Lu Ye's weapon control skills early on, so he hurriedly summoned his Spiritual Artifact. Clinking and clanging sounds were heard as the three streaks of light aimed at him were deflected. Yul Qi used the rebound force to fly back more than ten meters, but just as he steadied himself, another streak of light quietly approached from the side.

Yul Qi hastily dodged, but was still grazed on the shoulder by the streak of light, and immediately intense pain surged, with blood flowing from his shoulder.

Simultaneously, the sound of air being torn came from behind, and on looking up, five or six streaks of light were attacking from various different angles.

In that instant, only one thought flashed through Yul Qi's mind,

My life is over!

He knew Lu Ye was strong, capable of leaping two levels to kill a 9th Heaven cultivator with his 7th Heaven cultivation, but previously he only heard of it without a clear concept, until now experiencing it firsthand.

Thinking that he himself was a 8th Heaven cultivator with three hundred and ten orifices opened, facing Lu Ye who was a level lower in cultivation, he didn't even have a chance to retaliate.

Moreover, from start to finish, the man had been sitting there without moving, merely using his weapon control skills to drive him into a desperate situation.

This strength had already surpassed his understanding.

In the moment of life and death, he pressed his hand onto his own battlefield marking, and urgently sent out a message.

In his mind, only one thought persisted: his own death didn't matter; he must reveal Lu Yiye's location immediately.

He hadn't done so earlier upon discovering Lu Ye because he wanted to monopolize the benefits of killing Lu Ye, but now, he couldn't afford not to send the message.

He just didn't know if it was too late!

Ding...

A light ringing sound arose, and Yul Qi could almost feel the sharpness of the approaching weapons from all angles. Then, he realized that he was not dead yet.

The Spiritual Artifacts stopped just one inch away from him, all halted in place.

Yul Qi maintained his rigid posture, not daring to move.

Sweat dripped down his face in large drops, and Yul Qi rolled his eyeballs, looking towards Lu Ye who still sat in the same spot.

"Did you finish sending the message?" Lu Ye spoke.

"What?" Yul Qi did not catch on.

"Did the message go out?"

"Mhm." Yul Qi instinctively responded.

"Very good!"

As his words fell, the Spiritual Artifacts suspended in front of Yul Qi exploded with brilliant spirit light.

In the imminent moment of his death, Yul Qi gritted his teeth and said, "I'll be waiting for you on the road to Hell!"

Blood splashed everywhere as the hastily conjured protective spirit force around Yul Qi was like paper under the Spirit Artifacts' assault, piercing through his vital points, and with bursts of hot blood, flew back into the supplies box at Lu Ye's waist.

Plop...

Yul Qi's body fell.

Giant Armor put down the half-cooked mountain pig he was roasting, stepped forward, and lifted Yul Qi's body, taking the storage sack from his waist and throwing the body behind a large rock. Behind the rock, several corpses lay scattered haphazardly.

All were ghost cultivators who had discovered Lu Ye's whereabouts, yet each one of these cultivators had foolishly thought to kill him single-handedly. The result was that, without exception, they all ended up lying here.

None of the ghost cultivators had managed to leak his location before dying.

Until Yul Qi.

After days of preparations and a significant expenditure of merit, his location was now exposed. A feast of slaughter was about to start.

Mere moments after Yul Qi's death, in Fog-shrouded Mountain, various squads from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge began rapidly converging towards Lu Ye's location.

The squad closest to him took only half an hour to arrive and spotted Lu Ye from a distance. This squad did not rashly attack but quietly lay in wait, waiting for other squads to converge.

An hour later, the gathered squads reached five, numbering over seventy people.

More teams were converging from all directions.

It was not until then that several teams began to encircle from all sides, and as the distance closed, a killing intent started to erupt.

At this point, there was no need to hide their movements, and as they looked at the figure standing on the giant rock, each Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator's eyes were filled with fervor.

"Lu Yiye, meet your death!"

"Kill Lu Yiye!"

"Avenge our fallen Fellow Daoists!"

Angry shouts roared from all sides, and at first glance, it looked like many righteous heroes besieging a most wicked demon. Bursts of light from controlled weapons and spells began to radiate, thunderously striking towards Lu Ye.

However, to the utter astonishment of all Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, Lu Ye stood there unmoved, facing the overwhelming onslaught, without even the intent to dodge.

What the hell was he doing? All the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators watching this scene were perplexed.

Such aggression would be tough even for an average cultivator from the Cloud River Realm, not to mention a 7th Heaven level cultivator.

Unless he wanted to die.

Naturally, Lu Ye did not seek death. Just as those numerous attacks were about to strike, a banner suddenly appeared in his hand. With a slight flick of the banner, spirit force was activated, and a visible layer of light shield barrier suddenly rose, tightly wrapping him and the Giant Armor.

Above the light shield barrier, Defense Spirit Runes swam around like fish.

"Protective array!" a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator exclaimed, now understanding Lu Ye's apparent disregard for anyone.

The site he occupied had clearly been set up with a protective array.

This defensive Formation, fundamentally similar to the stationary protective arrays, seemed exceptionally strong since it was meant to protect a smaller space.

The reason why Lu Ye was dreaded by all factions of Ten Thousand Demons was precisely because of his array destruction skills demonstrated in the inner circle. He was capable of dismantling protective arrays of that caliber, and setting up arrays was naturally no challenge for him.

A sense of unease arose in many of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, recalling a problem that they had long overlooked...

A thunderous noise erupted, and when the power of various controlled weapons and spells fell, the protective array shielding Lu Ye and the Giant Armor rippled in layers, its brightness visibly dimming and likely to shatter in less than ten breaths.

However, just then, another banner appeared in Lu Ye's hand. When the banner was waved, over a dozen cultivators from a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge team approaching from the side felt a skin-pricking sting, and a profound sense of danger arose within them.

At the same time, bright patterns emerged beneath their feet, swiftly forming a large array covering an area spanning over ten meters.

Four hidden banner poles surfaced at the four corners of the formation, resonating with each other, and the spirit force stored within the banners delineated a pattern of spirit runes.

Explosion!

This was a spirit rune that Lu Ye had recently obtained from the Talent Tree, and it was particularly suited for use in formations.

His extensive knowledge of the Array Path garnered from the challenge in the Hundred Arrays Pagoda at the Tianyan Sect had led to an unimaginable improvement in his expertise, with profound insights not immediately evident. Many pieces of knowledge were worth savoring repeatedly, which enhanced his mastery of Array Path during the process.

In the tests of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, he had arranged many formations according to its requirements, so his skills in array setup had improved significantly since then.

How strong the power burst from an array structured with four banner poles and based on the Explosion Spirit Runes, filled with a large amount of Spirit Stone energy stored by Lu Ye, was something he also wanted to see.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators feared his ability to destroy arrays, but none had yet tested his skills in array setup.

"Run fast!" a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator shouted.

But it was too late.

The destructive spirit force boiled to its limit in an instant; the moment the Explosion Spirit Runes formed, the ground shook, and a deafening roar rang out, startling all Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators rushing towards Lu Ye, instinctively halting their advance.

Looking in the direction of the noise, one could only see a flurry of Blood Rain falling, with limbs and flesh scattered everywhere. A team of over a dozen Ten Thousand Demons Ridge members was decimated in an instant, with the survivors badly injured, falling to the ground and screaming in agony.

The power of this explosive magic array was even better than expected.

However, the cost was high, and the banners used just now were damaged beyond repair.

These four banners were not a reward from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

The banners awarded by the Hundred Arrays Pagoda were extraordinary, and Lu Ye would never dare to waste those recklessly.

These four banners had been purchased by him from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, each costing between dozens to hundreds of merit points, a price almost equivalent to a decent low-grade spirit artifact.

Lu Ye had spent nearly all of his thousands of merit points on buying banners and array bases.

Actually, if Lu Ye were strong enough, given his advantage of possessing fire-type spiritual power, he could have bought some materials and crafted the needed banners himself.

However, given his current cultivation level wasn't up to that mark, and lacking the time and conditions to craft on his own, he had to buy ready-made ones from Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

For him, this was not a loss because killing enemies itself earned merit, and the spoils of war could be resold for more merit or Spirit Stones.

If the enemies he killed were wealthy enough, it wouldn't just break even, there would be a profit.

As the first explosive formation activated, a few more arrays were triggered.

With the second loud noise, the squad of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators covered by the array suffered the same fate as the earlier team, suffering heavy casualties.

The other formations were not all explosive types, but each had its unique utility; controlled by Lu Ye, spells radiated within the arrays, causing immense distress to the afflicted Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.