

Humanity 371

Chapter 371 Yiyi and Giant Armor's Crisis

There's no denying that this is an extremely powerful spirit rune, its might definitely far surpasses any that Lu Ye had mastered before.

However, Lu Ye didn't dare to rashly attempt to activate it because, judging just from the complexity of this spirit rune, the spirit force needed to construct it was vast. With his current 7th Heaven cultivation, were he to construct this spirit rune, he feared that all his spirit force would be exhausted.

This thing was like a trump card; once used, it would be a case of either the enemy dying or my own demise.

However, the name Fire Phoenix did remind Lu Ye of some rather unpleasant experiences.

Previously, when he cultivated the Red Lotus Soaring to Sky Technique, that Cultivation Technique came with two magic and spells, one of which was the Fire Phoenix Technique. Somehow, it ended up being executed by Lu Ye as the Fire Quail Technique...

Not until his return from Xianyuan City, with a significant increase in his psyche strength and a leap in his control over spirit force, did the form of that magic and spells improve.

Currently, Lu Ye didn't use magic and spells much; all cultivators in the Nine Provinces knew he was a combat cultivator, and it was already difficult to use magic and spells to conceal his style. Moreover, his weapon control skills were strong, and when attacking enemies from a distance, controlling the weapon sufficed; there was no need to activate magic and spells.

Now, his Talent Tree had devoured a fragment of the weak Phoenix True Fire, granting him the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, and in his unconscious state, he had also witnessed the majestic figure of the Vermillion Bird.

These various experiences had brought his understanding of the Fire Phoenix Technique to an indescribable level.

One could say that in the entire Nine Provinces, when it came to understanding the Fire Phoenix, no one knew more than he did.

With a thought, spirit force surged, and as he lifted his hand and pointed, the Fire Phoenix Technique was executed. A fiery-red figure suddenly sprang forth, trailing a long tail feather, its delicate plumes extremely intricate, the patterns on them clearly visible.

Under his control, this magic and spells, like a living thing, circled above his head, before coming to rest on a nearby tree trunk, lowering its head to preen its feathers.

Then, with a pop, it burst apart, dissolving into specks of luminescence.

The power of his Fire Phoenix Technique was now undoubtedly much greater than before, and this wasn't just because of his increased strength, but also because of the various enhancements this experience had brought him.

This turned out to be an unexpected gain. After all, using weapon control to kill enemies ultimately had a sustainability issue, which magic and spells didn't. As long as there was sufficient spirit force within his body, he could execute magic and spells at will.

Moreover, Lu Ye made an unexpected discovery.

The royal jelly had a permanent effect on enhancing blood Qi and spirit force!

He didn't know how long he had been unconscious, but compared to before he lost consciousness, not only had his blood Qi and spirit force not diminished, but they seemed to flow even faster.

This undoubtedly suggested that the effects of the royal jelly were not simply a temporary boost.

And it made sense, after all: that vast swarm of bees had labored hard to produce just half a bowl's worth of royal jelly, it was surely extraordinary.

After examining the Formation he had previously set up, he found evidence of it being triggered, likely by demon beasts nearby. This made Lu Ye feel relieved; luckily, he had been careful enough to arrange a series of connected Formations. Otherwise, being unconscious for such a long time, it's more likely bad luck would have befallen him.

A vibration from the battlefield marking suddenly brought news. Lu Ye looked down to check; it was a message from Yiyi.

His expression gradually became grave!

The messages from Yiyi weren't just one or two but several, all sent while he was unconscious, with no way for him to respond at the time.

Looking at the time, five or six days had already passed.

The messages from Yiyi were pleas for help. She and Giant Armor had been waiting at a location outside Fog-shrouded Mountain for Lu Ye to meet up with them when they were discovered by passing cultivators of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. With no other choice, Giant Armor could only lead Yiyi and Amber on a relentless escape.

Giant Armor's distinctive physical traits made him too conspicuous, and since many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had seen him with Lu Ye before, they naturally knew they were together.

Many from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had hunted Lu Ye to Fog-shrouded Mountain and, despite suffering heavy casualties, had failed to deal with Lu Ye. Now that they had discovered Giant Armor, how could they let him go?

Luckily, Giant Armor was not so easily dealt with. His physique was mightier than that of a typical 9th Heaven level cultivator, and although many from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge attacked him, they still couldn't break through his defenses.

Originally, Giant Armor intended to take Yiyi and Amber back to Fog-shrouded Mountain, because he was certain that Lu Ye would be there, and though he didn't know why he couldn't make contact, as

long as they entered the Fog-shrouded Mountain, they had a chance to find Lu Ye and then regroup with him.

However, in the end, Giant Armor didn't have as many tricks up his sleeve or the speed of controlling weapons like Lu Ye did. After several unsuccessful attempts and an increasing number of enemies, they had no choice but to run away from Fog-shrouded Mountain.

In terms of fleeing, other than his physique, Giant Armor's strength lay in his endurance.

He possessed his own unique demonic pill, with an extremely ample reserve of spirit force. As long as his physical strength could keep up, he could continue weapon control-flying indefinitely, until the power within the demonic pill was depleted, a feat unmatched by any Spirit Stream Realm cultivator.

As time went on, more and more forces from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge mobilized, and although the Haotian Alliance had many responses, they couldn't restrain all the cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Now, Giant Armor had taken Yiyi and Amber into a perilous land called Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, and their situation was not too good.

For one thing, the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest had been marked as a perilous land on the ten-part map, like the Land of Fiery Flames, both forbidden zones for cultivators, with the dangers of the place bearing a striking resemblance to those of the Land of Fiery Flames.

The perilous nature of the Land of Fiery Flames stemmed from that group of weak, waning Phoenix True Fire; the closer to the center, the more extreme the environment became.

The peril of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was its poison.

Year-round, it was shrouded in boundless and endless poisonous barriers, with the toxicity intensifying the deeper one went. Not only was the environment harsh, but numerous poisonous creatures also lived there, from small spiders and ants to venomous pythons and ferocious beasts of all kinds. Even the Spirit Plants that grew there were extremely toxic.

Being forced into Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was a desperate move, as there were many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators in pursuit. Giant Armor had no way to escape; outside of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, there was simply nowhere to go.

Currently, they were trapped on the outskirts of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, unable to flee because Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had surrounded the entire forest.

The people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge also dared not venture too deeply into Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, intent on trapping Giant Armor to death there, whilst also waiting for Lu Ye, for they were convinced that Lu Ye would not abandon Giant Armor. As long as they kept watch over Giant Armor, Lu Ye was bound to come.

As time passed, more and more cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge gathered towards Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

"Hold on, I'm coming!" Lu Ye quickly replied with a message before retracting his array banners scattered around and raising his spirit ark into the sky.

Soon after, Yiyi responded, "The situation here is still manageable. The toxicity of the poisonous barrier here isn't too strong and the honey we collected in Fog-shrouded Mountain possesses some detoxifying effects. We can still hold on. Just be careful on your side."

The fact that ordinary honey could detoxify was a surprise to Lu Ye, but thinking about it, it wasn't strange at all. Bees are naturally toxic, so honey made by poisonous bees naturally has a detoxifying effect, just as areas infested with venomous snakes often have detoxifying herbs.

Luckily, Giant Armor and the others had brought with them a lot of honey; otherwise, they really wouldn't have been able to hold on.

Checking through the ten-part map, Lu Ye found that Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was not close to Fog-shrouded Mountain, which meant Giant Armor must have been leading Yiyi and Amber in continuous escape without rest. Otherwise, it didn't make sense they could travel so far in just a few days.

Yiyi had considered seeking refuge in one of the Haotian Alliance's estates, but if they did go, they would surely bring disaster upon that Haotian Alliance branch. Moreover, without having formed an Alliance Pact with the local governor of that branch, they wouldn't be able to use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to return to the Nine Provinces.

The only likely outcome would be the refuge getting besieged by countless Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, followed by the estate's downfall and Giant Armor's group having nowhere to escape.

Therefore, entering Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was almost their only choice.

One thing Yiyi did not tell Lu Ye was that the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were no longer content with just surrounding them—they were preparing to enter Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and capture Giant Armor.

The reason they had not acted was due to the immense number of Detoxification Pills needed; they were collecting them from various places, and once they had enough, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would definitely take action.

Rapidly making his way towards Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye checked the battlefield marking. Hua Ci had also left a message that he hadn't managed to check earlier.

Hua Ci had previously been en route to Mount Ying to enter the land of legacy, and Lu Ye faintly sensed that the place she was going to was not very safe, for if it truly were safe, Hua Ci would have already obtained all the inheritances from that land and there would be no need to delay.

He tried to stop her but wasn't successful, so he did not press further.

Later, while busy outwitting a group of people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in Fog-shrouded Mountain, Lu Ye wanted to contact Hua Ci to inquire about her situation but found that he couldn't reach her, only surmising from the imprint that she was still alive.

Now that Hua Ci had taken the initiative to send a message, it was clear that she had left the land of legacy, but the outcome of her venture was unknown.

"Yiyi and Giant Armor are trapped, and I'm on my way."

That was the message left by Hua Ci.

Lu Ye quickly replied, "Don't come here, I'm already on my way."

Hua Ci soon responded, "You're still alive, huh?"

"The feeling's mutual."

"Hehe."

Lu Ye's brows twitched, "What does 'hehe' mean?"

"It doesn't mean anything."

Lu Ye wanted to ask what 'it doesn't mean anything' actually meant, but considering that this would only lead to an endless conversation, he sent a message, "Anyway, don't come over for now, the situation is not very good."

"Got it. Just be careful, children can't be without a father."

Lu Ye nearly lost his composure; this woman's words were getting more and more brazen.

He was about to retort when suddenly, a strong aura approached rapidly from the side. Lu Ye turned his head to look and immediately felt a headache coming on.

It was none other than the Overlord-level female demon.

He didn't know how she had found him, or perhaps it was merely a coincidence. If it was a coincidence, though, it was truly bad luck.

Compared to when he had last seen her, the female demon's form had changed: her arms had transformed into what appeared to be wings, with red feathers covering them.

Considering that the Vermillion Bird was also a kind of avian demon beast, it wasn't strange that this female demon could sense the presence of Phoenix True Fire from over a hundred miles away.

Chapter 372 Lu Yiye Makes an Appearance

Lu Ye even suspected that the reason why this Overlord-level female demon was so powerful was because she had been absorbing the energy emitted from the Phoenix True Fire in the Land of Fiery Flames for many years.

If that was indeed the case, then the Phoenix True Fire must hold a fatal attraction for this female demon.

Upon seeing this female demon, Lu Ye immediately urged the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes to enhance the spirit ark, elevating its already extreme speed to another level.

However, the pursuit behind him was quickly closing in.

Lu Ye looked back and his eyes twitched slightly.

He saw that the female demon had caught up with him, keeping pace with his own speed.

Being a bird-like demon beast with the strength of an Overlord, she outpaced Lu Ye even when he urged the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes. Unless he could use the wings rune tattoo, but since its time limit had been reached, he could no longer activate it.

What brought Lu Ye some relief was that, although the female demon had caught up, she showed no signs of attacking.

"That fire!" The female demon's red eyes stared at Lu Ye as she suddenly spoke.

Lu Ye tensed up, his hand resting on the Boulder Mountain Saber, ready to strike the moment she asked a question he couldn't answer. He was in a hurry to rescue Yiyi and the others and had no time to dawdle with this female demon. As for whether he could win against her... chances were slim, but if he used all his means, it wouldn't be easy for the female demon to deal with him either.

"I didn't find it!"

It would be strange if he had. The Phoenix True Fire had long been devoured by the Talent Tree, leaving no residue behind. The Spirit Stream battlefield would likely never see the Land of Fiery Flames again.

"I didn't see it either," Lu Ye said calmly. "Could you have been mistaken?"

"Impossible."

From start to finish, she never doubted that it was Lu Ye who had made the fire disappear because, in her eyes, Lu Ye was far weaker than her. If she couldn't easily obtain the fire, how could Lu Ye possibly do so?

"Can you no longer feel it now?"

The female demon shook her head, her face showing some disappointment.

After pondering for a moment, Lu Ye said, "You see, in this world, there are many treasures which, over time, develop their own sentience. Those with the right destiny can obtain them effortlessly, while those without it might not find them even when close by. Since you're certain there was fire there, yet neither of us saw it, perhaps it's a matter of destiny."

"Destiny?"

"Yes, destiny."

The female demon fell into thought, her fiery red wings occasionally fluttering without seeming to exert much effort, yet Lu Ye couldn't shake her off.

After thinking for a while, she suddenly said, "Is that fire still there? Is it hiding from me?"

I didn't say that!

The female demon suddenly halted and turned, flying back toward the Land of Fiery Flames, convinced that the fire was still there but hiding from her, making her unable to see it.

Watching the female demon disappear, Lu Ye felt somewhat emotional.

The creator is indeed fair, granting some things while taking others away. Considering the intelligence of this female demon, it's fortunate her strength was great; otherwise, she would have died long ago.

The unexpected interlude didn't affect Lu Ye much. He sped on his way, heading straight towards the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

According to the ten-part map, if he maintained the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes for flight, it would take less than two days to reach the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, but without it, the travel time would double.

It was impossible for Lu Ye to sustain the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes continuously, as the consumption of spirit force was too great to sustain.

Without maintaining the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, the consumption and replenishment of spirit force could just about break even. Even if it consumed a bit more, he still had Breath Fruit wine to use.

Elixir pills were continuously stuffed into his mouth, refining the medicinal effects, while occasionally urging the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes for a burst of speed, hurtling forward like lightning.

Meanwhile, around the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators that had gathered had surpassed three thousand, and with every moment that passed, more cultivators continued to converge there.

Within Fog-shrouded Mountain, the defeat of the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance had already spread. The failure of so many to kill Lu Yiye, resulting in hundreds of deaths, was beyond belief.

This wasn't just a defeat for one sect; it was the entire Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's reputation that Lu Yiye had trampled into the ground and ruthlessly ground into the dirt.

It also made the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side fully realize that if they didn't obliterate Lu Yiye soon, it would be too late.

In the killing fields within Fog-shrouded Mountain, many 1st grade sect members and strong individuals on the Spirit Stream Ranking, confident in their status and positions, hadn't joined the hunt, but this time was different. Outside the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, over twenty names from the Spirit Stream Ranking had gathered, with the strongest among them ranked in the thirties.

There were even rumors that a ranked top ten powerhouse was lurking in the shadows, waiting to deliver a fatal blow to Lu Yiye the moment he appeared.

This assembly of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators was even larger than the last, and in contrast to the pursuit within Fog-shrouded Mountain, this time, both Heaven and Earth were undoubtedly on the side of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Fog-shrouded Mountain was vast and had a unique environment, making it difficult to find Lu Yiye once he hid inside, and even if he were found, it wasn't a guarantee they would be his match.

But the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was different. The area enveloped by the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was much smaller than Fog-shrouded Mountain, and the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side now had plenty of hands to completely surround it.

In this way, those surrounded within would have no chance of escape, like Giant Armor and Yiyi who were currently trapped inside.

As for whether they would stay hidden and not come out, that wasn't a concern; the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was filled with poisonous barriers. Even if they could last for a while, they couldn't last forever, and staying hidden would only result in death by poisoning.

It was precisely because they realized this point that the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators wanted to delve deeper into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest to capture the Giant Armor alive.

It wasn't easy to corner Giant Armor, but they could not allow him to die in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, or else they would lose their leverage over Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer.

Capturing Giant Armor alive and forcing Lu Yiye to show himself was precisely Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's plan!

The detoxification pills and poison-avoiding treasures gathered from various places were all in place. As the forces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge moved in unison, groups of people entered the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest from all directions, searching for Giant Armor's figure.

News soon arrived that a team had encountered Giant Armor and the White Tiger that Lu Ye used as a mount, regretfully they failed to capture him alive, and he escaped.

The spirits of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were greatly boosted. They continued to press on Giant Armor's living space, intending to force him out. Several times Giant Armor attempted to escape using weapon control, but each attempt was thwarted by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had sealed off the skies.

For a while, the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest seemed like a dead end.

Even more exhilarating news reached those from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Lu Yiye has appeared!

He was less than half a day's journey from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and was heading this way.

With the news spreading, the forces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge rejoiced, knowing that their previous plan had worked. Many cultivators immediately left the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and stood guard outside, setting up layers of traps, simply waiting for Lu Ye to walk into their net.

There were even those who were more impatient and moved directly towards the direction Lu Ye was coming from, clearly intending to intercept and kill him.

At a location only half a day's journey from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye used weapon control to travel, followed by a string of flowing lights.

As he made his way here in such an open and unrestrained manner, it was inevitable that his whereabouts would be exposed, not to mention that he never intended to hide his tracks.

Lu Ye was well aware of the plans of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. The situation of Yiyi and Giant Armor was unknown; when he made inquiries through communication, Yiyi only said that everything was still okay.

Obviously, that wasn't the truth.

By attracting some of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators here, Yiyi and the others in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest would face less pressure.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators following him numbered in the dozens. Just like the previous pursuit, people were continuously falling behind and also constantly joining the pursuing ranks.

Lu Ye had no intention of entangling with them now, as his current spirit force was precious and not to be wasted here.

During the chase, as he swept over a jungle, Lu Ye suddenly felt something. Looking down towards the ground, he saw sword lights burst forth. The continuous sword lights gathered like a sword dragon, carrying a chilling intent to kill, heading straight for the pursuers behind him.

Not only massive sword lights emerged to attack, but also more than a dozen plainly-dressed figures.

"Beixuan Sword Sect!" Among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators chasing Lu Ye, someone cried out in panic.

Lu Ye immediately halted his movement, turning around and attacking the pursuers behind him. Before he arrived, nine streaks of flowing light had already been shot from his supplies box.

He had previously been reluctant to engage with the pursuers because he was alone; even if he could kill some of them, he would ultimately be outnumbered. But now, with assistance, it was different.

And that assistance came from over a dozen swordsmen known for their ferocity in battle.

The surging sword lights caused screams of agony to rise continuously, and although there were quite a few cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge chasing after them, facing these fierce swordsmen from the Beixuan Sword Sect, they truly felt a sense of fear.

It was common knowledge that the Sword Control Technique of these sword madmen was known as the premier lethal technique in the Nine Provinces.

Furthermore, Lu Ye was also part of the fray, and compared to the dozen or so sword cultivators from the Beixuan Sword Sect, Lu Ye's killing speed was not slow at all.

After a brief and rushed exchange, the casualties were heavy. Only about a dozen managed to escape in time, each carrying injuries, while the rest were dead on the spot.

Being ambushed and attacked by a group of sword madmen was certainly not going to end well.

With the ringing of a blade, nine streaks of light returned to the supplies box. Lu Ye shook the blood off the Boulder Mountain Saber, sheathed it, and looked towards the leading sword cultivator.

It turned out to be someone he recognized.

At Golden Light Peak, Li Baxian had once tasked this person with protecting Lu Ye. At that time, his cultivation was not very high, but now, he had reached the 9th Heaven.

Lu Ye remembered this person's name was Yooi Lianzhou.

"I have seen Master Uncle Lu!" Yooi Lianzhou greeted formally, and the dozen or so sword cultivators behind him also solemnly saluted in unison.

Lu Ye hastily motioned with his hand to stop them, "Don't call me Master Uncle, it makes one feel old, I'm not even older than you guys."

By seniority, Li Baxian was a generation above them, and as Li Baxian was Lu Ye's fourth senior brother, it made sense for them to address Lu Ye as Master Uncle.

In fact, if you were to really count, there were very few cultivators in the Spirit Stream battlefield who were of the same generation as Lu Ye.

When Shui Yuan went to the Tianyan Sect headquarters, the Tianyan Sect Master Yooi Xiao had even called her "senior sister". With the long lifespans of cultivators, generational seniority can often be difficult to discern, and unless they were close, cultivators of similar age would usually address each other as brothers and sisters.

"Since you all have that relationship with my fourth senior brother, it isn't appropriate for us to consider each other as brothers, so let's just address each other as Fellow Daoist," suggested Lu Ye.

"Fellow Daoist Lu," Yooi Lianzhou readily agreed.

"How come you are here?" Lu Ye asked, seeing these sword cultivators here was clearly more than coincidence; such things were not that likely to happen.

Chapter 373 Spirit Energy Storage

Those from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could see the tremendous threat Lu Ye posed to their side, and they wished to eliminate that threat to prevent future troubles; the Haotian Alliance could likewise not fail to see this.

To Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer was a disaster star, the source of chaos and calamity, but to the Haotian Alliance, Lu Ye was the young generation's rapidly rising star, a pillar to stand against Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in the future.

When one's stance differs, so naturally does one's attitude towards people and things.

If Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wanted to kill, then the Haotian Alliance would want to protect. Since ancient times, the confrontation between these two camps has always been thus; neither side would easily fulfill the other's wishes.

It wasn't just the Beixuan Sword Sect that had sent people; many sects from the Core Circle had also dispatched their disciples. However, they didn't know from which direction Lu Ye would come, so they scattered to various locations to search and wait.

Lu Ye came from this direction and encountered the Beixuan Sword Sect; had he come from another direction, he might have encountered the Righteousness Sect, Qingyu Sect, or the Jade Cloud Palace.

The Beixuan Sword Sect has extremely stringent requirements for taking in disciples; looking across all the 1st grade sects in the Nine Provinces, this sect had the fewest members. Within the Core Circle, there were only a few dozen disciples from the sect headquarters in the Beixuan Sword Sect's station. Now, more than ten of them had been dispatched, demonstrating how much they valued Lu Ye, a decision surely influenced by Li Baxian.

"Fellow Daoist Lu, you cannot go to the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest; the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge has laid numerous traps there, just waiting for you to walk right into them."

"A member of our Righteous Blood Sect is trapped inside."

"I've heard. Even if you have to go, now is not the time. You need to gather more forces first. Right now, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge has the upper hand, with thousands of their cultivators gathered there. Without adequate manpower, we can't breach their defenses."

"We can't wait any longer. The conditions inside are harsh, and my Righteous Blood Sect disciple has already been trapped for a number of days. Further delay may result in more bad than good." Lu Ye turned to look at Yooi Lianzhou, "If a disciple of the Beixuan Sword Sect were trapped inside, what would you Fellow Daoists do?"

Yooi Lianzhou pondered briefly and replied, "I understand. Then let us accompany Fellow Daoist on this journey."

"I am deeply grateful for Fellow Daoists' willingness to help. However, this journey is perilous, and you need not venture deep into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest."

"Fellow Daoist intends to break through alone?" Yooi Lianzhou understood the meaning behind Lu Ye's words.

"I may be able to breach their defenses and enter the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest."

"May be able to?"

"I haven't tried before, so I can't be certain. However, I still must trouble Fellow Daoists to escort me on my way. With my whereabouts now exposed, quite a few from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge will probably come to intercept me, and I need to recover for a while to maintain my spirit force."

"But Fellow Daoist Lu, even if you truly have a means to break their defenses and enter the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, what then? The place is rife with deadly poison, a land of great danger. If you can't find a way out, you'll eventually die there."

"I have my plans, please don't worry, Fellow Daoist."

Yooi Lianzhou frowned at him, unsure whether Lu Ye was telling the truth.

Lu Ye smiled: "I value my life more than any of you."

Only then did Yooi Lianzhou nod in agreement: "We will do as you say, Fellow Daoist. However, if the task proves impossible, do not act recklessly."

"Understood."

"Let's go!"

With Yooi Lianzhou's low shout, he rose on his flying sword, and Lu Ye stepped onto his sword. A group of more than ten people turned into sword light and sped towards the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Lu Ye had been worried about the endurance of his spirit force, but now with Yooi Lianzhou's Sword Control carrying him, he could concentrate on recovering his own strength.

He stuffed a large number of elixir pills into his mouth, activated the Bestial Gluttony Feast, and the buzzing in his belly never stopped, rapidly restoring his spirit force.

Along the way, numerous Haotian Alliance cultivators received the message and hurried over to join forces, and they also encountered Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who came to kill Lu Ye head-on. However, after several groups of them were wiped out, those from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge no longer dared to act rashly, and didn't even dare to follow from afar.

Because, the speed of a sword cultivator's Sword Control is very fast; once targeted by the sword madmen of the Beixuan Sword Sect, there was a very high likelihood of not escaping.

Gradually, the number of Haotian Alliance members that gathered grew more and more, quickly reaching over two hundred people.

But as Yooi Lianzhou had previously mentioned, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had the advantage this time, amassing far more people than the Haotian Alliance, so in a short time, the Haotian Alliance could not gather too many reinforcements.

Initially, he wanted to persuade Lu Ye to wait a few more days, to wait until the Haotian Alliance gathered enough manpower to battle with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, but he was unable to convince him.

Under normal circumstances, waiting a few more days wouldn't matter, but in the current situation, neither Lu Ye nor the Giant Armor could afford to wait.

Moreover, even if the Haotian Alliance amassed enough manpower on their side, at most they would only be able to form a standoff with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

A standoff involving several thousand people usually doesn't lead to battle because the numbers are too large. Once a fight broke out, both the enemy and allies would suffer heavy casualties, something neither side could bear.

Just like in the inner circle, facing the Allied Forces pulled together by Lu Ye, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge gathered a nearly equal number of cultivators to resist.

In previous years, neither of the two major factions would engage in such large-scale operations, as no one wanted to force the other into a mutual destruction scenario.

However, since Lu Ye stirred up a storm in the inner circle, large gatherings of cultivators seem to have become the norm.

On his Spirit Sword, Lu Ye's spirit force had become abundant, yet he still felt somewhat uneasy.

The Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes that required one to two hundred leaves to bear were extremely complex to construct, but with the Talent Tree, Lu Ye wasn't worried about failing to create them. What concerned him was the enormous amount of spirit force consumed during construction, and with his current Level 7 cultivation, he wasn't sure he could manage it.

If he exhausted all his spirit force during the process... the scene would be unimaginable.

Consuming Breath Fruit wine while constructing the spirit runes was one solution, but it couldn't guarantee timely replenishment.

The best response would be to rapidly increase his own spirit force reserves, but that wasn't something one could enhance just by saying so.

To expand his spirit force reserves, he would need to open more orifices, and even though Lu Ye could open them quickly, it would still take some time to see any effect.

Lu Ye thought of a spirit rune.

Spirit Energy Storing!

This rune was specifically for storing spirit force.

Each weapon control artefact was built around a core of restriction that stored spirit energy; otherwise, there would be no way to control the artefact once it left the body.

The key for a cultivator to control artefacts was reaching Level 7, being able to manage spirit force outside their body, pre-storing spirit force in the artefact, and using the control over the stored spirit force to achieve the goal of artefact manipulation.

If he could use Spirit Energy Storing to store a large amount of spirit force, it would undoubtedly solve the problem he faced.

He could enhance his own body with the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, and he could do the same with the Bloodstain Spirit Runes, so naturally, he could enhance himself with the spirit energy storing spirit runes as well!

With this thought, Lu Ye immediately activated his spirit force and constructed a spirit energy storing spirit rune on his chest. Then he began to channel his own spirit force into the rune, storing it.

The spirit energy storing spirit rune itself required spirit force to maintain, and this act of injecting his own spirit force was another consumption. Moreover, the impact during spirit force injection could also cause the rune to collapse, which was undoubtedly a substantial test for Lu Ye.

Fortunately, his psyche was tough enough, his concentration strong, and his control over his own spirit force, smooth and natural.

As he slowly infused spirit force into the spirit energy storing spirit rune, Lu Ye gradually adapted, and there was no sign of the rune collapsing.

Once he confirmed his idea was workable, Lu Ye took out an elixir pill and drank a bottle of Breath Fruit wine to replenish his consumption.

As time passed, Yooi Lianzhou suddenly turned his head to glance at Lu Ye.

He vaguely sensed that there was something off about Lu Ye behind him. From Lu Ye, he felt a hint of danger, not because Lu Ye was going to sneak attack him, but because Lu Ye himself seemed like a balloon about to burst, with highly unstable spirit force fluctuations.

It wasn't just him who felt it; other cultivators nearby who were providing protection also noticed and turned their attention to it.

At this moment, the spirit energy storing spirit rune Lu Ye had constructed on his chest had reached its limit and could no longer store any more spirit force.

After sensing it briefly, the stored spirit force in this rune was roughly equivalent to thirty percent of his total reserve.

With plenty of mental capacity to spare, Lu Ye boldly constructed another similar spirit energy storing spirit rune on his back.

The same method as before!

With previous experience, this time was much simpler.

If Lu Ye's spirit force reserves were likened to a pond, then he was now digging two small connected ponds beside it. The total spirit force these two small ponds could store was roughly sixty percent of his own.

Lu Ye continued with his work until he felt he had stored enough spirit force and then stopped. By this time, he had a total of five such 'ponds' within his body.

Yooi Lianzhou's temple twitched with the sharp realisation of the crisis behind him. If Lu Ye previously resembled a balloon at the brink of bursting, now he seemed like a volcano ready to erupt at any moment.

He didn't know what Lu Ye was up to, but he could be sure of one thing—that Fellow Daoist Lu was engaging in a very risky affair!

"Fellow Daoist Yooi, please speed up!" Lu Ye's voice suddenly came from behind.

Previously, to wait for reinforcements from the Haotian Alliance from various locations, Yooi Lianzhou hadn't been flying swiftly because in his mind, the more people, the better for taking action. Even though the people they had gathered were but a mantis trying to stop a chariot against Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, having more was always better.

As for Lu Ye's previous claim that he might have a way to break through the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's defense line and enter the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Yooi Lianzhou had not paid much attention. Human efforts are sometimes limited; even if Lu Ye had exhibited exceptional performance before, facing so many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators by himself, he would still have difficulty achieving his goal.

While they were hurrying forward, he had already discussed with other Haotian Alliance cultivators who had come to join up. They planned to charge the formations together, trying to tear through Ten

Thousand Demons Ridge's defense line and enter the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest. If the task proved impossible, then they would retreat and plan slowly.

They could understand Lu Ye's desire to save his sect members in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, so they were willing to take this risk with him. However, sensing the intense crisis from behind, Yooi Lianzhou started to believe a bit in what Lu Ye had said about possibly having a way to break through the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's defense line.

This method hadn't even been used yet, and it was already so impressive. What would it be like if it were actually deployed?

Chapter 374 The Divine Bird Appears

Outside the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge stood with solemn expressions, ready for battle.

Messages kept coming from all directions, keeping everyone on the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side fully aware of Lu Ye's movements.

"Senior Brother Woo, that Lu Yiye is already about 30 miles away and will be here soon," Qin Zheng of the Thousand Wings Sect approached a man.

The one referred to as Senior Brother Woo was none other than Woo Beihan, who ranked thirty-third on the Spirit Stream Ranking and was born into a 1st grade sect, significantly stronger than Qin Zheng.

The pursuit of Lu Ye at Fog-shrouded Mountain was led by Qin Zheng, resulting in heavy losses and bringing shame to both him and his sect, the Thousand Wings Sect.

Now, with quite a few strong cultivators mobilized on Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's side and more than ten from the Spirit Stream Ranking alone here, it was naturally not Qin Zheng's place to direct operations anymore.

"How many people are with him?" Woo Beihan looked towards the direction Lu Ye was coming from. A distance of 30 miles was very close for cultivators of the Core Circle, and Lu Ye could probably arrive in less than the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

"About three to four hundred," he replied.

"Only three to four hundred..." Woo Beihan scoffed, "Nothing to worry about."

With about three to four thousand people gathered on Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's side, although they spread out to surround Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, there were still over seven hundred people in this direction.

With only three to four hundred from the Haotian Alliance, they were undoubtedly heading down a path of destruction.

Qin Zheng wanted to remind Woo Beihan not to underestimate the enemy, but thinking of the nearly double numerical superiority of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, it seemed impossible for them to lose this battle, so he held his tongue to avoid being mocked for cowardice again.

Due to the previous fiasco at Fog-shrouded Mountain, many had openly and secretly blamed him, accusing his poor decisions of leading to heavy losses and great humiliation for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Yet in truth, thrust into a crisis situation like that, how could he have made a better decision? Throughout the chase at Fog-shrouded Mountain, it was almost as if Lu Ye had been leading them by the nose.

Woo Beihan was undoubtedly a cautious person. Even with a numerical advantage, he voiced his lack of concern, but still ordered a careful inspection of the surroundings.

This area was set with many formations, and some even purchased binding spiritual artifacts specifically designed for capturing from Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

These were net-like spiritual artifacts requiring several people to activate, usually used to capture large, troublesome demon beasts.

Each spirit net was expensive, but to deal with Lu Ye, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had bought more than a dozen. If Lu Yiye did not show up, so be it; if he dared to appear, escape would be impossible!

Woo Beihan then looked towards a particular spot in the crowd, where a non-descript, short cultivator stood. This man had an ordinary appearance, the type no one would notice in a crowd, and the spirit light emanating from his body was merely of the 8th Heaven level.

However, few among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators gathered here knew that this man was the Spectral Shadow, the ninth ranked cultivator on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

It was no secret that Lu Ye, with his 7th Heaven cultivation, could kill cultivators of the 9th Heaven level. Therefore, if they really wanted to deal with Lu Ye, the Spectral Shadow's assassination skills were undoubtedly a promising blade to look forward to, and his presence filled Woo Beihan with confidence about this operation.

With all preparations in place, several hundred cultivators held their breath in concentration, waiting only for the appearance of the Haotian Alliance members.

As time passed, at a certain moment, someone whispered, "They're here!"

In the distance, a mass of flowing lights rushed towards them. It was the Haotian Alliance cultivators escorting Lu Ye, led by more than ten sword cultivators from the Beixuan Sword Sect.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side was immediately abuzz.

The few hundred members of the Haotian Alliance rushing over so brazenly undoubtedly felt like a slight, and it also puzzled them. What exactly was the Haotian Alliance up to? These were all cultivators of the Core Circle; it didn't make sense for them to act so foolishly.

In the distant Haotian Alliance camp, looking towards the direction of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Yooi Lianzhou declared solemnly, "Fellow Daoist Lu, there's still 20 miles to go!"

"Understood."

Lu Ye, who had been sitting behind Yooi Lianzhou, slowly stood up and spoke out loud, "Fellow Daoists, I'm deeply grateful for your protection along the way. I'll take it from here. Please respond as the situation dictates."

A 9th Heaven cultivator laughed loudly, "Brother Yiye, I don't know what method you plan to use, but Ten Thousand Demons Ridge is powerful now. Going it alone might be difficult for you to accomplish anything. Since we are here, we won't mind going along with you. But let me say beforehand, if it really becomes unfeasible, we still need to run. As long as we have a place to return to, we won't lack for firewood, Brother Yiye."

"Indeed, indeed!"

"Ten miles!" Yooi Lianzhou called out firmly. From this position, they could already feel the fluctuations of spirit force emanating from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

Lu Ye launched his own spirit ark, leaping down from Yooi Lianzhou's flying sword, and as he drank a bottle of prepared Breath Fruit wine with one hand, the spirit ark slightly shook and surged to the forefront.

In the next instant, under the watchful eyes of thousands from both sides, Lu Ye's figure was suddenly enveloped by a vivid red spirit force.

The thick spirit force flowed, surged, converged, and formed the shape of an egg, tightly wrapping Lu Ye inside.

The violent fluctuations of spirit force spread in all directions, and on the surface of that egg, various intricate patterns rapidly evolved, dazzling to behold.

Members of the Haotian Alliance had sensed that Lu Ye had been holding back a powerful method on the way, and naturally, they widened their eyes trying to discern it clearly, but were utterly baffled.

Equally puzzled were the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Lu Ye had suddenly charged forward, using his own spirit force to condense into the shape of an egg, and hid inside it. It seemed like he intended to forcibly break through their formation.

But even if he protected himself so meticulously, what would it avail? With over 700 Core Circle cultivators launching a concentrated attack, even a True Lake Realm cultivator would have to tread cautiously.

The spirit force surged like a tide, making the spirit runes on the spirit force egg enveloping Lu Ye increasingly clear, flickering with a dazzling luster.

The spirit force stored within the spirit energy storing spirit runes built in front of his chest was depleted in just under three breaths' time, followed by the spirit force in the second set of spirit energy storing spirit runes, then those in other spirit energy storing runes, and finally, the spirit force flowing in Lu Ye's spiritual orifice.

Never had Lu Ye experienced such severe depletion of his internal spirit force.

Onlookers only saw the various changes on the surface of the spirit force egg, but in reality, more changes were happening inside. Fragments of spirit runes borne by one or two hundred leaves of the Talent Tree were constructed and pieced together by Lu Ye using a massive amount of spirit force in an incredibly short time.

Not only spirit force was consumed but also mental power.

The Haotian Alliance cultivators closely following Lu Ye were the first to perceive something amiss because a remarkably dangerous aura emanated from the spirit force egg enveloping Lu Ye, causing their skin to prickle painfully.

The Haotian Alliance cultivators, who had initially planned to charge into battle alongside Lu Ye and penetrate into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, halted under Yooi Lianzhou's lead, their eyelids twitching as they watched the rapidly approaching spirit force egg heading toward the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's camp.

They dared not follow any further. Although they could not discern what technique Lu Ye had used, it was clearly a method of extreme power and danger.

Once executed, it was very likely to injure them as well.

Recalling what Lu Ye had said earlier, the cultivators of the Haotian Alliance finally understood the confidence behind his actions.

At this moment, they were only about 30 miles away from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

Even these 30 miles were quickly closing.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge finally realized the dire situation as the surface of the approaching spirit force egg turned a scorching red, as if it was about to explode, emitting a heart-palpitating aura that, despite the distance, made their hair stand on end.

Woo Beihan's gaze was fixed intently on that spirit force egg, and the alarm churning inside him told him to flee quickly, but his cultivator's pride prevented him from moving.

Hundreds of people facing one, if they fled like this, what would their dignity amount to?

He failed to notice that within the crowd, the Spectral Shadow had already stealthily concealed his form at the first opportunity, having run off to who knows where.

Spectral Shadow, a powerful spirit cultivator, was extremely sensitive to crises. The terrifying sense of impending disaster made it impossible for him to remain there any longer!

About 30 miles, one mile...

Woo Beihan's shout rang out, "Attack!"

The moment his words fell, numerous formations were activated, and a barrage of magic and spells and weapon control techniques rained down on the approaching spirit force egg. Not only that, but several cultivators' weapon control sent up a net of spiritual artifacts, each aiming to envelop the spirit force egg.

Crackling...

The red-hot surface of the spirit force egg cracked open with multiple fissures and, in a thunderous shatter, suddenly, a clear and loud cry echoed through the heavens and the earth.

Orange-red flames spread in all directions, sweeping across, and a massive fire bird emerged out of nowhere.

The fire bird alone was over 30 yards long, with its tail feathers trailing long behind it, and a wingspan nearly 60 yards wide. Its posture was elegant, its expression vividly lifelike, and the patterns on its feathers clear, as if it were an actual living being.

As its wings flapped, the space around it distorted from the heat, with many attacking spells impacting against it like stones tossed into the sea. The numerous spiritual artifacts instantly lost their essence, their restrictions destroyed, melting and crashing to the ground; the several spirit nets aimed at it were unable to block its gracefully advancing form.

That day, a divine bird appeared, and the world was shaken!

All the cultivators who witnessed this scene stared, trembled, and gazed at the massive fire bird.

"One of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, the Vermillion Bird!"

Yooi Lianzhou murmured, and even though he was an exceptionally skilled sword cultivator, at that moment, his Sword Heart trembled, and his scalp numbed.

The Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts—he had only read about them in the sect's archives and had never seen one with his own eyes.

And today, at this place, he had seen it.

A moment of relief followed; had they not acted quickly enough to stop following Lu Ye, they would have likely suffered heavy losses the instant the Vermillion Bird appeared.

Not just him, every cultivator from the Haotian Alliance felt their hearts palpitate.

They had all guessed that Lu Ye was about to employ a method of immense power, but now they realized that this method was excessively powerful.

Furthermore, what kind of method was this that it could even summon one of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts?

Of course, everyone knew this was not a real Four Auspicious Sacred Beast; a real one could probably shatter the entire Spirit Stream battlefield with a flap of its wings.

This was merely a manifestation formed by Lu Ye through his own spirit force. The key issue was, could a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator really initiate such a technique?

Chapter 375 Glorious Roll of Honour

In this direction, more than 700,000 cultivators from the Core Circle of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were gathered, above and below the heavens, with many Arrays and Spiritual Artifacts deployed, forming a tightly sealed defensive line. Such a defense could not be said to be anything but solid.

However, when the silhouette of the Vermillion Bird swept past, this sturdy defense line was as if made of paper, easily torn open with a gaping breach.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, who had been pulling on the spirit net to ensnare the Vermillion Bird, bore the brunt of the attack. Before they could even get close, their clothes and hair ignited, and their protective spirit force did nothing to help.

By then, they finally realized that a great disaster was about to befall them, and wished to turn and flee, but it was already too late.

The wings of the Vermillion Bird quivered slightly, and its slender and graceful figure overcame the barrier of space. The orange flames enveloped and encased them.

Screams rose as figures fell like rain toward the ground below, already breathless before they fully hit the earth.

More cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were swept up by the orange flames, and even the powerful cultivators from the Spirit Stream Ranking were as fragile as ants before such a might.

The dense formation was originally intended to better cope with any charge from the Haotian Alliance; however, it now became their biggest blunder.

The figure of the Vermillion Bird swept through the most crowded place among the people, and scorching power carved out a path of death in both the air and ground, ramming into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Its momentum unabated, the perennial poisonous barriers in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest were cleared away, forming a cleared zone through which the Vermillion Bird passed, nullifying the poisons into nothingness.

From high above, outside the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the previously tight formation of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge now had a gap tens of yards wide where no one stood; on either side of the gap were Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators with looks of terror, their pairs of eyes trembling as they stared into the forest where the orange figure had crashed.

They were alive not because they were strong enough, but because they were luckier, not affected by the great figure's sweep.

And for those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who were affected, each and every one of them was now a charred corpse, void of life.

In just a short ten breaths or so, more than two hundred cultivators gathered here from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had died or been injured! Even several from the Spirit Stream Ranking had perished, including Woo Beiha, who ranked thirty-third.

After all, he was the most powerful on the face of this operation, so when the Vermillion Bird revealed itself in that instant, he did not choose to hide or flee but instead commanded cultivators from all directions to attack.

But he underestimated just how powerful the Fire Phoenix was, and by the time the orange figure charged forward to his face, it was too late to run.

He died a peaceful death.

That clear and resonant cry rang out once more, and the figure of the Vermillion Bird scattered into specks of light several miles into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, dissipating into tiny glowing sparks.

Amidst the fluttering lights in the sky, a figure plummeted straight down.

"It's that Lu Yi!" a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator exclaimed with a trembling voice.

This Vermillion Bird, one of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, was a method conjured by Lu Ye, and now that the Vermillion Bird was gone, Lu Ye's figure naturally revealed itself. However, his current condition seemed... not very good?

"He's done for!" someone shouted excitedly.

This shocking method had massacred more than two hundred core circle cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in one fell swoop, and the red lights streaming out of the corpses converged into a ribbon of light drifting towards where Lu Ye had fallen.

But could this truly be a method casually executed by a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator?

By this point in their cultivation, who didn't understand the principle that the stronger the method, the greater the cost?

Although it was unclear why Lu Yiye could execute such a method, it was undoubtedly now when he was at his weakest, possibly even suffering great retaliation.

It was definitely his most vulnerable moment, as evident from the wretchedness of his falling figure.

The boundless terror from a moment ago was suddenly struck by a great surge of excitement; all surviving cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge saw this as an opportunity.

An opportunity to slay Lu Ye!

Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect was considered a mobile treasure vault; whoever killed him could enjoy inexhaustible wealth in the future.

So, after a brief freeze, all surviving cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge became fervent.

However, before they could rush into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest to search for Lu Ye, the sound of sword cries suddenly rang out.

Someone exclaimed, "The killers from Haotian Alliance have arrived!"

Those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators whose attention had been drawn by Lu Ye turned their heads and saw more than a dozen Sword Madmen from the Beixuan Sword Sect forming a Sword Array, their flying swords like dragons, attacking from their direction. And following these Sword Madmen were three to four hundred Haotian Alliance cultivators.

The appearance of the Vermillion Bird was indeed startling, but the Haotian Alliance, after all, was not the one being attacked, and so they were quicker to regain their senses than Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Yooi Lianzhou and the others immediately realized this was a good opportunity to attack Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. As the Vermillion Bird's figure smashed into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, they launched an assault on the enemy whose minds were greatly disturbed.

A massive battle suddenly erupted.

Thousands of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had gathered inside and outside the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, with over seven hundred in this direction before. Even though some had died just now, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge still held the numerical advantage.

But sword cultivators excel in combat, especially when more than a dozen of them form a gigantic Sword Array — its killing power greatly enhanced. The sword dragon, formed by over a thousand flying swords, crashed into the crowd and instantly turned into a meat grinder. Screams rose and fell as blood and limbs scattered everywhere.

Following closely behind this Sword Array, over three hundred Haotian Alliance cultivators employed various techniques, striking terror in the hearts of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge for a time.

If the previous arrangements had still been in place, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could have used them to turn the tide. But once the silhouette of the Vermilion Bird swept across this area, all the previously laid-out formations and tactics had been destroyed.

At this moment, all Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could rely on was their numerical advantage.

That slight advantage was utterly insufficient to block the ferocious offensive of the Haotian Alliance. Under relentless pressure, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge found themselves unable to withstand the attack until cultivators from both sides, alerted by the noise, came to assist and finally stemmed the onslaught of the Haotian Alliance.

The several hundred members of the Haotian Alliance didn't linger after gaining the upper hand; they fled immediately. Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's cultivators pursued, and the battle raged furiously...

As the cultivators from both sides were engaged in fierce combat, Lu Ye, covered in blood and weak in breath, sprinted through the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

He felt his consciousness blurring, overwhelmed with exhaustion, and his spirit force was nearly depleted. If it weren't for the Breath Fruit wine he had drunk before using the Fire Phoenix technique, he would have surely burned out by now.

Numerous wounds covered his body, and even the flesh inside had sustained damage.

He was fortunately relieved that he had previously stored a good amount of spirit force with his 5th Dao spirit energy storing spirit runes, or he wouldn't have been able to execute the Fire Phoenix.

This spirit rune was too taxing on one's spirit force and consciousness, not something a cultivator of his level should be able to cast.

Though he had managed to successfully unleash it in the end, the Fire Phoenix he conjured was beyond his control. If that hadn't been the case, he wouldn't have crashed into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and would've already wiped out those several hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

Soon after crashing into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the Fire Phoenix dissipated — not because its power was exhausted, but because he had no strength left to maintain it. If he had persisted, Lu Ye felt he would have died.

To easily construct such a massive spirit rune and control it flawlessly, Lu Ye estimated he would need to advance to the Cloud River Realm... and that was just a possibility.

The Breath Fruit wine continued to work, rapidly replenishing the consumed spirit force, but the aftermath of using the Fire Phoenix began to manifest rapidly.

He dared not stay put, as there were Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators within the forest, and his conspicuous crash must have already led some to search for him.

If he encountered a cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge at this time, Lu Ye guessed his fate wouldn't be so favorable, as his ability to fight was severely diminished.

Luckily, he had already communicated with Yiyi, who was guiding the Giant Armor to his location. Besides, the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was filled with toxic barriers and limited visibility, making it extremely difficult for anyone from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to track him down in such an environment. As long as he remained cautious, there shouldn't be too much of a problem.

As he was contemplating this, a feeling of Heaven's Augury descended upon him, and subsequently, a giant, semi-transparent ranking appeared out of nowhere in the sky above him.

Emblazoned on the ranking were the names and origins of a hundred cultivators — it was the renowned Spirit Stream Ranking.

Lu Ye stiffened as he fled.

Things seemed... not so good!

Lu Ye, of course, knew about the Spirit Stream Ranking. His fourth senior brother told him that those who made it onto the list for the first time could feel this omnipresent Heaven's Augury, and if they performed exceptionally well, Heaven's Augury would manifest in a unique way to highlight those who made the list as a form of recognition and reward.

But throughout history, the number of people genuinely recognized and rewarded by Heaven's Augury has been limited. If compared to the total number of those who made the list, the ratio is about one in ten thousand. Nearly every few years, one such person emerges.

Just as Lu Ye was considering how to keep his whereabouts a secret, the semi-transparent Spirit Stream Ranking suddenly unfolded in the sky above him like a banner, clearly visible to anyone within thirty miles who wasn't blind.

Could it be...

It shouldn't be...

Why would it...

Under countless gazes, five names on the Spirit Stream Ranking suddenly dimmed, followed by their disappearance as streaks of light, signifying these five either ascended to the Cloud River or had perished.

Then, in the position of the thirty-third rank, a row of dazzling golden characters appeared.

Lu Yiye, Righteous Blood Sect of Bingzhou, 7th Heaven level!

Immediately after, everyone ranked below thirty-three advanced one spot upward, and at the tail end, where vacancies were created, a few new lines appeared, denoting the names, origins, and cultivation levels of the newcomers to the list.

The vast Spirit Stream Ranking hung high in the sky for an instant; every cultivator within thirty miles could see it clearly, with all eyes fixed on the line at rank thirty-three, especially the last five characters.

7th Heaven level!

How eye-catching.

Traditionally, strong individuals on the Spirit Stream Ranking had invariably possessed 9th Heaven cultivation. Only in the past decade had Li Baxian, with his 8th Heaven cultivation, consistently held a position in the top ten of the Spirit Stream Ranking. But Li Baxian was different as he had fallen from 9th Heaven cultivation, and even with a damaged spiritual orifice, his profound accumulation was intact. Moreover, with extraordinary talent and his mastery of Sword Control of one hundred paths, even the sword master of the Beixuan Sword Sect had once considered taking him as a disciple.

Attaining a spot on the Spirit Stream Ranking with 7th Heaven cultivation was unprecedented!

Chapter 376 Nine Provinces Tremble

The Spirit Stream Ranking is a list generated naturally by Heaven's Augury, and among the countless cultivators of the Spirit Stream battlefield, only a hundred are selected. One can imagine the difficulty of making it onto the list.

Over the years, the cultivators of the Nine Provinces have already figured out the rules for entry into the Spirit Stream Ranking.

There are two ways to climb onto the Spirit Stream Ranking.

The first method is to battle in public, displaying one's strength during combat. If the displayed strength is sufficiently powerful, it would be included in the Spirit Stream Ranking and assigned an appropriate position.

Hence, as long as one's strength is great enough, it is guaranteed to make it onto the Spirit Stream Ranking. Of course, if a cultivator wishes to hide his capabilities and never reveals his strongest strength in public, even if he is qualified, he would not be selected.

Take Li Baxian for example. The first time Lu Ye met him, he was ranked tenth on the Spirit Stream Ranking because he had always concealed his full strength from others.

It wasn't until after the battle at Golden Light Peak and his agreed fight with Yanh Xing that he exposed his foundation. The Spirit Stream Ranking then promptly adjusted his position from tenth to third.

Recently, after Li Baxian's spiritual orifice was fully repaired and with his 9th Heaven level cultivation, he killed Yanh Xing outside the Mad Saber Sect's territory and jumped from the third place to the top of the list.

This was because, in the judgment of Heaven's Augury, the strength he had displayed had surpassed Feng Yuechan.

Another method is to challenge someone on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Heaven's Augury has its own set of criteria and methods for challenges. If someone off the ranking succeeds in the challenge or kills the ranked person, they would replace that person's position on the list.

It is very beneficial for a cultivator to climb onto the Spirit Stream Ranking. These benefits, bestowed by Heaven's Augury, greatly aid in cultivation.

It is precisely because of these various benefits that many cultivators with profound backgrounds and 9th Heaven level cultivation are unwilling to ascend to Cloud River. They remain in the Spirit Stream battlefield largely for the Spirit Stream Ranking. If they could get onto the ranking and obtain the blessings granted by Heaven's Augury before ascending to Cloud River, their potential would be even greater in the future.

When cultivators reach the 9th Heaven level, the disparities in their foundations slowly become apparent.

Even amongst cultivators with the same cultivation, their strengths vary.

Although Lu Ye has killed quite a few 9th Heaven level cultivators recently, if he were to truly face a powerhouse from the Spirit Stream Ranking, who would win is truly uncertain. The strength he has demonstrated so far has not been enough to allow him to climb onto the Spirit Stream Ranking—this is Heaven's Augury's fair judgment.

Until now.

In one fell swoop, Fire Phoenix annihilated more than two hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, among which five were on the Spirit Stream Ranking, and the highest-ranked of them was Woo Beihan at thirty-third...

According to the rules of the Spirit Stream Ranking, by killing Woo Beihan, Lu Ye, regardless of the means used, would take over his spot.

In fact, considering the terrifying power displayed by Fire Phoenix, not even the first-ranked on the Spirit Stream Ranking could withstand it. In theory, Lu Ye could have immediately ascended to the top of the ranking.

However, Heaven's Augury has its own set of standards for judgment, and perhaps it felt that Lu Ye's method was a bit opportunistic. Therefore, it only allowed him to replace Woo Beihan's position.

After all, under normal circumstances, Lu Ye wouldn't have the opportunity to use that spirit rune in a fight. His spirit force would be insufficient and depleted before he could, so how could he use it?

This time he succeeded because he had prepared in advance, storing up to sixty percent of his spirit force using two spirit energy storing spirit runes. In a real combat situation, he wouldn't have the time to do all this.

At this moment, on that huge ranking list, amidst the uniformly listed 9th Heaven level cultivators, a 7th Heaven Level 7 cultivator had mixed in, occupying the thirty-third position, shining brightly and nearly blinding both friendly and hostile cultivators alike!

Never before has anyone started off so high on the Spirit Stream Ranking; most cultivators climbed up from the very bottom of the list step by step.

This unprecedented event unfolded right before everyone's eyes.

Through the communication of various cultivators, the news rapidly spread throughout the Nine Provinces. Within a short period, every cultivator in the Nine Provinces knew about it.

The Nine Provinces were shaken!

The shock wasn't merely from Lu Ye's attainment of the thirty-third position on the Spirit Stream Ranking with his 7th Heaven cultivation but also from the terrifying method he employed. No one knew exactly how he had done it, but somehow he had conjured the figure of the Vermillion Bird, one of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, and wiped out more than two hundred people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in one go.

At this moment, Lu Ye's plight was hard to voice, as if he had swallowed a bitter pill. Originally, the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was rife with poison barriers, and he began to flee the instant he fell. With his powerful perception and the trace-erasing bangle and Concealment Spirit Runes, as long as his luck wasn't too awful, he generally didn't worry about being discovered by the people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

But now the Spirit Stream Ranking was like a massive flag waving suddenly above his head!

That flag accurately indicated Lu Ye's position to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. In an instant, those who had been aimlessly searching for Lu Ye converged in the direction indicated by the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Lu Ye was full of bitterness, as if he had chewed on coptis. What made him even more annoyed was the name displayed for him on the Spirit Stream Ranking—what was going on with that?

Even Heaven's Augury had decided to call him Lu Yiye?

His name was clearly Lu Ye!

Yue Shan, you wretched scoundrel, just you wait!

Dragging his weary body and mustering his spirits, Lu Ye quickly delved deeper into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest. For other cultivators, the omnipresent poison barriers might be troublesome, but for Lu Ye, they were not a threat at all.

As long as the fuel reserves in his Talent Tree were sufficient, any poison that invaded his body would be burnt clean.

With his strong perception, Lu Ye often detected the presence of those searching for him among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators before they did. Moreover, the view within the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was obscured; at a glance, the entire forest was filled with colorful mists and barriers of poison drifting directionlessly.

The trace-erasing bangle was already on his wrist. As soon as he sensed someone nearby, he would promptly activate the power of the bangle to conceal himself.

Madam Yun's Spiritual Artifact came in handy at this time, helping Lu Ye a great deal. Although the spirit force within his body was rapidly recovering, it was best to conserve energy whenever possible during such times.

The spirit force required to activate the trace-erasing bangle was much less than that needed for the Concealment Spirit Runes, and moreover, the concealment effect of this Spiritual Artifact was somewhat superior to that of the runes.

Continuously, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators passed by nearby, searching all around.

Only after they had left did Lu Ye continue his escape.

In this stop-and-go fashion, suddenly, Lu Ye felt a strong premonition in his heart, and he quickly stopped and concealed his tracks.

All around was deathly quiet with no signs of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators searching, causing Lu Ye to frown. He thought he was mistaken, but just as he was about to deactivate the power of the trace-erasing bangle, that premonition emerged out of thin air again.

He stood still, holding his breath, and carefully inspected his surroundings.

His perception, far exceeding that of a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator, played a critical role at this moment as Lu Ye detected a faint sign of life not far from him.

There was someone at that spot!

And to be able to conceal their presence and figure to this extent clearly indicated an extremely powerful ghost cultivator.

Quietly stimulating the Insight Spirit Runes to enhance his eyesight, sure enough, he saw traces of spirit force flowing in a human shape at that location.

The ghost cultivator seemed to have sensed something and, while concealing his figure, roamed around nearby. Moments later, he actually approached within a short distance of Lu Ye.

The two of them, each having concealed their presence, were now separated by a mere thirty feet, each sizing up the other's location.

The flow of spirit force within the ghost cultivator suddenly sped up significantly, leading Lu Ye to immediately deduce that the other party was preparing to strike.

It wasn't that the other party had detected his presence, but rather that the ghost cultivator seemed to be testing the waters...

With a ringing sound, from the supplies box on Lu Ye's waist, nine streaks of Liu Guang shot forth towards the front.

Having sensed the other's intention to make a move, Lu Ye certainly wasn't going to wait foolishly.

The ghost cultivator, who had not yet made a move, was evidently startled, revealing his figure in haste; an ordinary-looking face emerged, which belonged to none other than Spectral Shadow, ranked ninth on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

As the spirit force surged, Spectral Shadow's dagger turned into a blur, and with a series of clinks, all nine weapon-controlled items were blocked.

Looking up again, Lu Ye had already soared into the sky with weapon control.

Spectral Shadow was furious. It was the first time someone had pierced through his concealed presence and discovered his trail. He had no idea how Lu Ye did it, but this was something unthinkable and unacceptable for any ghost cultivator.

Without any delay, he summoned his Flying Spirit Artifact and pursued closely.

At the same time, shouts rang out from all directions.

"Lu Yiye is here!"

Those were the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had been searching for Lu Ye in the sky and had found him.

In an instant, the scene became lively as multiple figures chased after Lu Ye, casting spells and magic from a distance, forcing Lu Ye to maneuver his controlled artifact to evade the attacks.

Heading deeper into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, not long after, a streak of light rushed toward him.

Lu Ye focused his eyes and saw a broad figure standing on the Flying Spirit Artifact with a greenish spirit light all over his body, evidently poisoned heavily, with a White Tiger on his shoulder.

Giant Armor!

Previously, when Lu Ye had contacted Yiyi, he had hoped they would come to offer their support. Now that his whereabouts had been exposed, Giant Armor was no longer hiding.

The two quickly met, and Lu Ye leaped onto Giant Armor's Flying Spirit Artifact, after which Giant Armor immediately turned and headed deeper into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

A mass of lights pursued them relentlessly from behind.

But as the chase continued, some began to falter.

The deeper one went into the cursed land of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the stronger the toxicity of the poisonous barrier became. Even though the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had taken Detoxification Pills in advance and prepared some poison-warding Spiritual Artifacts, many could no longer endure it upon reaching there.

Continuing the chase would leave them uncertain of Lu Ye's fate, but it would certainly spell death for themselves.

To their surprise, Giant Armor, who was clearly poisoned, was still stubbornly clinging to life, which was truly shocking.

Gradually, the number of pursuers dwindled until, after a period corresponding to the burning time of an incense stick, there were no more chasers.

Going so deep meant that Spirit Stream Realm cultivators had reached their limit of endurance. Staying longer than the time it takes one incense stick to burn, even with detoxifying elixir pills, would not be of much help.

Giant Armor also began to sway, the Spiritual Artifact he controlled becoming unsteady, and he could no longer hold on, plummeting towards the ground below.

It was true that he and Yiyi had not ventured to such depths before.

Chapter 377 Life is Short

...

The rustling sound broke the silence, branches snapped, and two figures tumbled awkwardly to the ground. Yiyi quickly appeared and, channeling her spirit force, caught Lu Ye and Giant Armor in midair, allowing them to land safely.

Lu Ye's vision was filled with double images, with stars flashing before his eyes.

The aftereffects of activating the Fire Phoenix were already taking their toll. Although his spirit force was gradually recovering under the influence of the Breath Fruit wine, the strain that such a massive spirit rune exerted on his body was not easily erased.

Just now, they were being pursued by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators with no time to rest. At the moment, his skin was cracked all over, and blood was everywhere, presenting a horrifying sight.

"Lu Ye, are you alright?" Yiyi's voice carried a hint of sobbing. Besides the time she had taken Lu Ye to Mount Ying to seek life-saving help from Hua Ci, she had not seen Lu Ye in such a miserable state for a long time.

Lu Ye waved his hand, took a deep breath, and from his storage sack, he took out a bottle of royal jelly and handed it to Yiyi: "Give this to Giant Armor."

Giant Armor was severely poisoned and needed to be treated urgently. Yiyi had said before that the regular honey they brought from Fog-shrouded Mountain had some detoxifying effects, so the royal jelly must also possess that property, and probably even more potent.

As Yiyi was feeding Giant Armor the royal jelly, Lu Ye began setting up a Formation with great effort.

This place was deep within the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, surrounded by virulent poisons. He himself had the Talent Tree burn off pill poison and could be immune to all toxins, provided the Talent Tree had enough fuel. However, Giant Armor and Yiyi were another story. Without the protection of a Formation, they would be poisoned to death in no time.

He tossed out array banners one after another, rapidly outlining a simple sheltering Formation. Lu Ye then directed Yiyi to place an adequate amount of Spirit Stones at the appropriate spots. Finally, he positioned the array banner that controlled the Formation at the core.

The big array was activated, and a light curtain surged forth, encasing the area where they were, forming a half-circle about 30 feet in diameter.

But that was not all. Lu Ye began to construct Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes on his own spiritual orifice.

It wasn't to recuperate his own spirit force through the use of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, but to devour the poisonous mist within the array. Only then would the environment inside the Formation barely be considered safe.

With Lu Ye's current cultivation, constructing the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes was quite a simple task.

Moments later, under the pull of the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, the visible green mist started pouring into Lu Ye's body, and the environment within the Formation quickly improved. The area, once saturated with toxic mist, began to clear up.

Lu Ye also checked on Giant Armor and noticed that the detoxifying effect of the royal jelly was indeed remarkable, with the green on his body fading considerably.

He handed the storage sack containing royal jelly and high-quality honey to Yiyi, "Have Amber take a bottle of that liquid too, and keep the rest for detoxification. Look after them, I'm going to rest for a bit."

"Okay." Yiyi nodded quickly, and when she looked back at Lu Ye, she saw that he had already bowed his head and fallen into a deep sleep.

Yiyi stepped forward, carefully laid him down flat, and as she looked at Lu Ye's body covered in wounds and his clothes stained with blood, her heart felt sour.

Lu Yiye had been forced into the depths of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest. His life was likely not long for this world!

After Lu Ye's rise to the 33rd place on the Spirit Stream Ranking with a 7th Heaven cultivation, another piece of news spread like wildfire.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's side erupted in celebration!

It was no easy feat. This calamity, that bane of their existence, was finally stepping onto the road to his doom.

Thinking back to when this guy first revealed his identity as a Righteous Blood Sect disciple, he stirred up storm after storm on the Spirit Stream battlefield. The initial skirmish at Golden Light Peak is barely worth mentioning — things got rather out of hand, but the cultivators involved weren't of high cultivation. In the eyes of the real powerhouses, it was like children playing house.

But as his cultivation rose, so did the threat he posed to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

In the outer circle, the power of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge near the Righteous Blood Sect's territory was suppressed to the point they couldn't lift their heads. Sect cultivators spent years hiding within their own territories, not daring to show their faces, and even now two of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's forces haven't been able to rebuild their territories. Within that several hundred miles area, the Righteous Blood Sect held an absolute advantage — all thanks to Lu Yiye's deeds.

And when this guy entered the inner circle, things became even worse. He even employed unfathomable methods to break through protective arrays and occupy other territories. Especially after returning from his specialized study of the Array Path with the Tianyan Sect, he quickly assembled an Allied Forces army under the Haotian Alliance's flag. Wherever they went, they were unstoppable, causing over a hundred Ten Thousand Demons Ridge forces to suffer greatly. The depths of their resentment caused the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to curse his name and fear at his mention.

In the end, the matter escalated to the extent that it required the intervention of Divine Sea Realm strong cultivators from both sides to come to a settlement. It was truly unprecedented.

Both the outer and inner circles were thrown into chaos by him. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side suffered so much and was holding in so much anger, all of them were sharpening their knives, waiting for him to enter the Core Circle to teach him a lesson!

This desire was quickly fulfilled. This guy advanced to the 7th Heaven rank at an astonishing speed and entered the Core Circle, and what happened then?

The pursuit through Fog-shrouded Mountain ended in a wretched state with the loss of several hundred from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side.

Here in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, he employed Thunderbolt tactics and wiped out more than two hundred forces in one fell swoop. Just on the Spirit Stream Ranking alone, five had perished, including Woo Beiha who was ranked thirty-third, allowing him to ascend to the Spirit Stream Ranking with his 7th Heaven cultivation and capture the attention of the entire Nine Provinces.

...

This guy is not just a disaster star; he is a calamity and even the bane of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge! Anyone who gets involved with him is bound to encounter bad luck on the side of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

In an unfortunate stroke of luck, he is now forced into the depths of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, a true forbidden zone for cultivators, a notoriously dangerous place on the Spirit Stream battlefield. No matter how strong you are, entering that place is a death sentence.

How could Ten Thousand Demons Ridge not be pleased?

The heavy losses they had suffered before were temporarily forgotten because, for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, as long as they could kill Lu Yiye, any loss would be acceptable.

The guy's growth rate was too fast, his methods too terrifying. They had to eliminate him before he fully grew into his power, or it would be too late.

The Spirit Stream Ranking that previously appeared in the sky had already vanished, but many cultivators could still use their battlefield markings to check it. So finding out whether Lu Ye was alive or dead was simple; they just needed to look at the Spirit Stream Ranking to see if his name was still listed.

During that incident with the Tianyan Sect, Lu Yiye had once feigned death. Ten Thousand Demons Ridge believed it was true, celebrating for a good while until two months later when Lu Yiye emerged from the Tianyan Sect, quickly pulling together a Haotian Alliance army to hammer down the various powers of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, causing them to question their existence.

Now with the Spirit Stream Ranking as proof, he wouldn't be able to fake his death anymore.

Moreover, there was news that many from the Haotian Alliance were trying to contact Lu Yiye, but received no response...

Hearing this, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge became even more convinced that Lu Yiye's life was nearing its end. If he wasn't responding at this time, it surely meant he had already passed out, and it wouldn't be long before the poison took his life.

To prevent that scoundrel from escaping the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, forces from various factions of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge sent a large number of cultivators to rush here. In an extremely short amount of time, they had completely surrounded the forest, with the presence of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators filling the skies and the ground, so tightly packed that not even a mosquito could fly out of the forest!

The Haotian Alliance also responded by organizing several attempts to break through the encirclement, led by the big sects of Bingzhou. But the vast disparity in numbers made it difficult for them to achieve success, forcing them to retreat temporarily and continue gathering reinforcements.

But everyone knew it was too late; the further you went into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the more dangerous it became. Lu Ye was currently out of contact, and no one knew how long he could last. Perhaps in a day or maybe two, his name would disappear from the Spirit Stream Ranking, signaling his death.

In the meantime, near the border between the inner circle and the Core Circle, a streak of light flashed rapidly across the sky, carrying a plump figure wrapped within it—it was Hua Ci.

When she communicated with Lu Yiye earlier, he told her not to come. Although she agreed verbally, how could she not go?

If she hadn't received the legacy before, she indeed would not have gone, because her strength would have only caused more chaos, but now that she had obtained all the legacy from the land of legacy, and Lu Yiye and the others were trapped in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, there was a role for her to play.

At the moment, Hua Ci's face was filled with anxiety, her expression solemn. She tirelessly tried to contact Lu Yiye through her battlefield marking time and time again, but all her messages vanished like stones dropped into the sea.

She had heard about the situation in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest on her way here, so she was proceeding at full speed without regard for the energy cost, eager to reach the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest as soon as possible. However, even with all the inheritance, she only had the strength of a regular Level 9 cultivator, and being a healing cultivator, how fast could her weapon control be?

Just as she was thinking this, several streaks of light approached rapidly, closing in quickly.

Hua Ci halted and looked towards the newcomers.

This place could barely be considered part of the Core Circle, so there was a wide gap in the strength of the cultivators she encountered.

The newcomers were covered with rich spirit light, indicating their fast weapon control speed, clearly those who had converted to cultivating Heaven Rank techniques.

The leader even had cultivation at the 8th Heaven, who looked coldly at Hua Ci and then slowly raised a hand towards her, revealing a pale red light on the back of his hand.

This approach, of revealing one's allegiance outright, clearly did not intend to waste words with Hua Ci. If they were from the same camp, things would be friendly, but if they were from hostile factions, the other party definitely would not hold back.

Hua Ci's Level 9 cultivation was plain to see, and any one of the Heaven rank cultivators could easily deal with her with a wave of their hand.

Without lifting her own hand, Hua Ci simply looked at them and spoke indifferently, "I am a healing cultivator!"

The identity of a healing cultivator served as a protection on the Spirit Stream battlefield and throughout the Nine Provinces, just as when Lu Ye captured Phong Yue alive. If not for her status as a healing cultivator, she would have been killed without a doubt, even if she had knelt down and broken her head.

The young man who showed his battlefield marking to Hua Ci raised his eyebrows, "Words alone are no proof!"

As he finished speaking, he sent a streak of light slashing towards Hua Ci.

Hua Ci didn't dodge, and as the light was about to hit her chest, it abruptly altered its trajectory and grazed her arm instead.

Blood splattered as a three-inch gash opened up on her fair arm, flesh peeling back.

Chapter 378 Giant Armor's Capital

It's quite simple to verify whether a cultivator is a healing cultivator; just observe the healing methods they use, and it becomes clear at a glance.

The purpose of the cultivator from the 8th Heaven injuring Hua Ci was just this.

Hua Ci raised her hand, a soft and warm emerald light emanating from the palm of her hand. This light enveloped the wound, and in the time it takes for three breaths, the gory wound stopped bleeding. After several more breaths, Hua Ci withdrew her hand.

The few observers looked toward the wound and raised their eyebrows in surprise.

Because the wound had actually started to show signs of healing!

When Hua Ci revealed the properties of her spirit force, the others had mostly concluded that she wasn't lying, because only the spirit force of a healing cultivator could be so gentle and warm. But now, having seen Hua Ci's method, they realized they had somewhat underestimated her.

Such a healing speed was not something an ordinary healing cultivator could achieve, which undoubtedly indicated that the healer before them possessed extremely profound medical skills.

"Which sect are you from?" asked the cultivator from the 8th Heaven.

"Independent cultivator," Hua Ci of course wouldn't be foolish enough to tell others that she was from the Righteous Blood Sect.

The cultivator from the 8th Heaven neither agreed nor disagreed.

Among independent cultivators, all types of schools can be found, but the number of healing cultivators is the rarest. It's uncommon for a healing cultivator to become an independent cultivator because any healing cultivator, no matter their level of cultivation or how profound their medical skills, is a target for big sects to court.

No sect would complain about having too many healing cultivators.

Especially someone like Hua Ci, who was at Level 9, which is considered a not insignificant level of cultivation even in the Spirit Stream battlefield; how could she possibly be a wild healing cultivator.

However, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge didn't bother to delve into her background. They had captured Hua Ci alive at this moment, and although they wouldn't take her life, if she wanted to regain her freedom, it would certainly require her backing sect to pay a price to ransom her.

At that time, they would naturally be able to clarify her origins.

This was also an unwritten rule that had existed in the Spirit Stream battleground since ancient times.

"Hand over your storage sack!" the cultivator from the 8th Heaven reached out.

Hua Ci did not resist; she took off the storage sack from her waist and tossed it to the other party. Her storage sack didn't contain much, at most some elixir pills and spirit stones used for cultivation, along with a few Spiritual Artifacts.

Moments later, the group set out on their journey again. A few cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge found Hua Ci's weapon control-flying speed too slow, so the cultivator from the 8th Heaven carried her instead.

No one bound her freedom, nor was there any mistreatment, because no one considered a Level 9 healing cultivator a threat to them.

"Where are you headed?" Hua Ci asked.

"Ten Thousand Poisons Forest!" The cultivator from the 8th Heaven flying the weapon replied offhandedly.

Hua Ci nodded slightly and said no more. The cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge could never have imagined that this satisfactory answer to Hua Ci would allow them to narrowly escape a catastrophe.

Being carried by the cultivator from the 8th Heaven, they moved much faster than Hua Ci could have managed flying her weapon by herself.

Deep within the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye's dormant consciousness began to stir and slowly wake up.

There was a feeling of weakness in his body, and without a few days of rest, he wouldn't recover. However, the blood robe he wore had been taken off, and all his wounds had been bandaged up; it must have been Yiyi's handiwork.

"How long have I been asleep?"

"Almost two days," Yiyi pulled out a water bladder from her storage sack and handed it to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye took it, drinking deeply, then turned to look around.

The Array he had set up was still in operation, conserved by the spiritual force. Within the area covered by the Array, they were shielded from the poison fog's corrosion. However, outside the Array, the surroundings flowed with a vibrant green color—that was the poisonous barrier of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

From the barrier of the Array came constant crackling noises, evidently from poisons corroding the Array. But as long as there were enough Spirit Stones, there was no worry that the Array's barrier would be damaged.

Green was flowing on Yiyi's body, which was obviously a sign of poisoning.

Looking towards Giant Armor, his condition was even more serious; his whole body had a greenish hue, his eyes deeply sunken, giving off the appearance of a man on the brink of death. If it wasn't for Giant Armor's strong physique, he probably would have been poisoned to death by now.

Only Amber was radiant with clear spirit light on her body.

"The things I gave you, they didn't work?" Lu Ye frowned.

"They did, but I think Brother Giant Armor had too much accumulated poison. So those things could only suppress it temporarily and couldn't completely eradicate the poison from his body."

Before Lu Ye's arrival, Giant Armor had constantly used his spirit force to protect Amber, keeping her from the harm of the deadly poisons of this place, while Yiyi had been hiding inside Amber's body, naturally not getting poisoned.

But earlier on, in order to steady both Giant Armor and Lu Ye, Yiyi had rushed out of Amber's body. Even though she was a Spiritual Body, the deadly poison in this area still managed to invade her.

A Spiritual Body cannot take royal jelly to detoxify. Fortunately, her symptoms weren't too severe.

While Lu Ye was unconscious, following his instructions, Yiyi had administered royal jelly to Giant Armor. Initially, the effect was significant, but the suppressed poison within his body burst forth again, and after several iterations of this cycle, the royal jelly had lost most of its effectiveness.

Lu Ye turned to look at Giant Armor.

"How are you feeling?"

Giant Armor revealed a goofy smile towards him, which was uglier than crying.

Lu Ye knew his condition was bad.

This is troublesome.

The violent toxicity within Giant Armor was so fierce that not even royal jelly could detoxify it. To cure the poison, they probably could only send him back to the Righteous Blood Sect headquarters and ask Second Senior Sister to take action.

But they were trapped in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, and Lu Ye's own power was greatly reduced. How could they break through the heavy encirclement of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators and escape from this place?

Although he did not know the exact situation outside, it was certain that Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had definitely surrounded the area, and with his current state, there was no chance of leaving.

Maybe he could use the Talent Tree's power to burn the toxins?

But the Talent Tree was rooted in Lu Ye's Root Spiritual Orifice, and when he activated the power of the Talent Tree, only many imperceptible roots would extend from his body, devouring any energy they could consume. How could they burn the deadly poison inside Giant Armor?

Lu Ye briefly tried and discovered that this method was completely impractical.

What he could do now was to prompt his spirit force to penetrate into Giant Armor's body and use the characteristics of his fire attribute spirit force to burn the pill poison. But not only was this method inefficient, but it also greatly harmed Giant Armor himself.

"Lu Ye, is there no other way?" Yiyi looked at Giant Armor worriedly. These past few days, she had watched Giant Armor steadily weaken. Her heart was anxious, yet she was powerless to help.

Lu Ye pondered for a moment, then raised his head to look at Giant Armor, "Is it possible for you to advance to Cloud River?"

Giant Armor's current cultivation level was 7th Heaven, but Lu Ye knew this was not his limit. If Giant Armor was willing, he could open more spiritual orifices because he possessed a demonic pill that could store a large amount of spirit force!

He had maintained the cultivation level of 7th Heaven because Lu Ye's level was at this stage. All along, he had suppressed his cultivation to match the realm of Lu Ye.

This might be due to Giant Armor's own personality or perhaps a habit formed while following Sima Yang before; he would never allow his cultivation to surpass the person he followed.

Lu Ye had noticed this early on.

Lu Ye did not know exactly how much spirit force was stored in Giant Armor's demonic pill, but if he could advance to Cloud River, then there was a way out of this deadly situation.

The Spirit Stream battlefield could only accommodate cultivators of the Spirit Stream Realm. If Giant Armor were to advance here, he would be ejected by the Spirit Stream battlefield and sent back to the Nine Provinces sect headquarters, where Second Senior Sister would definitely save him.

Throughout the ages, many cultivators chose to advance to Cloud River in their own residence within the Spirit Stream battlefield because the place was rich in Spiritual Energy and safe. So, the fact that cultivators would be expelled after advancing to Cloud River was well-known. Lu Ye had heard of such cases but had never witnessed it.

"I don't know," Giant Armor replied with a buzzing voice.

"Give it a try!"

Whether Giant Armor could advance to Cloud River here or not, having a higher cultivation level was always beneficial. Perhaps with a higher cultivation level, his condition might improve a bit.

Giant Armor nodded at those words and closed his eyes.

As the spirit force surged, a series of soft popping sounds emerged, signaling the shattering of the spiritual orifice barriers.

Even though Lu Ye had once experienced the terrifying speed of Giant Armor opening his orifices, he couldn't help but twitch at the corner of his eyes.

For any cultivator, breaking through the spiritual orifice barriers required time, but to Giant Armor, opening orifices was virtually unimpeded; wherever the spirit force traveled, the barriers were shattered.

Lu Ye estimated that this was related to the abundant spirit force within Giant Armor.

A riverbank might hold back the river's flow, but it certainly cannot withstand the impact of floodwaters.

Within a brief moment, sixty sounds of breaking were heard.

After a while, when Giant Armor linked these freshly opened sixty orifices with spirit force to complete a new Minor Circumambulation cycle, he successfully advanced to 8th Heaven.

The sound of shattering spiritual orifice barriers rang out again, and Lu Ye and Yiyi counted the sequence nearby.

Another sixty sounds of breaking resounded, and Lu Ye understood that all along, he had underestimated the amount of spirit force stored in the demonic pill within Giant Armor.

Giant Armor had had the resources to advance to Cloud River for quite some time already.

The biggest obstacle preventing his advancement in the past was the lack of merit to purchase a Heaven Rank technique, but ever since Lu Ye helped him gather the merits required to buy a Heaven Rank technique, his path forward was clear.

With three hundred and sixty orifices opened within his body, but because Giant Armor had not formed a Circumambulation with the last sixty orifices, the cultivation level he displayed was still 8th Heaven.

All orifices had been opened; Giant Armor could advance to Cloud River and leave this place at any moment.

"Go back and tell Second Senior Sister and the sect master not to worry about me," Lu Ye instructed him as he apportioned some of the various spoils he had obtained recently into a storage sack and tied it around his waist.

Perhaps because of the advancement in cultivation, Giant Armor's complexion seemed to have improved compared to before.

Giant Armor looked at him and then suddenly leaned against a large tree, his arms folded, giving Lu Ye his back.

What does this mean? Lu Ye was utterly confused.

"He doesn't want to go; he's worried about you," Yiyi spoke up from the side.

Lu Ye couldn't help but chuckle, stood up, walked next to Giant Armor, and crouched beside him, speaking earnestly, "You don't want me to clean up your corpse here, do you? Go back to the sect, find Second Senior Sister. She is the only one who can save you now. I'm not trying to drive you away, but we really have no choice at this point. You don't need to worry about me; I'm immune to all poisons. This place is dangerous for others, but it's nothing to me."

"I'll take you, we'll fight our way out!" Giant Armor suddenly said with a fierce expression.

Chapter 379 Giant Armor Advances to Cloud River

"Don't talk nonsense." Lu Ye raised his hand and patted the shoulder of Giant Armor, "Ten Thousand Demons Ridge has a multitude of powerful people, and right now, they are eager for us to show ourselves, so for me, hiding here is the safest option."

The expression on Giant Armor's face was somewhat dejected, and he probably knew that Lu Ye was right.

"Advance in your cultivation, return to our sect headquarters, and report that you are safe to the sect master and Second Senior Sister."

Giant Armor remained silent and did not speak.

Lu Ye said no more, stood up, and walked to a side, beginning to improve the formation he had laid out earlier.

Although the previously laid-out array was functional, it had been set up in haste and had many areas for improvement. With each Array Banner being planted, the scope covered by the formation increased significantly, and the array became more stable.

While he was busy, Giant Armor just quietly watched. After Lu Ye had finished, he suddenly spoke: "Stay alive!"

Lu Ye turned to look at him: "Definitely won't die."

It was then that Giant Armor sat down cross-legged, his surging spirit force quickly stabilized, and his cultivation rapidly fell.

The process for a cultivator to advance from the Spirit Stream Realm to the Cloud River Realm is actually not difficult; what's hard is the earlier orifice-opening stage. As long as the number of spiritual orifices opened inside the body is sufficient, advancing to Cloud River poses no great risk.

In just a moment, all the Minor Circumambulation cycles inside Giant Armor's body stopped flowing. Following his cultivation, a torrent of spirit force began, starting from his Root Spiritual Orifice and successively passing through each spiritual orifice.

The more spiritual orifices the spirit force passed through, the more fiercely the energy fluctuated on the surface of Giant Armor's body. Listening closely, one could even hear the movement of the spirit force inside his body.

It was not very noticeable at first, but gradually, the flowing spirit force became like a stream, and then the noise grew louder.

Until at one moment, when spirit force passed through all three hundred and sixty orifices, a boiling torrent of energy surged through his body like a river, sending out a buzzing sound.

Visibly, a dazzling spirit light flashed across Giant Armor's body and an invisible wave of energy exploded outward from where he was, spreading in all directions.

Cloud River Realm!

The names Spirit Stream Realm and Cloud River Realm are in fact derived from how the spirit force flows within the body.

Spirit Stream Realm cultivators have multiple Minor Circumambulation cycle systems in their bodies, with spirit force flowing like streams. The number of Minor Circumambulation cycles determines the Level—hence the titles such as 7th Heaven, 8th Heaven, and 9th Heaven are used instead of Spirit Stream Level 10, 11, or 12. After cultivating a Heaven Rank technique, a cultivator's body doesn't have that many Minor Circumambulation cycles. Of course, in calculations of merit from slaying enemies, Heaven's Augury does take into account Levels 10, 11, or 12.

Unlike the Spirit Stream Realm, the Cloud River Realm has only one circulating system encompassing all the opened spiritual orifices, like Giant Armor's perfect Major Circumambulation cycle with all three hundred and sixty orifices opened.

All spirit force flows within this one Major Circumambulation system like rushing river water, drastically changing a cultivator's control over spirit force and causing a revolutionary transformation in personal strength, leading to an explosive increase.

This is why, at the Spirit Stream Realm, cultivators try to open as many spiritual orifices as possible, reluctant to advance hastily to the Cloud River Realm.

The more spiritual orifices opened, the greater the enhancement of personal strength and future potential after advancing to Cloud River.

In the Spirit Stream Realm, each additional opened spiritual orifice directly enhances one's strength in the Cloud River Realm, potentially making the difference between whether one can advance to the True Lake later on.

Everyone knows the foundation is most critical in cultivation; for cultivators, the Spirit Stream Realm is that very foundation, and every cultivator tries to make their foundation as solid as possible.

Because the number of spiritual orifices varies greatly when advancing to Cloud River—from 240 to all 360 orifices—this leads to substantial discrepancies in strength among cultivators within the Cloud River Realm.

At the Spirit Stream Realm, overcoming levels to defeat more powerful enemies is still the specialty of many cultivation geniuses, but in the Cloud River Realm, this becomes quite common.

This was the first time someone had advanced to the Cloud River Realm under Lu Ye's observation. He too would eventually take this step, so he had been watching closely, trying to draw some experience from it, but in the end, he found that advancing to the Cloud River Realm, just like the rumours, posed no great risk as long as enough spiritual orifices were open and the advancement was smooth.

Almost at the moment Giant Armor advanced to the Cloud River Realm, the space he was in started to distort.

Giant Armor clearly perceived something, hurriedly opened his eyes, and seemed about to say something, yet before he could speak, the twisted space stabilized, and Giant Armor had disappeared without a trace.

Lu Ye immediately contacted Shui Yuan.

Shortly after, he received a reply: Giant Armor had appeared in the main hall of Heaven's Augury at the Righteous Blood Sect's headquarters. Second Senior Sister was checking on him, assuring Lu Ye not to worry.

Lu Ye naturally had nothing to worry about; previously, in the Tianyan Sect, even though Giant Armor had been affected by a powerful poison, Second Senior Sister had managed to save him, so there was nothing concerning now.

With Giant Armor's issue resolved, Lu Ye turned his attention to Yiyi...

Yiyi's problem was uncertain, as she could not advance to the Cloud River Realm, return to the sect headquarters of the Righteous Blood Sect following the rules of Borrowing Heaven's Augury, nor could her Spiritual Body consume anything.

"I'm fine, just feeling a bit uncomfortable." Yiyi, sensing what Lu Ye was pondering, spoke up to reassure him.

"Has Amber consumed the royal jelly yet?"

"Yes, she has."

"It doesn't work for you?" Yiyi was Amber's minion spirit, and if she could absorb some antidote through Amber, it might have an effect on Yiyi.

Yiyi shook her head, stepped forward, and wrapped her arms around Lu Ye's arm, resting her head on his shoulder, "Don't think about these things anymore. Rest well, let's talk after you've recovered."

"If anything feels off, you must tell me right away!" Lu Ye seriously instructed her.

Yiyi didn't respond.

Lu Ye raised his hand and flicked her forehead, "Did you hear me?"

"I know!" Yiyi raised her hand and rubbed her forehead, her face a picture of aggrievement.

Lu Ye checked his battlefield marking. He had been unconscious for two days, and his battlefield marking had many residual messages. After checking them, they were mostly inquiries about his current situation.

Many people urged him to hold on just a bit longer. The Haotian Alliance was preparing to gather a group of people to forcefully break through the formation and help Lu Ye escape from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Some inner circle sect governors, such as Luo Fu from Silver Light Island, Zhou Pei from Soaring Cloud Palace, Zhao Li from Tianyan Sect, and so on, who he had collaborated with before, were also on their way to provide support.

The multitude of messages overflowed with concern and worry.

Lu Ye responded to each message, informing them that his situation was safe and they needn't worry.

About 30 miles away from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, in a hidden location, over two thousand Haotian Alliance cultivators gathered, led by cultivators from several big sects of Bingzhou.

At this moment, a group of people gathered around Yooi Lianzhou from the Beixuan Sword Sect, waiting for the result of his communication with Lu Ye.

It took one incense stick's time before Yooi Lianzhou finished this communication.

"How did it go?" a cultivator from the Righteousness Sect asked.

Yooi Lianzhou looked up at the crowd and said, "Fellow Daoist Lu said, 'Do not start any large-scale conflict with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, otherwise, he would be a sinner of the Haotian Alliance.'"

Should such a large-scale conflict involving thousands of people occur, both the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would undoubtedly suffer heavy casualties. Upon knowing that the Haotian Alliance was preparing to rescue him, Lu Ye's biggest concern was this.

"He also said that his situation there is very safe. He has set up a Formation, creating a safe zone where the poisons from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest cannot infiltrate. Although he is injured, it is not severe. He now plans to cultivate there until he reaches the 9th Heaven level before coming out..."

Upon hearing this, everyone's expressions turned strange.

They had been extremely anxious about Lu Ye's safety, fearing he would perish in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, but now it seemed that he was quite comfortable inside. If that's really the case, they indeed should not engage in a large-scale conflict with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

"Does Brother Yooi think that what Fellow Daoist Yiye said is true or false?" It could be that Lu Ye did not want the Haotian Alliance to suffer too many casualties, so he was just consoling them.

"He made a Heaven's Augury oath in his message," Yooi Lianzhou replied with a helpless smile. "So there shouldn't be any falsehood."

"So...are we still rescuing him?"

Yes, if Lu Ye was living well in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, should they still rescue him?

Not to rescue him feels wrong, given that everyone had already gathered here. To rescue him seems unnecessary, as it appears that he does not really need it...

Yooi Lianzhou said, "Fellow Daoist Lu told us to do what we must, as right now many cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge have been drawn to the outskirts of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest solely to kill him, yet they dare not enter rashly. This situation will only waste cultivation time. He himself will stay in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and wear down the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, until the day he ascends to 9th Heaven and can break free."

With Lu Ye's 7th Heaven cultivation able to kill those at 9th Heaven, and having previously displayed the powerful Fire Phoenix technique to reach the 33rd position on the Spirit Stream Ranking, if he truly were to cultivate to the 9th Heaven level, who in the entire Spirit Stream battlefield could be his opponent?

When that time comes, even if Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were to gather more forces on this side, he would be able to break free.

"Then we just leave him?"

"This Fellow Daoist Yiye, is truly extraordinary."

"In my opinion, since we've already come this far, we should at least kill some people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge before leaving. It's not easy to gather so many people in the core circle; we should at least achieve something."

"Exactly, exactly. With such a grand movement from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, now that we don't have to worry about Fellow Daoist Yiye's safety, we need to strike back to show that the Haotian Alliance is not to be trifled with."

The group was vocally relentless, and the main players from the Spirit Stream Ranking knew that with so many forces gathered, they couldn't just disperse. Now that they don't need to rescue Lu Ye, they could act without any constraints and be more flexible.

They immediately gathered to discuss it, and soon, the over two thousand people dispersed in all directions.

Without needing to rescue Lu Ye, and not daring to charge into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, they decided to intercept the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators coming to provide support. Since they were here, they couldn't return empty-handed, no matter how fruitful the attempt; they were ready to strike first and think later.

Just as the over two thousand Haotian Alliance members dispersed, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were continuously pondering one question.

How is Lu Yiye still not dead?

Chapter 380 The Strange Maiden Hua Ci

Two days earlier, Lu Yiye employed some unknown method to summon the Vermillion Bird of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, wiping out over two hundred cultivators from the Core Circle of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge in a single move—an incredibly powerful tactic, inconceivable to the cultivators, and certainly placing an unimaginable burden on him.

Afterwards, he was picked up by Giant Armor, and escaped deep into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest. Everyone thought his life would soon end and anticipated his death from poisoning within a short period.

Yet, today, two days had passed and he was still alive and well because his name still prominently appeared on the Spirit Stream Ranking, without disappearing.

How on earth could he survive!

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side particularly couldn't understand this.

Even though he was proficient in Array Path and could create a suitable survival environment for himself through formations, he had already been severely poisoned during his venture into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest—it made no sense for him to keep hanging on.

Perhaps... maybe... probably he was about to die?

Hanging on to this hope, the cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side continued to wait outside the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

As long as Lu Yiye lived, they would not be able to rest easy; they determined to stand guard here, wanting to see with their own eyes this catastrophe dying in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest before they would be willing to give up.

During the wait, some unsettling news quickly spread—the Haotian Alliance was ambushing Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators rushing from all directions; losses were already mounting on their side.

This scenario was within expectations. With Ten Thousand Demons Ridge making such a significant move this time, the Haotian Alliance was bound to respond accordingly. However, currently the Haotian Alliance didn't have as many hands as Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, making it difficult to initiate a major battle, thereby resorting to this tactic.

On one hand, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge transmitted messages in all directions, advising arriving reinforcements to proceed with caution, and on the other hand, they dispatched personnel to provide support.

About 30 miles from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, a battle had just ended—it was more a one-sided slaughter than a battle. Lying on the ground were the corpses of several Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, and beside these corpses stood a quiet woman with a serene and dignified demeanor, a blue light shining from the back of her hand she lifted.

It was Hua Ci, the healing cultivator who had been captivated to this location by several Ten Thousand Demons Ridge Heaven-rank cultivators.

Looking at the few corpses on the ground, Hua Ci felt somewhat helpless; she had intended to follow these people from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and then enter the forest to find Lu Ye, but who would have expected these unfortunate souls to be so unlucky as to be ambushed and killed by a squad of Haotian Alliance cultivators upon arriving here!

With no choice left, Hua Ci had to reveal her battlefield marking.

There were eight Haotian Alliance cultivators who had killed these men, with the leader having 9th Heaven cultivation, his longsword halting just three inches from Hua Ci. Seeing the blue light, he immediately withdrew his sword, looking surprised, "Junior Sister, how come you are with people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge?"

Hua Ci explained, "I am a healing cultivator, and I was captured by them."

The group suddenly realized; it was common on the Spirit Stream battlefield for enemy healing cultivators to be captured, and generally, captured healing cultivators weren't treated too harshly, which led them initially to think Hua Ci was allied with those men.

"Junior Sister, this place isn't very peaceful right now, would you like to join us?" the sword-bearing cultivator asked.

Although Hua Ci's Level 9 cultivation wasn't considered very high, she was qualified to compete in the Core Circle, mainly because she was a healing cultivator.

Cultivators often clashed with others, and injuries were a common occurrence. Having a healing cultivator nearby allowed them to fight more freely.

Hua Ci shook her head.

The sword-bearing cultivator didn't insist, seeing her response, "Then you should leave quickly, Junior Sister. This place might soon be checked by cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge."

After advising Hua Ci, the group quickly flew away on their weapon control.

As Hua Ci watched the group disappear, she looked again at the corpses lying in the pool of blood, feeling somewhat frustrated, thinking these fellows were too weak—they had been so arrogant in front of her, yet so ineffective against the Haotian Alliance cultivators.

Still having 30 miles to go, she could only deploy her Flying Spirit Artifact, heading towards the direction of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Her storage sack had been taken by the people from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and had now become the spoils of war for those several Haotian Alliance cultivators; she didn't ask for it back since there was nothing valuable in it; the only item left on her was this Flying Spirit Artifact.

As she progressed, her luck was strangely good; she didn't encounter anyone from the Haotian Alliance or the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, until she reached the outskirts of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, where she saw large groups of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators gathered together.

If viewed from above, one could see these Ten Thousand Demons Ridge people had completely surrounded the entire Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, not only on the ground but also a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators patrolling the air, watching for Lu Ye to escape.

However, the interior of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was filled with pervasive deadly toxins, making it extremely dense, so cultivators patrolling the air couldn't see clearly inside the forest.

Hua Ci didn't descend but floated in mid-air, looking towards the toxic forest ahead.

Some Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators noticed her, but most merely gave her a few more glances because of her beauty, not paying much attention.

No one suspected that here, in a place crowded with Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, there was a Haotian Alliance healing cultivator who had boldly come over and was so brazenly hovering in mid-air.

As if she didn't care if others saw her.

Without showing the glow of her battlefield marking, aside from those who knew each other, no one could tell which faction she belonged to.

With Hua Ci exhibiting such composure and her Level 9 cultivation status, who would think to investigate which camp she was from?

This is a typical case of "darkness beneath the lamplight."

"Does anyone need a healing cultivator? We need a healing cultivator!" Suddenly, someone's voice sounded nearby.

Hua Ci turned her head and saw a young man shouting loudly nearby.

She originally had no intention of paying attention, but the next words the young man shouted changed her mind.

"Entering the forest to search for Lu Yiye, is there any healing cultivator to assist?"

"I am a healing cultivator." Hua Ci lightly landed in front of the young man.

The young man looked her up and down and, although he found her pleasing to the eye, he still felt slightly disdainful, "Your cultivation is a bit low..."

He preferred a healing cultivator who had switched to cultivating a Heaven Rank technique since they were venturing deep into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, where a higher cultivation in a healing cultivator would provide more security.

"I am skilled at detoxifying." Hua Ci said indifferently.

The young man looked at Hua Ci skeptically, then walked over to a man with a sharp chin and monkey cheeks, whispering something in his ear. The man snickered and took a pink elixir pill from his storage sack.

The young man took the elixir pill, came up to Hua Ci, and handed it to her, "If someone were poisoned with this, could you cure it?"

Hua Ci picked up the elixir pill, didn't even glance at it, and swallowed it right away.

The few nearby onlookers were stunned, and the young man was speechless!

He had only intended to test Hua Ci's detoxification skills, but to his surprise, she had directly consumed the pill.

The owner of the elixir pill, the man with the sharp chin and monkey cheeks, couldn't help but come closer, carefully observing Hua Ci's reaction. After a good while, he incredulously said, "You... are alright?"

That elixir pill wasn't a deadly poison, but for a woman, it was something not to be trifled with lightly. Even a female cultivator who had switched to cultivating a Heaven Rank technique would be overwhelmed by it, becoming delirious and infatuated. Such things were usually used discreetly. No one would openly consume it in public, unafraid of making a fool of themselves.

"Do you have more?" Hua Ci looked at the man with the sharp chin and monkey cheeks, appearing still unsatisfied.

The man involuntarily twitched the corner of his eye, having never before encountered such an extraordinary woman!

"Junior Sister's detoxifying skills truly are incredible!" The young man who had been shouting earlier laughed loudly, "It's settled then, you're with us. Once inside the forest, we'll all rely on Junior Sister."

Hua Ci revealed a gentle smile, "Dear Senior Brothers, rest assured and entrust your lives to me!"

Though her words sounded a bit odd, the young man didn't think much of it and waved, "Everyone is here, let's set out!"

With that call, a group of more than twenty people gathered around and followed the young man deep into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge squad, though certain that Lu Ye's life would not last much longer, still periodically sent people into the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest to search for him and restrict his mobility to prevent any tricks he might have up his sleeve in the forest.

Even if they couldn't find Lu Ye, they couldn't let him escape from deep within.

The dangers in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest didn't only come from the omnipresent poisonous fog and barriers. Numerous poisonous creatures also lived there, but fortunately, due to the recent continuous flow of a large number of people moving in and out, the poisonous creatures on the outer perimeter had been mostly cleared away.

As the group of more than twenty people ventured deeper into Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, they didn't spread out too far apart. Having had the experience in the Fog-shrouded Mountain previously, they truly did not dare to disperse their forces too much for fear of being ambushed by Lu Ye.

Hua Ci was undoubtedly a key individual for protection; being the only healing cultivator in the team and one who hadn't switched to cultivating a Heaven Rank technique, everyone was naturally vigilant.

"Junior Sister, remember to use protective spirit force." The lead young man inadvertently noticed that Hua Ci hadn't activated her protective spirit force. Instead, she was breathing the toxic fog naturally and hurriedly reminded her.

"Hmm," Hua Ci casually replied, slightly invoking her protective spirit force.

Seeing this, the young man was reassured.

As they continued deeper, after walking for about three miles, the toxicity of the poisonous fog became much more intense. Even after taking some Detoxification Pills before entering, some were beginning to struggle.

The young leader thought about retreating. Searches like this had been conducted many times recently by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side with no avail.

However, for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, having no findings was their biggest gain, indicating that Lu Ye was still within the depth of the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and had not escaped.

Just when the young man was about to order a retreat, a faint thump was suddenly heard nearby.

Suddenly someone exclaimed, "Not good, Junior Brother Wang has been poisoned."

The voice had barely faded when several more thumps signified others collapsing.

One man, his consciousness blurring as he fell, cried out, "Run, the poison is fierce..."

He never finished his sentence before all went quiet.

This sudden event startled everyone; they had entered the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest several times before and reached such depths, but never had they experienced anything like this. No one knew how such a mishap had occurred this time.

With continuous thumping sounds of bodies falling, the squad of more than twenty people quickly dwindled to just a few who were still barely managing to stand but were also dizzy and confused.