

Humanity 391

Chapter 391 Rankings Contest

Hovering in midair, Lu Ye hurriedly adjusted his body and awkwardly landed on the ground, his legs gave way, and with a thud, he knelt on one knee.

"Oh man!" A surprised cry rang out in front of him, "All was well, why such a grand gesture?"

Hearing the voice, Lu Ye's eyes twitched, and he looked up to find Hua Ci looking at him with a smile.

"Help me up, I can't stand..."

A moment later, settled in on the third floor of the wooden house, Lu Ye had fallen into a deep sleep while Hua Ci was tending to his injuries.

After several days of continuous battles without much rest, he was truly exhausted.

The little wooden house in Ten Thousand Poisons Forest had truly become a sanctuary. Outside, enemies surrounded him on all sides, wherever he went he could be chased and attacked by a group from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, but only upon returning here could he truly relax.

Waking up from a good sleep, he heard faint snoring and seemed to feel something pressing on him. Lu Ye looked down to see Amber curled up and sleeping on his chest.

Lu Ye lifted his hand, grabbed Amber by the neck, and moved it to one side, sitting up with his thoughts drifting...

Daydreaming!

Alluring aromas wafted in from outside, as if someone was cooking something delicious; it was this smell that brought Lu Ye back to his senses and, enticed, his stomach growled.

After changing into a set of clean clothes and getting dressed neatly, he went downstairs from the third floor to the courtyard.

A new table was added to the yard, full of dishes, and next to it was a stove. Yiyi and Hua Ci were chatting and busy cooking.

Lu Ye crossed his arms and leaned quietly against the doorway, watching Yiyi add firewood and observing Hua Ci, who was bustling around the stove with an apron and headscarf, suddenly feeling that the human world was indeed a wonderful place!

"Lu Ye, you're awake?" Yiyi saw him and exclaimed with joy.

Hua Ci turned around, met Lu Ye's gaze, and gently smiled, "Hungry? Sit down and eat."

Lu Ye walked to the table and sat on a stool, picked up the chopsticks, and hesitated before the many dishes laid out in front of him...

In the end, he decided to start with a dish of mushrooms; at least he recognized the dish as mushrooms, the rest he couldn't identify at all.

The only thing he could be certain of was that everything on the table was from the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest!

This kind of meal was truly a luxury that not everyone could afford.

Tasting a mushroom, Lu Ye's eyebrows lifted in surprise at the unexpectedly delicious flavor; he looked inwardly at his own Root Spiritual Orifice, and as expected, a wide expanse of gray fog that had been burned appeared on the Talent Tree...

With his appetite fully aroused, Lu Ye stopped caring about the true identity of the ingredients and ate without reservation.

Hua Ci soon brought another dish to the table and sat across from him, eating slowly and methodically, occasionally picking some delicacies for Lu Ye.

Yiyi, unable to eat, stood behind Lu Ye, combing his disheveled hair.

After a satisfying meal, Lu Ye half-reclined in his chair, patting his belly and leisurely crossing his legs, fully content. Yiyi brought over tea and served him perfectly.

The fatigue of the past few days was swept away; it had to be said, the things Hua Ci made were a bit poisonous, but they were really nourishing.

During the first few days of recuperating here, he had to endure Hua Ci's various tonic concoctions until his nose bled.

Just having had a full meal and not feeling like moving just yet, Lu Ye said, "Yiyi, help me bring the storage sacks from upstairs."

This outing had seen the demise of quite a few people, and it brought back many storage sacks. There was no time to unlock them before, but now was a perfect moment to pass the time.

"Sure." Yiyi floated up to the third floor and quickly returned, bringing back a large pile of storage sacks.

And then came the most anticipated moment.

Yiyi loved watching Lu Ye open storage sacks because no one knew what was inside until they were opened, and sometimes certain sacks could bring unexpected surprises.

As each storage sack was opened, Yiyi took out all the items and sorted them into categories. Whenever she found something good in a sack, her face beamed with joy, but if a sack held few treasures, she'd mumble about the owner being a pauper!

Each person's level of wealth varies. For Lu Ye, except for the first few months of cultivation, he didn't have to worry about resources; he always had an endless supply of Spirit Stones and elixirs to consume.

But for most cultivators, life was just getting by.

Because most cultivators couldn't accumulate wealth through slaying enemies like Lu Ye could.

From the day a cultivator begins their cultivation, they are constantly consuming resources. Elixirs and Spirit Stones need no mentioning; at lower cultivation levels, these are always in short supply, and any surplus had to be spent on a few Spirit Talismans as life-saving items.

Upon reaching Level 7, one has to consider buying weapon control artifacts.

At Level 8, it becomes necessary to acquire Flying Spirit Artifacts.

At Level 9, one must buy Heaven Rank techniques...

Looking across the whole Spirit Stream Realm hierarchy, the inner circle cultivators are actually the poorest group because they need to buy so many different things.

Upon reaching the Core Circle, the situation improved slightly, but as their cultivation grew, so did the costs of cultivation, and many lived a life of hardship.

Besides the ordinary Spiritual Artifacts they used, the accumulation of elixir pills and Spirit Stones in their storage sacks actually wasn't much.

This was also why the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were so keen on killing Lu Ye; on one hand, they truly felt the threat Lu Ye posed to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and on the other hand, the benefits of killing Lu Ye were too great.

As long as they could kill Lu Ye, even if the reward was to be divided equally among all the participants, any Spirit Stream Realm cultivator would become overnight wealthy!

Everyone hustles for their own gain.

An hour later, after the storage sack was fully opened, Lu Ye left Yiyi to organize the contents and walked over to the nearby parent teleportation array.

This parent array, being set up with array banners and Lu Ye's current low level of cultivation, was not very stable, and after each use, it needed to be reset.

Looking at the parent array in front of him, Lu Ye felt a headache coming on; he didn't know if it was an issue with his array-setting technique or lack of experience, but the location of each teleportation always seemed to be a bit off.

During earlier trials, the deviation wasn't too far from the parent array.

This time, though, it was rather outrageous; he had teleported back from about 30 miles away and ended up about fifty yards from the parent array, a significant deviation, and he appeared mid-air!

Falling from a height of about thirty yards, he could handle, but what if it was a hundred yards or more?

If he teleported back from outside in poor condition, without even being able to control a Flying Spirit Artifact, wouldn't he fall to his death?

But at the moment, he really had no good solution; he could only try his best to set up the parent array and hope that next time the deviation would be less.

After a bustle of activity,

While Lu Ye was leisurely enjoying his time in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance was endlessly busy. The area where Lu Ye last appeared had been turned upside down by a large number of cultivators, yet not a trace of him was found.

Lu Yiye just disappeared mysteriously like that!

In the third floor of the wooden hut, Lu Ye was swallowing elixir pills to recover his spirit force while activating the Talent Tree to devour Earth's Core Fire purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

He bought forty portions of Earth's Core Fire this time, and he was not sure what spirit runes he would get from it, but he was still quite excited.

Looking at the Talent Tree now, many leaves were fiercely burning; setting aside the Fire Phoenix perched at the top of the tree that was vividly lifelike, Lu Ye had already mastered nearly 20th Dao of the ordinary spirit runes.

It must be acknowledged that many of these spirit runes were not suitable for battle, but those he could use were not few, which made his methods in the face of the enemy more flexible.

His ability to kill a 9th Heaven cultivator from a higher realm with thunderbolt tactics did not depend solely on his pure spirit force and profound foundations, but also on the various spirit runes he secretly activated during combat. These spirit runes made his combat methods unpredictable and hard to guard against.

Two days later, Lu Ye had fully recovered, and even his spiritual orifices had increased by two.

Now, he was only a few dozen orifices away from reaching 9th Heaven level. Once he reached that level, no one on the Spirit Stream battlefield should be able to threaten his safety.

He had this confidence.

Perhaps it was the continuous battles and ceaseless travels before, but suddenly having two days of rest made Lu Ye feel somewhat uncomfortable. Moreover, during this time, some rather unpleasant rumors reached his ears through the messages of a few good friends.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had been unable to find him, probably growing impatient, and thus they spread quite a few unpleasant words, like saying Lu Yiye was cowardly and afraid of death, in an attempt to force him to show himself.

For the time being, Lu Ye had no intention of leaving the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Thus, after ending the message exchange with a few friends, he thought for a moment, halted his own cultivation, and activated the battlefield marking, linking to the Spirit Stream Ranking!

Now, he had the qualifications to challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking!

After all, he had fallen from the 33rd position on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

He hadn't challenged it before, first because he wasn't in the mood, and second because he wanted to maximize the rewards from the Spirit Stream Ranking!

Being on the Spirit Stream Ranking did have its benefits!

As long as you stayed on the ranking for one month, Heaven's Augury would bestow some real benefits.

The Spirit Stream Ranking only held one hundred positions, so naturally, it wasn't easy to stay on it for a month, especially for those at the lower rankings; it was common to see the last few spots change hands several times in a single day.

Those closer to the top had a somewhat better situation; even if someone challenged them and they fell in rank, they still had the opportunity to climb back up.

What Lu Ye needed to do now was challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking and then secure a spot for a month!

His fourth senior brother told him that the benefits bestowed by Heaven's Augury were very useful; the higher one's ranking, the greater the benefits. Therefore, if there was a chance, one should try to surge

up the Spirit Stream Ranking as much as possible and occupy the highest spot one could claim in the shortest time possible.

Lu Ye tested it and found that he could only challenge the last three spots; all three of these were 9th Heaven cultivators from different sects.

Both the 99th and 98th ranked individuals were from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, while the one at rank 100 was from the Haotian Alliance.

Of course, he intended to challenge those from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and he immediately activated the marking and issued a challenge to the one ranked 99th.

Chapter 392 Why is it a Gang Fight?

Under non-essential circumstances, cultivators from the same camp would not challenge each other, as doing so could easily give opposing cultivators an advantage.

Lu Ye chose to challenge the cultivator ranked ninety-ninth, but the information fed back to him from the marking was unexpected: that person was already in the midst of a challenge...

A person obviously can't accept two challenges at the same time, so if Lu Ye insisted on challenging this individual, he would have to wait until the current battle was over.

He then changed his challenge target to the one ranked ninety-eighth, and surprisingly, this person was also being challenged.

It seemed that the cultivators ranked in the last three places on the Spirit Stream Ranking were rather busy...

This indicated that if one didn't have enough strength to push towards the higher positions on the ranking list, even if by luck one climbed onto the Spirit Stream Ranking, they would quickly be beaten down.

Just as Lu Ye was prepared to wait a little longer, the name at the hundredth position on the Spirit Stream Ranking suddenly started to twist, then disappeared, to be replaced by another person's name.

The original hundredth rank had been replaced!

Lu Ye hurriedly checked the new ranker's camp, confirmed that it was a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator, and with quick reflexes, he sent out a challenge.

This time, there was no information about this person being currently challenged.

Not a moment later, the challenge was accepted. There was no choice; to refuse would mean Lu Ye would take their place.

Having just finished challenging someone else and climbed the Spirit Stream Ranking, the opponent would certainly need some time to recover, so although they accepted the challenge, the battle did not begin immediately.

With nothing else to do, Lu Ye swallowed elixir pills for cultivation while letting the Talent Tree continue to devour the Earth's Core Fire. At the same time, he divided his attention to study the Spirit Stream Ranking.

His understanding of the Spirit Stream Ranking was all hearsay; although he had once climbed to the thirty-third position, he was quickly ousted after just three days, so he wasn't very clear about what exactly was involved in this ranking.

Time flew by, and four hours passed.

There was a message in the battlefield marking, and Lu Ye immediately stopped what he was doing, readying himself for the battle.

In the midst of the unknown, suddenly Heaven's Augury descended, enveloping him. The space around Lu Ye began to twist, his vision changed, and vast white light flooded his sight.

When the white light dissipated, a figure appeared not far in front of him: a male in his early twenties, who should be the target of this challenge.

"Ah woo..."

"Huh?"

A strange sound came from the side. Lu Ye turned his head and saw Amber and Yiyi standing beside him, both looking around in surprise. They had been asleep and cultivating respectively just moments ago, without understanding how they suddenly ended up here.

"Lu Ye, what is this place?" Yiyi asked.

"We'll talk about it later," Lu Ye replied, turning his gaze back to the opposite side. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator was looking at him and Yiyi with a stunned expression, then glanced at Amber, utterly baffled. The agreed-upon one-on-one duel had somehow turned into a group fight!

In the Spirit Stream Ranking challenges, it was understandable for a cultivator to have beast pets that they had formed pet contracts with. There were cultivators from the beast-taming faction on the ranking list who even had more than one beast pet.

However, having two enemies participate was quite preposterous!

Just as he was about to ask about the situation, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator suddenly recognized Lu Ye's face. Upon closer examination, wasn't this the guy whom their camp had been desperately but fruitlessly searching for recently?

Presently, the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance had many cultivators still scouring the area of his last known whereabouts, yet here he was, challenging the Spirit Stream Ranking!

"Lu Yiye!"

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator cried out, torn between laughter and tears.

Inexplicably, a moving treasure vault had appeared right in front of him. If he could kill Lu Ye here, all the spoils would be his.

But knowing Lu Ye's formidable strength, he had barely made it onto the Spirit Stream Ranking and wasn't confident he could win this fight.

As the words fell, Lu Ye had already rushed towards him at an alarming speed.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator internally cursed—being a combat cultivator, he had deliberately chosen a very small space for the battle. This area had nothing but a combat arena a few dozen zhang square, the confined space undoubtedly suited a combat cultivator's abilities.

But Lu Ye was also a combat cultivator, facing similar advantages in this environment.

With Move-Like-The-Wind grant, his figure was agile, almost trailing an afterimage, rapidly closing the distance that originally was dozens of zhang.

That speed... The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator's eyes twitched as he raised his hand and summoned his Spiritual Artifact, feeling unlikely to be Lu Yiye's match yet resolved to at least exchange a few moves to gauge Lu Ye's strength.

Whooshing through the air, as Lu Ye dashed forward, nine Liu Guang projectiles were already hurled from the supplies box, each stream of light joining into a straight line, chasing the stars and the moon.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator had heard of Lu Ye's weapon control prowess and quickly took out a Golden Body Talisman and slapped it on himself, fully mobilizing his spirit force, protecting his body.

"Roar!" A thunderous tiger roar resounded, and visible waves of force swept towards the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator. Struck by this wave of sound, the man immediately felt as if someone had

hammered his head, causing pain in his brain, seeing stars, and for a brief moment, his spirit force disbanded.

Shock overcame his heart, as Lu Yiye's companion, the White Tiger, possessed such divine might?

Just as he steadied his mind, a barrage of magic and spells assaulted him from the flank. Amidst the chaos, he caught a glimpse of the young girl who entered with Lu Yiye, her body surging with spirit force, rapidly forming one spell after another, hurling them at him as if money meant nothing.

The speed of the spellcasting and the variety of the spells were dazzling.

With booming sounds, the spells struck down, and even though the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator gave it his all to dodge, he was inevitably hit, and the golden light on his body visibly faded.

An immense sense of danger grew within him.

He quickly uttered, "I acknowl..."

Before the last word could escape him, a flying weapon had breached his Golden Body Talisman and protective spirit force, tearing through the protective treasure armor he wore, carrying with it a spray of blood as his body was forcefully knocked back, violently shaking.

Lu Ye rushed to his side, drawing the Boulder Mountain Saber. With a swift motion, the blade fell, and as he brushed past, a large head soared to the sky, gushing blood from the neckless stump, Blood Rain sprinkling down.

Some distance away, Lu Ye flicked the bloodstains off the Boulder Mountain Saber, then sheathed it.

Too weak!

Since advancing to the 7th Heaven and entering the Core Circle, he had slain many from the 9th Heaven, but this was the first time he directly fought and killed someone from the Spirit Stream Ranking. His opponent felt extremely weak, hardly a match for him.

Even though Amber and Yiyi had intervened in the battle, the level of skill displayed by the opponent still left Lu Ye feeling disappointed.

Since entering the Core Circle, Lu Ye had always been in a state of being besieged and had never fought someone in a one-on-one fight. The Spirit Stream Ranking challenge presented him with a perfect opportunity.

This way, he could use it to gauge the gap between himself and other strong cultivators on the Spirit Stream Ranking. Moreover, having chosen to challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking, he naturally had to heed his Fourth Senior Brother's advice—to strike for the highest position in the shortest amount of time!

Yiyi stepped forward to collect the man's storage sack and Spiritual Artifact, only then realizing, "Lu Ye, Lu Ye, this was a Spirit Stream Ranking challenge, wasn't it?"

When she first appeared here, she hadn't quite grasped the situation, but by now, she had come to realize it.

"Hmm."

That both Yiyi and Amber could be transported here to participate in the challenge was something Lu Ye hadn't anticipated beforehand.

However, strictly speaking, Amber was his beast pet, and as a combat cultivator, bringing a beast pet to join a Spirit Stream Ranking challenge was reasonable and permitted by Heaven's Augury.

And since Yiyi was Amber's minion spirit, she naturally came along.

This gave him an innate advantage.

"Let's go," Lu Ye called out.

Heaven's Augury descended, and with a blurring of his vision, he was back inside the wooden hut.

Yiyi floated in through the window, settling neatly in front of him, while Amber leapt onto his lap, silently waiting. Both appeared well aware that Lu Ye wouldn't just call it quits and were prepared to join him in the ranking battles.

Lu Ye once again activated the battlefield marking, trying to connect with the Spirit Stream Ranking to challenge those ranked ninety-nine, but was unsuccessful, so he settled for the one ranked ninety-eight.

This time, it was a success.

And to Lu Ye's surprise, the opponent didn't make him wait too long; just half a Shichen later, Heaven's Augury descended and transported him into a small space.

The terrain of this battle was similar to the last one; a very small space with an area of only dozens of yards.

Whoever chose such a space must be either a physique cultivator or a combat cultivator because only these two types would prefer a terrain suited for close combat. Magic cultivators, ghost cultivators, and the like would definitely opt for a larger space.

As the white light dispersed from his vision, Lu Ye immediately looked ahead, spotting a burly cultivator opposite him. As expected, the man was a physique cultivator.

In this moment, the physique cultivator was frowning as he sized up Lu Ye...

He seemed to have caught a fleeting glimpse of a figure just then, but the transmittal by Heaven's Augury filled his vision with bright light, so he wasn't sure if he had seen correctly.

The fleeting figure was naturally Yiyi, who had already hidden underground, concealing her presence to avoid alerting others to the fact that it was two against one on Lu Ye's side, which could add unnecessary psychological pressure.

Moreover, with Yiyi concealed, she could launch a sneak attack at any time.

The physique cultivator had already mobilized his spirit force, with abundant blood Qi around his body. His left arm held a spirit artifact big shield, and in his right hand, he wielded a mace with sharp spikes covering its surface; a single blow from it would surely inflict great pain.

Raising the big shield before him, the physique cultivator tapped it with his mace, producing a loud thud. The challenge in this gesture was clear as he spoke, "Come at me, little Haotian Alliance..."

Before finishing his sentence, he paused, looking at Lu Ye attentively and exclaimed in surprise, "Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer?"

Lu Ye was already charging toward him, imbued with Move-Like-The-Wind, his figure streaking through the air like lightning and leaving a trail of afterimages.

As the distance between them closed rapidly, the physique cultivator's expression shifted subtly, inwardly cursing his bad luck. He had just made it onto the Spirit Stream Ranking, only to be challenged by this calamity. It looked like keeping his ninety-eighth position wasn't going to be easy.

Chapter 393 Charging Ahead with High Spirits

As usual, wielding a weapon to lead the way, nine streams of Liu Guang struck the physique cultivator's big shield spirit artifact one after the other. The enormous force wrapped around the impact, causing the physique cultivator's figure to shake violently, while the luster on the big shield spirit artifact rapidly faded.

The physique cultivator was greatly alarmed; he knew just how strong the defensive capabilities of his spirit artifact big shield were. It was seriously affected in such a short time, showcasing the incredible strength of the opponent's offensive.

Following the nine streams of Liu Guang, Lu Ye had already pounced in front of the combat cultivator, his Boulder Mountain Saber slashing down like lightning. He struck the big shield while at the same time, the Hefty Weight spirit runes were reinforced.

In an instant, a massive pressure descended from the sky. The physique cultivator felt as though a great mountain was pressing on his shield. Straining against it, refusing to retreat, his figure still stooped perilously close to kneeling on the ground.

He furiously urged his spirit force, his complexion reddening and his muscles tensing up as he bellowed. He shoved the big shield forward and swung down his hammer simultaneously.

The streams of weapon control came from the side, striking his hammer and causing his blow to brush past Lu Ye and forcefully strike the combat arena, which let out a thunderous noise as cracks spread across the ground.

Lu Ye's long saber thrust straight ahead, his spirit force boiling around him. With 8th Heaven cultivation, and the Double-Sharpness spirit runes reinforcing the strike, the saber unleashed a lethality that was unimaginable.

The luster of the big shield spirit artifact directly faded away, and with a crashing sound, the shield shattered to pieces.

Seeing the long saber, attached with flames, chopping down on him, the physique cultivator's expression turned to one of terror, instinctively wanting to concede defeat verbally.

However, just at that moment, Amber, who had been lying still on Lu Ye's shoulder until now, suddenly let out a roar. Visible sound waves surged toward the physique cultivator, causing his thoughts to become chaotic for a moment, and the words that had reached his lips were not shouted out.

The long saber chopped down, blood splattered!

The stalwart figure of the physique cultivator stumbled a couple of times before collapsing with a bang, his eyes wide open, dying with lingering resentment.

He knew he was no match for Lu Ye, but he figured that, as a physique cultivator, he'd at least have the chance to concede defeat verbally. He hadn't expected this last opportunity to be thwarted by Amber — under the Tiger Roar Intimidation, he lost his final breath of life.

Yiyi materialized her figure, "Is it over?"

Not happy!

She hadn't even had the chance to make a move!

Gathering the spoils of war, she left the place with the help of Heaven's Augury's teleportation.

Back in the wooden cabin, Lu Ye checked the Spirit Stream Ranking; he was currently ranked ninety-eight and could challenge up to five people above him, so the highest rank he could challenge was the one at ninety-three.

However, he didn't do so but instead chose to challenge the person ranked ninety-five. The reason he didn't challenge those ranked ninety-six and ninety-seven was naturally because those two were from the Haotian Alliance camp.

Since entering the Core Circle, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had targeted him in various ways and pursued him relentlessly. If his strength hadn't been formidable, he would have died countless times by now.

To say he harbored no resentment was impossible; as a spirited youth, who didn't have some temper? Previously he fought his way out of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, partly indeed to buy some array banners for future use, but also to vent his anger by killing some Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

However, contending against the entirety of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was always risky.

The Spirit Stream Ranking challenge was a perfect opportunity. Such challenges were always one-on-one, eliminating Lu Ye's fear of being ganged up on.

He decided to take them down one by one!

He was determined that wherever he went, he wouldn't see a single name of a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator any longer!

Since he was being targeted, he might as well return the favor.

The cultivator ranked ninety-fifth wasn't so busy. As soon as Lu Ye issued the challenge, it was quickly accepted. When Heaven's Augury teleported him to the small space for combat, Yiyi, as usual, immediately went into hiding, and Amber crouched on Lu Ye's shoulder.

He surveyed his surroundings and discovered that this was a vast desert area, with the blazing sun overhead, an extremely hot environment. Looking around, the vision was filled with flying yellow sand without any other color, and he couldn't see the brother ranked ninety-fifth...

This guy was probably a magic cultivator who practiced either fire element or earth-type magic and spells.

Lu Ye concluded in his mind; otherwise, he wouldn't have chosen such terrain.

He didn't bother to look for the enemy's trace, simply standing in place and waiting. Soon after, Yiyi sent a message, having found the person's whereabouts. As expected, the other party was indeed a magic cultivator.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp was in an uproar.

Many cultivators from the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance were searching for Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer but to no avail. No one knew where he was hiding; it was as if he had vanished into thin air.

But on the Spirit Stream Ranking, the name Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect appeared again.

This guy actually started to climb the rankings!

Initially, only a small number of people were aware of this news, but soon it spread widely. In no time, countless gazes turned toward the Spirit Stream Ranking.

They watched, eyes wide, as his ranking continuously rose. Initially, when they noticed him, he was just ranked ninety-fifth, but in just half a day, he had moved up to eighty-second. Another half a day passed, seventy-third.

By the second day, he was at sixty-fifth place!

His ascension speed through the Spirit Stream Ranking was incredibly fast; it seemed he had no intention of taking a break. If it weren't for those being challenged making him wait for two Shichens, he would climb the rankings even quicker.

The waiting time for challenges greatly disrupted his rhythm.

What infuriated the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side even more was that Lu Ye faced his challenges one at a time. He did not spare any Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators ranked ahead of him, and all of those who had crossed hands with him had not survived; they were all slain by him!

This led to a peculiar phenomenon where the twenty people ranked behind him were all from the Haotian Alliance camp.

This was something that could never have happened in the past. Both the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and Haotian Alliance camps were cradles of talents, and on the Spirit Stream Ranking, it was basically impossible to see four or five consecutive people all from one camp.

But after Lu Ye started his challenge, this unthinkable phenomenon occurred.

It's simply because the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who should have been mixed in with these Haotian Alliance cultivators were all killed off!

For a time, many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were filled with righteous indignation and some were frustrated to the point of hating iron for not becoming steel.

They couldn't understand how the strong contenders, once considered as the future pillars, just couldn't hold their own. Even if they couldn't match Lu Ye one-on-one in combat, they surely had time to concede defeat. How could they be completely wiped out by that Lu Yiye?

And Lu Yiye's actions were undoubtedly deliberate, a targeted move, slapping the face of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

If this ranking list were man-made, it would be easy to handle—just revoke it to avoid the embarrassing display. But the problem is that the Spirit Stream Ranking is generated by Heaven's Augury, beyond the interference of humans. Any Spirit Stream Realm cultivator with enough strength can connect to it and check.

Such a ranking list undoubtedly stripped Ten Thousand Demons Ridge of its dignity. Every Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator capable of checking the list felt a burning sensation on their face when they saw the rankings, as if they had been slapped repeatedly from both sides.

With Lu Ye acting so recklessly, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side felt deeply humiliated, but the Haotian Alliance side enjoyed the show. News of the changes in the Spirit Stream Ranking kept spreading, and every time Lu Ye moved up in rank, the einated celebrations erupted whenever one of the challenged Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators completely disappeared from the Spirit Stream Ranking.

On the third day, Lu Ye's ranking had reached the fiftieth place!

There wasn't a single able fighter.

That was Lu Ye's biggest impression from the past few days of ranking battles.

No matter what faction those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators were from, no matter what terrain they chose, as long as Lu Ye discovered them, he could usually end the battle in a very short

time. And with Amber by his side, even if those people realized they were no match and tried to surrender, they didn't stand a chance.

Amber was only doing one thing now, squatting on Lu Ye's shoulder. As soon as any challenged cultivator showed signs of wanting to speak, she would immediately roar, and under Tiger Roar Intimidation, their only destiny was death!

Inside the wooden house in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye was still cultivating while allowing the Talent Tree to absorb the Earth's Core Fire.

He had been busy ranking for the past few days, and had used up only twenty out of forty pieces of Earth's Core Fire, which allowed him to gain two new spirit runes, one Golden Arc and one Lightning Attracting...

After checking the specific information for these two spirit runes, he found that if they were constructed, they could be used to cast magic and spells.

This move further expanded his journey on the path of magic cultivation.

However, since his spirit force was of fire element with a hint of metal, if he constructed these two spirit runes to activate magic and spells, the results might differ from the normal spells. These two spirit runes would best be used to set up killing arrays, which could have some unique effects.

He had already issued a challenge to the cultivator ranked forty-eighth. Although the opponent had accepted the challenge, the battle had not immediately commenced; it seemed there would be another wait of two Shichen.

Lu Ye took out a portion of Earth's Core Fire and let the Talent Tree absorb it, while also dedicating some of his consciousness to cultivation.

The twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire were quickly devoured, and Lu Ye looked towards the Talent Tree expectantly, curious about what new spirit runes he might obtain.

Looking over it, he was slightly startled.

Because there were no new leaves burning, it was just that in a certain area of the Talent Tree, there was a large number of leaves glowing red...

He had experienced this situation once before.

It was when he was in the Land of Fiery Flames, absorbing that cluster of Phoenix True Fire. At that time, a large area of leaves responded simultaneously when he absorbed the Phoenix True Fire. It was only after completely devouring the Phoenix True Fire that those leaves burned up, outlining the figure of a Vermillion Bird perched on the treetop, subsequently granting him the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes.

Now a similar situation had occurred once again; it was likely another special spirit rune!

Lu Ye carefully examined and discovered that the responsive leaves were not as numerous as those for the Fire Phoenix, only about a dozen or so. Nonetheless, this was still extremely remarkable.

Ever since he obtained the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, Lu Ye had been particularly looking forward to the emergence of such special spirit runes because they were far more powerful than regular spirit runes.

The leaves on the Talent Tree glowing red were not arranged haphazardly but in a symmetrical pattern.

Upon closer inspection, if one were to connect the symmetrical leaves, they seemed to form something resembling a pair of... wings?

Lu Ye's spirits immediately lifted.

Could it be...

Could it possibly be...

It was very likely...

It took the absorption of no less than twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire for those dozen or so leaves to begin glowing red. It was unknown how much more they needed to devour before they could fully ignite.

Chapter 394 So Big!

What made Lu Ye feel helpless was that he had no Earth's Core Fire left!

Annoyed at himself, he wished he had spent all his merit points at Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union in the past few days.

Checking his own merits, he had over 2,500, which would indeed be enough to purchase about a dozen portions of Earth's Core Fire, but certainly it would not suffice; even if he sold all the spoils of war he had gathered recently to Heaven's Augury treasure vault, he would not earn many more merits.

Where could he find Earth's Core Fire? Lu Ye was quite worried.

At the same time, within the Core Circle, at a 2nd grade sect of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge base.

Seated side by side on a cliff-side boulder, two 9th Heaven cultivators, a man and a woman. The man bore a majestic aura and looked extraordinary, while the woman was beautiful with a dainty figure, snuggling into the man's embrace with a look of intimacy.

The two were the Governor and Deputy Governor of this base.

Not to mention the man, the woman was Bai Lan, ranked forty-eight on the Spirit Stream Ranking, donned in a robe with large sleeves; it was clear she was a magic cultivator because only those who didn't need to engage in close-quarters combat would wear such loose clothing. In contrast, physique cultivators, combat cultivators, or Netherworld cultivators usually opted for tight-fitting garments that made fighting easier.

However, her impressive assets were still prominent even under the loose clothing.

Bai Lan held the man's hand and said softly, "Senior Brother, there's no need to worry. I've chosen a terrain that suits magic cultivators. Even if that Lu Yiye is fierce, he can't just kill me with one strike. If I really can't win, I'll just concede."

It has to be said, many strong cultivators on the Spirit Stream Ranking who were killed by Lu Ye thought the same when they accepted his challenge...

9th Heaven against 8th Heaven, if they couldn't win, didn't they still have the chance to surrender?

Turns out, they really didn't.

"Are you sure it is this Lu Yiye who challenged you?" The man's expression was fraught with worry.

Bai Lan pursed her lips and smiled, "He's been challenging the ranking these past few days, every cultivator ranked above him on the Spirit Stream Ranking has been challenged by him; now that he's ranked fiftieth, and I'm forty-eight, who else could it be if not him?"

"Such a tyrant... Sister, why don't you just refuse..."

"If I refuse, the shame will fall on our sect. How would our younger brothers and sisters hold their heads high in the Core Circle afterward?"

As a strong cultivator on the Spirit Stream Ranking lacking even the courage to fight, it would only become a joke if word got out. Furthermore, Lu Ye's challenge mission attracted significant attention from many big sects in the Divine Sea Realm at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Those strong Divine Sea Realm cultivators saw it as an opportunity.

Now that Lu Ye's whereabouts were unknown on the Spirit Stream battlefield, if someone could kill him during his ranking challenge, it would save them the effort of searching elsewhere.

Those ranked after fifty can't be relied upon, so the hopes rest on those ranked in the top fifty.

If the top fifty couldn't deal with it, then hopes should be pinned on the top ten!

It's improbable to let him kill his way to the first rank on the Spirit Stream Ranking, right?

There must be someone who can defeat him, someone who can kill him!

"But..."

The man wanted to say more, but Bai Lan already raised her hand to his lips and said softly, "It's fine, really, you don't need to worry; our master gave me a top-grade spirit artifact a few days ago. Its defense is extremely strong, and although I can't unleash its full power with my cultivation, I won't be in danger."

The man looked down at her earlobe, noticing a beautiful earring that resembled a tear drop, realizing, "So that's the spirit artifact Second Elder bestowed upon you."

Bai Lan's lips curled into a teasing smile, "What else did you think? Who else did you think gave it to me?"

The man sheepishly smiled.

Bai Lan reached out to tickle him, "Senior Brother, how could you think so little of me!"

The man hurriedly begged for mercy.

As four hours flew by, with the man's anxious gaze upon her, Bai Lan's figure vanished from sight.

In a small space covering about ten square miles, filled with the fragrance of flowers and surprisingly beautiful environment.

As usual, Yiyi almost immediately went underground while Lu Ye, as his vision restored, surveyed the surroundings. Seeing no trace of the enemy, he guessed from the name on the Spirit Stream Ranking that his opponent for this time was likely a woman.

The space wasn't small, ruling out the possibility that the opponent was a physique or combat cultivator. As for healing cultivators... that was even less likely.

After the fiftieth rank on the Spirit Stream Ranking, there might be a few healing cultivators who also practiced other styles, but among the top fifty, not a single healing cultivator could be found.

Cultivators have limited energy, and practicing two styles simultaneously means neither can be very powerful.

Was it a magic cultivator or a Netherworld cultivator?

Over the past couple of days, Lu Ye had fought twenty to thirty battles, facing cultivators from all styles except for healing cultivators, and even encountered some exotic mino...

Yiyi was put in charge of tracking down the enemy, while Lu Ye stood still, quietly waiting and tossing a few elixir pills into his mouth, chewing with his cheeks puffing in and out.

Since he began his cultivation journey, he had eaten so many elixir pills that he felt like vomiting. Lu Ye really wanted to suggest to those Pill Masters to create some different flavors, like apple, orange, or even banana...

Eating dozens of elixir pills of the same flavor every day was really unbearable.

Yiyi sent a message; she had found the female cultivator's whereabouts. The opponent was clearly very cautious, continually changing positions to avoid being ambushed by Lu Ye.

"Lu Ye, Lu Ye, so big," Yiyi's transmission mixed in some strange information.

"Hmm?"

"Bigger than Sister Hua Ci."

"Age?"

"No, it's that thing you like."

"What nonsense are you talking about, child."

"Just don't go easy on her when you see her."

"..."

In the confined space, Bai Lan didn't dare to control her weapon to fly, as she had long heard that Lu Ye's speed in weapon control was unparalleled. Even the sword cultivators' speed wasn't as fast as Lu Ye's, so she, a magic cultivator, didn't dare to show off in front of Lu Ye.

Quickly moving, she searched all around for Lu Ye. As a magic cultivator, the only chance she had to beat Lu Ye was to keep him away from her. If she could maintain enough distance, then Lu Yiye, however strong, would be blasted into bits by her magic and spells.

Suddenly, she came to a stop. Ahead in the direction she was moving, another figure appeared, standing expressionlessly, as if he had been waiting for her for a long time.

Lu Yiye!

Bai Lan's reaction was incredibly quick. The moment she saw Lu Ye, she raised her hand and cast a spell. Spiritual power surged, creating ripples and mist that formed into three fierce beasts made purely from spiritual power, each lunging toward Lu Ye from different directions.

She pointed again, and a huge spirit force disc appeared overhead, its runes flowing. As the runes moved, countless water arrows rained down toward Lu Ye from the disc.

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow.

He thought that the ranking among the top fifty was indeed different from before; the speed and strength of her casting, as well as the distance, were like nothing he had seen before.

Among the Five Elements Techniques, water-type spells were generally weaker, but the water-type spells cast by Bai Lan didn't have this problem; each spell's power was not inferior to those of other branches.

The supplies box buzzed, and nine spiritual artifacts shot into the sky, dividing into three groups to meet the three fierce beasts, while he also drew the Boulder Mountain Saber from his waist. Spiritual power surged around his body, precisely splitting each incoming water arrow.

The collision between fire-type spiritual power and water-type spiritual power created a large mist in the space between them.

Bai Lan stared fixedly at Lu Ye, her expression impassive, but her heart was shocked.

Lu Yiye's mental power was incredibly strong, controlling the nine spiritual artifacts as if they were extensions of his limbs, which was one thing, but he could also simultaneously split her water arrows without any misses.

This only meant one thing, that he was far more than capable of handling her attacks, and he didn't even bother to dodge.

At that moment, Bai Lan felt a pang of envy.

Every magic cultivator hoped their mental power was as strong as possible, because the stronger the mental power, the better the control over spiritual power, and the greater the power of their spells...

They would even undertake special cultivation practices to enhance their mental power.

Now, to see such a strong cultivator display a mental strength far exceeding that of a magic cultivator, Bai Lan couldn't help but feel envious.

The disc in the sky slowly disappeared, and water arrows no longer fell. Lu Ye sheathed his saber, and the next moment, his brow furrowed, and the nine flying artifacts returned to the supplies box in a flash of light.

With a quick sense check, he found that his connection with the nine spiritual artifacts seemed a lot weaker than before. Those three water-type spiritual power beasts were not just offensive moves but also had the effect of eroding spiritual artifacts.

Water nourishes without form! It seemed that this was a unique ability of Bai Lan.

With such a skill, others using spiritual artifacts against her would be at a disadvantage, because as the fight dragged on, the power of the spiritual artifacts would rapidly weaken.

Bai Lan was about to activate another spell when Lu Ye raised one hand: "Wait a moment."

Bai Lan looked at him warily, her body brimming with accumulated spiritual power: "What?"

In battle, Lu Ye rarely exchanged words with his opponents, but this time, for the sake of those dozen or so leaves of the Talent Tree that hadn't ignited, he had to speak up.

"I want twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire."

"Huh?" Bai Lan was utterly confused, clearly not understanding.

The challenge on the Spirit Stream Ranking was usually a matter of life and death or one party conceding defeat. Why was Lu Yiye suddenly asking her for some Earth's Core Fire?

Is this guy crazy?

"They sell it in the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, one portion is worth two hundred merits, I want twenty portions!"

Somehow, Bai Lan seriously did the math: "Isn't that four thousand merit points?" After speaking, her face darkened. Why was she even calculating this?

Chapter 395 You Have Half a Shichen

"Yes, four thousand merit points. You may not have that many, but I think you should be able to gather them!"

The most common way to obtain merit was by killing enemies, and another way was to sell items to Heaven's Augury treasure vault. Under normal circumstances, it was difficult for a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator to accumulate so many merit points. Of course, if someone was Governor or Deputy Governor of a faction's base, they could also earn merit points by granting themselves a monthly salary.

Four thousand merit points was an enormous number for cultivators of the outer or inner circle, but for some in the Core Circle, it was not an impossible target with enough effort.

Especially for someone like Bai Lan, who was strong and beautiful, female cultivators like her were pampered in any sect, and even if she couldn't gather enough herself, someone would find a way to help her.

Lu Ye asking for twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire was not an excessive demand but a figure he arrived at after comprehensive consideration.

"Why should I give you twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire?" Bai Lan demanded angrily.

This was the first time she had encountered such a situation in a Spirit Stream Ranking challenge, and it truly left her speechless. Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer was notorious, and his reputation preceded him. Now that she had met him, she realized there was something off with his mind.

After all, would someone whose brain was functioning normally attract such targeted hostility from the entire Ten Thousand Demons Ridge?

"If you want to fight, then fight. Stop talking nonsense," Bai Lan snapped.

Then she saw Lu Ye leave a trail of afterimages behind him as he rushed toward her at high speed.

She raised her hand and cast a series of Dao techniques that continuously bombarded towards Lu Ye. However, he weaved through the onslaught of spells with precise movements, deftly avoiding every attack and rapidly closing the distance between them.

If it were an ordinary magic cultivator in this situation, they would immediately try to increase the distance while retreating and attacking continuously.

But Bai Lan was ranked forty-eighth on the Spirit Stream Ranking, no ordinary magic cultivator.

Furthermore, the moment Lu Ye took action, she realized their speeds were not on the same level; Lu Yiye's weapon control speed was unparalleled, and his own speed was equally astonishing.

She wouldn't be able to retreat far.

So she made a decisive choice, her magic spell hand movements shifting as she formed a Dharma Seal. Simultaneously, a light suddenly shone from the back of her hand.

It wasn't the light of a battlefield marking but that of a spirit rune!

On the back of this woman's hand was a rune tattoo inscribed by a spirit runes master!

Righteous Blood Sect had Madam Yun as a spirit runes master, so how could Ten Thousand Demons Ridge not have one? However, rune tattoos were so valuable that very few Spirit Stream Realm cultivators owned them.

Not to mention the various materials consumed in inscribing a spirit rune, even hiring those spirit runes masters was a significant expenditure.

To put it bluntly, the Rune Tattoo Wings that Lu Ye previously obtained were worth as much as a Magic Artifact in terms of value.

Moreover, rune tattoos were divided into Personality-Reveal Rune Tattoos and Hidden Rune Tattoos, as well as temporary and permanent, each with different resource requirements.

The rune tattoo Bai Lan was using was clearly a Hidden Rune Tattoo, invisible before activation, only revealing itself when she stimulated it to catch the enemy off-guard.

It was unclear whether it was temporary or permanent, but if it was the latter, then the cost of inscribing that spirit rune must have been substantial.

Although the spirit rune flashed only briefly, Lu Ye could see it clearly. It looked somewhat familiar, resembling the newly acquired Lightning Attracting Spirit Runes he had obtained.

Mist formed by the collision of water and fire spirit forces enveloped a vast area, and by now it was too late to escape.

Lu Ye immediately understood his opponent's plan, and without hesitation, he spurred his spirit force, which was quickly enveloped by a layer of protective covering formed by Defense Spirit Runes.

A thunderbolt struck down, aiming directly at Lu Ye's location. In an instant, the fog-covered land was rife with lightning serpents, and the crackling sound was incessant.

Lu Ye's body shook as he truly felt the strength of the top fifty on the Spirit Stream Ranking. The intensity of the Defense Spirit Runes around his body was rapidly weakening, even though he was desperately encouraging his spirit force to maintain the operation of the runes, they only held up for the time of three breaths before they broke. Such a power of thunderbolt, few cultivators in the Spirit Stream Realm could withstand.

In Bai Lan's horrified gaze, Lu Ye emerged from the thunderbolt-ravaged space, his complexion scorched black, and as he dashed forward, he also spat out a mouthful of black air.

Despite her horror, Bai Lan did not cease her actions, as a lifelike, ferocious roaring water dragon pounced towards Lu Ye while she herself swiftly retreated.

Retreating was the only option now; her most powerful trump card had failed to affect Lu Yiye at all, so she dared not remain in place.

The Boulder Mountain Saber, wrapped in firelight, descended, and when it collided with the water dragon, an immense shockwave approached, causing Lu Ye's arm that held the saber to pause slightly.

As a light flashed over the blade, the Hefty Weight Spirit Runes were activated.

The saber, unstoppable, split the water dragon in two, reaching Bai Lan in an instant and fiercely chopping down.

With a look of fear on her face, Bai Lan touched an earring shaped like a teardrop below her earlobe; a protective layer quickly formed as spirit force surged.

Lu Ye's original slashing strike was not meant to take Bai Lan's life, as he was still counting on her to deliver the Earth's Core Fire; if he killed her, where would he find it?

However, upon seeing that layer of protection, another light swept over the Boulder Mountain Saber, with the Double-Sharpness enhancement.

After the strike, Bai Lan's body flew out like a torn sack, in utter disarray.

The defense wasn't broken, so she was not injured; after all, the earring was a top-grade spirit artifact. Even if she could not mobilize its full potential, it was enough to keep her from dying.

But under the strike, the protective screen's luster significantly diminished, and the impact of the great force could not be neutralized either.

Bai Lan hurriedly got up, and before she could steady herself, she felt another powerful force striking her, and once again, she flew out. This time the protective screen had become extremely dim.

She couldn't withstand a third strike!

Bai Lan panicked.

She had thought that with the top-grade spirit artifact given by her master, she would be invincible. But now she realized she had underestimated this hooligan, as the strength of his attacks exceeded her understanding. She truly couldn't comprehend how the might of a single strike from a 8th Heaven cultivator could be so terrifying.

Lu Ye did not pursue her but stood silently in place.

Bai Lan hastily got up and, from a distance, looked at Lu Ye with unsettled nerves.

"You have one hour."

Having dropped this sentence, Lu Ye called out again, "I concede!"

His figure rapidly faded, then disappeared.

Bai Lan was stunned...

She had already prepared herself to admit defeat, but instead, the other party conceded first.

What was that all about?

In a flash, Bai Lan saw through Lu Ye's intentions. In half a shichen, that thug would challenge her again!

Damnably!

On that precipice boulder, a man anxiously waited. Although his junior sister was protected by a top-grade Spiritual Artifact, Lu Yiye's previous records were there for all to see. Since he started challenging others on the ranking, not a single one of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators before him had survived. His junior sister was the apple of his eye; how could he not worry?

As he worried nervously, the void in front of him twisted, and his junior sister's figure suddenly appeared.

The man looked at his junior sister, then at the Spirit Stream Ranking...

His own junior sister was ranked forty-eight, with no change, while that Lu Yiye was ranked fiftieth, also with no change.

"Did you win?" the man asked excitedly.

Bai Lan, pale, looked at her senior brother and thought about facing that aggressive thug again in half a shichen. With a pout, she said, "Senior brother..."

The man's face changed, and he asked anxiously, "What is it, junior sister? Are you hurt somewhere?"

"Wu wu wu..." Bai Lan threw herself into his arms, crying her eyes out.

The man was frantic. "Are you hurt anywhere? Tell me quickly."

Bai Lan just kept crying and vigorously shook her head.

The man's face turned green. There were no signs of injury on his junior sister, but she was sobbing so sadly...

Could it be...

Lu Yiye, you despicable villain, I will never coexist with you!

It took a good moment before Bai Lan calmed down and the man finally understood the situation. He relaxed, as it wasn't what he had imagined.

"You're saying that scoundrel demanded twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire from you?"

"Mm-hmm."

"And then he's going to challenge you again in half a shichen?"

"Definitely. Just now, he conceded and left the combat field himself."

Remembering the aggressiveness of the thug wielding the saber, Bai Lan felt a chill, despite not feeling cold. She had fought against many combat cultivators before, but none had given her such a strong sense of oppression. The flame-wrapped saber didn't physically hurt her, but it left her soul riddled with wounds.

She didn't want to face off against someone like that again, no matter what. The feeling that her life was in constant danger was unbearable.

One thing was for sure—if it hadn't been for the top-grade spirit artifact bestowed by her master, she would have died in that combat encounter.

"That's simple. When he challenges you later, just refuse, right? It's not like you have to fight him."

In the midst of crying, Bai Lan sniffled and then thought to herself, right, she had the right to refuse. There was absolutely no need for her to fight him.

As long as her ranking on the Spirit Stream was behind his, he would never be able to bother her again!

That despicable man actually wanted to extort twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire from her! She hoped he would drop dead!

"You're so smart, senior brother!" Bai Lan smiled through her tears, wiping them from the corner of her eyes, and felt relaxed all of a sudden.

In a wooden hut within Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye was practising his cultivation while consuming pills.

Yiyi and Hua Ci sat facing him, both focusing their gaze on Lu Ye.

Stare!

"Just say what you want to say."

Lu Ye felt uncomfortable under their scrutiny.

With an odd tone, Hua Ci said, "I would've never guessed that Lu Ye, the Sect Destroyer, could actually be one to cherish flowers and show mercy to jade."

Yiyi added, "He's not like that toward every woman, only those with substantial assets."

"How substantial?"

"Hmm... at least bigger than you."

After pondering for a moment, Hua Ci said, "Isn't that a tiring way to live?"

"I don't know," Yiyi confessed, as she had never experienced such exhaustion. Curiously, she asked, "Sister Hua Ci, are you tired?"

With a gentle smile, Hua Ci answered, "Not really."

"Enough!"

Seeing the conversation drift, Lu Ye was losing his patience. "In your eyes, am I that kind of person?"

Both women considered the question seriously and then nodded in unison.

Yiyi said, "When we first left Qingyun Mountain, didn't you enjoy it when those female cultivators lectured you on the Dao? The bigger their truths, the more you appreciated them."

Hua Ci also said, "I remember the first time we met. Even though someone was wrapped up like a zongzi, their eyes were quite crafty."

"You misunderstand me," Lu Ye said with a hint of sadness.

Chapter 396 The Final Ultimatum

In the cabin, Lu Ye could no longer endure it and cast both Yiyi and Hua Ci out.

He checked the Spirit Stream Ranking, contemplated briefly, then immersed his mind in the battlefield marking to find the imprint of Yooi Lianzhou and sent a message: "Fellow Daoist Yooi, do you know anyone ranked after fifty on the Spirit Stream Ranking?"

Soon, Yooi Lianzhou responded, "I know most of them, though there are a few I haven't had contact with. What's the matter?"

"I'd like to ask for your help in delivering a message to them."

Without a moment's delay, Yooi Lianzhou understood Lu Ye's intention. Though not knowing why he was doing this, he still replied, "Consider it done."

To get what he wanted from Bai Lan, relying on himself alone wasn't enough; he needed others to cooperate.

After ending communication with Yooi Lianzhou, Lu Ye connected with the Spirit Stream Ranking and challenged Bai Lan once again!

Challenging the Spirit Stream Ranking, besides abiding by certain rules, wasn't heavily restricted; so even though Lu Ye had conceded earlier, he could still continue to challenge at this moment.

On the precipice's giant rock, Bai Lan was discussing the details of the previous battle with Lu Ye with her senior, since he too was on the Spirit Stream Ranking, ranked slightly higher than her, so eventually Lu Ye would challenge him too.

At this moment, gathering more information on Lu Ye would make future responses more effective.

The battlefield marking suddenly transmitted activity, Bai Lan checked and immediately felt unhappy: "Lu Yiye is challenging me again. We agreed on one hour, and it's only been the time for one cup of tea. Truly deceitful, such a scoundrel!"

"Just ignore him then," the man laughed.

"Mm, I rejected him."

Bai Lan relaxed in the embrace of her senior, currently ranked fifty on the Spirit Stream Ranking, while Lu Yiye moved up to forty-eight, so she no longer had to worry about his challenges.

As she thought this, the ranks of forty-eight and fifty-three suddenly swapped places, with Lu Yiye moving to fifty-three and the one originally at fifty-three taking over the forty-eighth rank!

Bai Lan's smile gradually stiffened, something... seemed off!

"Senior brother!" Bai Lan's voice trembled a bit.

This rapid swap in ranking was clearly because the Haotian Alliance cultivator originally at fifty-three had challenged Lu Yiye, who then refused.

A refusal was tantamount to conceding, which was why their ranks had swapped.

When Lu Ye was ranked forty-eight, he indeed had no grounds to challenge her, but now at fifty-three, he once again qualified to challenge her.

Her senior, also keenly watching the Spirit Stream Ranking, immediately sensed something amiss: "He's challenging you again?"

"Mm..." Bai Lan was actually close to tears.

Originally thinking that as long as she was ranked behind Lu Ye, she wouldn't have to worry about his challenges, but who could have expected him to pull such a bizarre maneuver.

Lu Yiye's current stance was clear: he was willing to drop his own rank just to keep her under constant watch.

He clung on like a festering maggot that wouldn't be shaken off.

Bai Lan hurriedly refused, and their ranks swapped again, with Bai Lan now at fifty-three and Lu Ye at fifty, but soon, Lu Ye moved to fifty-five, having been challenged by the original rank fifty-five...

Not only the siblings were watching the Spirit Stream Ranking, at this very moment, both Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and the Haotian Alliance had many people observing the changes.

For no other reason, Lu Ye had been climbing the ranking so swiftly these past few days that many people had kept their eyes on him.

Then, pair after pair of eyes witnessed an unprecedented bizarre occurrence on the Spirit Stream Ranking since its inception.

Lu Yiye, from Righteous Blood Sect, and a female cultivator named Bai Lan from Runyu Sect were constantly moving up and down the ranking list, occasionally swapping places.

While there were ups and downs, with other Haotian Alliance cultivators' involvement, overall, their ranks were steadily dropping; they slid only two or three places each time, but the frequency was so rapid that changes in their ranking occurred in the blink of an eye.

In less than the time it took for one cup of tea, their rankings had fallen from the top fifty to beyond seventy.

The Spirit Stream Ranking was being toyed with!

Such tactics had never been used before—not that they were particularly difficult to execute. Most climbers of the Spirit Stream Ranking consistently moved forward. Who would choose to fall back? The closer to the top, the richer the rewards from Heaven's Augury—real, tangible rewards!

Yet, here they were, seeing it happen!

Lu Yiye was deliberately falling back, not just bringing himself down but also dragging someone with him against her will.

In Runyu Sect, Bai Lan stared blankly...

She racked her brain but couldn't understand why she was being targeted!

If she were guilty, let Heaven's Augury punish her, not send someone like Lu Yiye to torment her!

With so many people on the Spirit Stream Ranking, why did the brute have to fixate on her!

"Junior sister, pull yourself together!" The man grasped Bai Lan's shoulders, shaking them vigorously, his heart bleeding as he looked at his junior sister's haggard expression.

"Senior Brother!" Bai Lan cried out in anguish.

"Accept his challenge!" the man said sternly.

"But I'm not his match."

"I didn't ask you to fight him, just accept it. You have four hours after acceptance to delay. I'll figure something out."

Inside the cabin in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye's eyebrows lifted slightly. So, they had finally decided to accept the challenge?

It seemed they wanted to delay, but it was ultimately meaningless.

Holding a book in his hands and swallowing an elixir pill, he quietly focused on his cultivation.

Meanwhile, some unfavorable comments about Lu Ye emerged at the Spirit Stream battlefield: they accused him of bullying a woman, which was not in the spirit of a true cultivator; they also claimed he only challenged those ranked in the last fifty of the Spirit Stream Ranking, preferring to bully the weak. If he truly had the ability, they challenged him to take on the top fifty.

Even more provocatively, a cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, ranked thirty-fourth, declared he was waiting for Lu Ye right at his position!

This statement ignited many higher-ranked Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators to collectively challenge Lu Ye to come up quickly and meet his demise.

During this time, the Haotian Alliance cultivators enjoyed the spectacle immensely. In just a few days, Lu Ye had consecutively defeated twenty to thirty strong opponents from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge on the Spirit Stream Ranking, to the great delight of his peers, who were eager to see him push higher and defeat even more opponents from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Suddenly, amidst this anticipation, so many antagonistic statements toward Lu Ye surfaced; naturally, the Haotian Alliance could not tolerate it.

Suddenly, the entire Spirit Stream battlefield buzzed with excitement, as slander and quarrels flew everywhere, and the more hot-headed ones began to issue ranking challenges directly.

The changes in the Spirit Stream Ranking were unprecedentedly fast...

Cultivators could communicate extremely efficiently, and various kinds of messages naturally reached Lu Ye's ears through various channels. He ignored them; regardless of how the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators cursed or provoked him, he wouldn't suffer any actual losses—his reputation might just get a bit more tarnished.

After all, he never had a good reputation over at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Every four hours, his and Bai Lan's rankings changed once because each time Bai Lan would accept a challenge and then delay it for four hours.

This was a rule of the Spirit Stream Ranking, and Lu Ye could do nothing but wait.

As for the thirty-fourth ranked guy, Lu Ye checked and found that he was from the same sect as Bai Lan; they likely shared a senior-junior relationship, which clarified why he would come to Bai Lan's defense.

And these clamorous comments were most likely his doing.

However, the Runyu Sect was indeed impressive. Being a 2nd grade sect and having two members within the top fifty of the Spirit Stream Ranking was rare in the Nine Provinces. Only previously did Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, both from the Loyal Heart Sect, manage to occupy high ranks on the ranking consistently due to their unique circumstances.

Time flew by, and three days later...

Lu Ye and Bai Lan's rankings had both dropped to the last places on the list—Lu Ye at one hundred and Bai Lan at ninety-seven!

With one more swap in ranking, one of them was bound to fall off the Spirit Stream Ranking, and which one it would be was obvious.

In the Runyu Sect compound, Bai Lan's eyes were swollen from distress; she had been under immense pressure and had barely rested these past days.

"Senior Brother!" Bai Lan said guiltily, lowering her head.

In front of her, the man placed a storage sack in Bai Lan's hand, "Inside are twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire. When you give them to him, make sure he swears by Heaven's Augury that he will no longer trouble you on the Spirit Stream Ranking in the future!"

"Senior Brother, I..."

The man raised his hand to stop her, "It's only a few days until Heaven's Augury dispenses its rewards. If you fall off the list now, all your previous efforts will have been in vain. The items are from our sect headquarters, and both the Sect Leader and the second elder want to quell this matter and ensure you secure this reward from Heaven's Augury. Disgrace can be experienced now but can be reclaimed later."

If the Spirit Stream Ranking were just a title, then losing it wouldn't be painful, but the ranking was tied to the rewards from Heaven's Augury, which were crucial benefits for any Spirit Stream Realm cultivator to miss.

Now, with only a few days left until Bai Lan received her reward from Heaven's Augury, falling off the ranking now would be too much of a loss.

Four thousand merit points were not insignificant, but compared to the future of an elite disciple from a 2nd grade sect, it was relatively minor, and the Runyu Sect could certainly afford it.

"He hasn't challenged you directly, has he?" the man asked again.

"Mm."

"It seems he is giving you time to prepare. This is his final ultimatum."

Now with Lu Ye ranked one hundred, it would only take one more challenge for Bai Lan to be ranked one hundred, and from there, it was easy for him to manipulate the situation to make her fall off the ranking list. After another challenge, Bai Lan's name would vanish completely from the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Even if she had the opportunity to challenge again, all her previously accumulated time would be voided, and she would have to start over from a month.

"So later, you need to explain the situation to him, and then try to reach the highest possible ranking in the shortest time possible; after that, leave the rest to me. I will make that Lu Yiye pay!"

Bai Lan wanted to say that her senior brother might not be a match for that ruffian, but she feared hurting his ego and struggled to speak up.

"He challenged me!" Bai Lan suddenly changed expression and checked her battlefield marking.

"Go then."

Bai Lan nodded, tightly grasping the storage sack containing twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire, steadied her spirit, chose her terrain, and accepted the challenge.

Chapter 397 Too Bullying

Space twisted, the view changed, and there he was again in the same combat field, with the figure of Bai Lan gradually becoming visible.

This time she didn't hide, instead, she summoned her Flying Spirit Artifact.

It was a Spirit Artifact that looked like a feather, breathtakingly beautiful, and upon it, Bai Lan soared into the sky.

The combat field, spanning a dozen miles in diameter, was neither too large nor too small. If everyone were on the ground, it would take some effort to find each other, but flying up into the air made it easier.

"Lu Yiye..." Bai Lan really wanted to shout out the name of that brute to demonstrate her courage that she was by no means afraid of him, but when the words reached her lips, her voice involuntarily weakened a great deal, as if those three syllables alone could remind her of some deep-seated psychological shadows.

As her words fell, a streak of Liu Guang soared into the sky from somewhere below.

Bai Lan was startled and quickly spurred the power of her earrings, enveloping herself with strong protection, giving her a sense of security.

Lu Ye did not attack her; instead, he hovered thirty zhang away from her, hand on the hilt of his saber, calmly watching her.

When this woman named Bai Lan accepted his challenge this time, he knew his plan must have been effective, and she must have prepared twenty shares of Earth's Core Fire; otherwise, she wouldn't have accepted the challenge.

Very smooth!

He had originally planned that if things didn't go well with Bai Lan, he would push her out of the Spirit Stream Ranking, then look for someone else.

With so many cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge on the Spirit Stream Ranking, there were bound to be one or two who knew the times and were heroes.

Now it seems there's no need for too much trouble.

"Don't come any closer! I warn you, if you dare take one more step, I will... say those three words!"

In the sky, Bai Lan sternly and cutely shouted, using the harshest tone to say the most timid words.

As for what those three words were, everyone knew very well.

Below, Yiyi, who had originally been preparing to search for Bai Lan's whereabouts, quietly appeared. When she heard her say those words, she couldn't help but bring a hand to her forehead.

What kind of psychological torment had this woman endured over these days, to say such words upon seeing Lu Ye?

In mid-air, Lu Ye's gaze shifted briefly to the storage sack in Bai Lan's hand, understanding her intent. He stretched out his hand to her.

"The items are ready, I can give them to you!" Bai Lan stared at Lu Ye warily, like a rabbit on guard against a hungry wolf, "But you have to swear by Heaven's Augury that from now on the Spirit Stream Ranking, you will never harass me without reason again!"

"Alright."

"You swear!"

Lu Ye stared expressionlessly at her.

"Swear, come on!" Bai Lan urged.

Lu Ye withdrew his hand and placed it on the hilt at his waist, slowly drawing out the Boulder Mountain Saber. The sound of the saber leaving its sheath was sharply grating.

Bai Lan's complexion turned a shade paler as she cautiously backed away: "What are you doing?"

"I won't make any Heaven's Augury vow. If I've given you a promise, I will keep it. You can choose to believe it or not, it's up to you!" With saber in hand and spirit force surging, the blade ignited with flames as Lu Ye adopted an offensive stance, the tip of the saber pointing towards Bai Lan. As his words finished, he became a streak of light, charging towards Bai Lan.

In an instant, even with a top-grade spirit artifact for defense, Bai Lan couldn't help but feel a sense of being on pins and needles. Almost at the moment Lu Ye made a move, she threw the storage sack in her hand forward, screaming, "Take them all, just take them all!"

This was too much bullying, boo-hoo-hoo...

Lu Ye's rapid forward motion halted, and he caught the storage sack in his hand. He opened it to check the contents, confirming with satisfaction that there were indeed twenty shares of Earth's Core Fire.

Pleased, he looked up: "Shall I escort you for a bit?"

This woman named Bai Lan hadn't left yet.

Bai Lan looked sadly and pathetically up, "You've already swindled so much from me, can't you just lose for once?" She definitely didn't want to drop out of the top hundred.

She was currently ranked ninety-seventh. Although only three places from the hundredth, being in the last three ranks on the Spirit Stream Ranking was the most troublesome. Anyone with the strength to challenge the Ranking would choose to challenge these three. It was the rule of the Spirit Stream Ranking, just as Lu Ye had started his challenge from these same three.

If you don't have the strength to quickly go up, you will eventually fall off the list.

Rank ninety-seven no longer had to worry about these problems...

Lu Ye suddenly understood her thoughts.

To have your mouth bound by what you eat, and your hand bound by what you take. The value of four thousand merit points was enough to satisfy her request!

Lu Ye felt he was a very reasonable person, of course, also because what she said made sense.

"I concede!"

As his words ended, Lu Ye's figure faded, returning to the wooden hut in Ten Thousand Poisons Forest.

Yiyi and Amber also appeared by his side.

With twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire in hand, he wondered if it would be enough to fully ignite those dozen plus leaves.

Lu Ye took out a portion of Earth's Core Fire and was about to devour it when his battlefield marking suddenly became active—it was a challenge.

At the same time, within the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance, a message was rapidly spreading: all cultivators who were eligible to challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking were to challenge Lu Yiye in batches without interruption, so that he would have no chance to enter the rankings again. Moreover, with such relentless challenges, even if that scoundrel was strong, he would eventually be replaced.

This initiative was led by Szi Guang of the Daoxuan Sect, and received the strong support of cultivators from various sects of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Many cultivators actively participated.

That Lu Yiye was too despicable. During the previous ranking challenge, he killed all the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators ranked above him, and to this date, no one knew how he did it.

In Spirit Stream Ranking challenges, if one admits defeat, they can naturally save their life, except in cases where the difference in strength between both parties is too great, creating an opportunity for an instant kill.

This time, Szi Guang's initiative to take turns challenging Lu Ye aimed firstly to tie him down so he wouldn't have the opportunity to enter the rankings again and, if possible, to pull him from the Spirit Stream Ranking. The second reason was to figure out how exactly he silenced the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators so they couldn't even concede defeat.

Knowing that Lu Ye was powerful and could indeed instantly kill average 9th Heaven opponents, Szi Guang specifically instructed that all challengers should use all available protective measures before entering the combat field, and in the early stages, it was best for physique cultivators to challenge him. There was no real expectation of beating Lu Yiye; the main goal was to wear down his spirit force. When the opportunity was right, cultivators of other factions could consider stepping in to defeat him!

In the wooden hut, Lu Ye had been looking forward to using the Talent Tree to devour the twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire he had obtained, to see if the newly emerged special spirit rune was indeed the one he suspected. Unexpectedly, at this critical moment, he was challenged.

Very annoying!

He connected to the Spirit Stream Ranking through his calm battlefield marking, accepted the challenge, chose the terrain for the combat field, Heaven's Augury descended, and his figure vanished.

On a combat field of just tens of zhang in size, Lu Ye appeared.

This was terrain particularly suited for combat cultivators.

At the instant the white light dispersed from his field of vision, Lu Ye saw, on the opposite side of the combat field, a physique cultivator holding a big spirit force shield and wearing thick treasure armor, with his spirit force and blood Qi mixed together, forming a barrier around him.

This fellow had employed all his protective measures before even coming in.

Lu Ye didn't know which sect he hailed from. As he was surveying the field, an immense pressure assailed him from the front. Looking up, he saw Lu Yiye's afterimage dragging behind him as he rushed toward him rapidly, and in front of him, there was the glimmer of 9th Dao weapon control leading the way!

The physique cultivator dared not be careless, knowing that many powerhouses from the Spirit Stream Ranking had been killed by this same opponent, and he was far from their equal. Thus, without hesitation, he bellowed and thrust the big shield into the ground, half-squatting. In a flash, a sense of immense solidity enveloped him, giving off an unmovable, mountain-like aura.

Just as he had just adopted a defensive stance, the nine glimmers of light had already struck in front of him. Ding ding dang... Crack...

The physique cultivator's heart went cold as he looked at his big shield, now turning into shards before his eyes, while the breath of death rushed toward his face.

Although he still had the protection of his treasure armor, it was rumored that Lu Yiye specialized in decapitation; the armor could protect the body, but not the neck.

"I..." Just as he was about to speak, Amber, crouched on Lu Ye's shoulder, let out a roar.

The powerful impact made the physique cultivator dizzy, causing the words he was about to say to be swallowed back down.

So that's how it is!

That was indeed why Lu Yiye prevented those strong from the Spirit Stream Ranking from conceding defeat!

Feeling a lightness in his body and seeing his vision turn upside down, as his consciousness blurred, he saw Lu Yiye holding a flaming saber, standing next to a headless corpse...

Indeed, that scoundrel truly specialized in beheading!

Next to the physique cultivator's corpse, Lu Ye wiped the fresh blood off the Boulder Mountain Saber before sheathing it.

After collecting the spoils of war, he left the combat field.

The moment his figure reappeared in the wooden hut, his battlefield marking stirred again. Lu Ye checked and furrowed his brows, realizing something—the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge seemed to be launching organized, concerted challenges against him! Otherwise, it made no sense that the next challenge would come as soon as one ended.

As before, he accepted and chose the same terrain again...

After just dozens of breaths, Lu Ye reappeared, and sure enough, a new challenge had arrived, relentless and unending.

Lu Ye decided not to rush to devour the Earth's Core Fire anymore. If Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wanted to play this game, then he would be forced to accompany them to the end.

Time passed, and one fight after another began and ended swiftly.

Such rapid combat was something Lu Ye had rarely experienced: the same combat field, different opponents, one fight after another, endless killing.

In half a day, more than twenty physique cultivators had died by Lu Ye's hand, and as time passed, this number was still increasing.

Continuous fighting was still a significant drain on Lu Ye, especially now that all his challengers were physique cultivators with strong bodies, who had all triggered their protective measures before entering the combat field. To kill them, he had to break through their defenses.

Even Lu Ye couldn't hold back if he wanted to break through those physique cultivators' defenses.

The Boulder Mountain Saber he wielded even started to develop some notches. Lu Ye had chosen this Spiritual Artifact because of its sturdiness, and inside it, more than half of its spirit runes were designed to reinforce the blade. Even so, the Boulder Mountain Saber was now showing signs of being overburdened.

Fortunately, Lu Ye's killing of the enemy did not rely on the sharpness of the Spiritual Artifact itself, so as long as it wasn't shattered, it could still be used.

Chapter 398 Wings

In the combat field, Lu Ye stood at a high point with his hand on the hilt of his blade. His cheeks puffed rhythmically as he chewed on the elixir pill in his mouth. Taking a few quick bites, he swallowed it whole to recover his own spirit force. Then, he took out a large chunk of high-quality honey and ate it, recovering not just his spirit force but also his physical strength, which was exactly what he needed at the moment.

The combat field, spanning dozens of zhang, was a scene of intense battle.

Yiyi and Amber were in the arena, facing off against a 9th Heaven physique cultivator.

Lu Ye had been fighting challenges like this for half the day and, exhausted from the effort, simply let Yiyi and Amber take over.

Plus, Yiyi had been itching for a fight since she hadn't taken action earlier.

Yiyi alone would find it very difficult to overcome a 9th Heaven cultivator, but with Amber's assistance, it was a different story. The two, a spirit and a tiger, had an intrinsic bond, understanding each other perfectly, and their cooperation was seamless. Amber was responsible for distracting the enemy's focus and attention, while Yiyi launched magical and spell attacks.

Even if they couldn't defeat their opponent right away, that physique cultivator didn't even get the chance to concede defeat. The moment he dared to open his mouth, Amber would unleash a Tiger Roar Intimidation. Its roar was an Innate Divine Ability targeting the psyche and mind, and in Xianyuan City, it had absorbed plenty of soul mist, which greatly enhanced the might of its roar.

So far, no Spirit Stream Realm cultivator they had encountered had been able to withstand the intimidation of the tiger's roar on their psyche.

After a fierce battle, the physique cultivator's morale exploded.

Unable to defeat them or escape, and without even a chance to verbally surrender.

And there stood Lu Yiye, watching intently — he felt he might die right there.

Why was this happening? The challenges on the Spirit Stream Ranking were always one-on-one. How could it be fair for a combat cultivator to have a beast pet, and not to mention, a female magic cultivator?!

What was agreed as a fair fight turned into him against three opponents.

No wonder so many Fellow Daoists who had previously challenged Lu Yiye had died. In such an environment, facing multiple opponents at once, what chance did anyone have?

He was full of unwillingness but could do nothing about it.

He wanted to share this information with others, but this was a combat field, where it was impossible to send messages out.

After a full hour of intense fighting, the physique cultivator finally staggered and fell, his body covered in marks of spells and magic, looking extremely pitiable.

Yiyi cheered and went forward to collect the spoils of war, picking up the opponent's storage sack and presenting it to Lu Ye like a treasure: "I won!"

Lu Ye ruffled her head and took the storage sack. "Good job, do you want to keep fighting?"

"Fight!" Yiyi's gaze was resolute.

She rarely had such opportunities to refine her own combat skills. Previously, when she was with Lu Ye, they were usually surrounded and attacked by large groups. Now, taking advantage of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators challenging Lu Ye, this grind was greatly beneficial for her growth.

Of course, this was only possible with Amber's cooperation; without him, she alone couldn't possibly defeat those 9th Heaven cultivators.

The moment they stepped out of the combat field, the next challenge was already arriving. Lu Ye accepted it, waiting for half an hour to let Yiyi and Amber recover some their strength before heading back into the combat field.

This unusual situation soon attracted the attention of the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance cultivators, including those from the previous battle!

Since the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance started their relentless challenges against Lu Ye, he always accepted immediately and entered the combat field, ending the battles quickly...

But the last battle had taken half an hour, and this time, he delayed accepting the challenge for another half an hour.

What did this imply?

It undoubtedly indicated that Lu Yiye was significantly drained and no longer at his peak, hence the delayed decision.

This lifted the spirits of the cultivators in the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance, brightening their mood.

Another half hour later, the battle ended.

The next challenge began.

After several consecutive battles, Yiyi was utterly exhausted, and even Amber seemed somewhat weakened...

Lu Ye, I can't go on anymore; you take over," Yiyi said, and then retreated into Amber to rest.

In the cabin, Lu Ye fed Amber some elixir pills and accepted the challenge that an unknown brother had just sent.

He then bizarrely discovered that the challenger this time was not a physique cultivator but a combat cultivator!

Perhaps there were too many Ten Thousand Demons' physique cultivators being killed or something.

As the opponent appeared and hastily sized up Lu Ye, he saw Lu Ye charging at him with an overwhelming momentum, his complexion drastically changing.

The situation was not as he expected at all; Lu Yiye was in perfect condition, filled with energy, and not the weary warrior he had imagined.

A moment later, the cultivators from the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance were stunned because Lu Ye had returned to his previous speed of killing enemies. Nearly every few moments, he ended another battle.

All those who challenged him died cleanly, and no one knew exactly what his condition was now.

The glimmer of hope they had just seen was cruelly extinguished with cold water.

After most of the day, Lu Ye waited inside the cabin for a long time, but no new challenges came.

No one dared to challenge him anymore.

In these two days, due to challenges against Lu Yiye, the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance lost over a hundred 9th Heaven cultivators, a large number of them physique cultivators!

Yet even with such a high-intensity challenge, they could see no hope of defeating Lu Ye. To challenge him again would be to court death.

It was not until this moment that the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance cultivators realized, even though their previous actions had some effect and ousted Lu Yiye from the Spirit Stream Ranking, what did it truly mean?

Being unable to kill him, merely driving him out of the rankings, seemed to be no significant loss to him.

Upon this realization, it suddenly felt like the more than a hundred people that Lu Yiye had killed during the past two days had all died in vain...

How utterly tragic!

Currently, Lu Ye's rank in the standings was at the very end, in the hundredth position, which was just as conspicuous as being first.

He didn't rush to climb to a higher rank but instead took out those twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire.

He had been delayed for two days and finally had time to deal with this matter.

Activating the Talent Tree, he devoured the Earth's Core Fires one by one. Lu Ye watched the dozen or so symmetric leaves tensely, calculating the progress of their burning.

It took a full eighteen portions of Earth's Core Fire before those leaves suddenly all ignited.

Lu Ye's tense mood relaxed.

After devouring the remaining two portions of Earth's Core Fire, Lu Ye then focused his mind on those dozen leaves.

Boom...

His mind slightly shuddered, his consciousness dramatically dispersed, giving rise to a sensation akin to his psyche leaving his body. Then, a vast and complex flood of information uncontrollably surged into his mind, bringing with it indescribable agony. Lu Ye's face suddenly turned pale.

However, he did not pass out.

Perhaps it was because he had previously withstood the powerful impact of the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, or perhaps his psyche was resilient enough. This time, the impact did not render him unconscious.

Lu Ye wished he could have passed out to avoid enduring this unbearable pain.

After a long while, he slowly recovered, shaking his head slightly. It felt as though his whole brain was shaking, almost as if it would fall out of his head. In such a state, the power he could muster was significantly reduced. Regrettably, no one from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge dared to challenge him anymore by then.

They were all intimidated.

Closing his eyes and concentrating, he digested the vast and complex information.

Lu Ye's expression gradually turned joyful.

Having the experience with the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, when he first saw those symmetric leaves, he thought they looked like a pair of wings. That's why he was so eager to verify it and even went so far as to swindle twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire from Bai Lan.

As it turned out, he was right.

These newly appeared spirit runes were indeed the Wings he had obtained before!

Before the Spirit Stream Defense Battle, Madam Yun had bestowed wings rune tattoos on his and Hua Ci's backs. They functioned until recently, in the Land of Fiery Flames, where they finally lost their effect. Many times they had greatly aided Lu Ye, often allowing him to escape certain death.

After those runes lost their effect, Lu Ye missed them greatly, especially during the times he was being chased by numerous cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

If he had the wings rune tattoo by his side, his speed would undoubtedly be faster, and his movements more agile, preventing him from being so embarrassingly cornered.

But even with Madam Yun's involvement, the cost of bestowing wings rune tattoos was enormous, needing the Essence Blood of a big avian demon. The last materials used were prepared by the sect master, and Lu Ye had planned to accumulate more merit to check the Heaven's Augury treasure vault

for suitable big demon blood for sale, hoping to request Madam Yun to bestow him with another wings rune tattoo.

Now that seemed unnecessary.

Lu Ye had mastered these spirit runes himself, able to activate them at any time, undoubtedly better than the time-restricted Tattoos.

He just didn't know what the consumption would be like.

With that thought, Lu Ye flashed out of the wooden hut and onto an open field.

With a slight shift of thought, spirit force surged around him, firelight flowed behind him, and in an instant, a pair of fiery red wings, spanning more than three Zhang, explosively unfolded.

Turning his head to look, these wings, built on the basis of his own spirit force, were undoubtedly more majestic and imposing than the previous wings rune tattoos.

The consumption seemed to be even greater!

Lu Ye thought for a moment and slightly retracted some spirit force. The fiery red wings on his back also shrank a bit.

The next instant, his entire body transformed into a mass of firelight and soared into the sky, flapping his wings and flying.

He did not fly out of the range covered by the toxic barrier, so he didn't fly very high. The fiery red figure passed through the area, stirring up the toxic mist and barriers.

For a full hour, the fiery red figure descended from the sky and explosively landed in front of the wooden hut. Lu Ye crouched down, the spirit force flowing in his wings gradually retracting.

After this test, Lu Ye gained a deeper understanding of these spirit runes.

The consumption was higher than adding flying to Flying Spirit Artifacts, even though he had tried hard to reduce the size of the wings. This kind of consumption was inevitable.

However, compared to weapon control-flying, using the Wings was undoubtedly more agile, and the speed was also faster.

Previously, when he slaughtered his way out of Ten Thousand Poisons Forest and was chased by a large group of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, if he had had the wings spirit runes on him, he would have left those fellows far behind without a trace.

It could be said that with the wings spirit runes, as long as Lu Ye had ample spirit force, he no longer needed to worry about being chased in the future.

Chapter 399 It's All His Fault

...

Cultivators in the Spirit Stream Realm can only fly using Flying Spirit Artifacts, but once they reach the Cloud River Realm, they're able to fly through the air using their bodies alone.

The two concepts are different, one involves wielding a Flying Spirit Artifact and being carried by it, while the other relies on the physical body to fly directly.

Although Lu Ye is currently relying on wings spirit runes, he can somewhat be said to experience the benefits of flying through the air in advance.

Of course, that doesn't mean cultivators no longer need Flying Spirit Artifacts after reaching the Cloud River Realm, as flying with artifacts consumes less energy. Moreover, some Flying Spirit Artifacts can be fitted with Spirit Stones and other consumables to replace the cultivator's own spirit force.

Especially those large Flying Spirit Artifacts, which are generally driven by the power of Spirit Stones and Formations, are hard to control solely with a cultivator's own spirit force.

After acquiring the wings spirit runes, Lu Ye was in high spirits, and considering the intensity of the battles he had fought over the past few days, he decided to rest for a day.

The Spirit Stream battlefield was unusually calm for a day, with no significant changes on the Spirit Stream Ranking and not too many disturbances on the battlefield.

There was a time when the vast battlefield could remain undisturbed simply because one man lay quiet. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators sadly realized that as long as Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer didn't stir up trouble, everything was rather peaceful.

However, this calm was shattered after just one day.

A day later, Lu Ye began to make his move on the ranking.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, his rank climbed several places every few breaths. All the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators he challenged rejected him without exception.

It might be embarrassing, but it was better than losing their lives!

After so many 9th Heaven cultivators had been killed by him, those on the lower ranks of the Spirit Stream Ranking from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had no confidence in surviving against Lu Ye.

The last time he climbed the ranking, Lu Ye specifically targeted cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, not letting any of them ahead of him off the hook.

This time was different. In the rankings between fiftieth and eightieth place, almost all belonged to the Haotian Alliance, and only after the eightieth rank did a small number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators appear.

If Lu Ye wanted to climb to a higher position on the Spirit Stream Ranking, he would have to challenge some Haotian Alliance cultivators.

There was no choice in the matter, but fortunately, those Haotian Alliance cultivators were understanding about it.

In just half a Shichen, Lu Ye once again fought his way back into the top fifty of the Spirit Stream Ranking — an unprecedented speed for climbing the ranks.

By then, there were many targets for him to choose from. Like before, Lu Ye specifically sought out cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp to challenge one after another.

It must be said, even if Lu Ye's previous combat achievements were astounding, those ranked in the top fifty still had their own pride, so at first, no one declined his challenges, and they all accepted gleefully.

Because they all had a reason to be proud of themselves!

Out of the countless Spirit Stream Realm cultivators on the vast battlefield, being in the top fifty meant their strength certainly wouldn't be weak.

Lu Ye did not deal with these people as he had with Bai Lan. First, he wasn't in such an urgent need of Earth's Core Fire at the moment; second, he had already accumulated quite a bit of merit, which he could use to purchase Earth's Core Fire if he needed it; and third, to do so would be a waste of time.

Ten days had passed since he began his assault on the Spirit Stream Ranking, and he needed to reach his limit position as soon as possible. That way, when Heaven's Augury bestowed rewards, he could get more benefits.

If he used the same method as with Bai Lan against these people, not to mention whether he could swindle any advantages, even if he succeeded, the cost would outweigh the benefits.

Any one of them, if handled properly, could consume days of his time.

Therefore, he had only one objective now: climb the ranks!

Since he was the one initiating the challenges every time, the choice of terrain was left to others. But even if those people chose terrains that suited themselves, they couldn't escape death.

After Lu Ye triumphed in three battles, killing his opponents in all of them, even those ranked in the top fifty sensed trouble brewing.

They had previously thought that it was the cultivators ranked after fiftieth who were too weak to even surrender against Lu Ye. But now it seemed that it wasn't a question of their strength, but rather that Lu Yiye had some special method that prevented the challenged from surrendering.

The precondition for accepting Lu Ye's challenge was that they could live if they couldn't win. If death was certain, then they needed to weigh their options carefully. Nobody was foolhardy enough to court death intentionally.

Unfortunately, they couldn't figure out what special technique Lu Yiye was using.

So far, Bai Lan of the Runyu Sect was the only surviving example among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had encountered Lu Ye in the combat field.

There had been queries to Bai Lan for information about Lu Ye before, and now there were even more. However, Bai Lan couldn't provide a clear answer; her battle with Lu Ye had been completely one-sided, to the point where her top-grade spirit artifact's defenses had almost been breached.

Considering the circumstances of that fight, Bai Lan clearly had the opportunity to surrender, so it stood to reason that Lu Yiye must have some technique he didn't use on her.

This caused a lot of speculation among the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, wondering if perhaps Lu Yiye was the sort to be merciful to women. Otherwise, why treat Bai Lan so differently?

But it wasn't as if there were no beautiful women on the Spirit Stream Ranking besides Bai Lan, and all except for her had been killed by him. Why was Bai Lan able to live?

When compared with the other fallen female cultivators, the only advantage Bai Lan had was her proud and ample "assets."

Suddenly, it seemed many understood the truth...

It is worth mentioning that since Lu Yiye began climbing the ranks, Bai Lan had also started making her move on the ranking. However, in comparison, the rate of advancement between the two was not on the same level. After all, Lu Ye had climbed from one hundredth to fiftieth without a single battle, advancing smoothly as his challengers rejected matches outright.

Bai Lan didn't have the same intimidating presence, so climbing ranks through battle after battle naturally couldn't achieve the same swift pace.

...

She already had the foundation of ranking forty-eight, so if she went all out, her final ranking shouldn't end up too bad.

In the wooden hut, Lu Ye's mind was connected to the Spirit Stream Ranking as he challenged one after another. After he had consecutively defeated three strong competitors ranked in the top fifty, the following challenges were unanimously declined by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, which caused his ranking to soar to the thirty-sixth position in no time.

The next target he had to challenge was Zhuo Jianchen, who was ranked thirty-fourth.

The name sounded somewhat familiar. Lu Ye checked his sect, and—it was Runyu Sect.

He suddenly remembered—wasn't this the brother who had boldly declared he would wait for him a few days ago? It seemed he was Bai Lan's senior fellow disciple.

After issuing the challenge, sure enough, the other party accepted, and Lu Ye waited in silence.

Within Runyu Sect, Bai Lan looked at the suppressed Zhuo Jianchen, "Senior Brother, has Lu Yiye challenged you?"

"Yes."

"You..."

"I accepted!"

"Senior Brother, wouldn't it be better to refuse?"

Zhuo Jianchen suddenly turned his head, "Why refuse? What are you afraid of?"

Bai Lan was somewhat dazed, "What?" She didn't understand why her senior brother was acting so strangely today; the usually gentle and refined brother now gave off an extremely gloomy feeling.

"Junior Sister, I ask you, why did that Lu Yiye only spare you?" Zhuo Jianchen pressed down the frustration in his heart and asked solemnly.

"He didn't spare me ah... he extorted twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire from me. That's worth four thousand points of merit!"

Zhuo Jianchen said, "All the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge Fellow Daoists who accepted his challenge have died, only you are alive. Do you think he was merely after those twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire from you?"

Bai Lan also sensed something was amiss at this point and looked at Zhuo Jianchen in astonishment, "Senior Brother, what are you trying to say?"

"I don't want to say anything; it's just that I've heard some things."

How could Zhuo Jianchen not care about the rumors flying about outside? At first, he didn't think much of it, but recalling the state his junior sister returned in after her fight with Lu Yiye, he couldn't help his wild thoughts from running.

A few days ago, when his junior sister returned from the combat field, she was extremely pale, as if she had suffered some great humiliation.

Back at their quarters, the way many junior brothers and sisters looked at him seemed somewhat off.

Bai Lan's face suddenly turned pale. She had naturally heard the rumors outside, but how could such rumors be taken seriously?

"Senior Brother, you believe..."

"I don't know if I should believe!" Zhuo Jianchen cut off Bai Lan, "So, I will ask him face to face."

"You can't go, Senior Brother. So many people have died," Bai Lan expressed her fear and concern.

However, the more fearful and concerned she appeared, the deeper the thorn in Zhuo Jianchen's heart pricked, the more he wanted to seek out Lu Ye for answers.

Without clarifying this matter, he would never have peace of mind.

"Alright! I need to prepare for this fight." Zhuo Jianchen turned around, presenting his back to Bai Lan, and with a sweeping motion of his large sleeve, the door to the room closed.

Bai Lan stood there dazedly, her eyes void of focus, truly unable to understand how things had developed to this stage.

Lu Yiye... it was all this guy's fault!

Clenching her teeth with resentment, Bai Lan wished she could rip that man into ten thousand pieces. Yet, whenever the image of that person came to mind, she couldn't help but shudder.

She pounded the door, yelling, "Senior Brother, listen to me."

But there was simply no response.

Having chosen the terrain of the combat field, the scenery before Zhuo Jianchen began to change.

Inside a combat field of moderate size, the silhouettes of Lu Ye and Zhuo Jianchen appeared simultaneously. Yiyi immediately submerged herself underground as usual to search for the enemy's trail, while Amber crouched unmoving on Lu Ye's shoulder, resembling a decorative item.

Before Lu Ye had a chance to survey his surroundings, a fierce shout came from ahead, "Lu Yiye, come out and face me!"

He looked up to see a sword light floating in mid-air ahead, with a figure standing on it, emanating an elegant sense of floating above the ground.

Around this person hovered several sword lights, each one a flying sword. From the looks of it, there was no doubt he was a sword cultivator!

For some reason, he appeared furious, and Lu Ye suspected it had to do with his junior sister being conned out of twenty portions of Earth's Core Fire.

With so many having declined his challenge before, and only this person accepted, it seemed that he had enough confidence in his own strength and was also quite headstrong.

Lu Ye liked such people!

Chapter 400 A Bit Disappointed

In the combat field, Lu Ye summoned his spirit ark and, through weapon control, rose to a position level with Zhuo Jianchen, several dozen zhang apart.

Even though his ascent through the ranking had been extremely smooth along the way, Lu Ye never underestimated his opponents, especially since his current opponent was very likely a sword cultivator!

The fact that the other party was ranked thirty-second without a doubt showed that he was quite capable.

As their eyes met, Zhuo Jianchen was furious and demanded sharply, "Lu Yiye, what excessive things have you done to my junior sister?"

Lu Ye pondered, recalling how he had knocked Bai Lan all the way from the 48th to the 97th position on the Spirit Stream Ranking, and extorted her for Earth's Core Fire worth four thousand merit points. Perhaps that was a tad too excessive?

But then again, that woman should thank him for not killing her, since if it weren't for his urgent need for Earth's Core Fire, she would already be dead.

Compared to one's life, what does a drop in the Spirit Stream Ranking or the loss of some possessions amount to?

A junior sister being bullied, and a senior brother stepping forward to take up her cause—it was understandable.

Lu Ye's silence undoubtedly fueled Zhuo Jianchen's rage even more. His face turned somewhat blue with anger as he gritted his teeth and said, "Good, since you have nothing to say, go to your death!"

As his words fell, 7th Dao materialized beside Zhuo Jianchen. Flying swords of varying lengths shone with sword light and the sound of slicing through the air erupted as the sword light streaked towards Lu Ye, arriving in an instant.

The speed and lethality of a sword cultivator's flying sword were extremely fast and powerful, which was why sword cultivators were able to slay enemies above their own rank.

Lu Ye's understanding of sword cultivators' methods wasn't comprehensive, but the fact that Zhuo Jianchen could control 7th Dao flying swords showed that his mental power was much stronger than that of average cultivators; otherwise, it would be impossible for him to control so many flying swords at once.

Compared to Yooi Lianzhou, the gap was still significant. According to Lu Ye's knowledge, Yooi Lianzhou's current limit in Sword Control was 20th Dao, almost three times that of Zhuo Jianchen.

Comparing with Li Baxian was even more out of the question. In the Spirit Stream Realm, Li Baxian's record of controlling flying swords was unbreakable. One reason was his natural talent in this area and another was the excessively long time he had stayed in the Spirit Stream Realm.

Unable to advance his cultivation for over a decade, he had continuously strengthened his psyche, which allowed him to control 100th Dao flying swords.

It could be said that with such a foundation to advance to the Cloud River Realm, Li Baxian's starting point in the Cloud River Realm was much higher than the average person.

As the 7th Dao flying swords came attacking, Lu Ye's supplies box at his waist buzzed and yi-yi streams of light met the attack. In an instant, in the mid-air where the two were, streams of light continuously flickered, and the sounds of clinking and clanging were incessant, accompanied occasionally by sparks flying in all directions.

On the path of Weapon Control, Lu Ye had strong confidence. After all, his psyche was strong, and a strong psyche meant powerful mental strength, which greatly enhanced his ability to control Spiritual Artifacts and manipulate spirit force.

Looking over the entire Spirit Stream battlefield, there was likely no one with a stronger psyche than his, and there should also be very few whose Weapon Control Technique surpassed his, and that definitely did not include Zhuo Jianchen.

In the mid-air where both individuals were, the weapons clashed endlessly in their control. The artifacts, as if possessing their own lives, fought each other fiercely.

But in just a moment, Zhuo Jianchen's flying swords fell into a disadvantage, completely suppressed by Lu Ye.

Not only did Lu Ye have a numerical advantage in terms of weapons, but he could also apply various spirit runes to his weapons, something Zhuo Jianchen couldn't match.

Zhuo Jianchen noticed something was wrong when his 7th Dao flying swords were pressured to approach him. His spirit force surged around him, and in a flash, the already disordered flying swords gathered together, intertwining with each other, and shot out like spinning tops.

Along the way, all of Lu Ye's controlling artifacts were knocked away.

Sword Array! Lu Ye's eyebrows raised. Although he wasn't very familiar with sword cultivators' methods, he had certainly heard of the Sword Array.

Formations composed of multiple cultivators typically required at least three people, but powerful sword cultivators could form an array by themselves because they could control multiple flying swords.

A Sword Array composed of 7th Dao flying swords was not to be underestimated. With a whistling sword sound and a thunderous momentum, it instantly attacked in front of Lu Ye.

Lu Ye's controlled artifacts were knocked away, and there was no time for them to come to his aid.

Just as the Sword Array reached Lu Ye, the Boulder Mountain Saber roared out of its sheath. A fiery red saber light slashed down, a strong impact swept from the front, accompanied by a bone-chilling Sword Intent.

On the ground, Yiyi looked up and saw Lu Ye holding the Boulder Mountain Saber in front of him. The saber confronted the buzzing Sword Array, pushing against his body, unable to stop retreating, while

behind the Sword Array, Zhuo Jianchen merged with the sword light, becoming one with his sword, and striking with it!

Yiyi watched with a calm expression and showed no intention of intervening.

Challenging the Spirit Stream Ranking was not only a way for Lu Ye to reach his limit in the shortest time possible but was also a means of tempering himself.

Facing off against powerful experts from various schools, fighting life and death battles—nothing could accelerate the growth of one's strength faster than this.

The opponents he had encountered before were too weak to withstand a single blow, and now that there was finally someone formidable, why would Yiyi step in and interfere?

Nine streams of light from the controlled weapons attacked from the left and right, and Zhuo Jianchen, merged with the sword light, felt murderous intent the first moment and swiftly deflected the approaching weapons with his Longsword points. However, the massive impact made his wrist go numb, and he was secretly shocked by Lu Yiyi, a combat cultivator, being so impressively fast and powerful with his weapon control.

Distracted here, the Sword Array developed flaws.

Lu Ye thrust forward with his saber, piercing the Boulder Mountain Saber right through the flaws in the Sword Array. Fierce spirit force burst forth, immediately disintegrating the unified Sword Array, which broke into streaks of light shooting in all directions.

Lu Ye's form halted, and the next moment, he pounced toward Zhuo Jianchen like a tiger descending the mountain.

Blades clashed, emitting a piercing screech, and in midair, the figures of the two men faced each other at a distance of less than ten feet, one with eyes ablaze as if harboring an irreconcilable hatred for the other, while the other remained expressionless.

"I will kill you!" Zhuo Jianchen gritted his teeth and growled.

Before the battle began, he had actually been quite worried because so far, none of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators who had accepted Lu Ye's challenge had met with a good end. But after the fight truly commenced, he realized that everyone had overestimated Lu Yiye. Indeed, the guy did have some strength—otherwise, he wouldn't have been qualified to challenge him—but that was all there was to it!

He even felt that with some effort, he could surpass his opponent.

If that were the case, he would surely bring glory to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and his sect!

In the midst of his rage, his longsword flickered continuously, a flurry of sword flowers enveloping Lu Ye.

Bright sword light cleaved the heavens, and the myriad sword flowers dissipated into nothingness.

Zhuo Jianchen felt a chill at his chest and instinctively took a few steps back, looking at Lu Ye doubtfully before glancing down at his own chest.

A gash with flesh turned outwards had appeared on his chest.

He hadn't even reacted to the opponent's slash just now—it was too fast.

"You..." Zhuo Jianchen suddenly began to doubt his life. He had thought the other man was nothing special, but then the other's violent outburst made him realize a serious problem.

Was what he had seen before really all of this guy's strength?

He hadn't considered it before, mainly because he hadn't expected anyone to hold back during the challenge of the Spirit Stream Ranking.

As he spoke, a figure flashed before him. Lu Ye, who had been more than ten feet away, was now up close. Faced with the slash coming at him, Zhuo Jianchen could only raise his sword to block.

An unstoppable force swept down from above, and Zhuo Jianchen, along with the flying spirit artifact he stood on, plummeted to the ground like a meteorite falling from the sky.

With a thunderous crash, dust billowed.

Zhuo Jianchen struggled to his feet, blood spilling from the corner of his mouth, and felt as though his bones were about to fall apart. His eyes were filled with disbelief, as it dawned on him that he couldn't even withstand a single slash from Lu Ye, and the explosive power that Lu Ye had suddenly unleashed was shockingly terrifying.

At his feet lay his flying spirit artifact, which, after such an impact, was now nearly wrecked, as flying spirit artifacts themselves didn't have much protective strength.

He staggered a few steps, looked up, but saw no trace of Lu Ye. On guard, he heard footsteps nearby and turned to see Lu Ye, holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, walking steadily towards him.

The opponent's pace was not fast, yet it carried with it an overwhelming pressure that weighed upon Zhuo Jianchen's chest, making it difficult to breathe.

Zhuo Jianchen raised his sword and pointed it at Lu Ye, shouting fiercely, "Why didn't you go all out from the start!"

Only now did he understand that Lu Yiye hadn't been using his full strength at the beginning, giving him the false impression that "I can win against this man if I try hard enough."

What was this? Was it not enough to humiliate his junior sister; did he have to humiliate him as well?

Hearing Zhuo Jianchen's words, Lu Ye didn't want to respond, but after thinking it over, he said, "I wanted to see the strength of someone around the 30th rank."

In the previous several battles, he hadn't had the chance to fight, as those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators had outright refused him, which meant he only knew the approximate strength of cultivators ranked around the 50th place. Those ranked 40th, he had no clue about.

Since Zhuo Jianchen had finally accepted his challenge, naturally, he had to hold back a little.

"And the result?"

"A bit disappointing!"

Zhuo Jianchen's eyelid twitched violently at the word, and just as he was about to say something more, he saw Lu Ye engulfed in surging spirit force, his form rapidly charging toward him.

"I..."

"Roar!" Amid the tiger's roar, Zhuo Jianchen only managed to spit out a single word before his mind felt as if it were struck by a heavy hammer, plunging into darkness.

But he was, after all, a sword cultivator capable of Sword Control at the 7th Dao, which undoubtedly meant his psyche was stronger than that of average Spirit Stream Realm cultivators, so the roar's effect on him was weaker than on others.

"...I concede!" The moment Zhuo Jianchen regained consciousness, he blurted out those two words, but by then, Lu Ye's figure was gone, leaving only the sound of sheathing a sword behind him.

Zhuo Jianchen breathed out lightly, gazing up at the clouds drifting across the sky, and muttered to himself, "So that's how it is!"

That was the reason why those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge Fellow Daoists who accepted the challenge never got the chance to concede...

Although he had managed to say it, he was still too late.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, the name at the 34th position trembled slightly before dissipating into nothingness, to be replaced by the name of Lu Yiye from Righteous Blood Sect.