

Humanity 401

Chapter 401 Are You That Lu Yiye?

Ranked thirty-fourth in the Spirit Stream Ranking, Zhuo Jianchen of the Runyu Sect fell to the saber after being challenged by Lu Yiye.

The news spread across the entire battlefield and throughout the Nine Provinces as if it had wings.

Everyone was shocked!

Previously, when Lu Ye was climbing the ranking, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators ranked after the fiftieth place all perished without a single survivor. It could be explained that Lu Yiye was simply too powerful, possessing the ability to kill those people in an instant, so they couldn't even shout out their surrender.

But now what?

Zhuo Jianchen, ranked thirty-fourth, certainly couldn't be that weak. How could he not even have the chance to surrender, especially since he was a sword cultivator?

It couldn't possibly be that Zhuo Jianchen fought Lu Yiye to the death. No one would be that foolish.

Countless people continued to watch closely, everyone curious where Lu Ye's limit was. Could he reach the top twenty? The top ten? Or could he even climb to the top of the ranking?

Especially for those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators ranked above Lu Ye on the Spirit Stream Ranking, each one of them felt the pressure weighing on them like a mountain.

After slaying Zhuo Jianchen, the name of Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect swiftly rose again. In less than the time it took to drink half a cup of tea, he advanced directly from thirty-fourth to the twentieth rank!

Among the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators in between, any who were challenged by him outright refused. Zhuo Jianchen had been killed by Lu Ye, and they understood they weren't much stronger than Zhuo Jianchen, so naturally, they wouldn't risk accepting the challenge.

However, climbing the Spirit Stream Ranking couldn't possibly go smoothly all the time. The stronger the cultivators ranked higher up, the prouder they were. Most of them had the confidence that "just because others failed, doesn't mean I will."

So when Lu Ye chose to challenge the one ranked seventeenth, the other party decisively accepted the fight.

Moreover, they didn't make Lu Ye wait long. Ten breaths after Lu Ye issued the challenge and the other party accepted, the two appeared in the combat field.

From this alone, one could see that the other party must have been waiting for Lu Ye's challenge all along, hence they were fully prepared.

This particular combat field was exactly the kind Lu Ye favored the most. The area wasn't large, sparing him the effort to search for the enemy's trace, which suited close-quarters combat.

Looking up, the opponent was a burly man standing atop the combat arena like a tower, his skin shining with a bronzed hue, his blood Qi abundant, muscles bulging all over his body.

There was no doubt this was a physique cultivator.

What particularly caught Lu Ye's attention was that this fellow had two curved horns on his forehead, and that wasn't all. The man was bare-chested, and his chest, waist, and arms were all covered with brightly colored tattoos.

Personality-Reveal Rune Tattoo?

There were countless cultivators in the Nine Provinces, each with their own character—some reserved and restrained, others enthusiastic and unrestrained, and then there were those like the physique cultivator before him, who liked to show off and boast.

These Personality-Reveal Rune Tattoos were enough to show that the opponent was not to be trifled with. If they met a slightly weaker cultivator, just the sight of these rune tattoos could cause immense psychological pressure, as no one knew what miraculous effects those tattoos could unleash.

Looking at the curved horns on the opponent's forehead, Lu Ye surmised that the man must be a demon cultivator!

Most demon cultivators were naturally endowed with vigorous blood Qi, ideally suited for being physique cultivators. The opponent's arms were also fitted with arm guards, and his fists were adorned with spiked gloves—both the arm guards and the gloves were clearly high-quality Spiritual Artifacts.

It was Lu Ye's first time encountering a physique cultivator who didn't wield shield-type Spiritual Artifacts, and he immediately concluded that this guy... was not easy to kill!

Such a physique cultivator didn't prioritize defense but, like a combat cultivator, leaned toward offense. Coupled with their tough skin and flesh, they were difficult to deal with.

"Are you that Lu Yiye?" the demon cultivator called out loudly.

The supplies box on Lu Ye's waist trembled, and a streak of Liu Guang greeted the opponent. In an instant, weapon control approached up close. The demon cultivator simply raised a hand to wave off the attack, and with a clang, knocked Lu Ye's weapon control aside.

However, after deflecting one attack came the second, followed quickly by the third...

The continuous clinking sounds echoed as the demon beast waved his arms non-stop, using the arm guards to deflect each wave of weapon control. In a short lapse of time, he became furious, "This is too much! Do you dare to come over here?"

Lu Ye remained expressionless, focused solely on attacking with weapon control. Occasionally, a burst of spirit light exploded from the weapons, with various types of spirit runes enhancing their power, making the demon cultivator overwhelmed by the assault.

He seemed even more enraged, attempting several times to break through the weapon control restraint to kill Lu Ye but was always forced back.

Despite his size, the guy was extremely agile. Of the nine weapon control attacks executed by Lu Ye, not a single one managed to wound him.

Furthermore, Lu Ye keenly noticed that although the fellow seemed to be extremely angry, his eyes were steady. His so-called towering rage was nothing more than a facade.

"Wah, you are making me so angry, I'm going to kill you!"

The demon cultivator bellowed as he was constantly entangled by the stream of illuminating weapon control attacks. Suddenly, a tattoo on his chest shone brightly, and an unidentified blood-red beast head emerged, roaring furiously towards the front.

The roar was so loud it was deafening, and Lu Ye's nine weapon control attacks were thrown into disarray.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the demon cultivator took large strides, rumbling towards Lu Ye like a mountain, quickly closing the distance, and threw a punch at him.

Lu Ye's figure leapt up, nimbly dodging the attack. Midair, he drew his Boulder Mountain Saber and slashed towards the back of his opponent's neck.

However, just at that moment, the seemingly clumsy figure turned around with unimaginable speed. The fist, wearing a boxing glove, met the Boulder Mountain Saber, and at the same time, the other hand opened, aimed at Lu Ye's body. Spirit force churned violently in the palm, and a small disc formed of spirit force appeared, a clear sign that a spell was about to be cast!

No one would have expected such a burly, rough-tempered physique cultivator to also be skilled in the ways of a magic cultivator, and judging by the speed of the opponent's spell casting, his talent in magic was certainly not low.

A playful expression appeared in the corner of the demon cultivator's eye.

It seemed a reckless strike on the surface, exposing his own weaknesses, but it was actually a trap to lure the enemy. This move of his had caught many Haotian Alliance cultivators off guard and led to their defeat.

With a bang, the Boulder Mountain Saber collided with the opponent's iron fist.

In that instant, the demon cultivator's expression tightened, feeling as if a mountain was pressing on his shoulders, his legs bending almost to the point of collapsing to the ground.

At the same time, Lu Ye was sent flying backward, the force from the opponent's punch was incredibly strong.

While squatting down, the demon cultivator immediately adjusted his center of gravity, his other hand ready with a spell aimed at Lu Ye's retreating figure. A mix of spirit force and blood Qi energy formed an attack that struck Lu Ye squarely in the chest.

This blow sent Lu Ye hurtling to the edge of the combat arena, where he slid down slowly.

The immense pressure on his shoulders vanished, and the demon cultivator stood up, glancing at Lu Ye who was unharmed and had steadied himself again, causing a twitch in his eye.

He had long heard that Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect could activate a protective spirit rune during combat. He had only heard of it before, but today he witnessed it with his own eyes.

At that moment, his spell did indeed hit Lu Ye, but he clearly saw a spirit rune barrier suddenly appear and block his attack, which was why Lu Ye, although appearing disheveled, was actually unharmed.

From several dozen feet away, the demon cultivator bared a smile, "It's only natural for a physique cultivator to be proficient in a few magic and spells, isn't it?"

Lu Ye silently nodded, holding his saber, eyes cast downward as he took step by step towards the demon cultivator.

The figure dozens of feet away suddenly blurred, leaving a trail of afterimages. The demon cultivator's complexion changed greatly, as he had never seen such baffling speed in the Spirit Stream Realm!

In a panic, he used his Ocular Power, trying to discern Lu Ye's form. As a flash of saber light passed by, he hurriedly raised his arms to protect himself. No attack came, but a strong wave of spirit force vibrated from behind.

He turned around hastily, swinging an arm out.

With a clang, the Boulder Mountain Saber struck the guard on his arm, sparks flying, and that mountainous pressure returned. The demon cultivator forcefully steadied himself. Before he could stand straight, a scorching force engulfed him. In his field of vision, a breathtakingly beautiful Fire Phoenix charged towards him. Before it even reached him, the demon cultivator felt an unbearable heat.

Indeed, this Lu Yiye was also proficient in magic!

Moreover, the opponent's spellcasting speed and power were even more formidable than his own.

The fire blazed into the sky, enveloping the demon cultivator. A powerful burst of blood Qi energy tore the Fire Phoenix apart, revealing the demon cultivator's muscular figure.

However, before he could grasp the situation around him, another slash came down. He rushed to block it. As soon as he fended off the saber, the Fire Phoenix engulfed him once more.

One saber strike, one spell, one saber strike, one spell...

It seemed endless.

As far as the eye could see, the demon cultivator's figure kept standing and squatting, time and again enduring attacks from the Boulder Mountain Saber and harassment by the Fire Phoenix Technique.

He wanted to flee, but Lu Ye gave him no chance to escape.

The demon cultivator was greatly annoyed. Although his physique was strong enough, facing such an unreasonable opponent was too much for him to bear. In frustration, he thought that as a physique cultivator, he should stick to physique techniques instead of toying with others using spells; it seemed he had now truly provoked Lu Yiye.

He felt he was done for!

With a rustling sound...

As the sound echoed, a chill ran through the demon cultivator's veins. The arm guard on his wrist was ruthlessly shattered by the opponent's saber, prompting him to quickly activate the strength of the spirit rune at his chest. As the roar of a beast resounded, a powerful burst spread in all directions.

Seizing the opportunity, he hurriedly put distance between them, gasping for breath.

On the combat arena, two figures stood ten feet apart. The demon cultivator was completely hairless, all his body hair having been burnt off.

Lu Ye's gaze passed over his abdomen and arms... The tattoos in those two places didn't seem quite right...

"Are they just for show, huh?" The demon cultivator said angrily, feeling embarrassed, "What's there to gawk at?"

The tattoos on his body were just decorations, except for the real rune tattoo on his chest. These tattoos could easily exert psychological pressure on others, making them seem no different from authentic rune tattoos; now exposed, they made it easy to intimidate an opponent.

Chapter 402 Challenging the Spectral Shadow

Lu Ye had not exerted his full strength before, first because he was wary of the unknown rune tattoos that the opponent might have, and second because he wanted to test the strength of the cultivators ranked in the top twenty. However, now that the opponent's depth had been probed, and it was clear that those rune tattoos were fake, there was no longer any need for caution.

The figure crouched slightly, the long saber slanting as he stood ready, supported by the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, he surged forward like thunder.

It seemed that the demon cultivator sensed Lu Ye's intent to kill and hastily began to say, "I..."

"Roar!" The previously silent Amber roared out, yet the usually unbeatable Tiger Roar Intimidation failed to take effect this time.

The demon cultivator only suffered a very brief impact before returning to normal, swiftly shouting out the words of surrender.

Lu Ye had already charged in front of him, brushing past, with the Double-Sharpness Spirit Runes bolstering his Boulder Mountain Saber as it cut across the demon cultivator's neck.

But even before this, an invisible protective barrier had enshrouded the demon cultivator from head to toe, and the blade failed to inflict any harm.

That was the protection of Heaven's Augury!

The demon cultivator touched his neck in terror, his figure quickly fading as he promptly left the combat field.

"He got away?" Yiyi revealed herself.

Lu Ye nodded slightly.

In fact, after the battle with Zhuo Jianchen, he had already realized this problem: the higher the ranking of the cultivator, the stronger their resistance to Amber's roar, and the harder they were to kill.

Zhuo Jianchen was actually only a step slower. The moment after Lu Ye's saber had passed over his head, was when he managed to yell out his surrender.

This demon cultivator was ranked seventeenth, a full seventeen ranks above Zhuo Jianchen, and naturally stronger. He hadn't completely blocked Amber's roar, but the impact was too minor.

"Should I help in the next fight?" Yiyi asked.

"Good!"

Having been challenging the Spirit Stream Ranking for some days, Lu Ye had a clear assessment of his own strength. With his current power, defeating those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators was not too difficult, but advancing further and attempting to kill them would not be easy.

Yiyi's assistance at the right moment would undoubtedly be a safeguard.

Returning to the cabin, Lu Ye took a short rest before beginning the next challenge!

Meanwhile, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge finally understood the source of Lu Ye's ability to wreak havoc: the beast pet by his side could assault the psyche with its roar, which was why previously challenged Ten Thousand Demons Ridge powerhouses didn't even have a chance to admit defeat.

It wasn't until the demon cultivator, who was originally ranked seventeenth, managed to survive by luck under Lu Yiye's hand and shared this crucial intelligence.

With the experience of that demon cultivator, those of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge who were ranked before him became fearless, all confident that they were no less capable than he. If that demon cultivator could survive under Lu Yiye's hand, they naturally thought they could as well.

However, the results took everyone by surprise.

In the subsequent challenges, not one of the three Ten Thousand Demons Ridge powerhouses ranked sixteenth, fourteenth, and eleventh was spared; all were slain on the Spirit Stream battlefield by Lu Yiye.

One must know that those ranked in these positions from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge generally came from 1st grade sects, and all had a high likelihood of advancing to the Divine Sea Realm in the future.

And just like that, Lu Ye killed them, causing the powerhouses of those few sects to clutch their hands in dismay and further intensifying Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's hatred towards Lu Yiye.

They couldn't understand how the seventeenth-ranked demon cultivator survived while those ranked higher all died.

After all, no living person on the combat field had seen Yiyi take action; all who had were now dead. With Yiyi cooperating in the shadows, using magic and spells at critical moments, even those Ten Thousand Demons Ridge powerhouses who could resist Amber's roar couldn't escape death.

Thus, the name of Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect rose high on the Spirit Stream Ranking at the eleventh position. Just one more step forward, and he would break into the top ten.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, fifty is a watershed, thirty is a watershed, and ten is yet another watershed. The gap in strength between cultivators is significant before and after each watershed.

If Lu Ye truly managed to enter the top ten of the Spirit Stream Ranking, it would mean that he was eligible to be among the strongest tier of the Spirit Stream Realm.

The last person to rank in the top ten of the Spirit Stream Ranking with 8th Heaven cultivation was Li Baxian!

However, Li Baxian was a special case; he originally had 9th Heaven cultivation, but his spiritual orifice was damaged, causing his cultivation to fall. This was different from Lu Yiye's situation. If Lu Yiye could truly enter the top ten, he would be genuinely, on the basis of 8th Heaven cultivation, counted among the strongest echelon of the Spirit Stream Realm.

But everyone knew that he wouldn't challenge the one ranked tenth, because that position belonged to the Haotian Alliance. His next target was undoubtedly the one ranked ninth, Spectral Shadow!

Everyone was watchful, eager to see if the powerhouses ranked in the top ten could stop Lu Yiye from advancing.

Yet, at this crucial moment, Lu Yiye suddenly stopped climbing the ranking, and for nearly half a day, there were no changes on the Spirit Stream Ranking. People sent messages to Spectral Shadow, who stated that he had not received any challenge.

This slightly relieved the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, but it also brought about more anxiety.

Lu Yiye obviously had not stopped his ranking challenge. The lack of activity at this time clearly indicated he was resting and adjusting, preparing to challenge the top ten in peak condition.

In fact, this was indeed the case. Since resuming the ranking challenge, Lu Ye had hardly rested at all.

The powerhouses in the top ten of the ranking represented the strongest tier within the Spirit Stream Realm's level, and naturally, he wanted to face them in his best state. The relative strength of cultivators was not just a matter of higher or lower realms, but also their condition during the fight and their responsive reactions.

In the small courtyard outside the wooden hut, Hua Ci had prepared many bizarre and strange dishes, which Lu Ye enjoyed without any reservations.

No matter what the ingredients of those dishes were, they were all incredibly delicious.

However, if one didn't have strong means of detoxification, it would be impossible to enjoy Hua Ci's hospitality.

After eating and drinking his fill, Lu Ye lay on a chair and suddenly thought of something. He turned his head to look at Hua Ci and asked, "Aren't you going to challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking?"

Although he didn't know Hua Ci's current strength or what kind of extraordinary methods she had for killing enemies, just from the fact that she had previously come here alone and killed so many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, Lu Ye knew that one shouldn't underestimate her strength.

If they were to face off, it's likely that one might not even know how they died. If he had to choose between Hua Ci and the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking, he would choose the latter without any hesitation.

Hua Ci certainly had the strength to challenge the ranking.

"No rush," Hua Ci casually replied while she and Yiyi cleaned up the dishes, "My cultivation is still a bit lacking, I'll wait until I've advanced to the 9th Heaven then consider it."

"How much more do you need?" Lu Ye asked casually.

"Twenty or thirty spiritual orifices?" Hua Ci pursed her lips and smiled, then turned and walked away.

Lu Ye's eye twitched.

He had noticed that since arriving in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Hua Ci's cultivation had been increasing at an unimaginable speed. His cultivation used to be higher than Hua Ci's, but now, even though they were both at the 8th Heaven cultivation, Hua Ci had opened more orifices than he had.

Even though he had been busy challenging the ranking and hadn't spent much time on cultivation recently, Lu Ye suspected that even if he were to focus purely on cultivation, he might not be able to catch up to her.

What kind of inheritance had this woman received?

After resting for a day and adjusting his condition to the best, Lu Ye connected his mind and spirit to the Spirit Stream Ranking and issued a challenge to Spectral Shadow, ranked ninth.

The opponent accepted the challenge, and a Heaven's Augury descended a moment later.

In a combat field about ten miles in diameter filled with towering trees and lush vegetation, Lu Ye found himself in a dense forest, terrain similar to the Fog-Shrouded Mountain, perfect for concealment.

The opponent's name was Spectral Shadow, presumably a ghost cultivator, so seeing this choice of terrain didn't surprise Lu Ye in the least.

Yiyi had already set off to search for traces of Spectral Shadow. Lu Ye stayed in place and chose a clean spot to sit cross-legged. He took out a few elixir pills and popped them into his mouth, then pulled a book out of his storage sack...

As time passed, even though Yiyi meticulously searched the entire combat field several times over, she found nothing.

Spectral Shadow seemed to have vanished into thin air.

As for Lu Ye, he continued to cultivate and read without encountering any attacks.

In his previous challenges, Lu Ye had encountered several ghost cultivators, all of whom first concealed themselves, then tried to ambush him by closing in when they saw an opportunity, in hopes of landing a killing blow in one strike.

The ghost cultivators who held such thoughts and put them into action generally died very quickly.

This time, the ghost cultivator seemed to be different. So well-concealed was he that not even Yiyi could find his tracks, nor did he make any rash moves to approach Lu Ye.

However, Lu Ye was certain that the opponent must be observing him from somewhere nearby, as his acute perception allowed him to sense that he seemed to be under surveillance.

As for exactly where the opponent was located... it was hard to pinpoint.

A few dozen yards away from where Lu Ye was seated, on a branch, Spectral Shadow clung like a ghostly shadow, quietly observing Lu Ye's figure.

In the combat field, his opponent was actually sitting as if at peace reading a book, methodically turning the pages. This was clearly a ruse to lure him closer.

As a ghost cultivator ranked at the forefront of the Spirit Stream Ranking and the current strongest within the Spirit Stream Realm, he wouldn't fall for it so easily.

A distinguished ghost cultivator must endure loneliness, waiting for the enemy to show their true flaws, and that would be the time for ghost cultivators to bare their fangs.

Time trickled by, and countless cultivators outside waited for the outcome of this battle. But as for the combatants, one was contentedly reading and cultivating, the other patiently lying in wait. In the expansive combat field, there wasn't even a sound to be heard.

The sky gradually darkened, and Lu Ye was somewhat surprised.

He had never stayed in a combat field for so long, so he had never known that the combat field also had nightfall.

It seems that the rumor of the combat field being part of some location in the Nine Provinces wasn't just conjecture; the time here, including the time in the Spirit Stream battlefield, was consistent with that of the Nine Provinces.

He touched his stomach, feeling a bit hungry again.

Lu Ye put away the book in his hands, took a few pieces of beast meat out of his storage sack, gave half to Amber, and then lit a bonfire to roast the remaining half.

This beast meat all came from the Fog-Shrouded Mountain, flesh from demon beasts.

Chapter 403 This Bastard Did It

Gradually, the fragrance filled the air, and the dripping hot oil from the roast crackled on the campfire.

After eating his fill, Lu Ye continued reading until late into the night, then closed his eyes for a brief rest at the original spot until dawn.

The next day was more of the same.

This was the most boring combat Lu Ye had experienced; so far, he hadn't even seen his opponent, nor had Yiyi found any trace of them.

But he knew that if they continued like this, he would definitely win. He could eat something anytime to replenish his energy, but Spectral Shadow couldn't. Having to stay hidden meant remaining that way constantly; any other action might reveal his whereabouts.

However, Lu Ye didn't plan to continue in this manner. A cultivator like Spectral Shadow could go days without food or drink, which was no problem. Spectral Shadow was willing to wait it out, but Lu Ye was not.

Closing the book in his hands, he stood up and absent-mindedly took out several array banners from his storage sack, throwing them in all directions to form the basic framework of a Formation. Then he activated his spirit force, improving the internal structure of the Formation. In no time, a Formation that covered nearly a hundred feet was set up.

This Formation wasn't much use; it was just a simple warning Formation. Unlike other formations, this one was undoubtedly much simpler to set up, and it could cover a larger area while consuming very little of his own spirit force.

Spectral Shadow had been hiding all along, and Lu Ye couldn't do much about it. The Spirit Stream Ranking Challenge was like this, with Heaven's Augury maintaining basic fairness, and the rest being a contest between cultivators.

Nobody said that a contest of patience wasn't a competition.

Covering the entire several-mile-wide combat battlefield with warning Formations, Lu Ye didn't believe he couldn't find Spectral Shadow, unless the fellow was also proficient in arrays and knew how to avoid the detection of the formations.

After setting a warning Formation, Lu Ye began arranging a second one, followed by the third, and then the fourth...

All the next day, Lu Ye was busy setting up Formations. Fortunately, he had bought enough array banners from Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union previously, or he wouldn't have been able to maintain it. By the end of the day, the Formations he had set up covered more than half of the combat field.

Spectral Shadow still didn't show himself; maybe he harbored a sliver of hope, wishing that Lu Ye didn't have enough array banners to cover the entire battlefield, which would give him some space to hide.

Suddenly realizing this, Lu Ye simply took all the array banners out of the storage sack and boldly placed them at his feet.

Hiding in the shadows, Spectral Shadow saw the large number of array banners and knew he couldn't keep hiding. If he didn't quickly find an opportunity to attack Lu Yiye, his whereabouts would definitely be exposed by the next day.

After a moment of silence, Spectral Shadow's lips moved slightly, and he quietly said a sentence, his figure quickly disappearing into the combat field.

On the other side, Lu Ye, who was busy setting up the formation, paused in his movements.

He had actually won!

He had thought that showing enough array banners would provoke Spectral Shadow to attack him tonight, but unexpectedly, the guy simply chose to surrender so cleanly.

Thinking about it, it made sense. Ghost cultivators' strength lay in approaching their targets silently. Such tactics could work against ordinary people, but facing Lu Ye, Spectral Shadow truly didn't have confidence. Who knew whether Lu Ye might have set up a Formation around him in advance? Actually attacking him would definitely lead to falling into a trap.

It can be said that for ghost cultivators when their cultivation is not high, well-prepared array cultivators are simply their nemesis!

But if the ghost cultivators were to cultivate their skills to a certain level, they could sneak through even a Formation undetected.

Having admitted defeat, Spectral Shadow fled, leaving Lu Ye and Yiyi to quickly gather the array banners they had set up across the battlefield, resulting in quite the busy scene.

"Lu Ye, if you encounter this guy again, make sure to beat him to death; he's just too hateful!" Yiyi complained while busying herself.

"Beat him half to death, then let Hua Ci heal him, then beat him half to death again..." Lu Ye declared fiercely; he would rather fight the opponent openly and straightforwardly than tire himself out like this only to end up cleaning up the aftermath.

Most importantly, from beginning to end, he hadn't even seen what his opponent looked like, which was incredibly infuriating.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, the name of Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect had surged into ninth place.

The world was in uproar!

The man had done it.

Achieving a feat of breaking into the top ten of the Spirit Stream Ranking with an 8th Heaven cultivation undoubtedly also signified that he was among the strongest at the Spirit Stream Realm level.

He was still just an 8th Heaven!

He could still ascend to 9th Heaven!

This was what truly terrified people.

To this extent, strictly speaking, Lu Ye only needed to fight one more battle to qualify to challenge for the top spot on the ranking.

However, since the start of his challenges, he had been targeting the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators one by one, so he had not chosen to do so.

The next target was the guy ranked sixth.

The challenge against Spectral Shadow took two days, and from beginning to end, Lu Ye did not draw his weapon. Although it ended with Spectral Shadow's concession, his desire for battle had not been realized, leaving him somewhat frustrated.

That's why he sharpened his sword fiercely, preparing to make his move against the guy ranked sixth.

Once he initiated the challenge and the opponent accepted, waiting for the opponent to choose the terrain, as soon as Heaven's Augury fell, Lu Ye's figure disappeared, all in one go.

In his field of vision, a burst of white light appeared, and the sound of sweeping waves reached his ears, even the air had a salty, damp smell.

This immediately reminded Lu Ye of the days he had spent with Hua Ci in the Spirit Stream Defense Battle. If he was not mistaken, the opponent had chosen the ocean as their terrain.

As his vision returned and he looked around, sure enough, they were on a small island above the sea.

The island was small, about thirty feet in diameter.

About several dozen feet away, there was another similar small island; the two islands were roughly the same size and looked like twin islands.

And on the opposite island stood a man in loose sleeves, about twenty-something years old. His appearance was not particularly handsome, but his expression was very determined.

This person was certainly a magic cultivator, and a water-type magic cultivator at that! That's why he specially chose such a combat battlefield.

It is well-known that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect practiced fire-type combat techniques. In such a combat battlefield, a water-type magic cultivator could take a large advantage, and conversely, this environment was extremely suppressive for a fire-type combat technique cultivator.

If Lu Ye wanted to get close, he would have to leap across those several dozen feet of sea surface to reach the opponent's island. Yet in mid-air, no matter how agile the weapon control, he was just a target.

If he didn't find a way to cross over, he would also become a target. In any case, that magic cultivator would take full advantage of the situation.

The challenger made full use of his right to choose the terrain of the combat battlefield. Lu Ye greatly admired his ability to find such an astonishing terrain among so many combat fields.

What surprised Lu Ye even more was that the sea under them was not calm either, various strange sea beasts swam past, casting huge shadows under the water.

If he were to fall into the sea while leaping across, he would almost certainly die.

In such an environment, Yiyi found it very difficult to get close to the opponent.

"Lu Yiye?" the magic cultivator called out from the back edge of his own island, attempting to greet Lu Ye.

In response, nine Weapon Control lights shot out, breaking through the air. The lights skimmed over the sea surface, and the magic cultivator stood still, his facial expression barely changing.

The weapon control stopped less than three feet away from this magic cultivator, shuddered slightly, then was retracted by Lu Ye. It wasn't that Lu Ye didn't want to attack, but rather that he had reached the limit of his control distance and had to retract it, otherwise it would have been futile.

"I had long heard that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect is sublime in Weapon Control Technique with an attack range far beyond his own realm. Seeing it today, it truly lives up to its reputation!" said the magic cultivator, not stinting in his praise, "But Fellow Daoist, there's no need for probing anymore, our current distance is about ninety feet, your weapon control can't hit me."

Although he was calm, he couldn't help but feel a trace of relief; he had tried to overestimate the range of Lu Ye's weapon control, but he still underestimated it.

In that moment, it was just a few feet short, and Lu Ye's weapon control would have hit him!

Moments later, he suddenly produced a water ball in his hand, and with a flick of his wrist, the water ball shot towards Lu Ye like an arrow off its bow. In midair, the water ball suddenly exploded, sending a hail of tiny water arrows covering Lu Ye's island.

"Magic and spells are different; the attack range of magic and spells is much farther than that of weapon control."

The attack range of magic and spells being longer than that of weapon control is common knowledge, so magic cultivators generally don't need to refine weapons to kill enemies, because their magic is enough.

Then he saw a Fire Phoenix Technique rushing towards him.

The magic cultivator immediately activated his magic to meet it, still a water ball, but as it flew into the air, the water ball transformed into various shapes of magic—water arrows, water dragons, or other shapes of water beasts—creating a dizzying array of techniques.

It had to be said that the reason this man was ranked sixth was indeed justified. He stood there like an artillery battery, casting one sophisticated spell after another at an extremely fast pace.

Lu Ye hadn't spent much effort in the magic cultivator sect, but his casting speed wasn't actually slow, especially after witnessing the birth to the fall of one of Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts in the lineage of Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes.

His understanding of the Fire Phoenix Technique far surpassed that of average magic cultivators, and the power of the Fire Phoenix Technique he now cast was several times greater than before.

Fire type explosive, water type supple, when it came to the lethality of a single spell, the opposing magic cultivator was inferior to Lu Ye, but in terms of the speed and frequency of casting, Lu Ye was far behind the opponent.

After all, the other party was a professional.

Moreover, Lu Ye quickly noticed a problem: the environment here strongly suppressed his Fire Phoenix Technique. Compared to the Fire Phoenix Technique he usually activated, the current one was weakened by as much as thirty percent.

"Impressive, truly impressive," said the magic cultivator as he exchanged spells with Lu Ye, getting increasingly excited, "Being able to manifest magic to this degree as a combat cultivator, Fellow Daoist, you are the first person I have seen who can do this! But continuing this way is meaningless, Fellow Daoist, you're going to lose if we keep up like this!"

Chapter 404 Losing composure a bit

The magic cultivator was so confident because, in the clash of magic and spells, Lu Ye had completely fallen into a disadvantageous position.

Competing with amateur skills against a professional, Lu Ye naturally couldn't gain the upper hand.

At this moment, the space between the two was filled with mist, and within the mist lurked numerous water globes. As soon as the Fire Phoenix Technique was used, its power diminished by thirty percent. Passing through the dense mist, the power decreased further, and before long, it would be intercepted and dispersed by the magic cultivator's spells.

The magic cultivator's spells, overwhelming like a flood, pressed down on Lu Ye bit by bit. Even with his full force behind the Fire Phoenix Technique, he couldn't reverse the decline.

"Fellow Daoist, don't feel frustrated. This time, I have the advantage of the terrain. If we were to encounter each other in the wild, you would certainly be able to reach me, and then, I wouldn't stand a chance."

Though the magic cultivator held all the advantages, his words sounded quite modest, even containing a tone of advising Lu Ye.

However, a member of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge giving advice to a member of the Haotian Alliance was clearly not normal.

The other party seemed to be offering kind advice, but in reality, he was adding fuel to the fire, his words inside and out tempting Lu Ye to find a way to get close to him, as if he would be helpless to do anything once Lu Ye got close.

It must be said that this person was highly skilled at understanding human nature; a few simple words were enough to provoke the flames of anger in his enemy.

The location of their fight was two isolated islands about ninety feet apart. If Lu Ye wanted to close in on him, he would have to fly across using weapon control, but facing a magic cultivator like a fixed battery, flying over wouldn't be easy. One misstep and he could be shot down.

However, the current situation was very unfriendly to Lu Ye. If he didn't fly across, he would lose this combat.

Summoning his Flying Spirit Artifact, Lu Ye leaped onto it. With his spirit force activated, he turned into a streak of light and lunged towards the other side, plunging into the thick mist. Shrouded in the dense fog, his silhouette could only be faintly seen.

Seeing Lu Ye act this way, the magic cultivator's mouth curved, a cunning, "you've-been-caught" expression on his face.

With his hands moving through magic spell gestures, more than a dozen water globes were thrown at Lu Ye, and then he clapped his hands together, uttering a low shout, "Condense!"

The dense fog between the two suddenly thickened. The moment he rushed into the fog, Lu Ye immediately felt a sense of delay, and his forward speed plummeted.

So he was waiting here for me!

Lu Ye suddenly realized.

He had previously fought against Bai Lan, who also practiced water-type techniques. However, her water-type techniques were harsh on weapon control, leading to a great reduction in the Artifact Spirit. Lu Ye thought this opponent would use similar methods to Bai Lan, aiming to damage the spirit of his Flying Spirit Artifact, leaving him in a dire situation mid-air.

But to his surprise, instead of corroding the Spiritual Artifact, the opponent's technique slowed its speed.

Now trapped in the sticky dense mist, though Lu Ye exerted all his strength to operate the Spiritual Artifact under his feet, he was still slow as a snail. At this speed, there was no hope of dodging attacks from the enemy.

The magic cultivator's killing move arrived with water globes suddenly surrounding Lu Ye, enclosing him completely. Then, the water globes exploded into numerous wonderful techniques, turning the area where Lu Ye stood into a death zone in an instant.

"Either admit defeat or die, which one will you choose?" The magic cultivator, looking at the shadowy outline through the fog ahead, was smug. In terms of true strength, he couldn't hold the sixth position on the Spirit Stream Ranking. Behind him was Yooi Lianzhou of the Beixuan Sword Sect, whose strength was clearly stronger.

But when Yooi Lianzhou challenged him, he ended up in the same predicament as Lu Ye is now and had to admit defeat reluctantly!

It could be said that it was this particular terrain that allowed him to maintain his position as the sixth on the Spirit Stream Ranking. Moreover, the Mist Condensation Technique was a spell he had practiced specifically to complement this terrain, effectively dealing with physique cultivators, combat cultivators, and even Spectral Shadow cultivators.

Lu Ye naturally wouldn't admit defeat. In the magic cultivator's watchful gaze, a bolt of lightning suddenly appeared within the mist, dazzling to the eye.

The magic cultivator's expression tightened. He hadn't heard that Lu Yiye practiced lightning type techniques. Where did this lightning come from?

As he was pondering this, a crack of thunder sounded, and a bolt of lightning fell from the sky, striking directly into the dense fog.

"A lightning-attracting talisman?" The magic cultivator was shocked, his hair standing on end from the immense sense of crisis that arose within him. In panic, he retreated to the edge of the small island, cleared the mist in front of him, and conjured a spirit force barrier around his body for a sense of security.

The presence of the dense fog greatly enhanced the power of the lightning, a peril he dared not approach.

As for his mistaken belief that Lu Ye had activated some lightning-attracting talisman, in reality, Lu Ye didn't have any such talismans. Those Spirit Talismans were quite expensive, each costing at least a hundred Spirit Stones, making them extremely costly.

What he had used were simply Lightning Attracting Spirit Runes.

This tactic was learned from Bai Lan; during their battle, she suddenly employed this move, catching him somewhat off guard.

All places filled with the dense fog were suddenly streaked with lightning, with electric serpents dancing wildly, presenting a terrifying sight.

Even though the magic cultivator tried his best to avoid it, he was still inevitably affected, trembling like a sieve and with his hair standing on end.

And before his eyes, the silhouette shrouded in the fog plummeted straight down, soon followed by the sound of a splash from the sea surface.

The monstrous beast swimming below boiled with activity. A huge gaping mouth suddenly opened, swallowing the fallen object whole!

Dead?

The magic cultivator watched the scene intently, scarcely able to believe that Lu Yiye had died just like that! Not under the assault of magic spells, but seemingly dead from his own lightning-attracting talisman...

This...

No, the magic cultivator suddenly realized a problem. If Lu Yiye really died, then by now, he should have won, but Heaven's Augury gave no feedback, which meant that Lu Yiye had not died!

Just as the thought crossed his mind, he saw a bright flame rapidly sweeping in from above the sea surface at a low altitude, which looked like a pair of wings!

He wanted to activate the Mist Condensation Technique to obstruct Lu Ye, but at this moment, lightning continued to travel through the dense fog, obstructing his ability to activate it.

A stabbing pain came from his brow, and alarms in his heart urged him to flee immediately, or it would be too late once the opponent got close.

"I admit defeat!" Being aware of the situation, the magic cultivator immediately shouted out loud.

As soon as the words left his mouth, Lu Ye, with wings of fire burning on his back, descended upon him like a celestial warrior, chopping at his neck with a blade. The tremendous force flung him away, but mid-air, he had already vanished.

His eyes widened with an expression of relief, thankful he had called it in time, or he would truly be dead!

Standing on the opponent's little island, Lu Ye's eyelids drooped, and anger coursed through him!

It was aggravating enough that the ninth-ranked Spectral Shadow wasted two days of his time, as the ghost cultivator wouldn't make a move without being confident, which is why it had hidden for two days and not shown itself.

But what the hell was with this magic cultivator, to choose such a peculiar terrain and by relying on the advantage of the location, bluster and boast, only to surrender directly when he himself came to kill!

What was the point of that? Lu Ye felt like someone who had punched hard only to hit cotton.

This guy was simply too infuriating.

He had even lost a Flying Spirit Artifact!

The one that had fallen into the water just before was his damaged Flying Spirit Artifact. He had let it fall into the water in the hopes it would let his enemy lower their guard, but it had not worked in the end.

Although he now had a bunch of Flying Spirit Artifacts, that was no reason to waste them.

He had originally intended to use this combat to relieve some of his pent-up desire to kill, but now, not only was there no sign of relief, the desire had intensified!

Leaving the combat field and returning to the wooden hut, Lu Ye rummaged through his storage sack and found a suitable Flying Spirit Artifact, quietly refining it.

He didn't know who or what sort of bizarre environments the next fight would bring, and he couldn't be without a Flying Spirit Artifact.

Although he now had the wings spirit runes and could activate them at any time, using the runes consumed much more than weapon control-flying, so he preferred not to use them when it wasn't necessary.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, the name of Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect was now proudly hanging in the sixth position!

Everyone at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was silent.

Even the strong ones among the top ten ranks of the Spirit Stream Ranking seemed unable to halt his momentum, and within a leaderboard dominated by those of 9th Heaven, one from 8th Heaven claimed such a high position, causing considerable embarrassment among many cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Szi Guang from Daoxuan Sect had already returned to his own base, preparing and recuperating because he knew that his battle with Lu Ye would come soon. Before that, he wanted to adjust himself to be in the best condition.

He was the last gatekeeper, and if even he were defeated, then all of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would lose face.

Even Li Baxian in the past couldn't occupy the number one position on the Spirit Stream Ranking with an 8th Heaven cultivation!

How long had Lu Yiye cultivated? What capability did he have to embark on such a spectacular feat?

In a flash, the entire Spirit Stream battlefield quieted down, as everyone's attention was drawn to the changes in the Spirit Stream Ranking.

From the current ranking, Lu Yiye only needed to defeat the third one on the Spirit Stream Ranking before he could challenge Szi Guang!

And that third one on the Spirit Stream Ranking was a female cultivator from a 1st grade sect in Tianzhou.

Inside the wooden hut, while Lu Ye refined the Flying Spirit Artifact, he also replied to numerous messages from friends.

The reason was simple: they all knew that Lu Yiye was about to challenge the third on the Spirit Stream Ranking, so these friends kindly sent him various details about his opponent.

After reading this information, Lu Ye frowned.

The one ranked third was strictly speaking a combat cultivator, and even more so, a member of a very special small school that was not common even in the Nine Provinces, even rarer than a cover armorer.

Was this another person going to be a pain to deal with?

Lu Ye was feeling emotionally strained.

The strength of the one ranked third on the Spirit Stream Ranking could be gauged by looking at the previous Li Baxian, who used to hold the third position.

Of course, since those three toxic influences had gone, the prestige of the Spirit Stream Ranking had undoubtedly diminished significantly, and the current third could not be compared to the former Li Baxian.

But Lu Ye would not underestimate her, nor would he show mercy just because she was a woman. During these days of battling through the ranks, the number of female cultivators who had died by his hand was not small. None of those he met had survived; only Bai Lan had narrowly escaped.

Chapter 405

Spirit Stream Ranking strong contenders, when challenged, always choose terrains that are advantageous to themselves, suitable for their own combat style.

For example, when Lu Ye was previously challenged, he chose a combat field that was not very large. As a combat cultivator who engages foes in close combat, he naturally did not wish for a too spacious battlefield.

Therefore, in the process of Lu Ye's challenge up the ranking, he would encounter all kinds of terrains.

In the wooden hut, Lu Ye's mind connected with the Spirit Stream Ranking, selecting the female cultivator ranked third, and issued his challenge.

The opponent accepted, but the battle did not begin immediately, and after a full Shichen, Heaven's Augury suddenly descended and transported him into the combat field.

As his vision gradually returned, Lu Ye immediately turned his head to look around and discovered that the terrain this time matched some of the information he had received beforehand.

It was a terrain of no small size, within the entire small space were two bald mountains, both several hundred zhang tall, with no vegetation on them, just bare rocks scattered about. The mountain slopes were not too steep, comparatively gentle.

Lu Ye took out his Flying Spirit Artifact and tried to ascend with weapon control.

Sure enough, just like the information he had received before, the field was under Sky Prohibition!

Realizing this, Lu Ye knew that his opponent had once again chosen a terrain that was extremely advantageous for her.

The Sky Prohibition undeniably meant increased difficulty in locating the enemy; facing the two mountains to his left and right, Lu Ye was unsure which one the enemy would pick as the high ground, so he simply stood still and waited.

Yiyi had already set off ahead to search for traces of the enemy.

Soon after, Yiyi sent a message, having located the enemy.

Lu Ye immediately rushed toward the mountain on his right. Bolstered by Move-Like-The-Wind, his afterimage trailed behind him as he ran.

However, he had climbed not even a hundred zhang when a whooshing sound of air being split assaulted him; he dodged to the side, feeling a gust of wind grazing past his face, leaving a stinging pain.

Looking up, he saw that a tall figure had appeared on the mountaintop. The female cultivator was wearing a tight-fitting long dress with white fabric and purple edges that outlined her shapely figure, with a high ponytail behind her head, holding a strong bow in her hand, her face cold and indifferent as she looked down from her vantage point.

This was Lu Ye's opponent this time, an archery cultivator!

This was a very niche faction, but niche factions are often the most troublesome to deal with because of their rarity, which means cultivators have less experience in confronting such specialized groups.

In such a Sky-Prohibited terrain, having allowed the opponent to seize the high ground, Lu Ye's opening situation was undoubtedly very unfavorable.

To defeat the adversary, at the very least, he had to reach an area within his weapon control range, but during this whole process, he would definitely be greeted with continuous barrages by the opponent's arrows.

The difference in elevation between the two was probably over two hundred zhang; it didn't seem too great, but that was just the vertical difference. The actual distance was at least five hundred zhang.

The arrows shot by cultivators are not something ordinary people can compare with; they are arrows with all kinds of inconceivable powers. This female cultivator's shot over five hundred zhang not only had the advantage of shooting from above but also demonstrated her impressive archery skills.

That arrow was probably just a greeting.

It was a similar situation to the last battle; facing these long-armed fellows, to kill or defeat the enemy, one had to first figure out a way to break into one's own attack range!

Lu Ye took a deep breath, made eye contact with the opponent across several hundred zhang, and then slightly lowered his body. With Move-Like-The-Wind bolstering his legs, two depressions suddenly appeared on the ground as he dashed forward amidst the rising dust!

Almost the instant Lu Ye made a move, the female cultivator raised her hand and shot three arrows, arranged in a character '品' shape, sealing off a large space.

Before the arrows arrived, Lu Ye already felt a prickling sensation on his skin.

It was evident the arrows were specially crafted, supplemented by her unique skills and natural talent in archery, possessing strong penetration and lethality.

Lu Ye leaped high to dodge the three arrows, and before he landed, another arrow suddenly appeared in front of him, which he had not noticed being fired before!

It dawned on him that the opponent had actually shot four arrows; three in the front and one in the back. The final arrow, the killing strike, was perfectly concealed by the first three.

In mid-air with nowhere to dodge, the Boulder Mountain Saber left its sheath, and he sliced at the incoming sharp arrow.

With a thunderous explosion, spirit force surged, and Lu Ye was sent drifting backwards under the impact. Barely steadying himself, several more arrows drew close to his face.

The opponent's attack was relentless, without a moment's break, and it seemed she could predict his next move. Even if Lu Ye could dodge this attack, he would be hindered by the next.

Above on the mountain, one with Move-Like-The-Wind, sprinting forward, and another with Unparalleled archery skills, firing ceaselessly.

Lu Ye truly experienced the prowess of this female archery cultivator; such a divine marksman would be terrifying in a large-scale melee.

If one were targeted by this woman amidst chaotic battle, basically no Spirit Stream Realm cultivator could survive, especially terrifying was the range of her attack, even farther than that of magic cultivators!

Lu Ye's figure continued to advance across the mountain, retreating now and then, or darting left and right, appearing extremely awkward.

Yet, in fact, he was constantly narrowing the distance between them, and in just half the time it took to burn an incense stick, they had already halved the gap.

As they got closer, the female archery cultivator's archery became even more fearsome.

Previously, at a greater distance, her archery seemed somewhat rigid, but as the distance closed, her archery became more agile. She could even control the trajectory of the arrows to some extent, making them even more unpredictable to guard against.

Yiyi lay hidden in the dark and did not strike; Lu Ye was still too far from the woman, and if Yiyi attacked now, it could easily startle the enemy.

Only when Lu Ye approached the enemy close enough would she launch a sudden attack, ensuring they could work together to kill the formidable opponent.

As the distance closed to about one hundred feet, Lu Ye's advance became increasingly difficult. At this range, the deterrent power of the opponent's archery skills surged.

The constant twang of the bowstring was incessant in his ears. The arrows rained down like meteors streaking from the heavens, continuous without any respite, relentlessly targeting Lu Ye.

On the barren mountaintop, with rocks scattering and dust flying, Lu Ye was followed by craters blasted out by the arrows, looking utterly disheveled and pitiful.

Until at a certain moment, the relentless attacks suddenly ceased.

Lu Ye looked up and saw the female archery cultivator standing quietly on the mountaintop with a strong bow in hand, from which blood dripped off the string. On the fingers of one hand, the flesh was mangled to the point of revealing white bones.

The female cultivator's complexion was as pale as paper, appearing extremely exhausted.

After sustaining a super high intensity of action for one incense stick's time, it was clear the female cultivator could hardly hold on any longer. Compared to her own state, Lu Ye was more suspicious that she might have run out of arrows!

In this short span of less than one incense stick's time, the female cultivator had shot close to a thousand arrows, if not eight hundred. The majority were dodged by Lu Ye, and the few that weren't he blocked with his Boulder Mountain Saber.

Lu Ye no longer moved forward, simply looking up quietly at the female cultivator.

Movements from the battlefield marking indicated it must be Yiyi trying to communicate, obviously asking Lu Ye whether he wanted to make a move at this moment.

Lu Ye slowly shook his head.

"You are very strong, Szi Guang is not your match!"

After saying these words, the female archery cultivator looked up to the sky, "I concede!"

Heaven's Augury descended and took her out of the combat field.

As Lu Ye had guessed, she had expended all her arrows. There was no denying her strength, but to fully utilize her capabilities, she relied heavily on external resources.

What could she use to fight Lu Ye with her arrows depleted?

And the reason she had the previous delay of more than two hours after accepting Lu Ye's challenge was to prepare her arrows.

It could be said the bout with Lu Ye was a heavy loss for her.

After all, each of her arrows needed to be specially crafted, and hundreds of arrows accumulated into quite a sizable wealth.

Only after the female archery cultivator disappeared did Lu Ye sheathe his saber and stood silently for a moment, allowing Heaven's Augury to pull him back to the wooden hut.

"Ah, the 3rd Dao of Spirit Stream Ranking has returned. Congratulations, congratulations."

A teasing congratulatory voice came from Hua Ci nearby, who had just returned from her cultivation journey outside to come across Lu Ye returning.

Lu Ye ignored her and communicated with Yooi Lianzhou to inquire about Szi Guang's condition.

"Were you bullied?" Hua Ci exclaimed in surprise.

Yiyi approached and whispered a few words into Hua Ci's ear, to which Hua Ci instantly understood and covered her mouth with a delicate laugh, "You won, didn't you? What does the process matter?"

Lu Ye knew this all too well, but...

What the heck were the top ten of the Spirit Stream Ranking?

Since challenging Spectral Shadow, he hadn't encountered a single straightforward opponent.

Spectral Shadow had dragged the battle out for two Shichen, at the end of which not even his face was seen.

The 6th-ranked magic cultivator chose a terrain with two isolated islands in the middle of the sea, whereupon Lu Ye had barely made his move when the opponent conceded.

This last battle was even more absurd; he hadn't even gotten within a hundred feet of the opponent before the fight ended, and throughout the battle, he had been the one getting hit.

Even though he had indeed won in the end, Lu Ye did not feel the slightest joy.

Just then, Yooi Lianzhou replied, "Szi Guang is a combat cultivator; his Spiritual Artifact is a long spear!"

Lu Ye took a deep breath, relieved that he would not have to face another bizarre opponent.

Without any delay, Lu Ye immediately issued a challenge to Szi Guang.

Although he was not at his peak condition, the frustration burning within him was close to erupting. He could hardly wait to engage in a straightforward fight with swords and spears to relieve the pent-up anger in his heart.

Szi Guang did not keep him waiting long—in the time it took to brew a cup of tea after the challenge was issued, Heaven's Augury descended, and Lu Ye's figure vanished from the wooden hut.

Within a combat field spanning a hundred feet in radius, both Lu Ye and Szi Guang appeared simultaneously and each could see the other.

Lu Ye looked around and noticed that the terrain quite suited him. He had chosen similar types of terrain when he had been challenged before, only they were even smaller than this one.

"Lu Yiye!" Szi Guang, holding a long spear, pointed it at him from afar and bellowed, "Come meet your death swiftly!"

Chapter 406 Szi Guang

Although there were no personal feuds between them, Szi Guang was Lu Ye's final opponent on the Spirit Stream Ranking, and he was also the last face of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Rank one on the Spirit Stream Ranking is a symbol, and even more so, an identity. The cultivators of the two major camps would not easily let the opposition take it away.

In the previous ten or so years, this position was dominated by Loyal Heart Sect's Feng Yuechan, a situation that was unavoidable; after all, who else but her had immersed themselves at the Spirit Stream Realm level for over a decade?

The cultivators of her cohort were already at Cloud River-True Lake, yet she remained at the Spirit Stream Realm. The strong foundation she had built over many years was not something that upcoming talents could easily challenge.

Finally, with the removal of the three great plagues on the Spirit Stream Ranking, it was Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's turn to rise to the top of the ranking for once.

But how long had that lasted? Just two months at best!

From the Haotian Alliance, a Lu Yiye appeared, advancing like a hot knife through butter, singing all the way, breaking various records of past years, and now he even qualified to contend for the top rank!

Therefore, no matter what, Szi Guang could not afford to lose this battle, nor did he dare to! If Lu Ye managed to ascend to the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking with the cultivation of 8th Heaven, then the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would forever be considered inferior.

In the combat field spanning dozens of zhang, Lu Ye looked at the figure boiling with spirit force on the other side and raised an eyebrow.

His current opponent seemed a bit off, as if he had ingested some kind of elixir pill that temporarily boosted strength!

Indeed, such elixir pills existed in the cultivation world. Lu Ye had seen one called Explosive Qi Pill when he once browsed the Heaven's Augury treasure vault. Once ingested, within the time it took for one incense stick to burn, the flow of spirit force in a cultivator's body could increase by three or four times, which in turn would drastically enhance their overall strength.

But these kinds of elixir pills that could temporarily increase a cultivator's strength often came with severe side effects. The stronger the effect, the more violent the repercussions.

Szi Guang had apparently ingested something similar to the Explosive Qi Pill before coming in. If he couldn't resolve Lu Ye within the time of one incense stick, he would be left without any strength to fight back.

"I'll handle it myself," Lu Ye said softly all of a sudden.

He was speaking to Yiyi, who had already slipped underground, ready to strike at any moment. But Lu Ye had felt extremely frustrated in his previous few challenges, and now that he finally met a normal opponent, albeit one who seemed to have taken an Explosive Qi Pill beforehand, he still didn't want Yiyi to intervene.

As Szi Guang roared angrily, he charged at Lu Ye like thunder, building up momentum in his long spear as he rushed over.

Lu Ye met him head-on.

In the combat field, the distance of several dozen zhang closed in a blink of an eye and then clashed violently.

The Boulder Mountain Saber was unsheathed, and the blade covered in leaping flames slashed down.

The long spear struck out, like a sleeping dragon suddenly thrusting its head out of its lair.

In that instant of stalemate, a thunderous boom rang out. The spirit force, under severe compression, burst forth wildly, and both figures were sent flying backward from the impact.

Mid-air, Lu Ye felt his palm go numb. Hastily stabilizing his figure, he grabbed Amber, who was crouching on his shoulder, tossed her aside, and landed in a sorry state before backpedaling several zhang to steady himself.

Regardless of whether Szi Guang had pre-ingested a strength-enhancing elixir pill or not, Lu Ye felt as if he had met a worthy adversary. Engaged in such a fight, he couldn't spare the attention to protect Amber.

On the other side, Szi Guang also landed, his feet unmoving yet his body sliding nearly ten zhang backward.

Before he could steady himself, a figure flashed in his vision. Lu Ye had already pounced in front of him, with the sharp long Saber stabbing straight at him.

In the face of such a ferocious strike, most would choose to evade with all their might, but Szi Guang merely shifted his body slightly to the side. His long spear, dragon-like, thrust at Lu Ye in return.

A ripping sound echoed as the two figures crossed paths, blood spraying in the air.

A bloody mark appeared on Lu Ye's waist and abdomen, while Szi Guang's chest was also lacerated.

This was bound to be a ferocious battle. Both combatants were determined to kill their opponent and neither showed any intention of retreating, leading to injuries for both parties after just the second exchange.

But Lu Ye's wound was lighter, because the moment the opponent's long spear came down, he had managed to form a Defense Spirit Rune!

Even though it couldn't fully block the might of that strike, it did relieve much of its force.

Szi Guang seemed not to feel the pain, as he rotated his long spear a half circle in front of him and, in a fluid change of hands, the spear's tip turned into its butt end. He thrust it backward in a smooth motion.

The change was so swift it was difficult to counter.

At this moment, Lu Ye still had his back turned to him, as the spearhead aimed supremely accurately at the back of Lu Ye's head.

Hidden in the shadows, Yiyi nearly cried out in alarm, and even Amber hurriedly prepared to save her master.

However, Lu Ye seemed to have eyes in the back of his head and suddenly crouched lower, causing the spear to graze his scalp as it poked out.

Avoiding such an unexpected strike undoubtedly demonstrated Lu Ye's excellent perception. At that moment, there was an unmistakable sharp pain at the back of his head, accompanied by an acute sense of fatal threat.

Curling up his body, he delivered a backlash with his Saber, striking Szi Guang's chest at the same moment he himself was struck by Szi Guang's long spear on the ground.

It was Szi Guang who, having his thrust miss, naturally pressed down his spear like a whip.

Forced back by that strike, Szi Guang looked down at his own chest, where even the protective treasure armor he wore failed to withstand the Sharpness of his opponent's long saber. At his chest were two ferocious wounds where flesh had been lacerated, dying his clothing red with blood.

If it were not for the treasure armor protecting him, those two strikes would have already claimed his life.

On the other side, Lu Ye staggered to his feet, his right cheek twitching uncontrollably, marked by the imprint of a rod...

Struck by Szi Guang's spear shaft...

The imprint stretched from his face all the way to his right side, burning with pain.

"You're very strong!" Szi Guang exclaimed loudly, his words carrying heartfelt admiration.

Lu Ye fell silent for a moment before responding indifferently, "So are you!"

Even though he wanted nothing more than to pin his opponent down and hack him to hundreds of pieces, that did not affect the pleasure he took from such praise. Acknowledgment from an adversary was undoubtedly the most genuine.

"It's not the same," Szi Guang slowly shook his head, "I've been on the Spirit Stream Ranking for several months now, receiving Heaven's Augury blessings monthly, and before coming here, I even took an Explosive Qi Pill, enabling me to exert strength far beyond my own level. Yet you have nothing, and your cultivation level is even a level lower than mine..."

As he spoke, Szi Guang himself began to doubt life's fairness—did such people truly exist? Despite being a small level higher in cultivation, having received several Heaven's Augury blessings, and after consuming an Explosive Qi Pill, he was only able to fight to a draw.

If his opponent had his kind of background, just how powerful would he be?

For such a person to continue living was undoubtedly a nightmare for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

"Are you done talking?" Lu Ye, holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, grew impatient.

"One last thing," Szi Guang bared his teeth in a fierce smile, "Although it's not very glorious, I'm glad I took the Explosive Qi Pill before coming in. Otherwise, I'd be no match for you!"

As the final word was spoken, both of them lunged at each other once more, and a Fight to the Death began again just as before. Saber and spear shadows clashed, killing intent erupted, and violent spirit force swept unrestrained across the combat field spanning dozens of yards, with fresh blood spattering and the continuous clang of weapons colliding.

Neither of them resorted to weapon control tactics; from the beginning, it was a bloody, hand-to-hand combat. Lu Ye was motivated by pent-up rage, while Szi Guang understood that he was no match for Lu Ye in the way of Weapon Control, naturally not wanting to humiliate himself.

However, as time passed, the strength Lu Ye displayed was noticeably increasing, both in terms of speed and power, much stronger than at the beginning.

As the Boulder Mountain Saber drew another spray of blood, Szi Guang's leg whipped across Lu Ye's shoulder with the force of a lash. Even after activating the Defense Spirit Runes in advance, Lu Ye was sent flying by this kick, crashing heavily to the ground and rolling several times before he stopped, quickly scrambling to his feet with blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, his left arm hanging weakly, unable to exert any strength.

Dislocated!

"So you also took an elixir pill beforehand to enhance your strength," Szi Guang snorted coldly.

He was clearly aware of the enhancement in Lu Ye's strength, which led him to assume that Lu Ye had done the same as himself, though Lu Ye's increase was visible to the naked eye and not a sudden eruption, so he guessed Lu Ye's pill must have been of a milder variety, not as violent as the Explosive Qi Pill.

Lu Ye couldn't be bothered to explain; he had not taken any strength-enhancing elixir pill.

All he had done was construct a Bloodstain Spirit Rune on himself!

He had acquired this spirit rune a long time ago, and up to now, he had only used it once, which was in the Spirit Stream Defense Battle.

After obtaining the spirit rune, he rarely encountered an opponent who was equally matched or just slightly stronger than him.

The function of this spirit rune was to absorb the blood spilling from Lu Ye's body to enhance his strength.

Simply put, the more Lu Ye was injured, the stronger the spirit rune's effect became.

In recent days, Lu Ye had often been chased by large groups of people, leaving him no opportunity to utilize the Bloodstain Spirit Runes.

But challenging Szi Guang did give him this chance.

Bitting down on the Boulder Mountain Saber, he took a bandage from his storage sack and carelessly wrapped it around his left arm a few times, fixing the flailing limb in place.

During this process, Szi Guang naturally wouldn't just watch, but it was unfortunate for him that Lu Ye moved too quickly. By the time he got close, Lu Ye had already finished.

Facing the spear stabbing towards him, Lu Ye thrust forward with his saber, breaking through the blossoming spear shadows and closing in on Szi Guang.

Szi Guang's color changed as he drew back his spear to block, but the Boulder Mountain Saber struck down.

With a resounding crash, Szi Guang's body lightened, and he was knocked away.

With the augmentation from the Bloodstain Spirit Runes, both the speed and power of Lu Ye's saber strikes underwent a drastic transformation, turning a once evenly matched battle into a one-sided affair.

Lu Ye activated Move-Like-The-Wind, catapulting forward, leaping high, and bringing down a heavy slash.

Though Szi Guang barely managed to block the blow, the immense force still sent him crashing down, while Lu Ye, mid-air, gracefully spun around and swept out his right leg like a whip.

Szi Guang, yet to touch ground, was sent flying again, and with this whip-like kick landing on his head, he saw stars flash before his eyes.

Chapter 407 Top of the List

Regardless of their cultivation levels, if only their strengths were to be compared, Lu Ye and Szi Guang, at the beginning of their battle, the latter was somewhat stronger. However, Lu Ye could activate

various spirit runes during combat which, particularly the Defense Spirit Runes, shielded him from several fatal threats.

That's why both parties could fight so fiercely.

As time passed, the Bloodstain Spirit Runes gradually took effect, enhancing Lu Ye's strength bit by bit until he slowly surpassed Szi Guang.

The Bloodstain Spirit Runes continued to exert their influence, continuously boosting Lu Ye's strength. By now, every exchange ended with Szi Guang at a disadvantage.

Szi Guang was furiously inconsolable.

Although consuming an Explosive Qi Pill could enhance a cultivator's strength in a short time, it had severe side effects, and while the pill was working, the cultivator's mental state would also be affected, becoming more prone to anger and irritability.

If Szi Guang had been in his normal state, he would have already noticed the growing gap in strength between himself and Lu Ye, but now he was completely blinded by rage, with only one thought swirling in his mind, to kill the opponent before him!

Rising from the ground, Szi Guang turned his head and spat out a mouthful of Blood Water, squinting his swollen eyes, and looked at Lu Ye, who was rapidly charging toward him. He slightly raised his long spear, assuming a very peculiar stance.

The next instant, spirit force surged into his spear like floodwaters bursting through a gate.

In the midst of his charge, Lu Ye suddenly felt a chilling rise of hairs on his body and a strong sense of imminent danger blossomed in his heart, immediately realizing that Szi Guang was about to use some powerful secret technique!

After a brief deliberation, Lu Ye didn't retreat but also drove his spirit force into the Boulder Mountain Saber, which was already wrapped in flames, now completely ignited.

Boom...

The explosion of their spirit forces distorted the space of the entire combat field, with numerous large and small whirlwinds roaming around.

Amber had been forced to the edge of the combat field by the ferocious power, her tiny body pressed tightly against the ground, motionless.

The two figures surged toward each other at a fast speed.

Szi Guang thrust his spear and bellowed, "Fire Beacon Razes Prairie!"

Lu Ye saw a blur of the spear that resembled the spreading fires of a prairie fire, swiftly expanding, and in an instant, his vision was completely filled with numerous spear silhouettes.

Ignoring everything, the fully ignited saber swung down with all his might.

The myriad spear silhouettes shattered into nothingness, the Boulder Mountain Saber felt like it struck flesh, and simultaneously, Lu Ye's chest also felt a chill.

The tumult of spirit force gradually subsided, and the two fighters stood frozen in place.

At a glance, Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber was lodged in Szi Guang's shoulder blade, nearly decapitating him, while Szi Guang's long spear had pierced through Lu Ye's chest and exited his back.

Drip, drip...

Blood dropped, producing clear sounds.

Both of them looked at each other with blood-soaked eyes and then simultaneously kicked out at each other.

With a thud, they were both jolted by the recoiling force, staggering backward, blood pouring from Lu Ye's chest wound, while blood jetted out from Szi Guang's neck like a fountain.

Clang...

With his saber stuck in the ground, Lu Ye managed to remain standing, while on the other side, Szi Guang couldn't hold on anymore and collapsed backward onto the ground, with his life force visibly weakening.

The Explosive Qi Pill's effects had worn off.

The powerful backlash contorted his expression into one of indescribable agony, and at this moment, he no longer had the strength to fight.

Lu Ye gasped for breath, barely managing to stand up, and step by step, walked toward Szi Guang.

Szi Guang, with his swollen eyes, stared blankly at the sky above the battlefield, lost in thought.

It was only when he heard the noise of Lu Ye's movements that he moved his lips, about to speak.

"Roar!" Amber timely roared.

However, it did not stop Szi Guang, who must have prepared for Amber's abilities before entering.

Amidst Amber's roar, an invisible barrier suddenly enveloped Szi Guang, isolating the impact of the roar.

"I concede!" Szi Guang uttered these words, and his entire persona relaxed as if he had unburdened himself of a heavy load.

Heaven's Augury descended, and Szi Guang's figure disappeared.

Lu Ye paused.

Yiyi appeared, hastily supporting him, looking at the wound on Lu Ye's chest with apprehension, knowing that if the spear had deviated slightly, Lu Ye might have already been dead.

In fact, Szi Guang had aimed the spear at Lu Ye's heart, but Lu Ye had dodged the vital point at the critical moment.

For a while, within the wooden hut, Lu Ye lay on the bed while Hua Ci sat askew by his side, her hands imbued with the rich wood type spirit force, healing his injuries. Before Hua Ci could finish her treatment, Lu Ye had already drifted into a deep sleep.

Undeniably, the battle with Szi Guang had been the most exhilarating fight he had faced since challenging the Spirit Stream Ranking, venting all the anger accumulated from previous encounters with Spectral Shadow and the others completely and utterly.

Although the opponent's method of consuming an Explosive Qi Pill beforehand was not exactly honorable, they were natural enemies after all, willing to use every means available, without concern for honor.

Right now, Lu Ye wanted nothing more than to sleep well.

During his deep slumber, the cultivators from the two camps at the Spirit Stream battlefield displayed utterly divergent mindsets.

The changes in the Spirit Stream Ranking were observed by the cultivators in real-time, and the moment the first and third positions swapped, numerous Haotian Alliance cultivators were overjoyed and excited, taking pride in the achievement. In contrast, the atmosphere amongst the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators was deathly still, filled with gloom.

The worst had finally happened!

That Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect, with his 8th Heaven cultivation, had defeated Szi Guang to ascend to the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking!

Such a feat broke many longstanding records in the Nine Provinces cultivation world.

Previously, there had never been an instance of an 8th Heaven cultivator occupying the top position on the Spirit Stream Ranking. Take the prior case of Li Baxian for example; he lingered in the Spirit Stream Realm for over a decade, only managing to dominate the top ten, and only after battling Yanh Xing did his real strength come to light, bringing him to third place...

Although the importance of the Spirit Stream Ranking had significantly diminished after the disappearance of those three notorious names, being at the top still held its prestige.

Among the hundred cultivators on the Spirit Stream Ranking, there was only one of the 8th Heaven standing tall above all, followed by a clear batch of 9th Heaven cultivators!

This was undoubtedly a moment that would be recorded in history.

Besides, when Lu Yiye first climbed the Spirit Stream Ranking, he was only of 7th Heaven cultivation and ranked thirty-third...

This too was unprecedented; apart from him, no one with 7th Heaven cultivation had ever ascended to the Spirit Stream Ranking, let alone ranked so high.

Setting aside cultivation for a moment, his speed at climbing the ranking was also astonishingly fast.

Since he began focusing on climbing the ranking, it had only been less than a half a month, during which he also spent five days dealing with Bai Lan and other challenging cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

In other words, he really spent only about ten days actively climbing the ranking!

In those ten days, he blazed an unstoppable path straight to the top position on the Spirit Stream Ranking, a feat that was alarming to hear.

The cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge felt bitter—was an era dominated by one individual looming again?

Previously, when he was in the inner circle, he had already caused much anxiety among the people of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, though at that time he relied merely on his expertise in Array Path to pull together the Allies of Haotian Alliance.

Now, he was relying on his true strength!

The two kinds of threats were completely different and, undoubtedly, Lu Ye in his current state was far more daunting than when he was in the inner circle.

The only consolation for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side was that news from Szi Guang indicated that Lu Yiye had sustained serious injuries in their last battle and would likely need quite some time to recuperate. Thus, for the short term, they need not worry about him causing trouble.

Under normal circumstances, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side could take this opportunity to challenge Lu Ye and pull him down from his position at the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking.

But looking at the current Spirit Stream Ranking, among the top six, only two were from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, one being Szi Guang, and the other that female archery cultivator, only they had the qualifications to challenge Lu Ye.

Szi Guang was also severely injured, and combined with the aftereffects of the Explosive Qi Pill, he would be bedridden for at least ten to fifteen days, struggling to maintain his own position, let alone challenging Lu Ye.

As for that female archery cultivator, her arrows had been totally depleted previously, and replenishing them would take several days.

A few days' time was enough for Lu Ye to recover.

So now, unless someone from the Haotian Alliance decided to challenge Lu Ye, his top position on the Spirit Stream Ranking would remain unassailable.

People from the Haotian Alliance would naturally not be foolish enough to make such a move that would cause pain to loved ones and joy to enemies.

However, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge definitely had this idea in mind because after Lu Ye climbed to the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking, the few Haotian Alliance cultivators ranking in the top six had been continuously challenged by those behind them from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. It was clear Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wanted to use these few people's ranking as stepping stones to challenge Lu Ye. If they could surpass these Haotian Alliance cultivators and take their places, they would earn the right to challenge Lu Ye. And given Lu Ye's current condition, they would likely win.

Inside the wooden hut, after waking from sleep, Lu Ye still felt significant pain in his chest and left arm, his body drained of much of its strength. He slowly sat up and yawned.

Yiyi was guarding nearby, and hearing the noise, she quickly stood up, grabbed a pillow, and propped it behind Lu Ye, asking with concern, "How do you feel?"

"Not bad," Lu Ye replied, patting his stomach. "A bit hungry, can we get something to eat?"

He could smell the scent drifting in from the window; unsurprisingly, it was Hua Ci cooking.

It seemed that people from the Righteous Blood Sect all shared this talent, each being accomplished cooks—Second Senior Sister, Fourth Senior Brother, and Hua Ci were no exceptions.

"Just a moment," Yiyi said, and floated out through the window. Shortly, she returned with a bowl of porridge. He was unsure what ingredients it contained, but it certainly looked colorful...

As Lu Ye sipped the porridge, he browsed through various messages in his battlefield marking, and chose some to respond to.

Most were messages of congratulations for dominating the Spirit Stream Ranking with his 8th Heaven cultivation, certainly worthy of celebration. To these messages, Lu Ye simply replied with a sentence.

Chapter 408 Single Flash and Heaven's Augury Rewards

There were also some invitations asking him to retreat to their residences for cultivation.

This was not about currying favor or anything of the sort. Currently, Lu Ye who was in considerable trouble, especially since he now ranked first in the Spirit Stream Ranking, made the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge even more determined to kill him. No matter which sect residence he went to for cultivation, it wouldn't bring much benefit to them. The only possibility was that they would be targeted by a joint effort from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

In response to these invitations, Lu Ye naturally refused them all.

The Ten Thousand Poisons Forest was the best hiding place for him at the moment. As long as he didn't show himself, the people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wouldn't be able to find him, yet he could strike them unexpectedly at any time.

Although the nature's spiritual energy here wasn't very rich, as long as Lu Ye had enough elixir pills, the speed of his cultivation wouldn't slow down much.

After ending the communication, Lu Ye focused on drinking porridge.

Hua Ci came every day to treat his injuries, and within three days, Lu Ye's injuries had significantly improved.

During his spare time, he cultivated and read books; suddenly, his days became peaceful, devoid of previous disturbances. And Lu Ye surprisingly discovered that he quite adapted to this kind of life and even enjoyed it.

It was only then that he realized deep down he was not someone who liked causing trouble. Compared to that kind of risky and thrilling life, he preferred peace and quiet.

But... in the world of martial arts, one cannot control their own fate!

Outside in the small courtyard of the wooden house, Lu Ye held the Boulder Mountain Saber with spirit force boiling around him, frantically surging into the blade.

Although he had been invincible during the recent ranking contest and hardly met any opponents, in his battle with Szi Guang, he realized a problem he was currently facing.

That was the lack of a decisive finishing move!

It could also be called a trump card.

The Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes certainly qualified as one, but with his current strength, it was difficult to activate at will. The last time he managed to do so had involved extensive preparation. Also, the side effects after activating the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes were severe; he had ended up lying in bed under Hua Ci's care for many days.

What he needed now was a trump card that he could handle and deploy on his own.

The last shot from Szi Guang had given him quite an enlightenment. He also recalled the scene when he had gone to the Loyal Heart Sect, battling a 9th Heaven sword cultivator who from start to finish had only struck once, concentrating all his power in that one sword strike, which was similar in essence to Szi Guang's final shot, both delivering a burst of massive spiritual energy in an instant.

This method was not hard to deploy. In the final moments of his fight with Szi Guang, Lu Ye had already grasped the essence, which allowed him to block that devastating shot.

What he needed to do now was familiarize himself with this technique and perfect it to ensure it could be deployed at any time during a battle.

The fire blazed, the long saber burned as the Boulder Mountain Saber buzzed. As Lu Ye slashed down, it seemed as if the space in front of him split apart, and the ground even split with a new crack!

He hadn't activated the Sharpness spirit runes, but the force of this saber strike was much greater than before.

Lu Ye frowned, not quite satisfied with this strike because it consumed a lot (not just the spirit force, but also physically), and after making this slash, his right arm was somewhat sore. Such a strike, he could at most make three times in quick succession before his right arm would probably be too sore to lift.

In a battle against a strong opponent, if such a situation occurred, defeat wouldn't be far off.

Although unsatisfied, since he had just started practicing, there were still many aspects that could be improved.

This counted as a technique and also a type of saber skill.

Since it was a saber skill, it should have its own name.

Naming it was a problem...

Lu Ye pondered, recalling the fleeting sharpness as the saber fell, and an idea formed in his mind.

Let's call it "Single Flash."

The practice of saber skills, aside from being persistent and diligently studying, had no shortcuts.

In the small courtyard, Lu Ye occasionally picked up the Boulder Mountain Saber to practice, then took elixir pills to recover. He would continue practicing once the soreness in his right arm subsided.

Though this method might slow down the progress of his cultivation, for Lu Ye, the level of cultivation had never been the most important aspect. He had already proved this by reaching the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking with his 8th Heaven cultivation. If he could practice Single Flash to the extent that he could use it spontaneously, slowing down his cultivation speed was worth it.

As days passed, Lu Ye gradually mastered Single Flash. However, the physical toll of this saber technique was still unresolved, making it difficult to use against strong opponents.

Lu Ye never felt that after topping the Spirit Stream Ranking, he had no more rivals. He would still advance to Cloud River, and the situation in Cloud River battlefield was much more complex than the Spirit Stream battlefield. Even if he could move freely in the Spirit Stream battlefield, he would still need to be cautious in the Cloud River battlefield.

During these days, several powerful fighters from the Haotian Alliance were holding their ranks in the Spirit Stream Ranking steadily. Except for Szi Guang, who had taken the second place in the Spirit Stream Ranking, there was only that female archery cultivator who became fourth. No significant changes occurred for the others, and as for Lu Ye, no one came to challenge him from start to finish.

Both Szi Guang and the female archery cultivator knew they were no match for Lu Ye and naturally wouldn't stir trouble without cause.

Half a month later, Lu Ye had opened up to three hundred and twenty orifices, and it had been forty days since his promotion to the 8th Heaven. Previously occupied with climbing the rankings, he had little time for cultivation. Recently, he had been practicing saber skills, which also slowed down his cultivation pace. So, despite so many days passing, he had only managed to open twenty orifices.

He was still forty orifices away from the 9th Heaven cultivation.

While practicing saber skills in the courtyard, Lu Ye suddenly stopped his movements and looked up into the sky, sensing the descent of Heaven's Augury in the mysterious beyond!

Since his return to the Spirit Stream Ranking, thirty days had passed, and it was time for Heaven's Augury's blessing.

These days, he had stayed inside the wooden hut without leaving, essentially waiting for this day to arrive. Regarding the strong on the Spirit Stream Ranking receiving blessings from Heaven's Augury, he had asked many about it and knew the process that would follow, even though it was his first experience.

Now he was only worried about one thing, whether Amber and Yiyi would receive the blessing with him!

However, upon careful consideration, Amber was his beast pet, recognized by Heaven's Augury, and Yiyi was the minion spirit of Amber. During the challenge for the Spirit Stream Ranking, both had participated in every battle. Now that the time of blessing had arrived, they should not be left behind.

Just as he was thinking this, Yiyi and Amber ran out from the wooden hut.

"Lu Ye, Lu Ye, I think I felt something, and so did Amber," Yiyi said, experiencing Heaven's Augury for the first time and feeling somewhat bewildered.

"Just don't resist," Lu Ye advised.

Hua Ci, hearing the commotion, came out and looking each other in the eyes, quickly came to an understanding, "It's time?"

Lu Ye nodded.

As their conversation ended, the figures of Lu Ye, Amber, and Yiyi quickly began to fade and disappear.

In a misty land, the three vanished figures abruptly appeared.

This was the place where Heaven's Augury's blessings were distributed, the Heaven's Augury Pond!

The mist in the pond was not nature's spiritual energy but a type of energy that was extremely beneficial to cultivators.

Absorbing and refining that mist not only tempered a cultivator's body but also enhanced the strength of their psyche, and purified the pill poison accumulated within their bodies, thus increasing the purity of their spirit force. The many benefits were profound and numerous.

Every strong cultivator on the Spirit Stream Ranking who held a place for one month was drawn here by Heaven's Augury to receive the baptism and thereby become stronger.

Therefore, when Lu Ye had challenged Szi Guang, he had mentioned that he had received baptisms from Heaven's Augury several times already, as Szi Guang had been on the Spirit Stream Ranking for several months.

Depending on the rankings on the Spirit Stream Ranking, the duration a cultivator could stay here varied. The higher the ranking, the longer the stay; conversely, the lower the ranking, the shorter the stay.

Lu Ye had inquired from Yooi Lianzhou and found out that his time in the Heaven's Augury Pond would only be about one incense stick's time. Once the time was up, Heaven's Augury would transport him back to his original place.

As for the top of the ranking, Yooi Lianzhou wasn't quite sure.

Lu Ye had asked the Second Senior Sister to inquire from Feng Yuechan, and according to her, her several visits to the Heaven's Augury Pond didn't last longer than half an hour.

This was also why the strong cultivators on the Spirit Stream battlefield were keen on the Spirit Stream Ranking. Being on the ranking provided not just fame but tangible advantages as well.

The spirit mist here could temper the body, strengthen the psyche, and boost the purity of spirit force—each aspect vital for a cultivator's future and strength.

It can be said that undergoing a baptism in the Heaven's Augury Pond could significantly enhance a cultivator's future prospects.

And the rule that higher rankings in the Spirit Stream Ranking allowed for longer stays in the Heaven's Augury Pond created a phenomenon where the strong got stronger!

This was probably an implicit encouragement by Heaven's Augury, concentrating more rewards on those with exceptional talents!

Those 9th Heaven cultivators, already at the limit of the Spirit Stream Realm, why don't they choose to advance to Cloud River?

Lu Ye previously naively thought that those 9th Heaven cultivators wanted to solidify their foundation in the Spirit Stream Realm for a while. But now, he realized that this idea wasn't entirely wrong, just not comprehensive enough.

Those 9th Heaven cultivators all yearned to climb onto the Spirit Stream Ranking. Merely relying on themselves for consolidation couldn't compete with the baptism of Heaven's Augury. That's why the 9th Heaven cultivators were not in a hurry to advance to Cloud River, all eyeing the Spirit Stream Ranking.

However, this kind of baptism also had its limits. Each person's situation was different. When the baptism from Heaven's Augury no longer had much effect on those strong on the Spirit Stream Ranking, they would choose to advance to Cloud River, rather than waste time.

Generally, a cultivator qualified to enter the Heaven's Augury Pond could do so three to four times; beyond that, even if there were more opportunities to enter, refining this spirit mist would not greatly benefit them.

In the past, there was a rumor that Feng Yuechan, Li Baxian, and Yanh Xing, because they occupied the Spirit Stream Ranking for too long, were disliked by Heaven's Augury, and so after the initial few times, they were excluded from the monthly Heaven's Augury Baptisms.

In fact, it wasn't that Heaven's Augury disliked them, but because the spirit mist here had no more effect on them, so Heaven's Augury no longer drew them here.

At the Heaven's Augury Pond, Lu Ye turned his head to look around and found that Amber and Yiyi were beside him. He felt greatly relieved!

Chapter 409 Is It Necessary?

Without the need for Lu Ye's command, Yiyi immediately entered a state of meditative cultivation, her body's glow fluctuating brightly and dimly, changing along with the glow. As the light changed, the surrounding spirit mist continuously surged into her body.

Amber was even more direct, revealing its true form, opening its huge maw, and taking a fierce inhale.

The naked eye could see the spirit mist turning into a stream of air as it was sucked into its belly.

Though it was their first time being led to this place by Heaven's Augury, they knew their time was limited. Even if Lu Ye ranked first, he would not stay in this place for more than half a Shichen, and they only had this opportunity once a month, so naturally, they had to cherish it.

Lu Ye then began to construct Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes within his own spiritual orifice.

He had experienced similar situations twice: once during the Dragon Spring Body Tempering at Hundred Peaks Mountain, and another time in the Soul Cleansing Pool of Xianyuan City, both being similar environments.

In such an environment, his method could play a huge role.

With the speed at which Lu Ye was constructing spirit runes and his focused mind, it took only a moment to complete all three hundred and twenty small spirit energy gathering funnels.

What came next didn't require his attention anymore; these small funnels would naturally draw the surrounding mist into Lu Ye's body, transforming it with the flow of his own spirit force.

A warm sensation meandered throughout his body—the spirit mist here was indeed effective, and Lu Ye could feel his physical body and psyche gradually growing stronger.

However, if one were to compare, the spirit mist here was not as potent in strengthening the physique as directly devouring the blood strands within that Scale Armor!

And for bolstering the psyche and soul, not as beneficial as the Soul Cleansing Pool of Xianyuan City.

As for enhancing the purity of spirit force... Lu Ye could not tell, for his spirit force had always been impeccably pure.

Overall, the spirit mist of Heaven's Augury Pond seemed to be like a weakened version combined from Dragon Spring and Soul Cleansing Pool.

But this did not mean it was useless to Lu Ye. On the contrary, it was very useful, because devouring the blood strands in the Scale Armor was a very violent process of strengthening the physique. Initially, Lu Ye did not dare to devour them directly. Amber would lay motionless for a while after each devouring...

It was not until both the man and the tiger's strength gradually grew that they were able to withstand it.

Moreover, the blood strands in that Scale Armor had now been consumed completely. Lu Ye once thought that the blood strands stored in the armor were extremely abundant, but with his and Amber's continuous use, and later providing it for the use of Giant Armor, over time, the Scale Armor had completely lost its function, and now the Scale Armor was merely a plain ornament.

The enhancement of physique and psyche by the spirit mist of Heaven's Augury Pond was a very mild state that wouldn't make one feel uncomfortable. Immersed in it, one's whole body could relax, and one might even feel like taking a nap.

After constructing the small spirit energy gathering funnels in his spiritual orifice, Lu Ye took out several array banners and cast them around, setting up a spirit energy gathering array within Heaven's Augury Pond to increase the gathering speed of the spirit mist.

The effect was evident, with the mist in the pond becoming denser.

He still didn't stop there. Having the experience from the Soul Cleansing Pool in Xianyuan City, he wanted to know if he could perform a similar operation here, condensing the spirit mist into a liquid to take away.

Considering the density of the spirit mist in the pool, it should be feasible.

Lu Ye hurriedly stimulated his spirit force again, constructing a large Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Rune, then controlling it to form a large funnel.

Everything went smoothly.

The thick spirit mist was drawn in, converging into the funnel, then climbing onto the walls of the funnel, condensing into a liquid and flowing out from the funnel's lower spout.

Lu Ye took out a jade vial and placed it at the spout of the funnel, ready to collect the dripping Spiritual Liquid.

However, just then, an invisible force swept through, instantly destroying the large funnel.

Lu Ye frowned.

Undeterred, he stimulated his spirit force to construct another large funnel...

This time, as soon as the large funnel formed, that invisible force reappeared, once again destroying the funnel.

Not only that but deep within, Lu Ye spontaneously felt a sense of being watched, as if there were a pair of eyes in the darkness focusing on him. Should he show any further untoward actions, there would surely be some unpleasant results.

Is this Heaven's Augury?

Lu Ye's heart was shaken.

Ever since he began his path of cultivation, he had often heard the term Heaven's Augury. Cultivators' daily cultivation life is inextricably linked with Heaven's Augury. All along, he had thought that Heaven's Augury was just some obscure, supreme rules or principles that existed above all beings.

But now it seemed that his understanding might be incorrect. This Heaven's Augury... was it alive?

His body became somewhat stiff, and that imminent disaster feeling was extremely unpleasant. Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force, tentatively attempting to construct a large Spirit Energy Gathering Funnel again, but as soon as it began to take shape, he inexplicably panicked, his heart pounding erratically in his chest as if it would jump out of his throat.

Dispersing his spirit force, that feeling of panic disappeared.

Lu Ye immediately determined that Heaven's Augury did not allow him to take the spirit mist from this place, hence the warning!

Was it necessary?

But upon further thought, the spirit mist was a reward from Heaven's Augury for those strong on the Spirit Stream Ranking who had stayed for a full month and were qualified to be led here. If he were to take the spirit mist away from here, what kind of reward would that be?

It's like going to a feast where being able to eat a lot is a skill, but taking food home is not acceptable.

Realizing this, Lu Ye gave up his previous idea. Although it was a pity, since Heaven's Augury did not permit it, there was nothing he could do. He couldn't compete with Heaven's Augury in a battle of wits and bravery, as he would be the one to suffer in the end.

What particularly concerned him was whether Heaven's Augury actually had its own consciousness, or, to put it another way, whether it was truly a living being.

Setting aside the doubts in his heart, Lu Ye found a spot to sit down and wait peacefully.

Other cultivators cultivate by holding on to the primeval and focusing their minds, free from distractions. After all, if not focused enough, one is unable to absorb nature's spiritual energy.

But Lu Ye's cultivation was always different; he did whatever he needed to do. As long as the small spirit energy gathering funnels were there, he didn't need to worry.

Quietly perceiving and meditating, his body and psyche continued to grow stronger.

Lu Ye had never felt time pass so quickly before. When his vision blurred and the environment changed from the Heaven's Augury Pond to the wooden house courtyard, Lu Ye realized that one hour had already passed.

On inspecting himself, even though Lu Ye's physique and psyche were already strong, the half an hour he spent in the Heaven's Augury Pond had given him a significant boost.

By a conservative estimate, both his body and psyche had improved by at least ten percent.

This improvement might sound small, only a mere ten percent, but in actuality, it was terrifying, because Lu Ye's foundation was already strong. An increase of ten percent on such a strong base brought a considerable gain.

Without mentioning anything else, if he were to fight Szi Guang now, he was confident that he could defeat his opponent without getting injured.

Of course, this had to do with the techniques he used. Others went inside focusing solely on absorption, and even with great talent, their efficiency couldn't be much higher.

He was different. Not to mention the more than three hundred small funnel spirit runes enhancing his spiritual orifice, he had also set up a spirit energy gathering array. Not only did he reap a lot of benefits, but Yiyi and Amber also benefited from it.

"Lu Ye, Lu Ye, you seem to have gotten paler," Yiyi said, curiously sizing up Lu Ye as if she had discovered a new continent.

"Nonsense!"

Lu Ye's face darkened as he reached out to pinch Yiyi's cheek, squeezing it firmly.

"Hmm, it feels better than before."

Lu Ye wondered if, by continuing to cultivate in this way, Yiyi could become indistinguishable from a living person. Although she now looked no different from anyone else, no matter what, she was still just a Spiritual Body.

Being pinched by Lu Ye, Yiyi couldn't escape and could only cry for help, "Sister Hua Ci, save me!"

Hua Ci, who came out of the house upon hearing the noise, slapped away Lu Ye's hand and protected Yiyi behind her, "Why are you always bullying the child?"

Yiyi peeked out from behind Hua Ci, stuck her tongue out at Lu Ye, and wore a triumphant expression as if to say, someone's got my back.

She then said to Hua Ci, "Sister Hua Ci, I said Lu Ye got paler, and he didn't believe me. Look, isn't it true?"

Hua Ci took a serious look at Lu Ye, and under his nervous and uneasy gaze, she said, "Your blood Qi is much more vigorous, with a healthy glow to your face. It looks like you have good fortune coming..."

She then glanced at Amber, "Amber too. Is the effect of Heaven's Augury's reward so obvious?"

"If it weren't obvious, why would those 9th Heaven cultivators still linger on the Spirit Stream battlefield? So, you should go challenge the Spirit Stream Ranking."

"Can I defeat you and claim the top spot?"

Lu Ye suddenly realized, "You sure have great ambitions! But to defeat me, I'm afraid you'll never have the chance."

With the Talent Tree, he was immune to all poisons, making Hua Ci's most powerful method ineffective against him, so naturally, she couldn't defeat him.

Only then did Lu Ye understand that Hua Ci's reason for not challenging the Ranking was because he currently held the top spot of the Spirit Stream Ranking. Her aspirations, like her generosity, were grand, aiming for the first place on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

If that were the case, she would definitely wait until he ascended to Cloud River before making her challenge.

Lu Ye could imagine the scene when that time came...

He felt sorry for the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

As it stood, his occupation of the top spot on the Spirit Stream Ranking with 8th Heaven cultivation already humiliated the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, but if Hua Ci were to rank first as a healing cultivator, not only would it be a disgrace to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, but the Haotian Alliance would also lose face...

When has a healing cultivator ever appeared in the top fifty of the Spirit Stream Ranking?

Lu Ye had no doubt that Hua Ci had the strength to take the top spot on the Spirit Stream Ranking, as she now had the qualifications to challenge the top thirty.

With both body and psyche enhanced, he needed some time to adjust. Once Hua Ci and Yiyi left, Lu Ye simply took out the Boulder Mountain Saber and practiced his Single Flash Saber Technique.

After swinging the saber once, Lu Ye felt the difference. It wasn't just the increased power of that single strike, but more importantly, his chest didn't hurt anymore.

It must be known that he had been pierced through the chest by a spear from Szi Guang. Although he recovered quickly with Hua Ci's treatment, Hua Ci was still of low cultivation at the moment. Even if she did her best, there were still some lingering issues at the site of Lu Ye's injury.

Previously, every time he practiced the Single Flash technique, there was a painful sensation in his chest.

Chapter 410 The Purple Qi Comes from the South

Cultivators often vie for bravery and ruthlessness in their disputes with others, and even the strongest amongst them are susceptible to injuries. While wounds may heal, many deep-seated problems linger in the body.

Now, Hua Ci's cultivation is still low, powerless against these invisible dangers, and only a healing cultivator of Second Senior Sister Shui Yuan's level can properly deal with such issues.

Previously, every time Lu Ye returned to the Righteous Blood Sect headquarters after his training exercises, Shui Yuan would carefully tend to him, ensuring all hidden dangers were eradicated.

It seems now that the spirit mist in Heaven's Augury Pond also has the effect of treating these deep-seated problems.

Lu Ye felt his body had become much lighter, as if a layer of invisible burden had been lifted.

He continued to focus on practicing Single Flash.

Suddenly, a message came through the battlefield marking; it was from Yooi Lianzhou, "Fellow Daoist Lu, I am about to ascend to Cloud River. In addition, Szi Guang has already ascended."

Lu Ye quickly consulted the Spirit Stream Ranking and, indeed, Szi Guang's name was absent. It looked like he had ascended to Cloud River just as Yooi Lianzhou had said.

Not only that, many familiar names were missing from the Spirit Stream Ranking, and a large number of unfamiliar names had appeared at the end of the list.

This swift changeover is typical for the Spirit Stream Ranking. Normally, the list would be completely refreshed every few months. Regardless of the ranking, after about three or four dips in Heaven's Augury Pond, you'd hit your limit, making it pointless to linger at the 9th Heaven level any longer.

As for the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance Yooi Lianzhou mentioned, Lu Ye had heard of it. He knew it was a temporary organization established for the sole purpose of eliminating him by forces from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, with Szi Guang as one of the leaders.

With this loose and temporary organization now leaderless due to Szi Guang's departure, the Lu Ye Extermination Alliance was likely headless.

Lu Ye messaged Yooi Lianzhou, exchanging farewells. A moment later, Yooi Lianzhou's name also disappeared from the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Outside the wooden hut, Lu Ye continued to diligently practice his saber skills, intermittently stopping to cultivate and study books until he was ready to resume training.

At the Core Circle, the residence of Endless Island.

Endless Island is a 1st grade sect with profound and powerful foundations, producing generations of extraordinary talent.

At this very moment, a young man stood alone, quietly observing a delicate pavilion not far away.

Had Lu Ye been there, he would have recognized this young man as Luo Ji, whom he had once fought against.

However, at that time, everyone's cultivation was not high. Lu Ye was on his way from Qingyun Mountain to the Righteous Blood Sect territory. En route, he crossed through Xuanmen and the Nine

Stars Sect territories, where he killed a Young Master from the Nine Stars Sect and was pursued as a result. Xuanmen intervened, leading to a chaotic battle in Sky-Splitting Gorge.

At that time, Luo Ji was on a training expedition with the Nine Stars Sect and was entrusted by Dong Shuye to pursue and attempt to kill Lu Ye.

Luo Ji was the first real magic cultivator Lu Ye encountered, and it was this encounter that sparked Lu Ye's strong dislike for the magic cultivator faction.

Of course, now, Lu Ye doesn't dislike them as much, mainly because magic cultivators are easy to kill.

In the year and a half since then, Luo Ji's cultivation had advanced to 7th Heaven.

Luo Ji was different from ordinary cultivators; he was directly cultivating a Heaven Rank technique. When Lu Ye encountered him, his cultivation was at the 2nd Heaven, with over fifty orifices opened.

At that time, Lu Ye was at Spirit Stream Level 3, and after an intense battle with Luo Ji, the fight was inconclusive.

In a year and a half, Luo Ji's cultivation had risen to 7th Heaven, with less than three hundred orifices opened—a rapid rate of progression. He was born into a well-placed family, possessed excellent aptitude, and had earned many rewards from Endless Island for his achievements, especially since he managed to escape back to his sect when the Nine Stars Sect headquarters were breached.

But Luo Ji was not content with his current state; quite simply, he was still unknown in the Spirit Stream battlefield, with nothing to show but his identity as an Endless Island disciple. Lu Yiye, whom he had matched in strength that day, was now a renowned figure across the Nine Provinces.

Furthermore, Lu Yiye was now at the 8th Heaven cultivation level and the top name on the Spirit Stream Ranking.

Under such dazzling brilliance, any talent would feel ashamed.

Upon returning to Endless Island that day, he swore to himself that he would one day defeat the mountain tiger, Lu Yiye, to redeem himself for past humiliations. But now, it seemed impossible to fulfill this wish.

Looking around the current Spirit Stream battlefield, perhaps only she could defeat Lu Yiye!

The woman he brought back from the Nine Stars Sect!

At the time, he did not know why this somewhat dim-witted-looking woman was so special. His visit to the Nine Stars Sect was simply to follow a clue forwarded by an elder of his sect who was skilled in divination, to find a person's whereabouts.

That divining elder had prophesied "The purple aura comes from the south," prompting many Endless Island disciples to be dispatched to the southern region of the Spirit Stream battlefield to find the person mentioned in the prophecy.

Ultimately, it was his good fortune to meet that woman at the Nine Stars Sect.

As it turned out, the elder's divination was not wrong.

During her time with the Nine Stars Sect, the woman seemed rather dull, and her talent was mediocre. But after following Luo Ji back to Endless Island, she was immediately recognized by the inheritance left by the ancestors of Endless Island, and her cultivation progressed incredibly fast thereafter.

The last time he saw her, a month ago, she had already reached 8th Heaven cultivation and it probably wouldn't be long before she could ascend to 9th Heaven!

Lu Yiye's cultivation speed was already fast, but compared to this woman, it was simply not worth mentioning.

"Junior Brother Luo, are you waiting for Ziyi?" someone suddenly asked.

Lu Yiye turned and saw it was his sect's Governor Kong Bu, and he couldn't help but blush slightly, "Just taking a walk."

Kong Bu chuckled, "There is nothing to be embarrassed about with a little romance, especially since you're the only one in the sect who can exchange a few words with Ziyi. This junior sister... even when I speak to her, sometimes she doesn't even bother to reply."

Lu Yiye hurriedly said, "Ziyi means no harm, she is just a bit slow-witted by nature."

It was well-known that the woman was slow-witted; perhaps you might ask her a question today, and she wouldn't react until the next day, then come running to tell you the answer. Some brothers in the sect often found her behavior confusing.

Kong Bu smiled, "I know she means no harm. Junior Brother Luo, don't be nervous. I'm not the kind of person who frets over these things."

After pausing, Kong Bu spoke leisurely, "'The purple Qi comes from the south,' Lan Ziyi, Grandmaster's divination skills have become increasingly profound."

"Indeed, when I first heard her name called at the Nine Stars Sect base that day, I knew she was the person I was looking for."

It was precisely because Lu Yiye brought back Lan Ziyi that he was able to earn great merit for the Endless Island.

"By the way, Senior Brother, I remember that you sparred with Ziyi before. Do you think if she ascends to the 9th Heaven, she could defeat that Lu Yiye?" Lu Yiye asked a question that concerned him.

"Yes!" Kong Bu replied without hesitation, "The last time we sparred, Ziyi was only at the 8th Heaven cultivation, but I almost wasn't a match for her."

Lu Yiye actually didn't know the result of their last spar, and upon hearing this, he was delighted: "That's fantastic."

So many 9th Heaven cultivators on the vast Spirit Stream Ranking were suppressed by an 8th Heaven. How could Ten Thousand Demons Ridge stand it? If Ziyi could defeat that Lu Yiye after she comes out of seclusion, it would surely bring great glory to the sect.

"With her speed of cultivation, it shouldn't take long for her to come out of seclusion."

"Let's hope so," Lu Yiye replied perfunctorily, "By the way, I forgot to congratulate Senior Brother on making it into the top twenty of the Spirit Stream Ranking."

Kong Bu gave a wry smile and shook his head, "This top twenty ranking of mine is not truly deserved."

Many who were ranked ahead of him had recently chosen to ascend Cloud River, and naturally, his rank also rose.

...

Within the wooden hut in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, Lu Ye's leisurely days had just passed three days when he received a message from Phong Yue, "Fifth Senior Brother, it's not good. A lot of people from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge are surrounding the Three Saints Sanctuary base. It seems they are targeting you."

Lu Ye was puzzled, "Targeting me, but why go to the Three Saints Sanctuary?"

Phong Yue replied, "Since they couldn't find you, they came looking for me instead. I don't know how they found out that I'm a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect... Fifth Senior Brother, what should we do?"

"Wait!"

Lu Ye replied with a single word and quickly transmitted messages to inquire about the situation.

He soon received some feedback.

During this time, he had been hiding in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge completely lost track of him. Seeing him rise to the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking and also receiving the blessings of Heaven's Augury, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge found it increasingly unbearable.

Lu Yiye was already difficult to kill. If he continued to grow stronger, no one on the Spirit Stream battlefield would be able to kill him.

Thus, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was currently trying every means to force him out.

The knowledge that Phong Yue was a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect wasn't due to someone deliberately leaking the information. When Lu Ye first entered the Core Circle, he took Phong Yue to the Three Saints Sanctuary base and left him there.

Those with ulterior motives could naturally think of this detail.

It wasn't only the Three Saints Sanctuary's base that was encircled; even the base of Loyal Heart Sect suffered unintended consequences.

When Feng Yuechan and Li Baxian were in charge of the Loyal Heart Sect base, no one dared to provoke it. But now, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge did not care whether the Righteous Blood Loyal Heart had fallen apart or not. Any Core Circle sect with even a slight connection to the Righteous Blood Sect was targeted.

For a time, the Loyal Heart Sect was in distress, and it was not suitable to explain anything to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, so they could only defend their base.

Fortunately, for now, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge only wanted to force Lu Ye out, so they surrounded but did not attack both the Three Saints Sanctuary and the Loyal Heart Sect, to put pressure on Lu Ye!

Whether the Loyal Heart Sect lived or died, Lu Ye didn't care much, but he couldn't ignore the Three Saints Sanctuary.

The ties to the Three Saints Sanctuary started when the sect master poached fifty disciples from them, and Lu Ye promised to affiliate and cultivate there, something he hadn't fulfilled yet. If because of him, the Three Saints Sanctuary base was breached... the sect master would have difficulty explaining it to the Three Saints Sanctuary.

He had originally planned to safely cultivate to the 9th Heaven level in the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, truly an instance of 'The tree desires quiet, but the wind will not cease!'

Suppressing the anger in his heart, Lu Ye transmitted a message to Phong Yue, "Tell the fellows at the Three Saints Sanctuary not to panic. If the base is breached because of me, I will compensate them later."