

Humanity 451

Chapter 451 Seeking Refuge

Reflecting on the method to set up a formation, Lu Ye placed sixteen array bases around the area, enveloping several buildings and the Spiritual Spring within it before activating the big array.

The protective ability of the newly formed big array wasn't very strong as it needed to draw in sufficient spirit force to continually strengthen its defense, the more concentrated nature's spiritual energy, the more outstanding the protection.

Moreover, with the protective array in place, the spiritual energy from the spirit ground would not leak out.

As dawn gradually broke, a night's accumulation made the spiritual energy in the spirit ground very dense, but it had not reached its limit yet; such accumulation generally takes several days to stabilize before the grade of the spirit ground can be evaluated.

Lu Ye began setting up various formations within the spirit ground.

In terms of cultivation, his was among the weakest in the Cloud River battlefield, but that didn't mean his strength was at the bottom, especially since he had a considerable understanding in the Array Path. Coupled with his methods in array cultivation, he was well prepared. Even if cultivators from the Level 4-5 of the Cloud River came, they might not necessarily be able to handle him.

If this place were really a barren land, it would not attract much attention, but with the revival of the Spiritual Spring and the resurrection of the spirit ground, it was bound to draw the attention of others soon, and troubles would inevitably follow.

As he was busy, Lu Ye suddenly sensed something and looked up into the sky.

He saw a bewitching figure hovering there, looking down in surprise, obviously having noticed something unusual about the spirit ground below.

As their eyes met, the person exclaimed in surprise, "It's you?"

Lu Ye was also surprised as he had not expected to encounter this female cultivator here.

This woman was the one who had fought briefly over the spirit fortune stick with him before, and then cooperated with him.

The Cloud River battlefield was vast, yet to encounter the same person twice in just two days was truly a case of 'no meeting is not destined'.

The female cultivator glanced at Lu Ye, then at the ten-part map in her hand, and realizing that there was no mark of this spirit ground on it, she said in surprise, "A newly born spirit ground?"

She was obviously mistaken.

Lu Ye did not intend to explain too much and just quietly watched her.

The female cultivator gently landed on the ground outside the protective array, touched the light curtain of the array with her hand, her eyes shining, "Little brother, are you an array cultivator?"

In the entire Cloud River battlefield, if one were to say which faction of cultivators was most in demand, it would undoubtedly be the array cultivators.

Array cultivators could set up formations, which were invaluable to those cultivators who owned spirit ground. If an array cultivator was stationed there, the protection of the spirit ground would undoubtedly be greatly enhanced.

Therefore, in the Cloud River battlefield, almost every spirit ground has its own array cultivator, and a spirit ground without one could not withstand the intrusion of outsiders.

Here was a spirit ground, and Lu Ye looked like an array cultivator, hence the lady's thoughts naturally became lively. Even though Lu Ye merely watched her expressionlessly, it did not diminish her enthusiasm.

"Little brother, are you alone here? Do you need a hand? Don't let my delicate appearance fool you, I'm quite capable in a fight," the female cultivator promoted herself vigorously as she spoke, even puffing up her chest, which stood tall and proud!

Lu Ye distinctly heard a snort of derision from Amber inside him.

"Little brother, if you really are alone, even if you're an array cultivator, you surely can't protect this spirit ground on your own. Let me help you, please take me in," she said, with a pleading tone at the end.

She spoke the truth, but Lu Ye hadn't planned to monopolize the spirit ground by himself either, as this was unrealistic.

According to the rules of the Cloud River battlefield, for a small spirit ground like this one, the first few people who discovered it could form a temporary alliance to occupy it together and look after each other.

Of course, rules were rigid, but people were adaptable—if Lu Ye had enough manpower, he could turn her down.

But currently, Giant Armor's whereabouts were unknown, and he could not get in touch with his fourth senior brother and Feng Yuechan either. The most likely outcome of rejecting others was that the news of this spirit ground would spread, and soon others would come in groups to fight for the possession of this spirit ground, which would complicate matters greatly.

Therefore, in the Cloud River battlefield, the cultivators who first discovered an uncharted spirit ground were usually entitled to a share.

"Your cultivation!" Lu Ye asked indifferently.

The female cultivator straightened up proudly and said, "Cloud River Level 5! I ascended through 360 orifices in the Cloud River, and back in the day, I was ranked 46th on the Spirit Stream Ranking. I swear by Heaven's Augury, there is no deception."

Being able to be listed on the Spirit Stream Ranking unquestionably indicated a solid foundation. However, in front of Lu Ye, the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking, she was still lacking. This indicated that the female cultivator's sect background was not simple either—at least a 3rd grade sect. Which faction she belonged to was irrelevant.

"Little brother, if you would take me in, I promise to work with you wholeheartedly to safeguard this spirit ground. Should any invaders come, they will surely not be spared," she vowed.

"Come in," Lu Ye said as he operated the jade cluster of the protective array, opening a gap in it.

The female cultivator immediately replied cheerfully, "Alrighty!"

She stepped in, thinking to herself how lucky she was to accidentally find a new spirit ground that hadn't yet stabilized and that the owner lacked sufficient manpower.

Only at this moment did Lu Ye take a good look at the woman. Undeniably, she was very beautiful, with a great figure to boot. Her fair arms, exposed to view, seemed so delicate that they could break with a mere puff, catching the eye.

The female cultivator looked around and finally realized, "Little brother, this is not a newly born spirit ground? Is it a revival of the Spiritual Spring?"

If this were a newly born spirit ground, there would not be so many dilapidated buildings here. If there were dilapidated buildings, it would indicate that people once lived here.

Where there were people living in a desolate wilderness, it could only be a spirit ground.

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"Yes."

"You're really lucky to have stumbled upon a reviving Spiritual Spring. Of course, I'm pretty lucky myself, hehe. Oh, by the way, I haven't asked yet, how should I address you, young man?" The female cultivator seemed quite casual and carefree, but she didn't lack the charm of a woman.

Lu Ye blurted out without hesitation, "Ye Liu!"

Having finally left the Spirit Stream battlefield, it was a new journey, a new beginning, and Lu Ye didn't want people to pay too much attention to him because of his name.

Righteous Blood Sect's Lu Yiye had caused too much commotion on the Spirit Stream battlefield, and there were definitely people on the Cloud River battlefield who had heard of him, so Lu Ye had already decided to change his name upon entering the Cloud River battlefield.

"Oh... so you're Fellow Daoist Ye, I'm Shen Xiaomao."

Their gazes met, and the atmosphere was somewhat stiff.

The name Ye Liu clearly wasn't a real name, and as for Shen Xiaomao, it was undoubtedly a pseudonym too. It was quite common for cultivators who weren't acquainted with each other to report their aliases to one another on the Cloud River battlefield.

"Let's draw up a Heaven's Augury Pact," Lu Ye broke the silence, knowing that unfamiliar cultivators forming an alliance to share a spirit ground required the drawing of a Heaven's Augury Pact. Only with a Heaven's Augury Pact could they feel assured of one another, without it, no one knew if the other party might scheme behind their back.

However, Lu Ye had never experienced this before and didn't know how to list the terms on the Heaven's Augury Pact, so he left the matter to Shen Xiaomao, taking the opportunity to observe and learn.

"Alright!" Shen Xiaomao agreed readily, muttering under her breath for a moment, and suddenly a beam of golden light descended from Heaven's Augury, which she grasped, and pulled out a Heaven's Augury Pact.

Lu Ye had seen his Fourth Senior Brother perform this action on Golden Light Peak, so he wasn't surprised by it.

"Fellow Daoist Ye, see if this suits you, and if it does, we can sign it," Shen Xiaomao handed the Heaven's Augury Pact to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye examined it carefully and found that the terms listed were very detailed, including the obligations and responsibilities they were supposed to fulfill for each other, the help they should provide, and the prohibition of harboring harmful intentions against the alliance. They were also forbidden from secretly revealing the existence of this spirit ground, mainly to prevent them from summoning familiar cultivators. For example, if Lu Ye were to summon his Fourth Senior Brother and Feng Yuechan, it would undoubtedly be disadvantageous for Shen Xiaomao, as she would have to be constantly wary of any designs they might have against her.

It was because of such considerations that the phenomenon of cultivators from two camps temporarily cooperating on the Cloud River battlefield occurred.

Shen Xiaomao even thoughtfully reserved spaces for two or three more people.

As such a small spirit ground typically gathered three to five people and there were only Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao, their defensive power was somewhat fragile. If they could add a few more people, defending this spirit ground would become easier.

"There's something I need to inform you in advance," Lu Ye looked up at Shen Xiaomao.

"Hmm, go ahead," Shen Xiaomao nodded.

"I have already revealed the news of this spirit ground to a fellow sect member, but I don't know when he'll be able to come."

"Just one?"

"Only this one!"

"That's fine then, as long as you don't leak it carelessly afterward."

"If there's no problem, let's sign the Heaven's Augury Pact." Lu Ye raised his hand, bit his fingertip, and stamped his fingerprint on the Heaven's Augury Pact. Shen Xiaomao did the same, and amidst the predestined arrangements, the Heaven's Augury Pact was consummated.

Lu Ye stored the Heaven's Augury Pact away.

After signing the Heaven's Augury Pact, Shen Xiaomao's expression became much more relaxed; she was previously quite wary of Lu Ye.

Looking around, she asked, "Which side are you staying on?"

Lu Ye pointed to the room he had stayed in the night before.

Shen Xiaomao pointed to another room, "Then I'll stay on this side!"

As she said this, she picked up the hem of her skirt and cheerfully ran into the room, busying herself with setting things up.

Lu Ye continued setting up the formation.

It wasn't until the evening that Shen Xiaomao finished her tasks. When she came out, she appeared disheveled, telling Lu Ye, "I'm going to find a place to take a bath."

After Lu Ye deactivated the protective array, she shot into the sky and disappeared in the blink of an eye, leaving no trace of where she went.

By nightfall, when Shen Xiaomao returned, Lu Ye had already gone into his room to rest.

The accumulation over a day and night made the nature's spiritual energy within the spirit ground extremely rich.

During Lu Ye's time in the Spirit Stream battlefield, he had also entered the territories of many Core Circle sects, and each Core Circle sect's territory was rich with nature's spiritual energy, suitable for cultivators to practice in.

In comparison, the nature's spiritual energy in the current spirit ground was about two to three times richer than that of any Core Circle sect's territory on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

In such an environment, Cloud River Realm cultivators naturally cultivated with twice the results for half the effort.

Furthermore, the current condition of the spirit ground was not yet completely stabilized. Once it did stabilize, the density of the nature's spiritual energy would increase even further.

Of course, the efficiency of cultivation couldn't compare to using a spirit fortune stick, but the advantage was in its stability and longevity. Competing for spirit fortune sticks was fraught with too much uncertainty.

Chapter 452 Come Out to Greet the Guest

In the spirit ground, Lu Ye sat casually on a rock, the Boulder Mountain Saber by his side, with a book in his hands that he was reading with great interest, occasionally popping an elixir pill into his mouth.

The spiritual energy within the spirit ground had completely stabilized.

According to Shen Xiaomao's evaluation, the grade of this spirit ground was slightly above Class C, but not quite reaching the level of Class B.

Lu Ye was quite shocked because compared to the nature's spiritual energy of the sect headquarters in the Core Circle of the Spirit Stream battlefield, the spiritual energy here in the spirit ground was three to four times greater.

If this isn't even Class B, then what wonders would Class B hold, let alone the better Class A spirit ground?

No wonder the cultivators at the Cloud River battlefield yearned so much for spirit grounds; for most cultivators who relied on absorbing nature's spiritual energy as their main method of cultivation, a good cultivation environment was crucial, as it related to the speed at which their cultivation progressed.

In terms of experience muddling through in the Cloud River battlefield, Shen Xiaomao doubtlessly had more than Lu Ye, a newcomer; in the past few days they spent together, Lu Ye had learned a lot of common knowledge from her, including how to evaluate the grade of a spirit ground.

As she said, if using the spiritual energy of the sect headquarters in the Core Circle of the Spirit Stream battlefield as a standard for measurement, a place with twice the concentration would be considered a Class D spirit ground.

Three times denser would be Class C, four times denser would be Class B, and five times or more would be Class A.

Based on such standards, this spirit ground was indeed between Class C and Class B.

The reason he wasn't cultivating inside his house but had run outside was mainly to wait for one or two lucky Fellow Daoists who might pass by!

Right now, only Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao were present in the spirit ground, with Lu Ye at Cloud River Level 1 and Shen Xiaomao at Cloud River Level 5; even though Lu Ye had set up a large number of Formations within the spirit ground, their defensive power was relatively weak, so they still needed more manpower.

On this matter, Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao reached an agreement.

Typically, a small spirit ground like this one would gather three to five people; Lu Ye had already informed Giant Armor, so they needed one or two more to strengthen their numbers.

Given the Heaven's Augury Pact they had previously signed, both of them couldn't secretly rally cultivators they knew, so they had no choice but to wait here, hoping to encounter one or two suitable candidates by chance.

According to what Shen Xiaomao said, such a spirit ground, neither high nor low in grade, didn't need to worry too much about being targeted by powerhouses in the Cloud River Realm because those powerhouses would prefer to occupy Class B or even Class A spirit grounds. Hence, a spirit ground between Class C to Class B was just right for cultivators at the Cloud River Level 4-5.

So a spirit ground's lower grade wasn't necessarily a bad thing; if it were a Class A grade, it might attract powerhouses from Cloud River Level 8-9, and if that happened, the spirit ground definitely couldn't be preserved.

Only then did Lu Ye realize that there was so much to consider for just a spirit ground.

This place was akin to a desolate wild land, so very few people came by, and Lu Ye waited outside for a day without seeing a single soul.

The next day, it was Shen Xiaomao's turn to keep watch.

Just entered the Cloud River battlefield, Lu Ye naturally had to focus on improving his own cultivation as the main task; only with enhanced cultivation could he possess sufficient self-protection power.

Therefore, he had been cultivating diligently these past few days, swallowing a large number of Origin Spirit Pills, coupled with the rich spiritual energy in the spirit ground, the river of spirit force inside him grew more robust by the day.

The cultivation in the Cloud River Realm was all about expanding the river of spirit force; breaking through each limit meant one's cultivation would rise a level until the river of spirit force filled the entire body and transformed into a lake of spirit force, forming a True Lake.

As he was cultivating, he suddenly heard Shen Xiaomao's voice from outside, along with another person's voice.

Lu Ye put down the book he was holding and listened quietly.

A moment later, he heard Shen Xiaomao call out from outside, "Fellow Daoist Ye, come out and greet the guests."

Lu Ye stood up with a dark expression, opened the door, and stepped out.

He saw Shen Xiaomao standing within the big array, and outside the light screen of the big array stood another figure, also a woman. She had a delicate appearance, with a teardrop mole beneath the corner of her eye, pitifully endearing.

Shen Xiaomao greeted with enthusiasm, "Fellow Daoist Ye, a homeless Fellow Daoist has arrived, her name is..."

"Ruan Qingzhu," the woman outside the big array said with a graceful gesture, her voice soft and delicate, a stark contrast to the loud and straightforward Shen Xiaomao.

"Right, her name is Ruan Qingzhu," Shen Xiaomao nodded, "Fellow Daoist Ye, I've asked her, and Fellow Daoist Ruan is willing to stay. She's quite capable, with cultivation at Cloud River Level 4, just what we need."

Ruan Qingzhu stood with her hands before her, performed another graceful gesture, and said, "Grateful for not abandoning me, if allowed to stay, I shall advance and retreat together with both Fellow Daoists."

Lu Ye looked at her for a while, nodded slightly, took out the Great Array Jade Cluster to open up the protective array, allowing Ruan Qingzhu to walk in, then handed over the Heaven's Augury Pact he and Shen Xiaomao had signed earlier, "Take a look for yourself, and if there are no problems, sign it."

Ruan Qingzhu took it, checked it carefully, and said with a slight smile, "No problem."

As she said this, she bit her finger and pressed the fingerprint onto the Heaven's Augury Pact.

Lu Ye secured the Heaven's Augury Pact.

Shen Xiaomao clapped her hands in approval and said, "Now we have three people. Counting Fellow Daoist Ye's Sect Brother who has not yet arrived, we will have four. So we can accept at most one more. I think we can leave the last spot to fate; there's no need to insist. What do you both think?"

"Fine by me," Lu Ye had no objections.

Ruan Qingzhu, being new, had no objections either and said with a smile, "I'll listen to sister."

Shen Xiaomao's face lit up with a smile, "Then it's settled. Over mountains and seas, it's by fate that we can gather here together. In the following days, we will have to rely on each other a lot."

Ruan Qingzhu pressed her lips together with a smile, "Sister, what are you talking about? It's me who should be depending on you."

Lu Ye had already turned and entered the room, continuing his cultivation.

Outside, Shen Xiaomao said to Ruan Qingzhu, "This guy is somewhat somber, but he's not a bad person. You'll get to know him better as time goes by."

"Mm-hmm."

"Since you're new here, let me help you get settled. Which side do you want to stay on? There are several empty houses here, and I live on this side."

"Then I shall be neighbors with sister."

"Very well."

Inside the house, Lu Ye frowned deeply, feeling that women are indeed strange creatures—they had only just met, and yet they could get along so comfortably. Truly curious and odd indeed.

With Ruan Qingzhu joining the spirit ground, having a Cloud River Level 4 cultivation was considered quite good, and naturally, the defensive strength increased. Together with the various formations that Lu Ye had set up, it would be difficult for others to take over this place unless they had an absolute advantage in numbers or strength.

Otherwise, a casual group of three to five people wouldn't be nearly enough.

The days went by, one after another, and Lu Ye was so engrossed in his cultivation that he couldn't extricate himself, quickly depleting the Origin Spirit Pills he had brought from his sect.

Suddenly, he realized that he had brought too few elixir pills. Mainly, he had not anticipated the Cloud River battlefield to be like this. In the Spirit Stream battlefield, he could obtain supplies for cultivation by defeating enemies, but so far in Cloud River battlefield, he had yet to kill a single person, leading to a shortage of elixir pills.

His main method of cultivation was to swallow elixir pills. Without enough pills, how could he continue his cultivation?

He took out the ten-part map to check, and saw that about 800 miles away there was a Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. For him at this moment, that wasn't too far. Traveling by weapon control-flying, a round trip would only take about half a day.

The next day, he stepped out of his room and went to Shen Xiaomao's nearby quarters, raising his hand to knock on her door.

The door opened, and Shen Xiaomao looked at him with a puzzled expression, "Something you need, Fellow Daoist Ye?"

"I need to step out for a bit," he said.

"Oh," Shen Xiaomao nodded, "Then make it a quick trip."

Lu Ye handed over the jade cluster for controlling the great array to her, "Take care while I'm away."

"Don't worry, we'll hold down the fort!" Shen Xiaomao thumped her chest with a trembling hand, causing Lu Ye to inadvertently take a couple more glances.

Summoning the spirit ark, Lu Ye soared into the sky.

The door next door opened, and Ruan Qingzhu poked her head out, curious, "Where is Fellow Daoist Ye off to?"

Shen Xiaomao shook her head, "He didn't say, just that he needed to go out. No need to worry about him; he's a grown man."

Ruan Qingzhu pursed her lips with a smile.

Traveling by weapon control, as swift as the wind and as fast as lightning, he headed in the direction of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

After days of cultivation, although Lu Ye had not made a breakthrough, the accumulation of his spirit force had reached a certain limit. He felt that he was about to make a breakthrough, just missing that final step.

However, even after the breakthrough, he would still be at Cloud River Level 2, which was still at the bottom of the Cloud River battlefield.

But a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and one must eat one bite at a time.

Outside the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye alighted and walked in.

He found a mercantile union manager and spent a large amount of Spirit Stones to purchase a batch of Origin Spirit Pills, leaving only a small amount for emergency use.

The Spirit Stones he had brought from his sect were not too many, and if he were to deplete all his elixir pills, he would have to find a way to obtain supplies for cultivation.

How to find them was a problem. Just as he was about to leave, the mercantile union manager said, "There will be a spirit fortune stick auction tonight at the union, including a purple one. If the customer is interested, perhaps you'd like to stay and take a look."

Naturally, Lu Ye was interested. Spirit fortune sticks were vastly helpful for advancing cultivation, and after having used the purple and green ones before, he had never forgot the feeling of rapidly increasing his power.

Unfortunately, encountering Heaven-bestowed spirit fortune sticks was something one could only hope for but not seek; he had not come across any more in recent days.

The auction for spirit fortune sticks used merit as currency, and he had more than 70,000 merits left. Looking over the entire Cloud River battlefield, there shouldn't be many with more merit than him.

With so many merits in hand, he feared no competitors at the auction.

When Lu Ye had first entered the Cloud River battlefield, he wanted to experience the spirit fortune stick auction, but unfortunately, he had just missed one by two days.

This time he finally had the chance. He decided to stay.

He messaged Shen Xiaomao, letting her know he'd return a bit later. She quickly replied, acknowledging his message and reminding him to be careful, giving Lu Ye a touch of warmth in the unfamiliar territory of the Cloud River battlefield.

Chapter 453 Spirit Fortune Stick Auction

Shen Xiaomao and Ruan Qingzhu had left their marks on each other; after all, they had signed the Heaven's Augury Pact and were partners in a trusted mutual defense alliance.

By nightfall at the mercantile union, the auction of spirit fortune sticks had begun.

Differently from what Lu Ye expected, each cultivator participating in the auction received a small object from the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, made from an unknown material. It was about the length of a finger and looked like a jade rod.

After being instructed on its use by the union's manager, Lu Ye gripped the jade rod in his partition and immersed his mind into it.

In an instant, the scene shifted, somewhat similar to his experiences entering the Heaven's Augury treasure vault each time, and his mind suddenly appeared in a closed-off small room.

Inside the small room was nothing else but floating spirit fortune sticks—most were white, around a hundred possibly, then green ones, also a good dozen, a few were blue, and in the center, a uniquely singular purple one!

Who knew which lucky individual had snagged this purple spirit fortune stick, not requiring it yet bringing it out for auction.

It was understandable though, as cultivators' cultivation consumed too many resources, and many cultivators lived frugally. This situation did not change as a cultivator's cultivation level increased.

Next to each spirit fortune stick was a number indicating its value, and as Lu Ye watched, these numbers were continuously increasing.

After looking for a while, Lu Ye understood that the changing numbers next to the spirit fortune sticks represented their prices.

At this moment, many cultivators were undoubtedly like him—immersed in this small space participating in the auction.

This method was quite novel, as all bidders would not face each other, thus nobody knew who was bidding, and even if someone won the best purple spirit fortune stick, they did not have to worry about being targeted by schemers.

Lu Ye hazily guessed that this auction method was related to the use of merits as bidding chips, as the only place cultivators could use merits was the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

This must be an auction involving Heaven's Augury otherwise, merits would not be utilized.

The value of spirit fortune sticks was a quandary.

After thinking for a moment, Lu Ye messaged Shen Xiaomao to ask about it.

"Are you at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union?" Shen Xiaomao realized something, "As for the spirit fortune sticks, a white one is generally worth around 200 merits, and it's not worth it if it goes over 220. You can calculate the others proportionally."

Lu Ye thanked him.

If a white spirit fortune stick was worth around 200 merits, then a green one would be 600, blue ones would be 1,800, and purple would need 5,400 merits. As for the gold ones, which Lu Ye had never seen before, each was valued at 16,200 merits.

According to Shen Xiaomao, if the price inflated more than 10 percent, it wouldn't be worth it.

With a measuring standard in mind, Lu Ye looked back at the rows of spirit fortune sticks and found it exactly as Shen Xiaomao had described.

The price of each white spirit fortune stick fluctuated around 200, green ones around 600, blues at about 1,800 points, and the unique purple one had already escalated to 5,500.

Lu Ye, of course, was eyeing the purple one. He raised his hand and tapped on the purple spirit fortune stick, which immediately emitted a stream of light and its price changed to 5,550.

Seeing this, Lu Ye speculated further and tapped on a white spirit fortune stick; as its price changed, it too emitted light.

Indeed, the glowing spirit fortune sticks were those he had bid on, and he was still holding the bid; those that did not glow indicated either loss of bid eligibility or no bids.

Having figured this out, Lu Ye began actively participating in the auction.

In no time, many spirit fortune sticks lit up, but quickly, the glowing stick after stick dimmed, which was undoubtedly due to someone outbidding him.

With over seventy thousand merits in hand, Lu Ye was not afraid of anyone; he kept raising his bids!

As time passed, spirit fortune sticks sporadically vanished, representing those taken by others.

Lu Ye managed to acquire over a dozen white spirit fortune sticks, priced at 220 or less, which was still acceptable.

Moments later, he acquired several green ones and two blue ones.

One spirit fortune stick after another disappeared, until finally, only the purple spirit fortune stick remained.

At this moment, the price of this purple spirit fortune stick had astonishingly reached 5,900.

If relying on Shen Xiaomao's experiences, this purple spirit fortune stick would not be worth it if it surpassed 6,000.

But at this moment, Lu Ye just wanted to increase his cultivation level quickly and spending a bit more merits was acceptable.

The glowing purple spirit fortune stick suddenly dimmed, and the price changed to 5,950, clearly someone had outbid Lu Ye.

Lu Ye immediately increased his bid...

In a back and forth with his anonymous competitor, the price finally steadied at 6,200.

The opponent stopped bidding, either surpassing his capability or his budget.

After waiting a moment, the purple spirit fortune stick flickered uncertainly three times and then glowed brightly.

This was the sign every previous acquired spirit fortune stick had shown, and Lu Ye immediately understood that this spirit fortune stick was now his.

He reached out and took the purple spirit fortune stick, storing it in his storage space.

The auction ended, and Lu Ye's mind withdrew from the small room.

Upon checking his gains, he found fifteen white spirit fortune sticks, six green ones, two blue, and one purple, having spent almost 16,800 merits. From his original amount of over 70,000 merits, only about 57,000 remained.

A great harvest, Lu Ye was undoubtedly satisfied. With so many spirit fortune sticks, once he returned to the spirit ground, he only needed a few days of seclusion to reach Cloud River Level 2, and although Cloud River Level 3 seemed unlikely, it would still save him a lot of painstaking cultivation time.

After leaving the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, the moon was bright, and the stars were sparse.

For a cultivator like Lu Ye with low cultivation in the Cloud River Realm, the night was not really suitable for traveling, and staying overnight at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union was the best choice.

But considering he was not in the spirit ground, where the defensive power was greatly reduced, Lu Ye had no choice but to set off overnight.

Moonlight sprinkled down, and the spirit ark flew swiftly, with Amber, perched on Lu Ye's shoulder, in high spirits.

Ever since learning the cultivation method of absorbing moonlight from the Giant Armor, Amber was happiest in such weather, perched on Lu Ye's shoulder, visibly absorbing the moonlight into its belly as it breathed in and out.

They sped along.

While flying, Lu Ye suddenly saw a streak of light rapidly approaching from the side, moving incredibly fast.

By its trajectory, it was unmistakably heading straight for him.

Lu Ye's expression darkened, thinking he was indeed unlucky. Although he did not know the other party's intent, the posture alone was enough to tell that the newcomer bore ill will.

Judging from the other party's speed and the faint fluctuations of spirit force, the newcomer had at the very least a Level 7-8 cultivation in the Cloud River Realm.

After encountering a few Cloud River Realm cultivators, Lu Ye had developed his own criteria for judging the levels of others' cultivation. He did not dare say it was completely accurate, but at least the error margin was not large.

He was no match!

Lu Ye immediately changed direction, boosted by Move-Like-The-Wind, and hurriedly fled.

The person behind him pursued relentlessly.

The gap in strength was too great; even with the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes boost, the distance between them slowly closed. Just as Lu Ye was considering whether to activate Wings, Yiyi's voice suddenly sounded, "Lu Ye, something seems off with that person, looks like he's fallen down."

Lu Ye looked back and saw the chasing streak of light had become extremely dim. Within the streak, a figure was clumsily plummeting downwards, struggling to stabilize but failing to do so.

This guy... was injured?

Lu Ye halted, watching as the other party awkwardly landed on the ground. If it weren't for forcibly stabilizing his body near the ground, he might have really crashed to his death.

If the other party was unscathed, Lu Ye would naturally flee as far as possible, but if the other party was seriously injured, then there was no need to be so wary.

Now thinking about it, the other party coming to him might not have had malicious intent, but instead might have been seeking his help?

Standing still for a moment to ponder, Lu Ye flew towards the direction where the man had fallen.

Shortly after, he saw a figure leaning against a big tree, soaked in blood, truly severely injured, with a fist-sized hole in his chest through which twitching organs could be faintly seen. The wounds didn't stop there; his body was covered in injuries, clearly having endured a fierce battle.

With such injuries... he couldn't survive!

Lu Ye, often injured himself, could tell the severity of the injuries at a glance.

Leaning against the tree, the man breathed lightly, seemingly noticing his arrival, opened his eyes, and met Lu Ye's gaze.

He clenched the bloody longsword in his hand, gave Lu Ye a miserable smile, and said in an extremely weak voice, "Fellow Daoist, you sure run fast!"

"Why chase me?" Lu Ye didn't understand. This guy looked like he was about to die; why bother chasing him, making him think the other was up to no good and unnecessarily worrying him for a while.

The other opened his mouth and said, "I can't survive. It's not easy encountering a person. I want to entrust Fellow Daoist with a task."

"What task?"

"Help me deliver this sword to the Blinding Speed Sect." The man raised the blood-stained longsword in his hand.

"Blinding Speed Sect... the sect from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge?" Lu Ye's mind stirred. If he remembered correctly, he had collected protection money from this sect at the Spirit Stream battlefield.

In other words, this sect was above the 3rd grade and had its own presence in the core circle of the Spirit Stream battlefield.

"Fellow Daoist, are you from the Haotian Alliance?" The man faintly picked up on some information from Lu Ye's tone.

Lu Ye remained silent.

"It doesn't matter. Just delivering a sword can be entrusted to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. There's no need for Fellow Daoist to make the trip personally. If Fellow Daoist agrees, besides this sword, all the possessions on my body belong to you. I won't lie to you; I am actually quite wealthy."

"I can do that." Lu Ye nodded.

Just delivering a sword, especially by entrusting the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union to do so, was not a difficult task.

"That's very good." The man relaxed, gave a bitter smile, and said, "All these years of cultivation... all for nothing in the end."

Lu Ye remained silent, not having experienced what it felt like to be in the other man's situation, but such has always been the way of the cultivation world, life and death.

Chapter 454 Luck

"Draw your sword," the man leaning against the tree trunk under the large tree said calmly as he looked at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye quietly watched him.

"I'm at the Cloud River Level 7, and your cultivation probably isn't too high, so killing me should at least net you a few hundred merits, consider it my last gift to you, Fellow Daoist," he said.

In the Spirit Stream battlefield, defeating an enemy of a higher level resulted in exponentially increasing rewards based on a certain base number, a rule that applied not only there but also on the Cloud River battlefield, and indeed throughout the entire Nine Provinces cultivation world.

Moreover, the base number represented by a cultivator from the Cloud River Realm was much higher than that from the Spirit Stream Realm.

In the Spirit Stream Realm, the base number was the level itself, for instance, a Level 5 cultivator of the Spirit Stream Realm represents five points of merit, Level 9 represents nine points, 7th Heaven ten points, and 9th Heaven twelve points.

The base number increased considerably upon reaching the Cloud River Realm.

For someone at the Cloud River Level 1, the base is twenty merit points, and with each rise in level, the base increases by five points.

For instance, this man, being of Cloud River Level 7, had a base of fifty merit points. If Lu Ye, being at a Cloud River Level 1, were to slay him, that would mean overcoming six minor levels, earning seven times the base, thus gaining three hundred fifty merit points.

Undoubtedly, this had significant value for any cultivator.

Three hundred fifty merit points could buy one and a half white spirit fortune sticks.

Defeating a higher-level enemy brought more rewards, but on the Cloud River battlefield, a higher-level cultivator slaying a lower-level one did not incur any penalties, unlike on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

On the Spirit Stream battlefield, overpowering someone weaker would result in merit deduction as a form of punishment by Heaven's Augury, a protective measure for lower-level cultivators, resulting in a clear delineation of outer circles, inner circles, and core circles.

But for cultivators who had reached the Cloud River Realm, having passed through the initial stages of cultivation, it was generally clear whom one should and shouldn't provoke. Having provoked someone one shouldn't and getting killed as a result was merely getting what one deserved.

Heaven's Augury only protected those who had just stepped into the cultivation world, leaving those in the Cloud River Realm to fend for themselves.

"No need to; taking money to ward off disasters, I will entrust this sword to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union to be delivered to the Blinding Speed Sect," Lu Ye replied.

Having cultivated till now, Lu Ye had killed many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, and for him, killing cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge posed no psychological barrier. However, to actually kill such a man who couldn't even fight back and was on the brink of death, he indeed found it difficult to proceed.

The man gave a bitter smile, "Fellow Daoist, please grant me a quick death. Waiting to die like this... is too agonizing."

Speechless, Lu Ye slowly drew out the Boulder Mountain Saber.

The man loosened his grip on the Longsword and tightly closed his eyes.

With his spirit force propelled around him, Lu Ye covered the distance of several tens of meters in an instant, plunging the Boulder Mountain Saber straight into the man's chest.

Perhaps due to the pain, the man suddenly opened his eyes wide and instinctively grabbed Lu Ye's arm, the strength of his grip causing Lu Ye to feel pain as well.

However, the man's strength soon faded, and his raised hand helplessly fell back, the gleam in his eyes rapidly vanishing.

Lu Ye withdrew the saber, bringing out a spray of hot blood, and seeing that the man's eyes were still wide open, he reached out and closed his eyelids.

There was no personal connection or acquaintance between them, and while killing the man didn't cause much of an emotional stir in Lu Ye, still being a fellow cultivator, and one who had reached the Cloud River Level 7 in this brutal Cloud River battlefield, only to meet such a fate, made Lu Ye even more aware of the cruelty of the cultivation world. It prompted a moment of reflection for him that he would need to be extra cautious in navigating the Cloud River battlefield in the future.

This battlefield wasn't the Spirit Stream battlefield where he could dominate; here, many could easily bring him to his demise.

Yiyi suddenly appeared next to Lu Ye, her mood seeming somewhat subdued.

Moving forward, Lu Ye took the storage sack attached to the man's waist and picked up the bloodstained Longsword. He then took a cloth from his own storage sack and wiped the fresh blood from the sword.

He didn't know what this Longsword meant to the cultivator, who had insisted on having it returned to his sect even in death. Observing it now, two small characters were engraved on the sword's handle.

Qingyun!

Perhaps it was the name of the sword, or possibly someone's name. Who could tell?

Most likely the latter; it could be a token of affection he had with a woman, otherwise, there was no reason to be so persistent about sending the sword back.

"Lu Ye, may I bury him?" Yiyi suddenly asked.

Having killed many from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge alongside Lu Ye, this was the first time she had felt the need to properly bury someone.

"Of course."

After all, they had taken his money, and burying him to let him rest in peace was just a small effort.

However, Lu Ye didn't dare linger too long on the spot because the man had been severely injured, and it was uncertain if a powerful enemy might chase after them. Thus, he carried the man's body and flew far away until they reached a clear and pristine area before landing.

Together with Yiyi, he found a spot, dug a large pit, and buried the man, carefully filling in the grave.

Yiyi bowed several times to the grave, then returned into her Amber form.

Although he initially planned on returning to the spirit ground, he now had to make a detour back to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. On the way, Lu Ye examined the Longsword engraved with the word Qingyun but didn't find anything special about it; it was just a mid-grade spirit artifact with 18 restrictions, worth a few hundred merits.

Lu Ye took out the opponent's storage sack again, attempting to unlock the restriction lock.

Since entering the Cloud River battlefield, he had noticed that his luck was unusually good.

Shortly after entering, he encountered the Heaven's Augury Bestowment, and fortuitously, the four-colored clouds stopped right above him. Although the competition for them was fierce, and he only managed to obtain a green Spirit Fortune Stick, the final outcome was surprisingly in his favor, as someone delivered a purple Spirit Fortune Stick right to him.

Later, when he stopped for a rest, he happened upon a rare revival of the Spiritual Spring, and effortlessly claimed it for himself.

That night was the same. He could have chosen to stay and rest at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union for the night before heading back, but due to his concern for the spirit ground, he decided to travel overnight. Just as he was worried about his cultivation supplies, a dying person came his way, and now the storage sack was in his hands.

If he had decided to stay and rest at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, he undoubtedly would have missed out on such a good fortune.

He never had such good luck at the Spirit Stream battlefield!

One or two incidents might be coincidental, but he had only been in the Cloud River battlefield for ten days, and he stumbled upon several lucky chances.

This was no longer something that could merely be explained by good luck alone.

Lu Ye faintly suspected that it was related to the Heaven's Augury Bestowment he experienced upon ascending to the Cloud River realm.

The Heaven's Augury Bestowment was made out to be grandiose, yet the benefits it brought him were disappointing. Lu Ye always felt that it was much ado about nothing.

But what if some benefits were invisible?

Like luck!

Luck is a peculiar thing. Those with good luck seem to rise effortlessly, while those with poor luck find trouble even when drinking water. Lu Ye always felt that his own luck was average; it didn't make sense for his fortunes to suddenly change once he entered the Cloud River battlefield.

If it were linked to the previous Heaven's Augury Bestowment, then it made sense.

Of course, this was just a guess by Lu Ye. Whether it was true needed further verification in the future.

With Lu Ye's current mastery in the Path of Spirit Runes, unlocking the restriction lock on the storage sack was extremely simple. In just a moment, the restriction lock was opened.

Lu Ye began his search.

It turned out the person was right. Compared to other cultivators in the Cloud River realm, this person was indeed quite wealthy.

Not to mention some rare ores and spirit flowers and rare herbs whose names Lu Ye didn't know. These likely were collected or acquired as spoils from slain enemies. This inference came from the fact that there were more than a dozen mid-grade spirit artifacts and several Flying Spirit Artifacts in the person's storage sack alone.

A cultivator simply didn't need so many spirit artifacts; they could only have been acquired from slain enemies.

Of course, for Lu Ye, apart from selling these items to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union in exchange for cultivation supplies, they had little use.

The remaining items were useful to him.

There were several bottles of healing pills, and more than twenty bottles of Origin Spirit Pills!

The most abundant item this person possessed was Spirit Stones!

There were mid-grade spirit stones and low-grade spirit stones, and even some that appeared to be top-grade spirit stones!

All in all, the total amount reached tens of thousands of stones.

Lu Ye, though he had seen much and knew much, had never seen anyone so tremendously wealthy.

Leaving everything else aside, the tens of thousands of spirit stones alone constituted a tremendous fortune, which even Lu Ye did not possess.

This certainly solved Lu Ye's urgent need. Originally, even if he had purchased a large number of Origin Spirit Pills from the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, he wouldn't have lasted long. He was thinking about where to find some cultivation resources, but now he didn't need to worry about this problem for a while.

After transferring the useful items into his storage space on the back of his hand, Lu Ye took out a copper shard from the storage sack.

The copper shard was about the size of a palm and looked quite ordinary. Lu Ye examined it for a long while, not knowing its purpose, until he channeled spirit force into it. Suddenly, a glow burst forth from the copper shard, and soon after, Lu Ye faintly felt a pulling force coming from it, suggesting a direction.

This copper shard... seemed to contain some secret!

Lu Ye was unclear about what lay in the direction indicated by the copper shard, but from the current situation, following its directed path would likely lead to discovering something.

Holding the copper shard, Lu Ye pondered for a moment.

After a while, he stored the copper shard away. No matter where it pointed, the most important thing for him at this stage was to enhance his own cultivation. Only by increasing his cultivation could he have sufficient self-protection and capital to venture further.

Before the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye descended and walked in leisurely.

He found a manager and inquired about a matter regarding the consignment of a sword. After learning the full circumstances, the manager provided Lu Ye with a solution.

The Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union would temporarily keep the longsword while sending a message to the Blinding Speed Sect, allowing the cultivators from the sect to come here and claim their Spirit Sword.

Lu Ye had no objections, but he had one condition, that they must not disclose any of his information to anyone.

Chapter 455 Cloud River Level 2 Realm

After such back and forth, more than half the night had passed, and Lu Ye hesitated about whether he should simply stay at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union for the night, when suddenly, there was a message from his battlefield marking.

Lu Ye checked it; it was a transmission from Shen Xiaomao, her tone very urgent, "Come back quickly, the spirit ground is in danger!"

Lu Ye hurriedly responded, but there was no more response from Shen Xiaomao's side.

Realizing something was amiss, he quickly left the mercantile union, summoned his spirit ark, and soared into the sky.

Only after one incense stick's time did Shen Xiaomao finally send another message. After briefly exchanging a few words with her, Lu Ye roughly understood the situation, and his heart was full of astonishment, never having expected things to turn out this way.

He raced all the way.

By the time dawn approached, he arrived at the agreed meeting spot with Shen Xiaomao. He descended but did not see any trace of Shen Xiaomao.

He sent a message, but there was no reply.

As he searched around, he saw a few drops of blood on the leaves of a nearby tree, and Lu Ye's brow furrowed, realizing that Shen Xiaomao's circumstances might not be good.

Just when Lu Ye did not know where to search for the woman, Amber, perched on his shoulder, suddenly jumped down and walked with light steps in a certain direction.

Lu Ye hastily followed.

After a moment, in front of a dark cave, Amber paused and gave a sound toward the inside. Lu Ye crouched down and entered, going all the way to the back. The strong smell of blood immediately hit his nose, and at the bottom of the cave, a seductive figure lay in a pool of blood, her complexion pale, breathing faint.

If it wasn't Shen Xiaomao, then who could it be? No wonder there was no response when he tried contacting her earlier.

The woman's injuries seemed severe, and she appeared to have already entered a coma.

Even in a coma, she could sense someone approaching; her brows wrinkled slightly, as if wanting to open her eyes, but her consciousness struggled to awaken, her expression pained.

Lu Ye's expression was solemn as he briefly examined Shen Xiaomao's injuries and found them indeed severe. If left unattended, it was very likely she would die here.

He took some healing items from his storage space and called out, "Yiyi, help her heal."

"Okay," Yiyi flashed out from within Amber and got busy.

Lu Ye then exited the cave, starting to set up a formation around it.

The events of this night were too unexpected; he had not thought that just by leaving the spirit ground for a trip, the ownership of the spirit ground would change hands and Shen Xiaomao would suffer severe injuries. Had this woman not been vigilant enough, she might now be nothing more than a corpse.

From the brief communication he had with her earlier, Lu Ye roughly knew the situation, but he hadn't had the chance to ask about the details, so it seemed he could only wait for her to awaken to discuss it.

What puzzled him more was how someone had circumvented the constraints of the Heaven's Augury Pact.

Could there be a loophole in the Heaven's Augury Pact?

After setting up a simple alert and Concealment Array, Lu Ye sat cross-legged at the cave entrance, took out the Heaven's Augury Pact, and investigated it closely, line by line. But after much scrutiny, he found

no exploitable aspect of this Heaven's Augury Pact. The many clauses on this pact, listed by Shen Xiaomao, revealed her meticulous nature; the clauses echoed each other, systematically organized with clear logic, completely eliminating the possibility of exploitation.

He was somewhat baffled!

However, through this ordeal, Lu Ye had indeed witnessed the maliciousness of human hearts, something he had not experienced on the Spirit Stream battlefield. On the Spirit Stream battlefield, there was more straightforward combat, with not much scheming or trickery.

Yiyi walked out of the cave.

"Will she survive?" Lu Ye asked as he put away the Heaven's Augury Pact.

"There shouldn't be any problems, but with such injuries, she will need at least ten days to half a month to recover."

"As long as she lives," Lu Ye nodded.

With the sky already bright, Lu Ye had a little to eat, then took out a white spirit fortune stick and forcefully snapped it.

No matter what, the urgent priority was still to enhance his own cultivation!

One by one, the spirit fortune sticks were consumed, until Lu Ye had exhausted all the white spirit fortune sticks and also used a green spirit fortune stick. Suddenly, the river of spirit force within his body shook as if it had broken some kind of shackle, its scale expanded significantly, and even the speed at which the spirit force flowed became faster!

Lu Ye felt thoroughly relaxed.

Honestly, the cultivation in the Cloud River Realm was never easy, because the entire process in the Cloud River Realm involved expanding the volume of the river of spirit force inside the body. Therefore, in the leap from quantitative to qualitative change in one's personal accumulation, the river of spirit force always imparted a tense feeling of reaching a limit.

Until now, with this breakthrough, that tense feeling suddenly vanished.

But this state was destined not to last long, because as Lu Ye continued his cultivation, that feeling of being stretched to the limit was sure to reappear, until he broke through the next restriction.

Cloud River Level 2!

Lu Ye had never experienced such a swift advancement rate since he began his cultivation!

Even when he was at the Spirit Stream Realm, breaking through a minor level typically took an average of two or three months, and often it took about three months.

But since his promotion to Cloud River, how much time had passed?

Only half a month!

Advancing one level in just half a month, if he could maintain this speed, he wouldn't need even half a year to reach Cloud River Level 9.

Of course, this was unrealistic. The reason he could cultivate so quickly now was mainly due to the power of the spirit fortune sticks, which greatly accelerated the cultivation speed of cultivators. Additionally, Lu Ye's cultivation didn't demand much from nature's spiritual energy. He primarily relied on consuming elixir pills, thus enabling the miracle of advancing one level in half a month.

He still had one purple spirit fortune stick, two blue ones, and five green ones, which could allow him to continue advancing at Cloud River Level 2, though it probably wouldn't be enough to reach Level 3.

In the thrill of cultivation, Lu Ye naturally pushed on relentlessly.

Time flew, and three days later, Shen Xiaomao barely recovered. Although her injuries had not fully healed, at least there was no risk to her life, and she could speak.

All of the spirit fortune sticks Lu Ye held were completely consumed. His cultivation had not broken through further, but he had made significant progress within Cloud River Level 2, saving him a lot of cultivation time.

In the depths of the cave, Lu Ye sat in front of Shen Xiaomao. She hung her head, and because the cave was dim, Lu Ye didn't notice that Shen Xiaomao's face was flushed.

There was no other reason; her clothes had been changed, and many areas had been carefully bandaged, especially some crucial parts. Shen Xiaomao naturally assumed that Lu Ye was responsible...

She couldn't really blame him; after all, he was saving her life!

She tried to convince herself. Cultivators of the path should not be concerned with these minor issues, but she couldn't help thinking about some matters.

Lu Ye held a bowl of water in his hand and fed Shen Xiaomao a few sips before handing her a piece of dried meat which she slowly chewed and swallowed.

After a long time, Lu Ye finally spoke, "Tell me, what happened?"

Recalling the events of that night, Shen Xiaomao gritted her teeth and said, "Ruan Qingzhu had premeditated this!"

That night, while Lu Ye was at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union participating in the spirit fortune stick auction and had communicated with Shen Xiaomao, nothing had happened yet. But in the middle of the night, while Shen Xiaomao was cultivating, she suddenly noticed something amiss. Before she could investigate, two strangers burst into her room. Both were strong, and in a fierce fight, Shen Xiaomao, outmatched, fought against two, sustaining serious injuries and fleeing. As she left, concerned

for Ruan Qingzhu's safety, she tried to call her to flee together, only to find the woman standing outside, silently watching her. Besides Ruan Qingzhu, there was another figure.

Eventually, Shen Xiaomao was chased by three people. If not for a life-saving item she carried, she would likely have perished then.

After escaping here and concealing her tracks, she sent a message to Lu Ye and then passed out. When she awoke, her injuries had been treated, and she saw Lu Ye.

It was now clear that Ruan Qingzhu was in league with those three strangers. Bound by the conditions of the Heaven's Augury Pact, Ruan Qingzhu was merely a spectator at the time and could not strike Shen Xiaomao personally.

Those three people were let in by Ruan Qingzhu because she was on duty in the middle of the night, holding the jade cluster for the big array. Otherwise, with the many formations Lu Ye had left behind, those three couldn't have stealthily infiltrated.

"What I can't figure out is how Ruan Qingzhu avoided the constraints of the Heaven's Augury Pact to connect with those three men."

The Heaven's Augury Pact specifically included a clause that forbade revealing the existence and location of the spirit ground in private, yet Ruan Qingzhu had managed to bypass this clause to call over three helpers.

Throughout these days of cultivation, Lu Ye had also been considering this question and finally figured out one possibility.

"You're right that she had premeditated," Lu Ye said, "After signing the Heaven's Augury Pact, she indeed couldn't reveal the existence and location of the spirit ground privately, but what if she disclosed it before signing the Heaven's Augury Pact?"

Shen Xiaomao was startled, "You mean to say..."

"Thinking back to the first day we met her, she held her hands in front of her abdomen, tucked into her sleeves. Perhaps at that moment, she had already used the battlefield marking to send a message. The reason they waited so many days before making a move was merely to wait for a suitable opportunity, and my departure from the spirit ground was the perfect chance!"

In Ruan Qingzhu's perception, as an adept array cultivator, Lu Ye had set up numerous formations in the spirit ground. Naturally, the power of those formations would decline significantly without him, so those people just needed to deal with Shen Xiaomao alone.

Their plan was perfect, and if they hadn't underestimated Shen Xiaomao's resourcefulness, Lu Ye might have encountered just a corpse at this moment.

"What deep scheming!" Shen Xiaomao was inwardly shocked, recalling her interactions with Ruan Qingzhu over the past few days. The latter had affectionately called her 'sister' and never showed any signs of malice, making Shen Xiaomao even more apprehensive.

Not to mention Lu Ye, who had only recently arrived at the Cloud River battlefield, even Shen Xiaomao, who had been involved in the Cloud River battlefield for some time, had never seen such malicious intent.

Through her actions, Ruan Qingzhu had thoroughly taught them a lesson.

Chapter 456 Infiltration

"Ye Liu, I'm sorry." In the cave, Shen Xiaomao suddenly spoke.

"Hmm?"

"I lost the spirit ground, it was my fault for not being careful enough. If I had realized her malicious intent earlier, we wouldn't have ended up in this situation."

On the Cloud River battlefield, a spirit ground was immensely beneficial for cultivators. Possessing a spirit ground was of great help to one's cultivation, and Shen Xiaomao had previously been grateful for meeting Lu Ye and being taken in by him. She had imagined her cultivation improving day by day, but to

her dismay, the spirit ground was seized by someone with evil intentions after just a few days, filling her with regret and self-reproach.

"Being a cat, how could you be an opponent to a fox? Don't dwell on it too much, it's just a spirit ground. It's gone, it's gone; what matters most is that we are still alive."

"Just let it be?" Shen Xiaomao clearly was not content to let things go.

"Heal your injuries first." Lu Ye glanced at her.

"Oh."

A spirit ground that was above Class C but below Class B wasn't really of much importance to Lu Ye. While it was good to have a spirit ground, its absence didn't significantly impact his cultivation.

If those people had fought him and Shen Xiaomao openly and defeated them, he would have had nothing to say about it. A coveted place should belong to the strong; if one's strength is inferior, there is nothing to complain about, and one should work diligently to improve. He planned to make a comeback some other day.

However, taking advantage of his absence to use underhanded methods to seize the spirit ground was quite despicable.

He naturally could not just let this matter slide.

Moreover, it was Lu Ye who had first discovered that spirit ground, and it was he who had personally set up the Formation there. Many array banners and array bases were still left behind. Not to mention anything else, just the protective array alone was worth tens of thousands of merit points.

After leaving Shen Xiaomao in the cave to heal, Lu Ye, taking advantage of the night, summoned his spirit ark and soared into the sky, racing rapidly towards his destination.

Shen Xiaomao, with her Level 5 Cloud River Realm cultivation, first took on two opponents alone and was seriously injured, then escaped a three-person ambush. This indicated that the enemy's cultivation wasn't much higher, most likely around Level 4-5.

As for Ruan Qingzhu, she was only at Level 4...

Although Lu Ye was only at Level 2 of the Cloud River Realm at the moment, most of the enemies he'd encountered since beginning his cultivation journey had been of a higher cultivation level than his. It was rare for him to face opponents of the same level or lower, so even if he was up against several Level 4-5s, he didn't have any fear.

Having entered the Cloud River battlefield, he had yet to truly fight against anyone, and he was actually quite curious about the standard of these people here.

Half an hour later, Lu Ye arrived at the periphery of the spirit ground. Looking around, the area where the spirit ground was located seemed empty and deserted. Even if someone passed by nearby, they wouldn't detect the existence of the spirit ground without a careful investigation.

Because the Formation that Lu Ye had previously set up not only had a protective array constructed from sixteen array bases but also a Concealment Formation built around Concealment Spirit Runes at its core.

The spirit ground wasn't very large, and with his current prowess in Array Path, he could conceal the entire spirit ground with a Concealment Formation, avoiding many unnecessary troubles.

If it weren't for the presence of a traitor this time, the spirit ground wouldn't have been so easily seized by others.

Lu Ye silently observed for a moment before landing three miles from the spirit ground. He then activated the Concealment Spirit Runes to cover his body, concealing his form as he stealthily approached the direction of the spirit ground.

One incense stick's time later, Lu Ye arrived at the outskirts of the spirit ground. It was already night, and not much activity stirred around him, save for the occasional insect chirps and frog croaks.

His eyes imbued with Insight Spirit Runes, the concealed spirit ground immediately revealed its presence, and the luminescence of the protective array entered his field of vision clearly.

There were no signs the big array had been altered. Lu Ye wasn't sure if any of those people were array cultivators, but even if there was one, their mastery of Array Path probably wasn't on par with his. Otherwise, they wouldn't have continued using the Formation he had laid out.

As the big array was arranged by Lu Ye himself, he was clear about how it operated and where its nodes were.

Casting several array banners towards the Formation and infusing spirit force, Lu Ye lifted his hand and flipped open a corner of the big array, walking in with ease.

After retrieving the array banners and continuing to conceal his form, a figure suddenly darted out from one of the buildings. This person, holding a Great Array Jade Cluster, looked around vigilantly, obviously in charge of guarding. Although the noise Lu Ye made infiltrating the big array was minimal, it had still disturbed him.

Sensing the guard's movement, several others walked out of their houses, including Ruan Qingzhu.

"Junior Brother Sun, what's going on?" A burly man with a wide waist asked.

The one called Junior Brother Sun, holding the Great Array Jade Cluster, frowned as he scanned the surroundings. He said, "There seems to be something unusual with the big array."

"What kind of unusual?" the burly man asked again, his expression alert.

Junior Brother Sun shook his head: "I'm not sure, but the big array just fluctuated." He turned to a tall and thin man: "Junior Brother Cheng, would you check it out?"

The tall and thin man, Junior Brother Cheng, replied, "Alright!"

With that, he stepped forward to receive the Great Array Jade Cluster from Junior Brother Sun's hand, channeled spirit force into it, and as he adjusted the big array's power, he carefully probed it. From his actions, this person seemed to be an array cultivator.

As Junior Brother Cheng was inspecting the array, Junior Brother Sun asked, "Could it be that Shen Xiaomao has returned?"

The burly man said, "That woman was seriously injured; even if she didn't die, she couldn't possibly have recovered so quickly. As opposed to that woman, I'm actually more concerned about that array cultivator. Junior Brother Cheng has also mentioned that the cultivator's proficiency in the Array Path is not to be underestimated."

Junior Brother Sun laughed, "Didn't Junior Sister Ruan say that the array cultivator is merely at Cloud River Level 1? He's probably just entered the Cloud River battlefield. There's nothing much to worry about."

Since they had all signed the Heaven's Augury Pact, Lu Ye had once told Ruan Qingzhu and Shen Xiaomao about his cultivation. At the time, upon learning that Lu Ye was only at Cloud River Level 1, both women were visibly surprised.

Thinking back, Ruan Qingzhu's surprise seemed to carry a deeper meaning.

Shen Xiaomao's surprise was because, during the previous scramble for the spirit fortune stick, she had briefly clashed with Lu Ye and had not expected him to be at Cloud River Level 1.

Junior Brother Cheng finished his careful inspection of the array and handed the jade cluster to Cultivator Sun, "The array is fine. There might have been some oversights during the setup, causing some stagnation in spirit force flow in some areas. I'll check it more thoroughly tomorrow."

Hearing this, Cultivator Sun was also reassured.

The four of them dispersed to their respective rooms.

Inside Cultivator Sun's room, he sat cross-legged, holding the Great Array Jade Cluster, silently cultivating. With the jade cluster in hand, he could sense any abnormalities within the array—it was a duty required of the guard.

Time quietly passed. At a certain moment, Cultivator Sun, who was immersed in cultivation, suddenly felt a chill spread throughout his body, an inexplicable sense of crisis enveloping him.

He was quick to react. The instant he sensed something amiss, he sharply opened his eyes. However, at that moment, a mysterious force engulfed him, the world spun wildly, and when he came back to his senses, he found himself in a chaotic stone forest.

He immediately surveyed his surroundings with vigilance and saw a figure a hundred paces away. The person appeared young, about seventeen or eighteen years old, head slightly bowed, hand on the hilt of a knife.

Cultivator Sun immediately shouted sharply, "Who goes there!"

More than the identity of the other party, he wanted to know where he was!

He had clearly been in his room in the spirit ground, yet in the blink of an eye, he found himself here, which truly baffled him.

This place, resembling a stone forest, was naturally the space within the Nine Worlds map.

As the four people at the spirit ground were opening the rooms to check the situation, he had quietly sneaked into Cultivator Sun's room. He chose this target because the man possessed the Great Array Jade Cluster.

Lu Ye needed to take control of the Great Array Jade Cluster immediately to move in and out at will.

Otherwise, even if he had set up the spirit ground's array, leaving would still require some effort, just like when he sneaked in.

He had not seized the moment Cultivator Sun was cultivating to launch a surprise attack and kill him, mainly because Lu Ye was not sure he could deliver a fatal blow in one strike and because, even if he could, there was no guarantee that the other party would not scream or make some other sound. If that happened, the remaining three would certainly rush over immediately, which would create a disadvantageous situation for him.

After all, the other party's cultivation was higher than his, and using the Nine Worlds map was undoubtedly more prudent. The map indeed captured him at first attempt, catching him entirely off guard.

At this moment, in the room of Cultivator Sun, Yiyi was controlling the Nine Worlds map. She didn't dare exert too much spirit force to avoid alerting others, which led to her just managing to maintain the operation of the map, unable to harness its full power to assist Lu Ye.

This battle, Lu Ye had to rely solely on his own strength!

Within the Nine Worlds map, as Cultivator Sun cried out, receiving no response, his heart was filled with panic. Combining his own plight with the rumors he'd heard...

For a person to change locations instantly, it was undoubtedly the work of a very powerful treasure, such as a spirit treasure like an array diagram.

With this in mind, he must be inside an array diagram. For a Cloud River Realm cultivator to possess a spirit treasure... was unimaginable. It would take an incredibly powerful background to own such a treasure, considering Cloud River Realm cultivators normally only use mid-grade spiritual artifacts.

While Cultivator Sun was alarmed, Lu Ye had already charged toward him, his body surging with spirit force.

Such movement exposed Lu Ye's cultivation without a doubt.

Enraged, Cultivator Sun bellowed, "Cloud River Level 2!"

Where did this death-defying youth come from? A Cloud River Level 2 dared to challenge him! Although his own cultivation base was not very profound, he was after all a cultivator of the Cloud River Level 4 realm.

Fury replaced the terror in his heart. With a wave of his hand, several weapon control attacks were hurled towards Lu Ye, revealing that the man was indeed a combat cultivator!

However, in the next instant, a chilling scene occurred for Cultivator Sun. He saw the charging youth throw out his hand, and nine beams of light shot out like meteors chasing the moon, their speed incredible, tearing through the air with a ceaseless whistling sound.

Clang clang clang, to Cultivator Sun's astonishment, he found that his weapon control was neither as numerous nor as formidable as his opponent's. The brief encounter left him thoroughly bested.

The opponent's nine spiritual artifacts broke through his spiritual artifact barrier, spinning like tops as they bore down on him.

#### Chapter 457 Ambush

In the Nine Worlds map, Cultivator Sun frantically summoned his spiritual artifact as he saw nine streaks of light successively charging towards him, which turned out to be a long staff!

With the staff in hand, the man parried and sliced, knocking away the nine approaching controlled weapons. However, the long staff hummed incessantly, and his hands that held the staff trembled slightly. The anger on his face was replaced by shock, and he immediately realized he had encountered a formidable opponent!

Initially, seeing that Lu Ye was only of the Cloud River Level 2, he hadn't taken him seriously. But after this exchange, he understood that Lu Ye's strength at this level far exceeded his expectations.

The Cloud River Realm was a realm with huge disparities in cultivation. Some people advanced to Cloud River with two hundred and forty orifices opened, while others did so with three hundred and sixty, which meant the same level of cultivation could exhibit vastly differing strengths.

The sect of Cultivator Sun and his companions was merely 5th grade; none of them had advanced to Cloud River by opening three hundred and sixty orifices. The best among them was that burly man who had reached Cloud River with three hundred and twelve orifices. Cultivator Sun fared even worse, having cultivated up to two hundred and ninety orifices in the Spirit Stream Realm before reaching his limit and finding it difficult to open new spiritual orifices.

On the Cloud River battlefield, there were many cultivators like him, whereas there were few like Lu Ye who advanced with three hundred and sixty orifices.

Not to mention that Lu Ye was once the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking, blessed by Heaven's Augury four times with rewards and baptisms, and even received Heaven's Augury Bestowment when he was promoted to Cloud River!

No match!

In an instant, this thought emerged in the heart of Cultivator Sun.

Just as he had fended off the assault of the nine weapons and his figure was forced to repeatedly retreat due to the tremendous force, not even stabilizing his footing, Lu Ye had already pounced on him. A flash of fiery red saber light passed, and the saber chopped down.

This strike was blocked by the staff in Cultivator Sun's hands, but it also struck him so hard that his figure shrank slightly, and the immense power almost caused the staff to fly out of his hands.

Without any time to catch his breath, fiery red saber lights continuously fell one after another, relentless as a storm.

After the Boulder Mountain Saber was upgraded to a mid-grade spiritual artifact, it undoubtedly became even more agile in Lu Ye's hands.

Cultivator Sun clenched his teeth to resist, holding the staff in front of him as the clanging sounds of metal filled the air, with sparks flying everywhere, and his figure continued to shrink.

Suddenly, Lu Ye didn't chop down but stabbed forward instead. Even though Cultivator Sun saw the strike and intended to block it, his arms were already numb from the shock, completely unable to defend.

The saber stabbed into Cultivator Sun's shoulder blade, piercing through his body, as he let out a miserable howl.

As Lu Ye pulled out the saber, he simultaneously kicked, sending the man in front of him flying abjectly to the ground.

Without pursuing further, Lu Ye stood in place, saber slanted towards the ground, frowning.

A bit weak!

He had thought this would be a tough battle, or at the very least it would be evenly matched. However, having truly engaged in combat, he found that Cultivator Sun was lacking in both strength and reaction speed compared to him.

He understood clearly that this person had not opened more than three hundred orifices when he advanced to Cloud River, otherwise a Cloud River Level 4 cultivator couldn't show such poor performance.

"Fellow Daoist, wait a moment!" Cultivator Sun, who had fallen to the ground, stood up awkwardly, fearfully created a distance from Lu Ye, and asked anxiously, "Are you the helper Shen Xiaomao requested? If so, please spare my life, Fellow Daoist. My brothers and I will leave this place immediately and will never trespass again!"

Lu Ye remained silent, simply raising his hand to reveal his battlefield marking to him!

Cultivator Sun's complexion turned deathly pale.

Lu Ye understood, the man belonged to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp.

If the opponent had been from the Haotian Alliance, Lu Ye really didn't know if he should kill him, as he had received a lot of help from the Haotian Alliance Sect on the Spirit Stream battlefield. Since it was Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, there was no issue.

With Move-Like-The-Wind enhanced, trailing shadows behind, Lu Ye instantly pounced in front of Cultivator Sun again, fiercely chopping down, sending the man flying. Mid-air, a spray of hot blood scattered, and a scream sounded.

Without waiting for him to land, Lu Ye followed with another strike, and the screams abruptly ceased.

With two thuds, a head and a headless body fell to the ground, blood drenching the earth red.

"Yiyi!" Lu Ye sheathed his sword and softly called out.

The next instant, repelling forces emerged around him, and the view blurred as he appeared in Cultivator Sun's room, with an additional corpse by his side.

Lu Ye bent down to collect the Great Array Jade Cluster and the opponent's storage sack.

Of the four, one was already dispatched, leaving a burly man, an array cultivator Junior Brother Cheng, and Ruan Qingzhu.

How to kill was a problem. He couldn't easily sneak into their rooms now. At best, he could lure one out and ambush them, managing to kill only one more, leaving two alive.

Among them, Junior Brother Cheng should be the easiest to kill, being an array cultivator; he must have devoted much time to Array Path, so his personal strength might not be very strong. The hardest to kill would likely be that burly man, manifestly a physique cultivator.

With Yiyi and Amber combining forces, they could probably hold one person for a moment. He then had to kill two of them in the shortest time possible!

It was a pity; some of the formations he had set up in this spirit ground had been broken. Otherwise, with the power of formations, facing three against one wouldn't be out of the question.

With a vague plan in mind, Lu Ye quietly pushed the door open and darted out, leaving Amber to continue staying in the room.

The developments until now had proceeded smoothly, so the death of Cultivator Sun had not alerted anyone.

Under the drive of the Concealment Spirit Runes, Lu Ye moved like a spectral bewitchment, silently arriving at the burly man's door.

If this man was the hardest to kill, then he would start with him. If he could deal with this man, the other two would be easy. Otherwise, if this man teamed up with the others, the situation would only worsen.

Having positioned himself well, Lu Ye was about to activate the Great Array Jade Cluster in his hand to create some noise to lure the enemy out to investigate, when suddenly a loud noise boomed from outside the formation.

Looking up, he saw a familiar figure standing in the sky, if not Shen Xiaomao, then who?

Instead of recuperating in the cave, somehow she had made her way here, her expression revealing a hint of urgency.

The disturbance just now was caused by her attacking the protective array.

Taking advantage of the situation, Lu Ye activated the Great Array Jade Cluster, shutting down the entire protective array.

Outside the array, right after Shen Xiaomao acted, she watched the protective array that enveloped the entire spirit ground suddenly dissipate rapidly. The spirit ground, previously concealed by the formation, was now clearly visible to her eyes.

She had been recuperating in the cave and upon waking up, found that Lu Ye had disappeared. At first, she thought he had abandoned her, but upon reflection, it seemed unlikely. If Lu Ye really didn't care about her, he wouldn't have bothered to rescue her and stayed with her for three days.

Recalling her previous conversation with Lu Ye, Shen Xiaomao faintly grasped Lu Ye's intentions and didn't care about her own injuries anymore; she hurriedly rushed to the spirit ground to investigate.

She didn't know if things were as she had guessed. If so, then it was possible that Lu Ye might have come to the spirit ground. However, Lu Ye being only in the Cloud River Level 1, was not very strong and might be captured due to a mishap.

So, she attacked the protective array to test, regardless, she and Lu Ye had signed the Heaven's Augury Pact of offense and defense alliance.

However, what shocked her happened. She struck the protective array casually, and it simply vanished!

She saw no signs of a fight, nor did she see Ye Liu's figure...

Shen Xiaomao thought to herself that this was bad and immediately planned to leave rapidly.

But the noise was so loud, it had already alarmed the three people within the spirit ground.

The doors were swiftly opened, and three figures dashed out.

In the next instant, the burly man's blood Qi burst forth explosively, and he turned around to throw a punch.

A streak of saber light flashed by, and an arm flew out, blood spurting everywhere.

Lu Ye, who had concealed his presence, revealed himself, holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, his eyelids lowered. The burly man staggered backward several steps, clutching his severed arm, disbelief filling his eyes.

He had never expected that someone would ambush him right at his room's door. If not for his strong perception, that strike could have killed him on the spot.

Even so, he had lost an arm.

"Ye Liu!"

The injured Shen Xiaomao and Ruan Qingzhu, having witnessed this scene, both exclaimed in unison.

Junior Brother Cheng was initially stunned, then realized what was happening and, with a flicker, was about to pounce towards Lu Ye, but Shen Xiaomao had already rapidly dived down to intercept him.

In terms of strength, Shen Xiaomao was undoubtedly stronger than Junior Brother Cheng. If she hadn't been lying, she was also a powerful figure who had once climbed the Spirit Stream Ranking. But now, with her injuries not yet healed and her strength compromised, she was somewhat unable to match Junior Brother Cheng, an array cultivator.

At this moment, Lu Ye, holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, enveloped the burly man in waves of fiery red saber light, pressing forward step by step, not giving an inch.

If the man had been in full health, the battle might have been challenging, as the burly man's cultivation in the Cloud River Level 5 was much stronger than that of Cultivator Sun.

But having lost an arm, he struggled to maintain the Major Circumambulation cycle of spirit force, his strength greatly diminished. Facing Lu Ye's storm-like barrage of saber attacks, he could only dodge.

Meanwhile, Amber had burst out from Cultivator Sun's room, revealing her true form, fiercely pouncing towards Ruan Qingzhu. Yiyi hadn't shown herself yet, waiting in the shadows for an opportunity to deliver a fatal strike to Ruan Qingzhu.

When a scream rang out, and blood splattered, no matter how desperately the burly man stirred up his spirit force and blood Qi, he couldn't fend off Lu Ye's relentless slashes. In just a short time, he was struck by more than a dozen blows, with each one flaying flesh.

Junior Brother Cheng and Ruan Qingzhu were both extremely frightened. Originally, Ruan Qingzhu should have had no problem dealing with one Amber, but now distracted, she struggled to shake off Amber's entanglement.

It was unthinkable to her, that Ye Liu, who she saw only as an array cultivator and only of Cloud River Level 1, could be such a ferocious character!

And, where was Senior Brother Sun? Why was there no trace of him?

All sorts of questions and astonishment swirled in Ruan Qingzhu's mind, and she felt as if she had stepped into a deep abyss, her figure continuously plummeting downward.

#### Chapter 458 Special Privileges

In the spirit ground, six shadows were each banded together and fighting ferociously, with Lu Ye and the burly man undoubtedly engaged in the most violent clash.

Being a physique cultivator and at the Cloud River Level 5 realm, and having advanced through more than 300 orifices initially, the burly man's strength far surpassed that of Cultivator Sun, not just by a little. Even after Lu Ye ambushed him and cut off one of his arms, following up with more than a dozen slashes from Lu Ye's sabers, he didn't die immediately and still had some power to resist.

Ignoring his injuries, he sacrificed his spirit artifact big shield by grabbing it with his remaining hand and kept defending against Lu Ye's long saber, occasionally counterattacking.

When saber and shield clashed, a huge force collided, spirit force surged, and blood Qi boiled.

The night invited more dreams. Seeing that regular slashes weren't effective against the man, Lu Ye decided not to drag out the fight any longer.

With a slash, the locked combatants suddenly split apart; Lu Ye stepped back two paces, positioned his long saber horizontally in front of him, and assumed a starting stance, as blood Qi began to gather in his right arm.

Spotting this, the burly man's heart sounded an alarm. He hurriedly rushed forward, his tower-like body merging with the big shield as he fiercely charged at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye leaped high into the air, his right arm, clenching the saber, suddenly swelling as he descended upon his opponent with an eagle's strike.

Single Flash!

A layer of blood-red mist steamed from his right arm, already gathered with blood Qi.

Repeated Slashing!

When the first slash fell, the burly man's pupils immediately dilated. A wild force bore down from above, striking his spirit artifact big shield, and though he was a physique cultivator, he was cut down to size.

Before he could adjust his stance, Lu Ye's second slash had already descended.

The burly man collapsed to his knees; the spirit artifact big shield also uncontrollably smashed into the ground with such force that it cracked the ground like a spider web.

The third slash fell, and the big shield lit up brightly.

With the fourth slash, the dazzling light suddenly dimmed.

By the fifth slash, accompanied by the loud sound of crashing, the mid-grade spirit artifact big shield with eighteen restrictions burst into pieces, and Lu Ye's saber, sharp and heavy, continued its path through the collapsed shield, cleaving from the left shoulder of the burly man to his right lower abdomen.

The rich blood Qi and protective spirit force were no match for the ferocious slash, which cut through him as if through tofu, leaving the burly man diagonally cleaved in two.

A look of shock and disbelief filled the burly man's eyes, as he fixedly stared at the youth before him. His lips quivered, as if he wanted to say something, but nothing came out.

Lu Ye maintained the position of his last slash, his right arm trembling violently, pain from torn flesh assailing him.

Back in the Spirit Stream Realm, using Repeated Slashing in his Single Flash state allowed him only three strikes; now in the Cloud River Level 5 realm, he could deliver five. This wasn't his limit; if necessary, he could strike once more.

However, each use of this saber technique left significant aftereffects, so Lu Ye generally avoided it unless absolutely necessary.

Three breaths later, Lu Ye stood up and glanced at the other two battlefields. One scene in particular shocked him; Amber was currently confronting Ruan Qingzhu, baring its giant maw and roaring at her. Ruan Qingzhu's seven orifices bled, and her complexion was pale, indicating that she had been severely wounded.

Had Yiyi taken action? But Lu Ye hadn't felt any fluctuations of magic and spells, and there were no signs of Yiyi's presence.

Amber alone couldn't have inflicted such damage on a Cloud River Level 4 cultivator.

What was going on? He was puzzled for the moment.

Having no time to think further, in another battlefield, Shen Xiaomao was struggling to defend against Junior Brother Cheng, faint traces of blood visible on her body—signs that her previously dressed wounds had reopened.

Initially, Junior Brother Cheng had the upper hand, but the tragic death of the burly man and Ruan Qingzhu's defeat threw him into disarray. Seeing Lu Ye turning his attention toward him, how could Junior Brother Cheng dare to linger any longer? He immediately fainted, forcing Shen Xiaomao to retreat, then attempted to shoot up into the sky.

But he was too late. The supplies box at Lu Ye's side buzzed, nine spirit artifacts shot out, blocking the space for the man's escape as Lu Ye himself charged with his saber in hand.

Junior Brother Cheng's strength was barely passable to begin with, quite equal to the previously slain Cultivator Sun. He might have managed against a severely injured Shen Xiaomao, but now facing both her and Lu Ye, he stood no chance.

Even the hope of escape was a luxury.

Moments later, Junior Brother Cheng too lay in a pool of blood, his body twitching a few times before going still.

Only then did Lu Ye turn and walk toward Ruan Qingzhu.

Seeing him approach, Ruan Qingzhu, who was propped up against a courtyard wall, became frantic. Instinctively, she attempted to flee, but her injuries seemed serious, and she struggled briefly, unable to rise.

Shen Xiaomao, covered in blood, followed suit, and the two of them, one on each side, looked down upon their former ally from a vantage point.

Ruan Qingzhu still had that pitiable look, her eyes brimming with tears as she gazed at Shen Xiaomao and softly whimpered, "Sister..."

"Don't call me that; you don't deserve it," Shen Xiaomao said coldly. Had she not possessed some skills three days ago, she would have been killed by those people; now, she harbored no sympathy.

Ruan Qingzhu smiled: "Alright then, I won't call you sister anymore. We miscalculated this time, but what of it? We've signed the Heaven's Augury Pact, you can't injure me, nor can you kill me. You still have to let me go, don't you?"

Shen Xiaomao clenched her teeth in resentment.

Lu Ye lowered his head to check his battlefield marking, receiving a message from Yiyi, who was hidden in the shadows.

After reading the message, Lu Ye finally understood why Ruan Qingzhu was in such a state.

The woman had suffered a backlash from the Heaven's Augury Pact!

Indeed, the non-aggression clause in the Heaven's Augury Pact signed by the three of them meant that Amber, as Lu Ye's pet beast, was also covered by this clause. Therefore, when Amber leaped out to stop Ruan Qingzhu and she struck at it, she immediately suffered a backlash from Heaven's Augury.

The backlash seemed quite severe; otherwise, it wouldn't have rendered a Cloud River Level 4 capable fighter powerless to even flee.

Just with Amber's strength, how could it have beaten Ruan Qingzhu to such an extent? It turned out to be the retaliation from Heaven's Augury...

It seemed that having Amber confront Ruan Qingzhu had been a wise decision indeed.

However, what puzzled Lu Ye was why Amber had not suffered any backlash...

The constraints of the Heaven's Augury Pact should have been mutual. If Ruan Qingzhu suffered backlash for attacking Amber, the latter should have faced the same fate. Yet it seemed that only Ruan Qingzhu was the one affected.

After sending a message to Yiyi to inquire about this, Lu Ye raised an eyebrow at her response.

"If the two of you have no further advice, then I shall take my leave," Ruan Qingzhu, with an air of confidence, spoke as she attempted to stand up. Though the backlash was severe, the rest had allowed her to recover some strength.

Approaching, Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber thundered out of its sheath, and a fiery red saber light flashed by.

"Don't!" Shen Xiaomao cried out.

Having spent much more time on the Cloud River battlefield than Lu Ye, she knew well the terror of Heaven's Augury's backlash. Essentially, since signing that pact, the three of them could no longer harm each other.

However, Lu Ye's saber strike was incredibly fast, and by the time she shouted, he had already shaken the blood off the saber and sheathed it.

In front of him, Ruan Qingzhu's eyes widened in terror, her body, which had just stood up, stiffened, and she brought her hands to her neck, as blood seeped through her fingers.

She looked at Lu Ye incredulously, never imagining that under the constraints of the Heaven's Augury Pact, this Ye Liu would dare to strike her with such a decisive blow!

With such a strike, her death was certain, but could this Ye Liu survive?

"I... I'll be waiting for you on the road to Hell!" Ruan Qingzhu said before she collapsed straight down, her body severed.

Shen Xiaomao still looked at Lu Ye with fright, worried that he might have come to harm, but after a long while, there was no sign that Lu Ye had suffered any backlash.

This left Shen Xiaomao stunned, hesitatingly she asked, "You... you're alright?"

It didn't make sense. She wrote the terms on the Heaven's Augury Pact, where it was clearly stipulated that those who signed could not harm each other. How could Ye Liu kill Ruan Qingzhu without suffering from Heaven's Augury's retaliation?

Yet, the young man standing beside her was indeed unharmed.

Lu Ye had dared to make that saber strike only after asking Yiyi.

Since Yiyi had been hiding in the dark, she saw everything clearly; during the confrontation between Amber and Ruan Qingzhu, only the latter had suffered a backlash, with Amber unaffected.

If Amber attacking Ruan Qingzhu did not trigger a backlash, then Lu Ye felt that he, as her master, would likely not suffer one either.

As for why... Lu Ye wasn't certain, but he had a feeling it was related to the Heaven's Augury Bestowment.

Regardless, Ruan Qingzhu had already committed an act detrimental to the shared interests of the three. Although she had never directly attacked Shen Xiaomao or Lu Ye from beginning to end, her fellow sect members acted with malice from the moment they entered this spirit ground.

If she was unkind, she couldn't blame others for being unrighteous.

Others might indeed have had no good solution for dealing with Ruan Qingzhu and would have had to let her go, but Lu Ye, who had received a special favor from Heaven's Augury, might enjoy some special treatment in the face of the fair and impartial Heaven's Augury.

"Ye Liu, are you really okay?" Shen Xiaomao continued to check on Lu Ye's condition.

"Tired," said Lu Ye as he walked over to a nearby rock, sat down, and placed the Boulder Mountain Saber beside him.

Though today's battle was brief, using the Single Flash state combined with his Repeated Slashing Saber Technique placed a great strain on him; his right arm was now swollen, and he would need a couple of days to recover.

This was essentially Lu Ye's first real battle since entering the Cloud River battlefield. Reflecting on the combat with his enemies, he realized that with his current foundation and strength, he could easily kill those in the Level 4-5 realm.

If anyone underestimated him because of his Cloud River Level 2 cultivation, they would surely pay the price.

He had long heard that the power disparity within the Cloud River realm was significant, and now it seemed even more apparent.

In his battle with the burly man, he hadn't actually needed to use his trump card. He just wanted to avoid protracted conflict and choose a quick resolution.

"Ye Liu, if you feel uncomfortable anywhere, you must tell me without hiding it," Shen Xiaomao warned once again, still concerned.

Lu Ye glanced at her, "Take good care of yourself first."

Chapter 459 This is My Sister

The spirit ground that changed hands three days ago had been taken back by Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao, each of them recuperating on their own.

The previous battle further exacerbated Shen Xiaomao's already severe injuries, and it was uncertain how long it would take for her to recover after this battle.

Lu Ye was in better shape, merely experiencing the aftermath of using his saber skills, and he had recovered completely after two days.

He reestablished the various formations that had been destroyed and shut down earlier.

After Ruan Qingzhu's incident, neither of them had any immediate plans to recruit new members.

Shen Xiaomao healed her injuries while Lu Ye focused on his cultivation practice with peace of mind.

However, having previously improved his cultivation through the spirit fortune stick, Lu Ye always felt his current pace of cultivation was somewhat slow. There is a saying, "I can endure the darkness until I see the light," which perfectly described Lu Ye's mood at the moment.

He was well aware that cultivation practice requires calm and patience above all else, yet he couldn't help but reminisce about the feeling of quickly improving his cultivation with the spirit fortune stick.

Shen Xiaomao's injuries gradually improved, and she was able to go out and about.

After the recent events, Shen Xiaomao's perception of Lu Ye had undoubtedly changed a lot. She had thought Ye Liu was just someone who had recently advanced to Cloud River Level 1, but she had no idea that he had quietly progressed to Level 2, not to mention his ability to kill enemies above his level.

He had killed several from Cloud River Level 4-5, and Shen Xiaomao understood that to have such a powerful foundation, Ye Liu must have been remarkable even in the Spirit Stream Realm.

What particularly baffled her was that despite having signed the Heaven's Augury Pact, Ye Liu had killed Ruan Qingzhu without suffering any backlash. During the days she spent healing, she kept thinking about the various clauses she had listed, but couldn't find any loopholes.

It made her wonder if Ye Liu might have some special means to evade the scrutiny of Heaven's Augury.

But she wasn't overly concerned that he would use such a method against her; if Ye Liu really wanted to harm her, he would not have needed to save her in the first place.

Although they hadn't known each other for long, Shen Xiaomao felt that Ye Liu was trustworthy.

Five days later, Shen Xiaomao personally cooked a meal to treat Lu Ye – a celebration of their reclamation of the spirit ground and a token of gratitude for him avenging her.

At the dinner table, Shen Xiaomao frequently offered toasts, her face blushing as she drank, clearly in a good mood. She not only drank herself but also toasted Lu Ye to the point that he felt overwhelmed and eventually ignored the woman, focusing on his meal instead.

"Ye Liu, I want to ask you something," Shen Xiaomao slurred, her eyes blurry.

"Speak!"

"Why didn't you tell me when you came to attack the spirit ground before? Were you afraid I might be in danger?"

Lu Ye looked at her and wanted to ask, Didn't you have any idea what condition you were in back then? But before he could say anything, Shen Xiaomao had already collapsed on the table.

The fact that a Cloud River Level 5 could drink herself to the point of passing out... that was truly a marvel!

After a while, with a satisfied full stomach and having had his fill of wine, Lu Ye stood up, walked over to Shen Xiaomao, and gave her a nudge. The woman just waved her hand casually and mumbled something incomprehensible before quieting down.

Lu Ye frowned, his hand moved to Shen Xiaomao's waist, grabbed firmly, and lifted her up effortlessly.

Carrying her back to his room as if he was carrying a sack, he tossed her onto the bed, then stepped out and shut the door behind him.

In the dark room, Shen Xiaomao suddenly opened her eyes, a flicker of clarity in her otherwise hazy gaze. She smiled faintly and muttered to herself, "Still pretty reliable."

Although several days had passed, she couldn't forget the scene from when she woke up in the cave, her body carefully bandaged, including some embarrassingly intimate areas. She had tried to convince herself that he had been saving her life, but as a woman, she couldn't help but care about these things.

She had no idea what had happened while she was unconscious.

Getting deliberately drunk today was just a test.

The results proved that although Ye Liu seemed a bit dull, he was still someone reliable. From this, she inferred that when he bandaged her wounds earlier, he probably didn't do anything unnecessary.

Her mood improved even more.

In Lu Ye's room, Yiyi emerged from Amber in a huff and sat in front of Lu Ye, staring intently.

"What's wrong?" Lu Ye asked, puzzled.

"That woman did it on purpose!" Yiyi's cheeks puffed up.

"What did she do on purpose?"

"She purposely got herself drunk, and she wasn't completely intoxicated!"

"How can you tell?" Lu Ye asked, surprised.

"Just like that, she... she..." Yiyi clenched her little fists, her face turned red with effort as she finally blurted out, "She's trying to seduce you!"

Lu Ye was astonished, "Really?"

"Yes!" Yiyi nodded vigorously, "Lu Ye, let me tell you, never drink alone with a woman, there are many bad women out there, you have to be careful!"

After finishing her admonition, she gritted her teeth, "Damn it, I should have let her die in that cave!"

What was the point in saving her!

"Hmm, I understand. I'll be more careful next time!" Lu Ye nodded seriously, annoyed with himself for not having just gone with the flow. Shen Xiaomao was very sharp!

The next day, as Lu Ye was cultivating and reading in his room, he suddenly heard Shen Xiaomao's alarmed shout from outside, "Who's there!"

This was followed by the sounds of a scuffle.

By the time Lu Ye pushed open the door and stepped outside, he saw Shen Xiaomao and Yiyi standing off at a distance from each other, both women wearing faces full of vigilance.

Lu Ye was taken aback.

Yiyi usually didn't wish to reveal herself in front of others, preferring to show herself only in front of people she was familiar with, or when alone with Lu Ye, since she always felt she was Lu Ye's trump card that should not be easily exposed.

Yet unexpectedly, this time she had taken the initiative to show herself in front of Shen Xiaomao, apparently on high alert because of last night's event.

"Brother Ye, she is a magic cultivator!" Shen Xiaomao quickly alerted Lu Ye but didn't take it too seriously since Yiyi didn't seem as strong as her from the way they clashed.

What puzzled Shen Xiaomao was how this young girl managed to sneak into the spirit ground without anyone noticing.

For the past few days, due to her unresolved injuries, it had been Lu Ye controlling the Great Array Jade Cluster, responsible for guarding. Since the formation was Lu Ye's own setup, it wouldn't make sense for someone to sneak in without him noticing.

"This is my sister... Ye Yiyi." Lu Ye stood at the doorway and introduced her. Having changed his own name, Yiyi also adopted a new one accordingly.

Shen Xiaomao doubted whether she had heard incorrectly. Looking at Yiyi and then at Lu Ye, it was only after he confirmed with a nod that she withdrew her hostilities, smiling awkwardly, "So it's your sister. I thought someone had snuck into the spirit ground."

Turning to look at Yiyi, she said, "Sister Yiyi, is it? I was rude."

"Hmph!" Yiyi turned her head haughtily and walked into Lu Ye's room.

Shen Xiaomao: "..."

Suddenly realizing, Shen Xiaomao found this sister of Ye Liu to be rather difficult to get along with, further baffled about how this sister managed to find this place...

According to the Heaven's Augury Pact, they were not to privately reveal the existence of the spirit ground to anyone else, so this young girl named Yiyi shouldn't have come here.

This Ye Liu fellow, could he truly have some special means to avoid the scrutiny of Heaven's Augury? But what could such an astonishing method be?

Shen Xiaomao's intuition was right; Ye Liu's sister was indeed tough to deal with. She could clearly feel the girl's strong hostility toward her; whenever they crossed paths, even when she attempted conversation, the girl would respond indifferently.

What concerned Shen Xiaomao was that the girl actually lived in the same room as Ye Liu. It dawned on her that this might not be any genuine sister at all, no wonder the hostility was so apparent...

Upon realizing the situation, Shen Xiaomao became more cautious.

In the room, Lu Ye said gravely, "Yiyi, don't be so obvious about it. We live under the same roof, we have to see each other every day."

"What! I'm here to keep an eye on you for Sister Hua Ci!" Yiyi declared righteously.

"What does Hua Ci have to do with this?" Lu Ye was speechless.

"How could it not concern Sister Hua Ci? You and she even have a child together..."

Lu Ye was shocked: "Don't spout nonsense, I and your Sister Hua Ci are innocent."

"You both said it yourselves. Sister Hua Ci even calls you 'child's father', and you don't object!" Yiyi retorted, shaking her head at Lu Ye, triumphant.

Lu Ye sighed sorrowfully and looked out the window: "Why hasn't Giant Armor come yet."

He had sent a message to Giant Armor when he first entered the Cloud River battlefield, and now almost twenty days had passed without a sign of him. Had he known it would take so long for Giant Armor to arrive, he would have directly requested a Heaven's Augury Pillar in the spirit ground to send him back to the Nine Provinces, then have him transported through the pillar from there.

Once in possession of the spirit ground, one could request a Heaven's Augury Pillar, but at a great cost. Lu Ye had inquired about it; a single pillar cost twenty thousand points of merit, and it couldn't be taken away.

In other words, should the spirit ground be overtaken, that investment of twenty thousand merit points would benefit the occupier.

However, if there was a Heaven's Augury Pillar in the spirit ground, some things would be convenient, such as buying and selling items from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

Generally in the Cloud River battlefield, only larger spirit grounds that could accommodate dozens of people would request a Heaven's Augury Pillar, as it facilitated the travel between the Nine Provinces and the battlefield, and the cost of the twenty thousand merit points would not be too much if shared among many cultivators.

For a small spirit ground like the one occupied by Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao, requesting a pillar would not be cost-effective.

The expense split between the two would be too great, and they might also face the problem of spirit force depletion. If the spirit force ran dry, the spirit ground would become useless.

Since Yiyi appeared, Shen Xiaomao had stayed indoors a lot, often going unseen for a day or two at a time.

Until this day, when the earth trembled and buzzed nonstop, as if thunderbolts were roaming beneath the ground, shaking everything violently.

Lu Ye originally thought someone was attacking the spirit ground and quickly leaped outside to investigate, but there was no one to be seen outside the array.

The door of the neighboring room was also pushed open, and the enchanting figure of Shen Xiaomao appeared, her expression grave as she asked, "What's happening?"

Lu Ye shook his head, indicating he didn't know.

This abnormality continued for quite a while before suddenly settling down. Shen Xiaomao seemed to sense something, soared into the sky, and stood mid-air, looking into the distance. Then, invigorated, she shouted down at Lu Ye, "Ye Liu, an opportunity has come!"

Chapter 460: The Young Master of the Ten Thousand Beasts Sect

The Spirit Stream battlefield, the Cloud River battlefield, and even the entire Nine Provinces are filled with numerous opportunities; it just depends on whether the cultivators can come across them.

Comparatively, the Spirit Stream battlefield features primarily inheritances, while the Cloud River battlefield focuses more on lifting the strength of cultivators.

The Heaven-bestowed spirit fortune stick is also an opportunity. Almost every day, across various spots in the Cloud River battlefield, there are Heaven-bestowed spirit fortune sticks, which are among the opportunities most welcomed by cultivators since they come without much risk but with the chance of definite benefits.

But opportunities are not limited to the Heaven-bestowed spirit fortune stick alone.

There are also various secret realms.

The Spirit Stream battlefield has its secret realms too. Xianyuan City, which Lu Ye had visited before, is one such secret realm, where he acquired a large amount of Soul Cleansing Water.

The secret realms in the Cloud River battlefield are particularly numerous; some open at fixed times and places. Whenever it is time, a large number of cultivators gather outside the secret realms.

There are also some secret realms that need special methods by cultivators to open, and others appear randomly across the Cloud River battlefield, where only those fated can enter.

As seen presently, at the horizon, a column of light shot into the sky, piercing the clouds. Even from hundreds of miles away, it was clearly visible.

Above the spirit ground, Lu Ye and Shen Xiaomao stood side by side, looking at the sky-piercing column of light, knowing that the recent disturbance must have been caused by it.

"What is that?" Lu Ye, though he had bought plenty of intelligence about the Cloud River battlefield from the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, had not been there long, so naturally did not have as much experience as Shen Xiaomao.

"It's likely a type of secret realm. I am not quite sure which, but whichever it is, it's bound to be beneficial."

"Let's check it out!"

"But this spirit ground..."

"Don't worry about it. There's a hiding array; it's not easy to detect unless someone inspects closely. Even if we lose it, we'll just snatch it back later."

As Lu Ye spoke, he called out to the others below. Yiyi and Amber quickly followed, summoning their spirit ark and turning into a streak of light heading in the direction of the light column.

Shen Xiaomao could only follow; she was also interested in the light column, just reluctant to leave the spirit ground behind.

For her, a cultivator who relies primarily on the absorption of nature's spiritual energy, having a stable spirit ground was too important; even if the spirit ground was not at Class B, it would save her a lot of time in her cultivation.

However, that was not the case for Lu Ye. For him, the spirit ground was not critical; it was an added advantage when available but no big deal if lost.

The last time he had gone back to reclaim the spirit ground was only because the tactics used by Ruan Qingzhu and others were particularly despicable.

From afar, the distance to that column of light seemed great, and even traveling rapidly, it proved to be quite far.

About three or four hundred miles, to be exact.

By the time Lu Ye and the others arrived at the location, the column of light had already subsided, leaving behind a screen of light about thirty feet tall, with twisting, multi-colored lights. If one observed carefully, various scenes flickered through, including rugged mountains disappearing in a flash, unknown cultivators flying through the air, and various animals and beasts.

Many cultivators had already gathered around.

Most of them were engrossed in the ever-changing screen of light, watching with great interest.

Lu Ye looked around; there were already two to three hundred cultivators here, and as time passed, more continued to arrive.

Based on the spirit force fluctuations coming from these cultivators, the strength of the arrivals varied greatly, ranging from Level 8-9 of Cloud River to those who had only recently ascended to Cloud River Level 1 or 2.

Suddenly, Lu Ye's gaze fixed on one person, a woman dressed in purple, her expression indifferent.

Feeling his gaze, the woman in purple looked over.

As their eyes met, the woman nodded slightly to Lu Ye, then averted her gaze.

Lu Ye also discreetly shifted his focus.

It was unexpected to encounter this woman so soon again.

"Be careful, this is a large-scale secret realm!" Just as Lu Ye was surveying the area, Shen Xiaomao suddenly came close and whispered.

"What do you mean?"

"I have been in this type of secret realm before. The environment inside is very complex; it's almost like a real world! Plus, once inside, each person is given a new identity."

"Who grants these identities?"

"Heaven's Augury!"

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow.

Anything involving Heaven's Augury was never simple. He couldn't help feeling a particular interest in this secret realm. If his previous conjectures were correct, having received the Heaven's Augury Bestowment, he might enjoy some special privileges under the influence of Heaven's Augury.

"What can we do once inside?"

"Do something that fits my new identity? Last time I entered a secret realm where I was a spy from one sect infiltrating another, tasked with stealing that sect's sect-guarding treasure."

"Wasn't that thrilling?"

"Don't mention it. I almost died there, but in the end, I got my hands on it!"

"What was the benefit?"

"That sect rewarded me with many cultivation resources, including several spirit fortune sticks."

Lu Ye's interest grew even stronger! Looking across the entire Cloud River battlefield, if he was most interested in anything right now, it was undoubtedly the spirit fortune sticks that could rapidly enhance one's cultivation.

"I don't know if we will be together after we enter. You are only at the Cloud River Level 2 now. Whatever identity you assume there, you must be very careful. We can still communicate inside, so if we get separated, and you have any questions, just message me."

"Understood."

Time passed, and gradually, more and more cultivators gathered. In less than half a day, the number of cultivators within a radius of about 30 miles had exceeded several hundreds.

Keep in mind this was the Cloud River battlefield, not the Spirit Stream battlefield. The Cloud River battlefield was much vaster and the cultivators were more dispersed. The rapid gathering of over six hundred cultivators in such a short time indicated the allure of this secret realm to the cultivators.

Despite the large number, no fights broke out. The cultivators who arrived were all focused on the secret realm, and nobody wanted to cause unnecessary trouble.

At this moment, that tens of feet high screen of light began to distort into an oval-shaped gate of light. The chaotic fluctuations gradually settled, and through the gate, one could even vaguely see the picturesque scenery on the other side, as if there really was another world beyond.

"We can go in now!" someone suddenly shouted.

The next moment, groups of cultivators started to rush through the gate of light in pairs and threes.

The number of cultivators remaining outside gradually decreased.

Lu Ye, Yiyi, and Shen Xiaomao also entered the gate of light after waiting for a moment.

A sensation of the world spinning overwhelmed him, and at the same time, a flood of uncontrollable information surged into Lu Ye's mind. This feeling was very similar to when he was exploring the spirit runes carried by the leaves on the Talent Tree.

His mind became muddled, and Lu Ye struggled to maintain his clarity, organizing the information in his mind.

Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, a world where cultivators and demon beasts coexist. Due to the world's uniqueness, a large number of demon beasts thrive and survive here. The beast-taming faction, which is not very common in the Nine Provinces, flourishes in this world. Most cultivators here are experts in the Path of Beast Taming, having lived and grown up with demon beasts from a young age, eventually having their own natal demon beasts.

However, constrained by the world's limitations, the highest cultivation level among the cultivators here is also only the Cloud River Realm. No cultivator has ever broken the bounds of the Cloud River Realm and ascended to True Lake.

Originally, this was a peaceful and serene world. Although there were numerous beast-taming sects coexisting and conflicts and disputes existed, they did not affect the stability of the entire world.

But a year ago, some changes started to occur, an inexplicable madness began spreading across the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain. This madness affected only the demon beasts, not the cultivators. Any demon beast that contracted the madness became extremely bloodthirsty and uncontrollable.

The cultivation world of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, primarily based on the beast-taming faction, was severely damaged in an instant. Those cultivators who mainly relied on beast-taming saw their combat effectiveness greatly reduced, and some demon beasts even turned on their masters, killing those who had grown up and lived with them from a young age.

Suddenly, a panic swept through the cultivators of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain!

Within just one year, the entire cultivation world was turned upside down. Nearly all sects based on the beast-taming faction were destroyed, and the once peaceful world faced a massive upheaval. Now, in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, only about ten sects not based on the beast-taming faction still struggled to survive. They formed a cultivator alliance to fight against those mad demon beasts.

If even these ten or so sect-formed cultivator alliances could not withstand those frenzied demon beasts, the complete collapse of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's cultivation world was imminent. At

that point, the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain would become a world dominated by demon beasts, and the human race would no longer have a foothold.

Currently, the cultivators from these remaining sects are gathered in a city called Two Worlds City. Apart from cultivators, there are a large number of ordinary humans living here. This is also the last haven for the humanity of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain.

Meanwhile, those crazed demon beasts have also set their sights on this last stronghold of the human race.

After organizing the numerous chaotic pieces of information, Lu Ye suddenly opened his eyes.

Sounds of breaking the air came to his ears, and the scenery around him rapidly moved backwards. Lu Ye discovered that he was currently in a mid-sized Flying Spirit Artifact.

This was a mid-sized Flying Spirit Artifact, capable of holding three to five people. A few faint fragrances lingered at the tip of his nose, the body scent of women.

Lu Ye hadn't completely recovered his senses when he heard a familiar voice calling him, "Ye Liu!"

Following the voice, Shen Xiaomao's pretty face came into view.

This woman was with him, not separated from him.

Not only Shen Xiaomao but also two other women were present, one of which was Lan Ziyi...

The last woman Lu Ye did not recognize, nor did he know who she was.

Three pairs of eyes stared at him. Lu Ye rubbed his temples, feeling rather overwhelmed.

This was his first time entering such a secret realm. Based on the clues and information he had previously organized, just as Shen Xiaomao had mentioned earlier, he was now given a new identity by Heaven's Augury.

The Young Master of the Ten Thousand Beasts Sect!

Heaven's Augury indeed favored him. The identity of the Young Master was undoubtedly beyond the reach of ordinary people. Shen Xiaomao, Lan Ziyi, and even the woman Lu Ye did not recognize, in this secret realm, all bore the identity of his maids.