

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 51 - 49 Great Tiger King Spares Life[1,363 words]

In the blink of an eye, a colorful light burst forth from the ice spike in front of the fair-skinned man as the mottled sunlight shone upon it, refracting a rainbow of colors!

Lu Ye sensed danger immediately.

Just now, he had gathered spirit force in his eyes and clearly saw the aura of light around the attacker's body, deducing that the other was a cultivator of Spirit Stream Level 3, but not yet Level 4.

The other's cultivation was higher than his, and from the way he had inexplicably been struck by the opponent's sword a moment ago, it was clear that their combat experience was also superior to his.

Lu Ye's cultivation journey was short, without rigorous training or guidance from a powerful figure. His swordsmanship was limited to the most basic slashes, thrusts, and feints, lacking any sophisticated techniques or skills.

With lesser cultivation and skill, and facing an opponent who also knew magic and spells... the situation couldn't be worse.

The moment the ice spike took form in the opponent's hand, Lu Ye stomped on the ground and propelled forward with the force of the recoil.

The fair-skinned cultivator was taken aback by Lu Ye's reaction, having expected him to immediately flee; instead, his adversary didn't back down but advanced.

The cultivator drifted backward once more, simultaneously launching the ice spike with incredible speed.

The sharp ice spike struck Lu Ye, blocked by the golden light on his body. Although it didn't wound him, the rebound force caused his chest to feel stuffy, slowing his forward momentum and dimming the golden glow on his body.

After one ice spike was thrown, the fair-skinned man's hands glowed with spirit light again, obviously intending to form a second spike. Lu Ye's eyes twitched; in a fight between low-level cultivators, the one with mastery of spells clearly had a significant advantage.

"How many more can you block?" the fair-skinned man ridiculed while maintaining a safe distance. In their cat-and-mouse game, Lu Ye was hit by three ice spikes in a short amount of time, his body's golden light nearly extinguished, yet he couldn't even touch the hem of the other's clothing.

Such a fight was frustrating for him; he was dying to teach the other a lesson with a Fire Serpent Talisman.

However, he suppressed this urge; he wasn't sure if one Fire Serpent Talisman could kill the other party, given that he was dealing with a cultivator, not the wolves he had killed upon first entering the battlefield, and without the advantageous terrain he had when competing with the big tiger.

He now had a vague plan in mind, yet whether it could be executed smoothly still depended on luck.

After a moment equivalent to the time it takes to drink a cup of tea, when Lu Ye was struck by another ice spike, the golden light on his body finally disappeared. Suffering internal injuries from the barrage of ice spikes, blood trickled from the corner of his mouth. Shivering from the cold enveloping him, he couldn't help but shudder.

He glared at the fair-skinned man with resentment vivid on his face, and for the first time since the fight began, he spoke, "What grievance do we have between us?"

The fair-skinned man chuckled, "No grievance, no grudge."

Lu Ye remained silent, waiting for what was to come next.

Indeed, the fair-skinned man said, "However, if you tell me where you found all those ores, I might spare your life!"

A fierce light flashed in Lu Ye's eyes as he confirmed the cause; this encounter wasn't by chance—his adversary had come specifically for him! The issue stemmed from the ores he had sold.

Truthfully, Lu Ye had always been careful. He went to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union three times, each time dealing with different people, and he only ever sold a small portion of ores, daring not to sell in large quantities to avoid drawing attention. Even on the way back, he would take several detours to ensure no one was following him.

But reality showed that someone indeed harbored ill intentions, and all his caution was for naught, unless he chose not to sell at Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

Yet, he needed elixir pills for his cultivation—where else could he go if not to Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union?

What he could be certain of at the moment was that this wasn't instigated by the mercantile union. Such a large entity, priding itself on honesty and fairness, had no reason to target a minor cultivator like him.

So this could very well be some underhanded maneuvers by a few people within the mercantile union, Lu Ye thought about the three cultivators from the union he had dealt with, but couldn't figure out who had set their sights on him.

All three transactions were quite ordinary, the only thing out of the ordinary was the hint given by the woman named Liew Ruyin during the first transaction, but that didn't prove anything.

From the fair-skinned man's words, it seemed that they suspected he had found a mining vein containing various ores, and they wanted to probe for its location.

What they didn't know was that Lu Ye didn't have any mining vein; all his ores were brought from Evil Moon Valley.

Seeing that Lu Ye didn't speak, the fair-skinned man's expression darkened slightly, "Tough guys who don't drink to respect, must drink as punishment!" He resolved to beat Lu Ye half to death and then force out the location of the vein.

With that, he brandished his knife and lunged at Lu Ye.

He didn't use the Ice Spike Technique again, mainly because it was rather draining, and now that Lu Ye's Golden Body Talisman was broken, he was confident that he could knead Lu Ye like dough.

However, Lu Ye, who had just put on a tough façade, turned and ran, his speed astonishingly fast.

The fair-skinned man was amused and angered all at once, looking at Lu Ye's retreating figure and nonchalantly said, "You think you can run away?"

He followed at an unhurried pace, while also taking out a Spirit Stone from his storage sack and holding it in his palm to slowly recover.

He could tell that Lu Ye had been scared out of his wits, and such desperate fleeing would only hasten the consumption of his spirit force. A low-level cultivator, once out of spirit force, wouldn't be much different from an ordinary person, and Manager Yang, killed by Lu Ye's schemes, was a prime example.

So all he had to do was to make sure not to lose Lu Ye.

The two of them, one chasing and the other fleeing, went through a forest of chaotic rocks, crossed a small river, and arrived at a clearing, where the fair-skinned man saw Lu Ye standing there, panting heavily, his complexion pale as paper, motionless.

Exhausted his spirit force so quickly? The fair-skinned man let out a scoff, stepped forward slowly, and twirled his longsword, "Why have you stopped running?"

He stood about ten paces in front of Lu Ye, his face full of mockery.

However, he quickly realized something was wrong because Lu Ye's expression was one of utter horror, looking in a certain direction with his sword-hand shaking violently.

A ferocious wind whipped up, a low growl sounded, and from behind a large tree, a robust, snow-white big tiger took leisurely steps, entering the scene.

Its amber eyes looked towards the fair-skinned man, causing his heart to jump, and suddenly, he remembered a rumor he had heard in the marketplace a couple of days ago.

Could he be so unlucky? He wailed inwardly.

But the thing that plunged him into despair happened, the big tiger opened its mouth and spoke human language, "How dare you disturb Great Tiger King's peaceful dream? It seems you wish not to live!"

The fair-skinned man's forehead was immediately covered with fine beads of sweat, and he finally understood the source of Lu Ye's terror.

It wasn't him that Lu Ye feared, but this big tiger!

Lost on what to do, he heard Lu Ye cry, "Great Tiger King, we beg for mercy, we didn't know this was your territory, and we will leave right now!"

The fair-skinned man nodded like a pecking chicken at those words.

The big tiger roared angrily, "You think you can come and go as you please? Do you take this place for nothing?"

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 52 - 50 Pursuit[1,379 words]

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The tiger sat in the mountain forest, its majesty awe-inspiring. In front of the big tiger, two figures stood stiff as boards.

Just as the fair-faced man was at a loss, he heard Lu Ye say, "Great Tiger King, please quell your anger. I understand the rules; I will follow your rules, so please spare my life!"

As he spoke, he took off his storage sack from around his waist, feigned activating the spirit force, and tossed down the storage sack. Not only that, but he also threw away the longsword in his hand.

The big tiger looked at him and hummed softly, "Since you understand the rules, I can spare your life."

"Thank you, Great Tiger King!"

The big tiger then turned its gaze to the fair-faced cultivator, "What about you, boy? Do you wish to die or to live?"

"I want to live!" blurted out the fair-faced cultivator, his face a portrait of agony as he unbuckled his storage sack in the manner of Lu Ye, unlocked the restriction lock, and threw it onto the ground before him.

He had heard some rumors in the marketplace before, saying that there was a demon beast in Qingyun Mountain that could speak human language. Many cultivators had encountered it, but the beast generally did not take human lives; it was only interested in elixir pills and Spirit Stones. As long as the cultivators were willing to pay a price, they could escape from the tiger's jaws.

He never expected that by merely following Lu Ye into the mountains, he would actually encounter this demon beast. Indeed, this was utter misfortune.

The big tiger was quite satisfied with their actions and spoke again, "Don't try any tricks. If I find out you haven't unlocked the restriction lock, hmph!" The threat was self-evident.

"Unlocked!" Lu Ye and the fair-faced cultivator said in unison. Moreover, Lu Ye pointed at the fair-faced cultivator, "Great King, he hasn't thrown away his weapon yet. He might be planning to harm you!"

The fair-faced cultivator was stunned, cursing Lu Ye to high heaven in his heart.

The big tiger was also visibly taken aback, but quickly turned its head towards the fair-faced cultivator, a threatening growl coming from its throat.

Clang...

The fair-faced cultivator decisively threw down his long knife, his heart bleeding in pain! His long knife was a Spiritual Artifact. Although it was of a low grade, it was still a Spiritual Artifact. The concept for a low-level cultivator of having or not having a Spiritual Artifact was completely different—one could say that a Spiritual Artifact could increase his strength by ten percent!

But at this moment, survival was the priority. Angering such a demon beast would surely lead to a bad end. Compared to his own life, external possessions could be discarded.

"Great King, if there are no further orders, then we shall take our leave," Lu Ye said.

"Scram," the big tiger roared indifferently.

Lu Ye and the fair-faced cultivator both retreated slowly, not showing their backs to the big tiger. Such caution was a normal response when facing a threat. Anyone would keep their guard up.

However, after retreating a few meters, the fair-faced cultivator was shocked to find that Lu Ye suddenly dashed forward, snatching up the longsword that lay on the ground, and pounced toward him with the ferocity of thunder.

The fair-faced cultivator was horrified, not having anticipated such an outrageous move from Lu Ye at all. With the big tiger nearby, shouldn't they be prioritizing their own lives? How could he have such audacity?

He had no time to think further. Almost the instant Lu Ye made a move, he also lunged forward, reaching his own weapon in a few steps, grabbed it, and channeled spirit force into the long knife, making the blade shimmer with light.

The force of the attack hit him head-on, and the fair-faced cultivator had no time to think; his long knife met the strike.

With a clang, the fair-faced cultivator, not yet fully upright, was forced down, kneeling on the ground.

One was fully prepared, the other caught off guard, and Lu Ye had the upper hand in this clash.

The fair-faced cultivator looked up sharply, catching a glimpse of Lu Ye's calm and indifferent eyes, and in that moment, he faintly sensed something.

But there was no time for him to think it over, as Lu Ye was already thrusting his sword forward.

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The fair-skinned cultivator hastily activated his protective spirit force around his body while simultaneously slashing his sword towards Lu Ye. However, to his surprise, his protective spirit force did not have any effect and the longsword pierced directly through his chest, exiting through his back.

Lu Ye kicked out again, sending the fair-skinned man flying, the longsword pulling out a string of blood from the chest as it went.

In the blink of an eye, victory and defeat between the two had been determined. Lu Ye was not sure whether his opponent was dead and did not rashly approach. Instead, he took out an attack Spirit Talisman from his storage sack, holding it in his hand, ready for any sudden needs.

If the opponent dared to stand up, he would immediately activate the talisman.

However, glancing over, the fair-skinned man's body on the ground convulsed a few times and then went still, which suggested that Lu Ye's sword strike had hit a vital spot.

The fights between cultivators are this perilous, often determining life and death in a very short span of time.

The ground was stained red with blood, the pungent smell of blood permeating the air. Lu Ye took deep breaths to calm his racing heart.

A speck of red light suddenly shot out from the direction of the fair-skinned cultivator's corpse and embedded into the back of Lu Ye's hand.

"What the...?" Yiyi emerged above Big Tiger's head, looking somewhat at a loss as she watched Lu Ye.

Just now, Lu Ye had suddenly charged over to her and said urgently, "Help me rob."

Right after that, the fair-skinned cultivator chased after him. Yiyi then understood what Lu Ye had encountered. She and Big Tiger had put on a show, which was something both of them were skilled at. Besides, they got the chance to rob some good stuff; why not do it?

But... wasn't it supposed to be a robbery?

How did it turn into a killing?

Yiyi slowly realized that it was she and Big Tiger who were supposed to be robbing, while from the beginning to the end, Lu Ye had intended to kill, merely using their momentum.

"You deceived me?" Yiyi glared at Lu Ye in anger.

Lu Ye glanced at her, criticizing, "You overacted!"

"What?" Yiyi was utterly confused.

Before Lu Ye could say more, a faint noise suddenly came from not far away. He hesitated for just a moment, then burst into action, calling out as he did, "Your secret's been exposed; there are others nearby. If you don't want to die, hurry over here!"

Yiyi felt like crying but had no tears, feeling trapped aboard a ship of thieves and unable to disembark. After exchanging a look with Big Tiger, Yiyi gritted her teeth, "Follow him!"

Big Tiger roared and sprinted on all fours.

Within the jungle, a seductively shaped female cultivator with a face full of panic and confusion fled for her life. She felt as if she had made a colossal mistake.

But could she really be blamed? She just wanted to live a bit better, tired of ingratiating herself with those disgusting customers. They were all independent cultivators; why should she have to spend her days and nights trying to please others? If this job had gone smoothly, she would have had much easier days ahead of her.

Yet, no matter what, she had not anticipated that the person she hired would fail.

Since leaving Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, she had been tracking the person using the hidden markers they left all the way to this point. She thought they would be dividing the spoils by now, but what she witnessed was the independent cultivator named Lu Ye killing the man she had hired. In a state of panic and confusion, she had exposed herself and was now being pursued.

She didn't want to die! She was still young, with many good days ahead of her. How could she die in a place like this?

Yet the sound of pursuit behind her was getting closer and closer. She knew that her chances of escape were slim.

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 53 - 51 Causes and Consequences[1,348 words]

Lu Ye focused his spirit force in his legs, significantly quickening his chase.

This was a little trick he had inadvertently discovered on his trips in and out of Qingyun Mountain. A cultivator's spirit force had many wonderful uses: focused in the eyes, it could reveal things usually unseen; condensed in the legs, it allowed one to run faster; reinforced onto blades, it enhanced the lethality of weapons.

The terrain of the forest was complicated, filled with large trees that required several people to embrace their trunks. The person fleeing ahead naturally was not as familiar with the terrain as Lu Ye, and the distance between them steadily closed.

By the time Lu Ye could see the person's silhouette clearly, all his doubts suddenly cleared.

He knew who was plotting everything from behind. This revelation surprised him since, in his view, he had no grievances with the other party and had interacted with them only once!

"Roar!" A snow-white figure suddenly burst out ahead, blocking the escapee's path—it was Big Tiger!

The person, terrified out of their wits by Big Tiger, screamed. Without thinking, they threw out a pre-prepared Spirit Talisman. The talisman turned into a crescent-shaped slash in mid-air, heading straight for Big Tiger.

Big Tiger hastily dodged; the crescent-shaped slash nearly grazed its body as it flew past, piercing through a big tree behind, revealing the penetrating power of the Spirit Talisman.

Having missed the strike, the person became even more panicked, frantically fumbling for something in their storage sack.

A tiny figure had already silently climbed onto her back, emitting a piercing screech.

Lu Ye saw the person's stature lower as if weighed down by something heavy; their hands also paused for a moment.

This reminded Lu Ye of the first time he encountered Yiyi and Big Tiger in the cave, when he was stealthily attacked by Yiyi the same way...

Delayed by this, Lu Ye had already charged close and sliced down with his sword.

The bright sword light flashed, and an arm flew off, blood spraying wildly.

The pain made her scream. Although she was an independent cultivator, her outstanding posture and appearance attracted the attention of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union not long after she entered the Spirit Stream battlefield. They recruited her into the mercantile union, and she had not fought with anyone since, let alone suffered such a severe injury.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call her a flower raised in a greenhouse.

Most of the people in the mercantile union were of this sort. They didn't need to fight against others, nor did they experience the hardships and dangers of Sect Disciples battling in the battlefield. They just needed to manage their business well.

Big Tiger pounced, knocking her to the ground, its fierce maw roaring and the foul breath nearly causing her to faint.

What terrified her even more was the sound of footsteps approaching from nearby. Twisting her head, she saw Lu Ye with his sword angled toward the ground, the blade still dripping with blood, as he walked step by step towards her.

Upon reaching her, Lu Ye looked down at her and said indifferently, "Liew Ruyin!"

This woman was indeed the one who had traded with him on his first visit to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

"Don't kill me, please, I beg you not to kill me!" Liew Ruyin's makeup was smeared by tears as she kept begging.

Lu Ye looked down, his eyes and brows low: "Who sent you?"

"No one sent me, I was blinded by greed, enticed by wealth..." Overwhelmed by immense fear, Liew Ruyin naturally blurted out everything, not even waiting for Lu Ye to continue questioning, and she rambled on about the reasons and effects.

"I see..." Lu Ye raised his sword high.

Sensing Lu Ye's intent to kill, Liew Ruyin yelled, "Don't kill me, I'll give you anything you want!"

The Longsword fell, and Big Tiger cleverly got out of the way, allowing the spirit force-imbued blade to glide across Liew Ruyin's fair and slender neck.

A streak of yellow light shot from the snow-white back of Liew Ruyin's hand and into the right hand of Lu Ye.

The headless corpse twitched and fresh blood spouted from the neck like a fountain, only to subside after a good while.

Yiyi, who was watching from the side, couldn't stop her eyelids from twitching. Everything she saw today had completely reshaped her understanding of Lu Ye. Now it became clear to her that Big Tiger hadn't died at this man's hand simply due to good luck. This guy was not someone easy to talk to.

Lu Ye bent over to remove the storage sack from around Liew Ruyin's waist and then searched her body to see if she had any hidden storage sacks. Of course, he was not trying to take advantage of her, but he wondered if she might have a storage sack concealed on her person.

He himself had a hidden storage sack... based on his own practice, he thought others might have the same.

Unfortunately, Liew Ruyin did not have this habit. After all, she was a member of the mercantile union, not needing to fight with others or take risks outside. Her storage sack was very safe on her person.

Liew Ruyin's storage sack was open, and after a brief inspection, Lu Ye found some useful items.

"Deal with the bodies," Lu Ye ordered.

"Huh?" Yiyi looked at him incredulously, with a "are-you-kidding-me" expression.

Lu Ye then took a bottle out of Liew Ruyin's storage sack and tossed it in his hand.

"Alright!" Yiyi hastily agreed and gave Big Tiger a signal before they swiftly got to work.

Lu Ye ran back to the spot where he had killed the fair-skinned cultivator earlier and picked up his storage sack as well, not to mention the fair-skinned cultivator's weapon.

Half a shichen later, inside the dwelling cave, Lu Ye sat cross-legged, shirtless, applying healing pills to his wounds.

The number of healing pills he had was not abundant; after using two pills this time, only four remained.

Reflecting on today's battles, Lu Ye didn't take pride in killing a Spirit Stream Level 3. Instead, he was reflecting on himself. The fights among low-level cultivators mostly revolved around close combat.

It could be said that the majority of low-level cultivators followed the path of a combat cultivator because they did not have high cultivation or enough time and energy to delve into magic and spells. Only when they grew stronger would they gradually realize their future path.

The fight with the fair-skinned cultivator had revealed a serious problem – he had no technique to speak of in combat, which was unavoidable. He had only been cultivating for less than three months, focusing solely on advancing his cultivation; how could he have spare energy to improve his combat skill?

In the end, he managed to kill the fair-skinned cultivator by taking advantage of Big Tiger's momentum, catching his opponent off guard.

But as for how to improve his technique, he was at a loss. Without a proper teacher to guide him, groping in the dark on his own would undoubtedly get him nowhere.

Then there was the issue of weaponry...

He hadn't felt it much before; the longsword in his hand was left behind by Manager Yang after his death, and before that, he had used it to kill Zhou Cheng, but their fighting was a mere moment.

It wasn't until today's life-and-death struggle with the fair-skinned man that he really noticed something – the compatibility with his longsword was severely lacking. Holding the sword, he found it awkward to use, failing to exploit the sword's advantages.

Swordplay emphasizes agility and skill, yet wielding his longsword was all about chopping and hacking, completely failing to exhibit the virtues of the sword.

With these thoughts, Lu Ye redressed himself, picked up the longsword at his feet, and examined it closely. There were many notches on the blade, all caused by his hacking, especially one gap about the size of a grain of rice located one-third of the way up the blade.

Such a gap was serious for a longsword; it was no longer usable.

He picked up the long knife of the fair-skinned man, stood up, and swung it a few times, raising his eyebrows.

This thing, when wielded... felt surprisingly gratifying.

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 54 - 52: The Changes in Merit[1,346 words]

The sword wasn't a traditional cleaver. It was longer than a typical sword but the blade was very narrow, similar to the legendary Xiuchun Sword.

Lu Ye swung it a few times and found it very easy to handle.

A good outcome, the previous sword was no longer usable, and he had acquired a new weapon without needing to purchase one.

He tried to channel his own spirit force into the blade, and a faint halo immediately emerged on the longsword. The glow was not sharp, but instead conveyed a sense of solidity.

What surprised Lu Ye even more was that he felt as if something was hidden inside the blade.

He closed his eyes and used the flow of his spirit force to sense what was inside, gradually understanding the situation within the blade.

There was a spirit rune inside this sword's blade!

Is this... a Spiritual Artifact? Lu Ye showed a surprised expression.

Having frequented Qingyun Marketplace several times, his knowledge now far surpassed what it had been when he first entered the Spirit Stream battlefield. He had heard about Spiritual Artifacts, which were weapons specifically used by cultivators, and a good Spiritual Artifact could greatly benefit its owner.

Lu Ye's previous sword was an ordinary artifact which, besides being well-forged and sharp, had no special features. However, a Spiritual Artifact was different. Depending on the type of spirit rune engraved in it, each Spiritual Artifact possessed its own unique power.

This sword had a spirit rune within, and Lu Ye could easily activate the power of the spirit rune by channeling his spirit force into it, thus endowing the sword with the characteristics of the spirit rune.

After experimenting for a moment, he determined that the spirit rune was used to reinforce the blade. Thus, in combat, this Spiritual Artifact would not be easily damaged.

Lu Ye suddenly realized why his previous longsword, despite being enhanced with the Sharpness spirit rune, had failed to cut through this sword...

This was indeed a pleasant surprise. Although reinforcing the blade might not seem useful, in reality, it was an extremely practical spirit rune. Moreover, Lu Ye himself had mastered the Sharpness spirit rune and could enhance the Spiritual Artifact with sharpness anytime, significantly increasing its cutting ability.

With such a Spiritual Artifact in hand, Lu Ye's strength could increase by at least ten to twenty percent. Should he encounter enemies again, he could freely slash without worrying about the weapon breaking.

However, a Spiritual Artifact with only one spirit rune was surely the most basic kind.

"Come in!" Lu Ye sheathed the longsword and resumed his seated position with legs crossed.

A small figure slowly floated in through the entrance. Upon reaching Lu Ye, it showed a pleasing smile and said obediently, "The other person's body has also been taken care of."

Lu Ye casually threw a storage sack, which was Liew Ruyin's.

Yiyi caught it and, after examining it, said in surprise, "So much?"

Inside were more than a bottle of elixir pills and a few Spirit Stones.

"Splitting it 2-1 makes five, thank you for this time," Lu Ye nodded at her. Although he had enough Spirit Talismans and was confident he could kill that fair-skinned man on his own, doing so would definitely prevent anyone from opening the other's storage sack.

And it would have involved some risks.

When he sought the help of Big Tiger and Yiyi, he did so with the intention of using their influence. Fortunately, Yiyi was quick-witted. With just a word, she knew what to do.

And this time, their cooperation was smooth and pleasant.

There weren't many valuable things in the fair-skinned man's storage sack, except for his weapon. Liew Ruyin was somewhat wealthy, but not by much.

Moreover, at the last moment, the Spirit Talisman in Liew Ruyin's hand was activated. If it weren't for Big Tiger shielding him, Lu Ye would have had to face the power of that Spirit Talisman himself, greatly increasing the danger.

They split the belongings half and half, but the Spiritual Artifact was kept by Lu Ye himself, which, in essence, meant he had profited.

Yiyi did not expect Lu Ye to be so generous and looked at him with a complex expression, finally thanking him.

"Wait," Lu Ye called out to her.

Yiyi turned back to look at him.

"You must have heard what the woman we killed earlier said," he said.

"Yes."

"Although it was her own private action and her death is not a pity, she was after all a member of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. I don't know how the union will react to her death, but you should probably move to another place. This location is too close to Qingyun Marketplace. If the mercantile union decides to investigate her death, they might easily trace it back to you."

"What about you?" Yiyi asked.

"I will be leaving here soon."

The recent events had taught Lu Ye a lesson. His cultivation now entirely depended on selling origin magnetic ore, and his only sales channel was the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. Having gone there just three times, he had already caught the attention of Liew Ruyin.

Who knew if there was another Liew Ruyin lurking there.

So, he didn't plan to stay here any longer.

If reaching Spirit Stream Level 1 had qualified him to survive on the Spirit Stream battlefield, then attaining Level 2 now gave him the capital to move around.

What decisions Yiyi and Big Tiger would make was beyond his control. The Spirit Stream battlefield was vast, and chances to meet again were slim, but out of a sense of righteousness, he felt compelled to give them a word of caution.

After Yiyi left, Lu Ye took stock of the supplies in his possession.

Ninety-three Spirit-Nurturing Pills, of which eighty-one had been bought from the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, and twelve were his share of the loot with Yiyi.

Four Spirit Stones, also part of the loot, as he had used all of his own Spirit Stones to buy food.

Seven healing pills, four of which were his remaining stock, and three were retrieved from the storage sack of that fair-skinned man. Interestingly, Liew Ruyin's storage sack contained no healing pills; it seemed she hadn't anticipated needing them.

Less than thirty Spirit Talismans.

Twenty-six pieces of origin magnetic ore, both large and small.

A single low-level longsword Spiritual Artifact.

One copy of the Golden Cicada Carefree Method.

The current stock of elixir pills was sufficient for his cultivation to reach Spirit Stream Level 3. Once he reached Spirit Stream Level 3, his strength would inevitably increase again. He didn't dare claim to dominate the outer circle of the battlefield, but at least his ability to protect himself would be enhanced.

He had a vague feeling that he had forgotten something. After thinking hard for a long time, he finally remembered.

He immediately activated his Spiritual Energy and channeled it into the back of his right hand. As ripples of spirit force spread, they transformed into a blue spirit rune. The rune squirmed and shifted, revealing several lines of text within Lu Ye's field of vision.

Name: Lu Ye.

Identity: Disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect.

Cultivation: 21st orifice.

Location: Spirit Stream battlefield.

Merit: Eight.

Compared to the first time he checked the battlefield marking, his name, identity, and location remained the same, but his cultivation had improved from the 3rd orifice to the 21st orifice, a result of Lu Ye's efforts over the past two months, so it was not something to fuss over.

What concerned him was the merit!

The first time he saw this, he found it very strange, wondering exactly what this merit was and how it was obtained.

Now, he faintly understood.

This merit, he feared, could only be obtained by killing.

He remembered that when that fair-skinned man died, a red glow had floated from his hand and into his own.

When Liew Ruyin died, however, the glow that emerged was yellow.

Did different colors of light represent different factions?

That being the case, the fair-skinned cultivator he had killed must have been from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, while the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union was likely a neutral faction, which was why they conducted business with both sides.

However, what exactly this merit was used for, Lu Ye was not yet sure, and he could only explore it slowly in the future.

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 55 - 53: Orientation[1,378 words]

Having decided to leave this place, a precise map was indispensable.

Therefore, before that, willing or not, he had to make a trip to Qingyun Marketplace.

The next morning, Lu Ye's figure appeared in the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

According to Liew Ruyin before her death, she had accidentally seen him when Lu Ye went to the mercantile union for the second time to trade. At that time, a man named Liu Quan who was acquainted with her, allowed her to inquire discreetly about the content of the trade in just a few words.

At that moment, Liew Ruyin guessed that Lu Ye had control over a rich ore vein in his hands, harboring ulterior motives, and ultimately unable to suppress her greed, she contacted the fair-skinned man, telling him to be ready at all times.

After that, Liew Ruyin closely monitored the situation every day.

Not until Lu Ye went to the mercantile union for the third time and conducted an even bigger transaction, did she make up her mind. That led to the pursuit by the fair-skinned man.

Fearing that the fair-skinned man might monopolize the benefits, Liew Ruyin followed soon after Lu Ye left, and it just so happened she witnessed Lu Ye personally killing the fair-skinned man, resulting in her own death as well.

The state Liew Ruyin was in before she died made it impossible for her to lie, so no one should know of her fate for the time being.

For the moment, he was safe, and that was why Lu Ye had hurried to the marketplace.

Previously, he had been selling the origin magnetic ore bit by bit, fearful of attracting anyone's attention, with each sale's earnings just enough to meet his short-term cultivation needs.

Now that he had decided to leave this area, there was no need to be so cautious anymore. First, he would get his hands on a map to determine the location of the Righteous Blood Sect's base!

One hour later, inside a private room, Lu Ye was drinking tea to the point of fullness as a middle-aged man courteously handed him a palm-sized White Jade Disc, along with two bottles of eighteen Spirit-Nurturing Pills, three bottles of fifteen healing pills, and a dozen more Spirit Stones.

This time, Lu Ye had sold twelve pieces of origin magnetic ore all at once! The total Spirit Stones he received were over six hundred.

In the outer circle of the battlefield, this was undoubtedly a considerable deal, warranting the middle-aged man's respectful treatment towards Lu Ye.

In fact, it proved that, barring some coincidences, doing business in Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union was quite safe. Lu Ye had come here four times, each transaction conducted with different people. Unless he brought out too many goods like this time, it was not easy to attract attention. Of course, attracting attention was also because Lu Ye was not high in strength.

If he were a cultivator of Level 4-5 of Spirit Stream, then Liew Ruyin would not dare harbor any malicious thoughts, no matter what.

After completing the transaction, the middle-aged man escorted Lu Ye to the door and also presented a business card, saying directly that if Lu Ye had more items to sell next time, he could contact him in advance, and he would offer a good price.

This was a courtesy Lu Ye had not received in his previous three visits.

Naturally, Lu Ye agreed wholeheartedly.

Upon leaving Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye, as usual, exchanged all those Spirit Stones for food and some household supplies.

Spirit Stones were not of much use to him. This journey might take him a long way, and some basic necessities for living outdoors were essential.

Fortunately, his storage sack was spacious enough, so there was no worry about running out of space.

Thanks to this trade, the number of Spirit-Nurturing Pills in Lu Ye's possession had increased to one hundred and eleven, and the healing pills to twenty-two, but only fourteen pieces of origin magnetic ore were left.

He had initially thought that the amount of origin magnetic ore he had would suffice for a long time, maybe even until he reached the Level 9 of Spirit Stream realm, but now it seemed completely inadequate. He had to rush back to the Righteous Blood Sect's base as soon as possible; only once he was back at the sect's base could he feel safe.

About half a day later, Lu Ye returned to the cave where he was dwelling and took out the White Jade Disc.

This was the ten-part map of the Spirit Stream battlefield! It included the distribution of the major forces' bases throughout the entire battlefield and even the terrain features, along with some dangerous areas.

However, just the thought that this item was worth six hundred Spirit Stones made Lu Ye's heart bleed. He had never spent six hundred Spirit Stones on his cultivation journey before, but to return to his sect's base, this was a necessary price to pay.

The only thing that comforted him was that this item could be updated at a branch of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union at any time, ensuring it would never become outdated.

Holding the White Jade Disc in both hands, Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force and poured it inside, and the disc immediately emitted a soft glow, forming a halo on its surface.

The halo twisted and changed, and in the blink of an eye, it transformed into a map.

What surprised Lu Ye was that this was not a flat map, but a three-dimensional one. He saw many undulating mountain ranges with varying elevations on the map.

In one area of the map, there was a shining point that flickered constantly. Lu Ye moved his sight to that location, and the light point did not change, but when he focused his spirit force towards that point, that area immediately enlarged. As more spirit force was poured in, the map continued to magnify.

However, since the disc was only so big, the area covered by the map gradually diminished as it enlarged.

Eventually, after the map was magnified to its limit, Lu Ye saw that the light point was located within a range of undulating mountains, and the mountains were marked as Qingyun Mountain.

Looking nearby, there was an area marked as Qingyun Marketplace Three.

Lu Ye immediately understood that the light point was his current location!

As for Qingyun Marketplace Three, that was the marketplace he often visited. Besides this marketplace, there were Qingyun Marketplaces One and Two around Qingyun Mountain, up to the point of marking "six."

In other words, there were a total of six marketplaces around the outer perimeter of Qingyun Mountain.

After playing with it for a while, Lu Ye gradually figured out how to use this ten-part map. He began searching for the location of the Righteous Blood Sect while secretly praying that he was not too far from the sect's base; if he was too far away, he didn't know how long it would take to return.

The Righteous Blood Sect was a 9th grade sect; its base was naturally located in the outer circle, which reduced the difficulty of his search. Lu Ye carefully examined each name, and at one point, he almost thought he had found the three characters for the Righteous Blood Sect. Upon closer inspection, however, it turned out to be Righteous Heart Sect, which infuriated him.

After half a circle, Lu Ye still hadn't found the Righteous Blood Sect, but the extremely tense feeling began to relax, as this meant that the situation couldn't get much worse.

A moment later, still having not found it, Lu Ye's mood actually brightened because this indicated that he was not far from the Righteous Blood Sect.

Finally, Lu Ye's gaze fixed on a spot on the map where three large characters appeared, exactly what he had been looking for—the Righteous Blood Sect.

He had found it!

After steadying his mind for a moment, Lu Ye zoomed out the map to compare his position with that of the Righteous Blood Sect.

His location was slightly west of due south on the map, while the Righteous Blood Sect's location was a bit north of due west on the map.

In other words, if he wanted to go to the Righteous Blood Sect's base, he would need to head westward, crossing one quarter of the entire battlefield's edge arc.

The situation was neither good nor bad, within an acceptable range.