

Humanity 521

Chapter 521 Hea Bing Must Die

The beast-taming faction is an interesting school, but the beast-tamers of the Nine Provinces have always taken a misguided path, focusing on beasts, where cultivators are eager to subdue demon beasts, nurture them, and mostly let the demon beasts fight their battles. As a result, the cultivators of the beast-taming faction generally possess rather weak personal power.

This has led to a situation where cultivators of the Nine Provinces' beast-taming faction mostly have more than one demon beast under their command, some have several, and some even ten or twenty.

In the early stages of cultivation, sheer numbers can often easily secure victory after victory, causing cultivators to lose themselves along this incorrect path, investing too much energy in nurturing demon beasts and thereby neglecting their own cultivation.

Therefore, looking across all the Nine Provinces, there are no particularly powerful experts among the beast-taming faction's cultivators, not even comparable to the cover armorers, who, though also obsessed with external things, at least create things that provide support to themselves.

In contrast, the beast-taming faction in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain is completely different from that of the Nine Provinces.

In the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, cultivators from the beast-taming faction only ever have one demon beast, which is their natal demon beast bound by life origin and the Beast Seal.

If the beast-tamers of the Nine Provinces focus on beasts, then those in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain focus on humans, which is the correct direction for the development of the beast-taming faction.

And Beast Transformation is the strongest technique within the beast-taming skill set.

In the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, within the insect hive of the Black Tortoise Sect, Niu Meng, whom Lu Ye and others encountered, appeared before them in a beast transformation state, and being at the core of the insect hive with vigorous vitality, he almost annihilated the entire squad

formed by Lu Ye and the others with his own strength alone. It was only because the Great Elder reminded them to break his Beast Seal and end his beast transformation state that they could even manage to fight.

Being at the same Level 9 cultivation, whether Zhou Hai, Pang Dahai, or Xia Qianqian, their strengths were certainly not weak; especially Zhou Hai, a sword cultivator known for his killing prowess, yet together they were still tremendously battered by Niu Meng; such was the terrifying enhancement brought by beast transformation.

Within the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, Lu Ye had formed both a life origin bond and a Beast Seal with Amber but had never been able to enter that state until now.

Because that state could not be stimulated so casually; it required a long period of buildup.

The battle against Hea Bing had created an excellent opportunity for him; the instincts to survive, the resolve to kill the enemy, united efforts with Amber, the mingling of each other's blood Qi, spirit force, and demonic power, and the sufficient length of the battle - all were inducements for entering the beast transformation state.

Differently from Niu Meng's transformation that entirely exhibited the traits of a demon beast, representing a deeper level of beast transformation, Lu Ye's current beast transformation wasn't as pronounced, so he did not exhibit any specific demon beast traits; he was merely enveloped in an orange glow that formed tiger ears and a tiger tail.

This sudden change not only startled Hea Bing but even Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were baffled.

It had only been twenty days since the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain was accessed, and although Lu Ye had sold the Beast Seal Method to the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union where cultivators could buy the secret technique with merits, no cultivator from the beast-taming faction had entered the beast transformation state before this.

Naturally, none of them had seen such a state, and no one knew what was happening.

But instinctively, Hea Bing sensed trouble; post-transformation, Lu Ye's already strong aura climbed to new heights, and his entire presence emitted a wildly fierce feeling. Standing there, with his blood Qi surging and spirit force billowing, he seemed like an ancient ferocious beast just released from its cage, exuding endless ferocity.

In the cave, Yiyi, holding the Nine Arrays Diagram, had been maintaining the operation of the array diagram. The moment Lu Ye entered the beast transformation state, the diagram suddenly rippled, and images within it started showing signs of breaking through the diagram, startling Yiyi. It was a sign that the space within the Nine Arrays Diagram was under too much pressure.

It wasn't that the Nine Arrays Diagram was inadequate, but that her strength wasn't enough to unleash its full potential.

Yiyi quickly increased the output of her own spirit force, smoothing over the ripples and stabilizing the operation of the Nine Arrays Diagram once again.

In the chaotic stone forest, Lu Ye, surrounded by billowing spirit force, felt a strange sensation...

Everything had changed.

Everything around seemed to slow down, he clearly saw the doubt and panic flash across Hea Bing's eyes, saw the blood streaming down Li Baxian's forehead, saw the slow formation of Feng Yuechan's magic and spells...

It wasn't that they had slowed down, but that he had sped up; to be precise, his thought process had quickened, which was why everything else seemed so slow in comparison.

Suddenly, Hea Bing thrust his spear, Li Baxian was sent flying back, and the long spear shot towards Lu Ye like a dragon.

He felt the unease.

Originally, Lu Ye's strength enhancement was already abnormal; he had thought that as long as he could stabilize the situation, he could win, but now with this sudden turn of events, Lu Ye's strength seemed to have increased again and he didn't dare to hold his ground anymore, immediately changing his strategy to take proactive action. He didn't hold Li Baxian or Feng Yuechan in high regard, given the clear gap in their cultivation; it was especially Lu Ye, who, despite the even larger gap in cultivation levels, filled him with immense dread.

"Here it comes, here it comes, quickly strike him down!"

Just as Hea Bing thrust his spear, a voice suddenly rang out deep within Lu Ye's mind. That voice sounded like that of a toddler, milkily fierce.

Lu Ye had just lifted his Boulder Mountain Saber ready to block the spear, startled by this sudden voice, the force he had been gathering abruptly drained by a third.

With a clang, sparks flew, and Lu Ye's figure drifted backwards.

Seizing the advantage, Hea Bing didn't relent, his long spear fluttering with spear flowers as he covered Lu Ye with attacks, his heart slightly settled. Initially seeing Lu Ye in such a posture, he thought his strength had greatly increased, but after crossing hands, he realized the other party was only so-so.

He had made a mountain out of a molehill.

Clang clang clang, after a failed move, Lu Ye kept retreating, his Boulder Mountain Saber slashing, lifting, and stabbing, blocking the attacks coming from Hea Bing, looking quite beleaguered.

While he was fighting, the voice in the depth of his mind kept ringing continuously.

"Left side, left side..."

"Here comes the right, oh, that cut was hideous..."

"Chop him, not his spear. What's the use of chopping the spear? It's driving me crazy."

"Stab him, stab his belly, pierce his chest, do you even know how to fight!"

"Great opportunity, bite his neck, quick, quick, quick..."

That fiercely fierce voice chattered on and on. Every time Lu Ye made a cut, there was a comment. Initially, Lu Ye hadn't understood what was happening, but when the voice told him to bite the neck, he immediately realized.

"Amber?"

"Huh?"

It really was this guy!

Lu Ye had never imagined that after his transformation, he could clearly hear Amber's voice—or rather, it wasn't Amber speaking aloud, but a form of mental activity.

When Amber shape-changed years ago, it chose to change its physical size. Although it couldn't transform into a human form or speak human language, it was very perceptive and could understand human speech. Now, in Lu Ye's beast transformation state, he could clearly perceive all these mental activities.

He was caught between laughter and tears. After spending so much time with Amber, he never knew it had such a personality.

"Shut up!"

"Oh!"

Amber complied and fell silent.

At that moment, a ferocious smile appeared on Hea Bing's face. He had thought his opponent had used some terrifying secret technique that greatly increased his power, but upon actually crossing spears, he realized that was all there was to it.

Under the oppressive might of his storm-like spear technique, the combat cultivator could only defend without any chance to counterattack.

If it weren't for that magic cultivator and sword cultivator distracting him, Hea Bing was confident he could take the life of the combat cultivator within ten spears.

Just as he thought this, Lu Ye suddenly lashed out with his saber, the fierce spirit force exploding and directly deflecting Hea Bing's long spear.

Feeling the force transmitted through his spear, Hea Bing's expression subtly changed.

Before he could react, Lu Ye had closed in, charging forward. In Hea Bing's reflected vision, he felt that what was rushing towards him was not a man, but a fierce tiger descending a mountain.

The relentless brutal onslaught turned Hea Bing's expression from suspicion to terror, as the combat cultivator seemed to have transformed into a completely different person, exhibiting even greater strength than before.

Swords clashed with the spear, blood splattered, some from Lu Ye, and some from Hea Bing.

Before this fight, except for a scar left by Li Baxian on Hea Bing's face, Hea Bing hadn't been injured, until now.

The enhancement brought by the Bloodstain Spirit Runes gave Lu Ye the strength close to a Level 5 realm, nearly a match for Hea Bing.

Under the beast transformation, with a further increase, he naturally surpassed Hea Bing.

Moreover, within the state of beast transformation, Lu Ye's mentality was influenced by Amber's animalistic nature, each strike more wildly ferocious than ever before, a fight-to-the-death style that left Hea Bing struggling to cope.

With the tide of battle turning, Feng Yuechan and Li Baxian's eyes brightened, and they hastened to use their magic and spells and flying swords to cover Lu Ye.

This further complicated Hea Bing's situation.

Before, it was he who had relentlessly pressured Lu Ye, but now the situation had completely reversed, and he was forced to retreat by the trio.

Sensing the danger, Hea Bing hurriedly spoke, "Must we fight to the death? How about we stop here?"

He had never expected to find himself asking for a truce in this battle, which he thought was like meat delivered to his mouth. But now, these three pieces of 'meat' could actually threaten his life.

By this point, he could no longer underestimate Lu Ye and the others.

Hearing Hea Bing's words, Lu Ye remained silent. The battle had come to this point, it was naturally a matter of life or death. Besides, the beast transformation state definitely couldn't last much longer. He was relying on the beast transformation and Bloodstain Spirit Runes to fight Hea Bing. If they were to stop now, once the effects wore off and he returned to the strength of Level 3, what if Hea Bing went back on his word? How could he hold him accountable then?

Moreover, he didn't want to reveal the secret of the teleportation array, and Hea Bing had also recognized Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan. Letting him live would only increase their own risks.

So no matter what, Hea Bing must die!

Chapter 522 Killing Hea Bing

In the chaotic stone forest, the flash of sabers was incessant. Under beast transformation, every strike that Lu Ye made reached a new peak in both speed and strength.

Hea Bing struggled to parry with his long spear, his tiger's mouth beginning to split, his spirit force violently surging, and his situation was becoming increasingly dire.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan flanked Lu Ye, distracting Hea Bing's attention, finally giving Lu Ye a perfect opportunity. His saber thrust straight forward, aiming directly at Hea Bing's chest.

Panic flashed in Hea Bing's eyes. At that moment, he leaned back, completely exposed, although he intended to block the incoming strike, he couldn't manage in time.

Given the strength that Lu Ye was demonstrating, his protective spirit body could not withstand this blow.

In other words, if he were hit, it would definitely be a thorough strike, and he was very likely to lose his life to this blow.

Just at this critical moment, Hea Bing suddenly pushed his spirit force to its limit, and a bright triangular barrier appeared out of nowhere, standing in front of him.

The Boulder Mountain Saber stabbed into the barrier, and was halted by it, unable to advance further.

Hea Bing's face was filled with horror, in that instant, he truly felt the breath of death.

Lu Ye raised his eyebrows, recognizing at a glance the flowing patterns on the suddenly emerged barrier as Defense Spirit Runes,

Is the enemy a battle runes master?

No!

If the opponent were truly a battle runes master, it would make no sense for him not to activate spirit runes during the fight. Since he isn't a battle runes master, then he must have a rune tattoo on his body.

Rune tattoos are not something every cultivator possesses, as the number of rune tattoo masters who can tattoo spirit runes onto cultivators' bodies is limited, and the materials required for rune tattoos are extremely expensive. Normally, based on the physical basis of a Cloud River Realm cultivator, only one rune tattoo can be endured, and more than that could not be withstood.

Hea Bing had a rune tattoo, and it was on his chest. At this moment, as his spirit force surged, it naturally triggered the power of the rune tattoo, forming a barrier that blocked Lu Ye's fatal strike.

This could be said to be Hea Bing's ace in the hole, something he wouldn't use unless absolutely necessary.

It had always been Lu Ye who activated Defense Spirit Runes to defend against others' attacks, and now his own attack being blocked by another's Defense Spirit Runes, was indeed a missed opportunity to kill his enemy.

Lu Ye's expression unchanged, he withdrew his saber and chopped again, yet the Defense Spirit Runes, activated by a Level 7 cultivator, had spirit force continuously infused into it, proving extremely sturdy.

To break this rune tattoo, an overwhelmingly fierce attack was needed.

Drawing back, he leveled his saber, severe blood Qi gathering towards his right arm, muscles slightly bulging.

However, before Lu Ye could strike, Li Baxian, darting at the flank, had already made his move. The scattered flying swords around suddenly gathered, all surging into the long sword in his hands. Li Baxian stood with his sword in front, his expression solemn.

In that instant, a chilling killing intent swept through all directions, and Li Baxian himself seemed to transform into an unsheathed sharp sword.

Since Lu Ye's beast transformation, Li Baxian had been skirmishing at the side, aiming not to harm or kill the enemy but primarily to distract. Seeing Hea Bing activating his Defense Spirit Runes, he held nothing back.

A terrifying Sword Intent arose, sword light shining in all directions, Li Baxian's entire being merged with the sword light, like a thunderbolt flashing past. He had appeared in front of Hea Bing, his longsword touching the Defense Spirit Runes.

A touch silent as the void, yet accompanied by an eruption of force.

With a loud crack, the seemingly impregnable Defense Spirit Runes shattered!

This is the fearsome offensive power of a sword cultivator, breaking his strongest defense means with a cultivation three levels lower than Hea Bing.

Under this one sword, Li Baxian's face turned as pale as paper, Hea Bing swept with his long spear, directly sending him flying.

Seizing the advantageous moment created by Li Baxian, Lu Ye's saber came slashing down.

A Single Flash!

Panic overflowed in Hea Bing's eyes, as he once again spurred his spirit force, attempting to activate the defensive power of the runes, but it was ultimately a step too slow.

As the saber fell, behind Lu Ye, the shadow of a fierce tiger flickered, as if the roar of a tiger resonated.

The fierce battlefield suddenly fell silent.

Lu Ye maintained the posture of his saber slash, motionless for a long while, as the dark red fresh blood gathered on the blade of the Boulder Mountain Saber, dripping down.

Drip, drop...

The faint sound broke the silence.

Feng Yuechan pressed her lips tightly, her gaze fixated on Hea Bing, her hand ready to unleash magic and spells.

Just three yards in front of Lu Ye, Hea Bing stood frozen in place, his long spear still in the pose of a thrust, the forming Defense Spirit Runes on his chest flickered and silently dispersed.

His eyeballs moved slightly, glancing at Lu Ye in front of him, his face twitching, then he fell backward.

As he hit the ground, his body separated, his eyes wide with resentment and disbelief.

"Phew..."

Only then did Feng Yuechan let out a deep breath, withdrew her spirit force, and hurried towards Li Baxian to check his condition.

Lu Ye also sat down on the ground, sprawled out, looking up at the ever-changing void above.

His vision blurred, and he appeared again in that underground cave, as Yiyi sensed the battle was over and had let them out.

"Lu Ye, are you alright?"

Yiyi stepped forward, looking at Lu Ye, who appeared as if drenched in fresh blood, her voice carrying a sobbing tone.

"I'm fine. How is Fourth Brother?"

From the side came the extremely weak voice of Li Baxian, "Power drained!"

His injuries were somewhat less severe than Lu Ye's, but the last of his secret swords had exhausted all his strength.

Hearing Li Baxian's voice, Lu Ye finally set his mind at ease.

As his mind relaxed, a streak of blood light burst from his chest, revealing Amber's figure, which looked quite exhausted, indicating that the beast transformation state had also taken a huge toll on it.

The moment he deactivated his beast transformation state, Lu Ye felt waves of fatigue sweeping over him, as if in that instant, all his essence, Qi, and spirit had been drained away.

It wasn't just the aftereffects of the beast transformation but also from the Bloodstain, the combination of which he simply couldn't withstand.

He just managed to say, "I need to sleep."

Then his consciousness plunged into darkness.

Yiyi was startled and quickly checked him, confirming there was no threat to Lu Ye's life, and then she breathed a sigh of relief.

Li Baxian also passed out shortly thereafter, and even Amber curled up next to Lu Ye, leaving Feng Yuechan and Yiyi to watch over them.

After feeding Lu Ye a healing pill and carefully bandaging his wounds, Yiyi said, "Senior Sister Feng, I'll go out and stand guard. Please take extra care here."

Feng Yuechan nodded, "Alright."

They had just experienced a fierce battle, and both Lu Ye and Li Baxian were now unconscious, which could spell trouble if someone were to come in at this time.

Yiyi could traverse underground, and when she was with Lu Ye, she often took on the duty of guard, making her the best choice to monitor the area.

The moment Lu Ye killed Hea Bing, on the high Kill Ranking in the sky, the points behind his name suddenly increased by two hundred fifty, reaching three thousand nine hundred ninety, just ten points shy of four thousand.

This sudden change inevitably caught the attention of many interested parties. Recently, the points following Lu Ye's name on the Kill Ranking had been increasing by hundreds at a time, and the time he killed a Level 6 cultivator, it even jumped by one hundred eighty points, which naturally aroused much speculation.

It was certain that the Rank 1 Lu Yiye's cultivation wasn't very high, because only when he killed enemies above his level would the kill points increase so substantially.

This additional two hundred fifty points indeed made people curious; whom had he killed this time? Considering that a Cloud River Level 9's base merit was only sixty points, two hundred fifty points were more than four times that amount.

About thirty miles away from the underground cave where Lu Ye and his group were located, Wei Que frowned as he looked at the Kill Ranking, his expression troubled.

He knew that Lu Ye was only at Level 3 cultivation. An increase of two hundred fifty kill points undoubtedly meant he had fought someone of Level 7!

Level 3 killing Level 7 was almost unimaginable, unbelievable to speak of, even if he had assistants like Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan.

But the fact was right before his eyes.

What troubled him was not the increase in Lu Ye's kill points, as he had no intentions of competing for the Kill Ranking; any increase in Lu Ye's kill points did not concern him.

His primary target had always been Lu Ye himself.

The reason for his troubled feeling was because he was certain that he had followed the wrong direction.

A few Level 3-4 cultivators fighting a Level 7 cultivator would definitely result in a heated battle, which simply couldn't be hidden, yet despite following their trail, he had completely lost track of Lu Ye and the others.

Where could those guys have run off to?

And what means did they use to escape?

Wei Que was utterly baffled.

As time passed, the rankings on the Kill Ranking continually changed, especially from second to tenth place, where the gaps were already small; a single battle could propel someone up several ranks.

What made them even more delighted was that Lu Ye's kill points had stalled.

Although there had previously been long periods when Lu Ye's kill points did not change, generally, almost every day there had been increases, and each time by several hundred points.

However, in the recent days, the points behind Lu Yiye had been fixed at three thousand nine hundred ninety and had not changed at all.

Originally, Lu Ye had been far ahead, seeming unreachable and causing despair among those behind him due to a thousand-point gap that was difficult to close.

But now they saw an opportunity again, thus they searched even more diligently for enemy traces.

After three days, Tan Sheng, who had been second in ranking, finally overtook Lu Ye, occupying the number one spot on the Kill Ranking, greatly pleased.

If not for Lu Ye's name still being on the Kill Ranking, he almost would have suspected the man had died. But now, with no activity for three consecutive days, it was almost certain that he was severely injured and likely healing.

It must be said, Tan Sheng was not wrong in his assumptions.

During these three days, Lu Ye was indeed recovering. His injuries weren't too severe and generally, a day or two of healing usually had no major impact on him, but the combined aftereffects of the beast transformation and the Bloodstain Spirit Runes made his body always feel weak.

The last time he had felt such weakness was after activating the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes at the Spirit Stream Battlefield, but back then, Hua Ci was by his side, caring for him thoroughly, allowing him to recover quickly.

Chapter 523 Golden Body Token

After three days of recovery, Lu Ye finally recuperated, and Li Baxian had also almost fully recovered.

Since the opening of the hunting ground, about ten days had passed, with no knowledge of when it would close.

Generally speaking, each opening of the hunting ground lasts from half a month to a month, with no specific pattern as to its duration, because no one knows when the hunting ground will suddenly close. The closing of the hunting ground signals the settling of the Kills Ranking, and at that time, various rewards will be distributed by Heaven's Augury.

According to Yiyi, who was on guard outside, Lu Ye's ranking on the Kills Ranking had fallen to fourth place. This was normal; although he had been a considerable distance ahead of the others, with no gains for a full three days, those powerful cultivators were sure to catch up and surpass him.

If it had been before, being surpassed would have been fine, but after Lu Ye, Li Baxian, and Feng Yuechan had worked so hard for so long, it would be a pity to be overtaken and lose the first place reward at this juncture.

Now that his body had recovered, he naturally set out to retake the first place on the Kills Ranking.

However, preparations were needed before that. Not to mention anything else, it was essential to set up some teleportation arrays.

The teleportation array in their current hideout didn't connect to any other points. If someone cornered them here, they would be trapped with no way out, just like before.

Lu Ye felt quite helpless about this. Generally, he chose very remote locations for his teleportation arrays, either inside caves or in underground caverns. But if he could find these places, so could others. If someone triggered the explosion magic arrays he left behind, all his arrangements would be destroyed.

The only solution was to set up as many arrays as possible. That way, even if some were destroyed, there would be other alternatives available.

Once the preparations were complete, Lu Ye quietly emerged from the underground cavern.

It should be daytime now, but under the shroud of the blood-colored sky, the entire hunting ground was enveloped in a sinister and eerie atmosphere.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan remained below, not following him.

Lu Ye was going to set up teleportation arrays, and naturally, it was more convenient to work alone. Setting aside everything else, he had ways to conceal himself; as long as he was careful, not even

cultivators of Level 8-9 would notice him passing by. Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan did not possess such abilities.

He traveled about 30 miles straight, following his previous memory, and arrived at a cave where he had set up a teleportation array, but now the cave was filled with rubble, and traces of spirit force explosion impacts, and even some dried blood on the ground - clear signs of an explosion magic array being activated.

Someone had gotten injured here, which means the person who breached the array and triggered it must not have had very high cultivation. If it had been someone of Level 8-9, they likely wouldn't have been hurt.

After inspecting the cave, which was reasonably sturdy, Lu Ye cleared the rubble from the floor and set up the Formation anew.

Although this place had been discovered by someone else, since they got nothing out of it and had been duped by Lu Ye's array, they probably wouldn't come back to investigate it further.

In less than six hours, all was prepared, and Lu Ye stood on the teleportation array for a test, ensuring this array was not only connected to Li Baxian's location but also to another. Only then did he consider his work done.

He had originally set up as many as twelve arrays, but after so many days, he didn't know how many were left.

Since many of the arrays were interconnected in sequence, he could only check the status of two or three other locations by using one array; it wasn't possible to check them all.

After setting up one teleportation array, Lu Ye left the cave, concealed himself, and headed for another location about 30 miles away.

Finding a suitable spot with Yiyi, he set up another teleportation array. This new array was connected to the location where Li Baxian was, as well as to the first array he set up earlier.

In this way, no matter which teleportation array they were at, there were two ways to retreat; even if one were destroyed, they wouldn't be cornered.

Having learned from his previous mistake, Lu Ye was now even more careful; he did not wish to engage with cultivators above Level 7 again.

Although they had won the battle against Hea Bing, it was incredibly hard-fought, and even after killing Hea Bing, they had wasted a full three days—a loss that far outweighed the gains.

For him, the most profitable targets were those at Level 4-5. They were easier to kill, and the kill points they offered were not few.

After setting up two teleportation arrays in succession, Lu Ye contacted Li Baxian to confirm their situation.

Shortly after, Lu Ye stood on the teleportation array and activated the Formation, his figure fading swiftly.

Returning to the previous underground cavern, he met up with Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, and the three of them set out.

After walking for more than ten miles, Lu Ye, as usual, began setting up a Formation to hide the presence and figures of Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan. Then, he found another suitable location to lay a trap array in case they encountered an overwhelming enemy.

Once everything was ready, Lu Ye concealed his presence and quietly lay in wait.

During the wait, Lu Ye looked up at the Kills Ranking.

His ranking had fallen again, now to the seventh place. The reward for the seventh place was only three 3rd Dao gold-hued spirit fortune sticks, a huge gap from first place.

The person who still held the first place was that fellow named Tan Sheng, who somehow must have stumbled upon incredible luck; the kill points he had were almost three hundred more than the second place.

It had been known that the gap between these contenders wasn't significant earlier, and a three hundred kill point difference was generally hard to close.

If it hadn't been for Lu Ye's three days of rest, leaving him a thousand kill points ahead of the second place, it would have been enough to make others utterly despair.

Six hours later, a group of cultivators passed by nearby. Judging by their cautious demeanor, their cultivation was not very high, and though they were flying on their weapons, the height above the ground was less than thirty feet.

In this way, should they encounter any danger, they would be able to land quickly and try to find somewhere to hide.

As usual, it was Li Baxian who made the sneak attack to determine the affiliation and cultivation level of the other party, followed by Yuechan's bombardment with her magic and spells, and Lu Ye lying in ambush to make the kill.

The battle lasted less than thirty breaths from beginning to end.

They quickly cleared the battlefield; Lu Ye recovered the array banners and array bases and they retreated along the same route.

Even though the battle went smoothly, maintaining enough vigilance was essential; within the hunting ground, no one knew when they might provoke one of those cultivators from the Level 8-9 realm. Hence, the trio adhered to their earlier principle of never striking in the same place twice.

Back in the underground cave, Lu Ye was in charge of disabling the restrictions on the storage sacks, and the three of them divided the spoils of war evenly. Then, under Lu Ye's activation, they teleported to the location of another teleportation array.

After making some brief repairs, they continued with their actions.

As before, each day Lu Ye's party earned several hundred kill points; by the thirteenth day of the hunting ground's opening, his kill points had reached five thousand four hundred and forty.

His ranking moved up one place, arriving at the sixth position.

But at this rate, reaching the top of the Kills Ranking was not possible, for the gap between him and the first place holder Tan Sheng was significant. With his Level 9 cultivation, Tan Sheng acted unbridled in the hunting grounds, unmatched by anyone except for the strong cultivators of the Haotian Alliance who were also at Level 9. Unlike Lu Ye and his companions, they had to do everything stealthily for fear of being discovered by stronger cultivators.

However, there was nothing they could do about it; the cultivation of the trio was simply too low, an absolute shortcoming.

In fact, the rewards for sixth place were not bad. Although it was only one spot higher than seventh place, the prize of the gold-hued spirit fortune sticks was a full five Dao higher.

In the bottom of the cave where they were hiding, atop the teleportation array, Lu Ye disabled the restrictions on the storage sacks, then divided the numerous storage sacks into three portions for each to choose from.

The division of spoils had always been like this, and what treasures could be found in each person's storage sack was entirely up to luck.

Mostly there wasn't anything significant, with some storage sacks containing spirit fortune sticks, though none of high quality.

These spirit fortune sticks were probably collected in the hunting ground and not yet used, which turned out to be a benefit for Lu Ye and the others.

Opening one storage sack after another, they sorted and stowed away anything useful.

Shortly after, Lu Ye pulled out a palm-sized token from the last storage sack.

On this token was an image of a bell, with a few simple strokes alongside the bell that suggested it was emitting light, which made it look rather amusing to the observer.

Lu Ye had never seen such a token before and didn't know its use; thinking it was some kind of Identity Token belonging to the sect of the deceased, he was about to throw it away casually when Li Baxian suddenly looked over.

"Junior brother, let me see that token," he said.

Hearing this, Lu Ye handed the token to Li Baxian.

Li Baxian took it, looked at it from all sides, and even pinched it with his fingers, then uncertainly passed the token to Yuechan: "You take a look."

Yuechan examined it carefully, seeming to recall something, and her expression turned to one of amazement and doubt.

"Is it that thing?" Li Baxian asked.

"It looks like it; I saw some records in an ancient tome. The image and size match," she replied.

"So, it seems this thing can also appear in the hunting ground. It looks like a stroke of fortune has fallen," Li Baxian mused.

"That should be the case."

"Wonder who was so lucky to encounter it."

"Lucky, but already dead," Yuechan noted.

Their exchange piqued Lu Ye's curiosity.

Once they finished discussing, Lu Ye asked, "Senior Brother, what is this token?"

From the way Li Baxian and Yuechan spoke, it seemed the item was not merely an Identity Token but something entirely unfamiliar to him.

"This is quite a treasure," Li Baxian said, handing the token back to Lu Ye, "It should be a Golden Body Token."

"Golden Body Token?"

"Yes, Junior Brother, you know of the Golden Body Talisman, right? The Golden Body Token works similarly, safeguarding a person entirely. The power of a Golden Body Talisman depends on the quality of the Spirit Talisman, but this Golden Body Token is a blessing from Heaven's Augury. In other words, if one activates this Golden Body Token, one is protected by a blessing from Heaven that is solid and unbreakable, far surer and lasting longer than any Golden Body Talisman. It can endure for at least several hours."

Chapter 524 Another Gold-Hued Spirit Fortune Stick

"Heaven's Augury grants protection that can last for several Shichen?"

Lu Ye was astonished.

"At the very least, as for exactly how long it can last, I'm not clear on that, I've only heard about it before, this is the first time I've seen the actual item."

Feng Yuechan also spoke up, "This is a blessing from Heaven's Augury, I have only heard of people obtaining the Golden Body Token in the secret realm, but I did not know it could also appear in this hunting ground. However, since it is an item bestowed by Heaven's Augury and the hunting ground is

filled with various fortunes scattered about, it's possible for it to appear. It seems someone acquired this Golden Body Token but didn't get the chance to use it, and now it's our good fortune."

Hearing her say this, Lu Ye suddenly remembered a detail.

During the ambush on that group of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, one of them indeed seemed to be trying to take something out of his storage sack but, unfortunately, before he could do so, he was slain by Lu Ye who was lurking close by.

Now it seems that person must have been trying to take out the Golden Body Token from his storage sack; otherwise, what would he have been reaching into his storage sack for at such a life-and-death moment?

"Junior brother, this item is rare, store it well, it can save your life at a crucial time," Li Baxian instructed.

A Golden Body Token is a barrier to death, after all, it's a form of protection gifted by the heavens, and it's simply not something ordinary means can break through.

In the past few days, having experienced trials and tribulations, both encounters with Level 9 experts and desperate fights with Level 7 entities, Li Baxian thought something had gone wrong with his junior brother's luck. But now, seeing that his junior brother's luck still held strong, obtaining something as rare as the Golden Body Token, that's not something that could be attributed to ordinary luck.

"How should this item be used?" Lu Ye inquired.

Li Baxian replied, "Activate it by infusing it with spirit force."

It was indeed simple; Lu Ye nodded and carefully stored the Golden Body Token.

This kind of item that could save one's life in times of crisis was truly more valuable than any treasure. Many treasures might be good, but one's own life is ultimately unique.

After a brief rest, they continued their mission.

Two days later, Lu Ye was hiding his figure, lying in wait in the shadows.

Since acquiring the Golden Body Token, his luck had been on a winning streak; these past two days had been fruitful. Currently, Lu Ye's ranking on the Kills Ranking had reached third place, only about five hundred kill points behind the first place Tan Sheng. At this rate, he would be able to surpass in just a few days.

Of course, with the hunting ground having been open for half a month already, whether he could return to first place before it closed was still uncertain.

He had been waiting at this spot for about six hours, and in that time, a group of cultivators did pass by, but upon Li Baxian's attempt to ambush them and determining they were from the Haotian Alliance, they decided to halt.

Just as he was getting bored, a violent surge of spirit force came from a few miles away, and Lu Ye looked up in the direction from which the spirit force emanated, a dazzling column of light catching his eye.

This is...

This is the commotion caused by the activation of that special gold-hued spirit fortune stick!

Having witnessed such a gold-hued spirit fortune stick granted by Heaven's Augury explode in his hand no fewer than four times, Lu Ye was naturally familiar with such a commotion.

This was the first time he had seen someone else's spirit fortune stick explode, indeed a sight to behold.

Although every day someone is chosen by Heaven's Augury and granted a spirit fortune stick, the hunting ground is vast, and since Lu Ye and his group usually lay in wait for their prey, they didn't cover a wide range, so the explosions of those spirit fortune sticks were far from them and undetected.

But he didn't expect to be so close this time.

Lu Ye's thoughts churned, and quickly he regained his composure, deciding not to get involved in the excitement. Although he had once reaped the benefits of that special gold-hued spirit fortune stick, now that it had activated, all the nearby cultivators would surely be rushing over. There would inevitably be many formidable opponents that could not be defeated. A Level 7 like Hea Bing had already forced them to recuperate for three days; attracting stronger figures would leave them with no way out.

The Golden Body Token could only protect one person anyway.

Even so, if he were not concerned about exposing his whereabouts, Lu Ye would prefer to leave this place of trouble.

A few miles distance was indeed too close for Cloud River Realm cultivators, but making any rash moves now was not a wise choice, better to continue hiding.

While he was considering this, a figure suddenly came into his field of vision. The person appeared anxious, as if fleeing from something, traveling through the air at a height of only seventy or eighty feet from the ground. Judging by the spirit force fluctuations emanating from this individual, they were a Level 6 cultivator.

The man was muttering under his breath as he fled, his expression showing extreme indignation.

Lu Ye's mind stirred with a hunch, and just as he was about to inform Li Baxian, a streak of sword light flashed by, and Li Baxian's figure was revealed, rushing towards the Level 6 cultivator.

Already on edge, the man turned pale when faced with the surprise attack, frantically attempting to defend himself.

The brief skirmish caused the battlefield markings on the back of Li Baxian's and the stranger's hands to emit lights of two colors.

Noticing Li Baxian was of Level 4 cultivation, the man was furious, "A Level 4 dares to fight for treasures, courting death!"

As he said this, he pointed a finger, and streaks of weapon control light bombarded Li Baxian, who countered with a flying sword, the clanging of metal ringing through the air.

While the stranger was locked in combat with Li Baxian, he failed to prevent an attack from Feng Yuechan on the flank. With spells thundering in, the assault from both sides left the man in a state of absolute disarray.

Though there was only one level difference between Level 7 and Level 6, the disparity in strength was great, and it was clear this man's foundations could not compare to Hea Bing's. Hea Bing had advanced to the Cloud River Realm with three hundred and sixty orifices open, but this man had not reached Great Perfection before advancing. He had only opened two hundred ninety-eight orifices back in the Spirit Stream Realm.

Such a Level 6 cultivator, being attacked simultaneously by Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, naturally showed signs of being hard-pressed.

Don't mention them joining forces, even alone, each had the capability to fight against it.

Realizing Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were not to be messed with, this person's expression turned ugly. He just felt incredibly unlucky, having escaped only to be intercepted here, and from the looks of it, his opponents had been waiting here for quite some time.

This was not an ambush targeted at him; they were merely hunting here, but he walked right into their trap.

If it were not because the treasure could not be given away once blessed, he would have already offered it up in exchange for his life. But he had previously attempted to discard it and found it impossible, a truly desperate situation.

He had also considered seeking the protection of a powerful Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator, but those strong ones were currently vying for rankings on the Kills Ranking, and no one had the time to protect him. Besides, with time pressing, he couldn't even contact a suitable strong cultivator.

He cursed the heavens for being blind; there were so many people in the hunting field, yet it just had to be him who was chosen.

Already in dire straits, as these wild thoughts swirled in his head, the situation grew increasingly unfavorable for him.

Suddenly, a piercing killing intent struck from behind, followed by intense pain engulfing his body. Caught completely off guard, his figure was sent flying and he landed in a sorry state.

At his original location, Lu Ye's figure emerged, flames entwining the Boulder Mountain Saber.

Having struck with a single sabercut, Lu Ye charged forward. Li Baxian's flying sword and Feng Yuechan's magic and spells also came from the sides.

The man scrambled to his feet, clumsily deflecting the flying sword, only to be staggered by the magic.

Lu Ye was already upon him. As the Boulder Mountain Saber swung down, the man had no power to resist.

Blood splattered, and his mangled body thudded to the ground.

Somewhat surprisingly, this Level 6 cultivator... was unimaginably weak.

In the past, Lu Ye, together with Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, had also teamed up to kill two or three Level 6 cultivators, but none had been as frail as this man turned out to be.

It seemed that this man's foundation was very weak, likely having opened few spiritual orifices during his time in the Spirit Stream Realm.

Hurriedly collecting the spoils of war, Lu Ye took the man's storage sack and Spiritual Artifact, then reached into the man's chest and, sure enough, found a gold-hued spirit fortune stick wrapped in faint aqua-colored light...

"Let's go!"

With a call from Lu Ye, Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan hurriedly followed, not even having the time to collect the array banners and array base scattered around.

They hadn't run a hundred yards when a streak of light came flying towards them from ahead, arriving in a blink of an eye and revealing a person's figure.

Clearly, sensing the commotion of the fight, he came to investigate.

Lu Ye and his companions were on high alert.

Fortunately, the battlefield markings on the backs of their hands did not light up; the newcomer was from the Haotian Alliance.

Realizing the cultivation of Lu Ye and his companions, the man waved his hand, signaling for them to leave quickly.

Lu Ye bowed with a fist, and he, together with Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan, swiftly left the scene.

Shortly after, intense sounds of combat came from behind them; it was likely that the Haotian Alliance cultivator had encountered a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator. Such noise would undoubtedly attract many cultivators to investigate. The greater the disturbance, the safer Lu Ye and his companions would be.

After a short while, the three of them rushed into a cave, with Lu Ye immediately activating the cave's Concealment Array to hide their auras and then stationing on the teleportation array.

This time they were fortunate. On the way back they only encountered someone from the Haotian Alliance and no others, so their position hadn't been exposed yet, there was no rush to teleport away.

It wouldn't be too late to start the teleportation when others truly found this place.

Time passed, with the sounds of swift movements occasionally reaching their ears, as well as the intermittent noise of fierce fights from a distance, all likely attracted by the previous anomaly involving both factions of cultivators.

By now, neither side knew into whose hands the gold-hued spirit fortune stick had fallen. Mainly because Lu Ye and his companions were lucky and acted quickly, the anomaly had just started when the holder of the gold-hued spirit fortune stick entered their ambush circle.

With his death, the whereabouts of the gold-hued spirit fortune stick became unknown.

Two hours, four hours...

The noise outside gradually subsided, and Lu Ye and his companions, who had been on edge the entire time, also relaxed.

Only now did they have the mood to check the spoils of war.

There were several storage sacks, each opened one by one, but they found nothing particularly valuable except for the gold-hued spirit fortune stick Lu Ye had found on the man.

Undoubtedly, it was a special spirit fortune stick bestowed by Heaven's Augury, with the faint aqua-colored light being the best indicator.

Lu Ye himself had not expected to get his hands on such a spirit fortune stick again, but with the experience from before, he was quite confident in keeping it safe. As long as his luck was not too terrible, the spirit fortune stick should not be taken from him.

A spirit fortune stick like this, bestowed by Heaven's Augury, was not necessarily a good thing for ordinary cultivators, because it couldn't be used, stored in a storage sack, or even discarded before the deadline; it had to be carried on the person.

Chapter 525 Meeting by Appointment

When Lu Ye had previously received the gold-hued spirit fortune stick, he even thought about using a teleportation array to discard it, but it turned out that even when he teleported, the gold-hued spirit fortune stick, like a persistent parasite, could not be shaken off.

Once this object was bestowed, unless killed in battle, it was simply impossible to get rid of.

Therefore, for cultivators with low cultivation, being selected by Heaven's Augury to receive a gold-hued spirit fortune stick was definitely not good news.

Lu Ye had previously not wanted to get involved with this gold-hued spirit fortune stick, but now that it had come into his possession, he had no choice but to hold onto it.

It wasn't all bad; as long as he could wait out the time limit, he would not only obtain a gold-hued spirit fortune stick but also a good number of kill points, which should allow him to return to the top position on the Kills Ranking.

As long as there were enough teleportation arrays, it shouldn't be a problem to keep this spirit fortune stick safe.

The only problem was that Lu Ye didn't know how many times the spirit fortune stick on his hand had been activated. He could confirm that it had been activated once, but whether it had happened before that, he wasn't too clear. Such matters could only be verified with time.

Soon, six hours passed.

The gold-hued spirit fortune stick concealed in Lu Ye's embrace erupted once more. As the strong spirit force fluctuations swept through, a beam of light shot up into the sky, which couldn't be concealed even though he hid in a cave.

Without hesitation, he truly activated the teleportation array.

But before leaving, Lu Ye unleashed a saber light, striking the location of the explosion magic array.

After they teleported away, the cave hummed for a while, and flames erupted.

Before long, cultivators were drawn to the site, but they only found a scene of destruction and no other clues.

About 30 miles away, atop another teleportation array, Lu Ye and the others appeared. Yiyi was the first to flash out and used ground evasion to scout the surroundings.

She soon sent a message back, no one was around.

The group calmly awaited.

Another six hours passed, and the spirit fortune stick activated for the second time.

Just as before, they quickly activated the teleportation array and left, once again leaving behind a scene of ruin.

Arriving at a new teleportation array, Yiyi went to scout the surroundings again, while Lu Ye started to adjust the teleportation array, checking the connectivity of the array below to other teleportation arrays.

There was only one teleportation array they could connect to...

The spirit fortune stick in hand had now activated twice, counting the initial activation, making it three times in total, but the pale cyan light on the stick had not disappeared, meaning the time limit hadn't been reached.

In other words, there was one last time.

The teleportation array must ensure that it can connect to at least two places to be considered safe, for who could be certain if another teleportation array would not be discovered and destroyed by others while waiting.

If so, when the spirit fortune stick erupted for the last time, they would have no means to escape using the teleportation array.

Given the circumstances, they could only take the risk to set up more teleportation arrays.

After informing Li Baxian, Lu Ye concealed his form and sneaked out of the cave, picking a random direction and proceeding.

This task was something Li Baxian and the others couldn't help with, let alone follow Lu Ye; they could only stay put and await news from Lu Ye.

A distance of about 30 miles wasn't far, but Lu Ye needed to conceal his tracks and be constantly vigilant, so he couldn't move too fast; additionally, he had to find suitable locations for array setup. More than two hours later, he finally found a place to set up the Formation.

There was not enough time to set up a second array, so Lu Ye could only teleport back to Li Baxian to regroup.

Waiting silently, more than two hours later, the eruption of the spirit fortune stick in his embrace occurred as expected.

As the light pillar surged and spirit force roiled, the figures of Lu Ye and the two others vanished from the teleportation array.

In the blink of an eye, the three of them appeared on the newly set up teleportation array by Lu Ye.

After confirming the safety of their surroundings, Lu Ye quickly took out the spirit fortune stick from his embrace and found that the pale cyan light had disappeared. He breathed a sigh of relief and stored it in his personal storage space.

At the same time, on the Kills Ranking, the name of Lu Ye, who had originally been ranked third, shot up two places to return to the top spot.

This time his kill points had increased by a considerable 750 points in one go, making his total exceed 7,000, over 200 more than the second-ranked Tan Sheng.

At a certain location in the hunting ground, Tan Sheng, dressed in a green shirt, looked up at the changes in the Kills Ranking with a frown on his face.

He inwardly marveled, Lu Yiye's luck was incredibly good to have gained so many kill points all at once, obviously not from slaying enemies but due to holding that special gold-hued spirit fortune stick.

It was the same last time; the guy shot up by a thousand kill points and directly ascended to the top position on the Kills Ranking.

Within half a month, this man had consecutively secured two gold-hued spirit fortune sticks, such fortune truly made others envious.

He had vaguely heard that this Lu Yiye was from the Righteous Blood Sect in Bingzhou and was a target of many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge sects' bounties. Recently, many powerful beings in the hunting ground had been searching for his trails, but to no avail thus far.

A gap of over 200 kill points wasn't significant, but catching up to him wouldn't be easy. Despite his lower cultivation, he amassed kill points much more efficiently than Tan Sheng, which was truly frustrating.

Having been overtaken in the rankings, he could only think of ways to obtain more kill points. The reward for ranking first was an entire class A spring spirit different from second place. Now at Level 9 in his cultivation, it wouldn't be long before he advanced to True Lake and left the Cloud River battlefield. A class A spring spirit might not hold much value for him, but he still had many junior brothers and sisters who needed it, so he couldn't miss out on this at any cost.

While he was pondering this, a message suddenly came through his battlefield marking. Tan Sheng checked it and discovered it was from one of his junior brothers.

The message was simple, someone had gone through several channels to contact him, then entrusted his junior brother to pass along a message to Tan Sheng, hoping to arrange a meeting in the hunting grounds.

Tan Sheng was currently single-mindedly focused on gaining more kill points to overtake Lu Ye; where would he find the time to meet anyone, especially when contacting him in such a roundabout way meant their cultivation couldn't be too high.

He was just about to refuse when the second message made his eyes light up.

He immediately replied, "Are you certain they said that?"

His junior brother replied, "That is indeed what they said, but I don't know if it's true or false."

"If they truly possess that thing, then they could indeed make it happen! Ask them where they are now."

After a moment, his junior brother sent a reply with a location. Tan Sheng took out his ten-part map to check and found that the location was not close. Even with his level of cultivation, it would take him at least half a day to get there at full speed. He immediately said, "Tell them to wait for me there, I'm on my way."

After ending the communication, Tan Sheng soared into the sky, turning into a streak of light as he rushed towards the predetermined location.

At the same time, on a spirit mountaintop, two figures were stealthily lying in wait. If Lu Ye were here, he would definitely recognize them as the brothers Jiang Liuzi and Jiang Chengzi.

Both were disheveled and bore numerous injuries, evidently the result of combat.

Both had Level 5 in their cultivation, and their strengths were not weak. In the Cloud River Realm, they were capable of defeating opponents of higher levels.

Lately, under the leadership of the cultivator named Loo Shu, they had been searching the hunting grounds for various opportunities, and also tracking down Lu Ye.

Their luck was fairly good at the beginning as they found some chances and even killed some Haotian Alliance cultivators, gaining a lot of spoils of war, but they couldn't find any trace of Lu Ye.

If things continued on like this, they could barely accept it.

However, yesterday, their situation suddenly took a turn for the worse when they encountered a powerful member of the Haotian Alliance, someone who already held a grudge against their sect.

Upon encounter, a fight was inevitable.

Although Loo Shu's cultivation was not weak, being at Level 8, he was still no match for that person, who was one level higher in cultivation.

Under normal circumstances, it would not be easy for a Level 9 to kill a Level 8. Once their cultivation reached this level, if Loo Shu was determined to flee, it was very likely the other person would not be able to kill him.

But given their mutual deep-seated hatred and Loo Shu's need to look after the two brothers, he was forced into battle, allowing the two to escape first.

It was only after they reached a safe place that they realized Loo Shu's battlefield marking had disappeared, which meant, Brother Loo Shu had fallen in battle.

This left a bitter taste in the hearts of the two brothers, both feeling that they were the cause of their senior brother's death.

Seeking revenge was out of the question; facing an adversary with Level 9 cultivation was simply beyond them. They immediately decided to hide until the hunting grounds event ended.

However, that powerful member of the Haotian Alliance was nearby, searching for them, keeping them constantly on edge, fearful of being discovered.

In desperation, they had to seek help from the powerful, but the powerful within the hunting grounds were all competing for spots on the Kills Ranking; who would help them without cause?

Jiang Liuzi set his sights on Tan Sheng because Tan Sheng was powerful enough to ensure their safety. As for the bargaining chip to move him to action, the two brothers had something in their possession.

It was also a matter of luck. Just half a day ago, a beacon of white light appeared where they were hiding, a scattered opportunity from Heaven's Augury. From that white light, they obtained an item.

With this item in hand, the brothers were certain that Tan Sheng would definitely take action.

After several attempts, they found someone to help send a message to Tan Sheng, and were now awaiting a response.

Suddenly, a message arrived. Jiang Liuzi eagerly checked it.

Jiang Chengzi asked, "How did it go?"

Jiang Liuzi nodded, "Tan Sheng agreed, but he is quite far from here; it will take about half a day."

"That's good news; it's as if there's always a solution from heaven when all seems lost."

The two brothers hadn't expected to find such an item in their moment of despair, an item from the scattered opportunities of Heaven's Augury.

Which is more valuable, the rewards from the Kills Ranking or Lu Yiye's life?

For the cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, it is undoubtedly the latter.

Even though Tan Sheng is in the awkward position of being second on the Kills Ranking, if he could truly slay Lu Ye, he would come immediately. Killing Lu Ye would not only get him back to the top of the ranking but also bring him many bounties, a true case of killing two birds with one stone.

For many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators eager to kill Lu Ye, the most troublesome part now was finding his whereabouts. If you can't even find the person, how can you even talk about killing him?

But the item the Jiang brothers obtained could precisely determine Lu Ye's current location, which was why Tan Sheng hurried to meet them.

Chapter 526 Whereabouts Exposed

Half a day later, Tan Sheng, dressed in green, appeared atop the spirit mountaintop. He had hurried along his journey, fearing he would arrive too late.

The hunting ground had been open for half a month and could close at any time. Once it closed, even if one had acquired that item, it might not be of much use anymore.

Moreover, once the hunting ground closed, the rankings on the Kills Ranking would be set, and many rewards would be distributed.

Gazing at the sky, he took out a ten-part map to check, confirming that this was the agreed-upon location, and immediately sent out a message.

After waiting for a moment, a message came back. He perused it briefly and murmured softly, "The sun and moon hang high, the twin rivers run side by side."

To himself, he scoffed at the ridiculous secret code...

As he finished speaking, he saw two figures emerging from their hiding places below.

With a flicker of his form, he dashed towards them and in an instant landed in front of the two people.

Jiang Liuzi stepped forward, cupping his fist and asking, "Are you Senior Brother Tan Sheng?" They had never met Tan Sheng before and didn't know what he looked like, but the secret code was correct, and the cultivation level matched, so it couldn't be wrong.

Tan Sheng nodded, "It's me. Where's the item?"

Jiang Liuzi took an object resembling a compass out of his storage sack. The compass seemed ancient and unadorned, with no trace of spirit force fluctuations. If one were to come across such an item in the wild, they would hardly take a second glance.

Yet this compass was key to precisely locating Lu Ye's whereabouts, and it was also a stroke of fortune that Jiang Liuzi and his brother had previously obtained.

"Give it to me," Tan Sheng extended his hand. The item looked no different from what the rumors described, but whether it was the same, he still needed to verify.

Jiang Liuzi shook his head, "Senior Brother Tan, my brother and I are not of high cultivation, and we have previously provoked a strong cultivator from the Haotian Alliance. Our lives are in peril, and we must ask Senior Brother Tan to ensure our safety."

The item certainly could not be handed over to Tan Sheng. If it were truly given to him, why would he take them with him? This item could only ensure their own safety if they kept it in their possession.

As for asking Tan Sheng to avenge Master Loo Shu, it simply wasn't realistic. Tan Sheng was at Level 9 realm, yes, but so was the person who had killed Master Loo Shu. With equal cultivation levels, even if Tan Sheng agreed, he did not have the capability, so Jiang Liuzi did not bother mentioning it.

The matter of revenge, they would handle themselves. Both of them were of notable talent and confident in their ability to surpass in cultivation the enemy who killed Master Loo Shu. When the time came, they would make him pay.

"Besides, if we truly manage to kill that Lu Yiye, we want forty percent of the bounty," Jiang Liuzi added another condition.

A cold gleam flashed in Tan Sheng's eyes, "You're not being greedy, are you? Aren't you afraid of biting off more than you can chew?"

Jiang Liuzi spoke confidently, "Senior Brother Tan must have heard about the amount of the bounties offered by the various sects of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Such a vast amount of resources—even if we brothers claim forty percent, it would still be enough for Senior Brother Tan to live comfortably for a lifetime."

Those 2nd-3rd grade sects had almost all issued bounties on Lu Ye. The bounty from any one sect was significant, and the total was unimaginable.

Hearing this, Tan Sheng was expressionless for a moment before saying, "Give me the item, and I'll give you forty percent."

Jiang Liuzi shook his head, "I need it for myself." Right now, it was most important to follow Tan Sheng. Only then could they leverage his power to prevent the Haotian Alliance's strong cultivator from acting rashly. If Tan Sheng took the item and fled, leaving the two brothers behind, they would be defenseless if their enemy attacked.

If they died, they would lose everything.

So even though he felt Tan Sheng's impatience, Jiang Liuzi couldn't relent. As for whether Tan Sheng might simply seize the item by force... the chances were slim. They were all from the Ten Thousand

Demons Ridge, and it would be disgraceful for Tan Sheng to do such a thing. Even if he attempted, Jiang Liuzi could render the compass useless beforehand, making their parting unprofitable for both parties.

Seeing Tan Sheng's hesitance, Jiang Liuzi pressed on, "Senior Brother Tan, the hunting ground has been open for half a month and could close at any moment. If that happens, you can forget about the number one reward on the Kills Ranking. Besides, once the hunting ground closes, even with this item, it might not be possible to kill Lu Yiye."

Not to mention that if the guy hides in the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union or returns to the Nine Provinces, where could they go to kill him?

Finally, Tan Sheng gave in, "Twenty percent. You use the item, and I'll take you both."

Jiang Liuzi frowned, but it was not good to haggle further at this point. Twenty percent of the bounty was sufficient for their use. He immediately nodded in agreement, "Fine."

"Let's begin," Tan Sheng urged.

Without delay, Jiang Liuzi raised his hand, bit the tip of his finger, and with his blood, wrote "Lu Yiye" on the surface of the compass.

The compass swiftly absorbed the bright red blood, and the ancient and plain compass immediately emitted a halo of light, its needle in the center spinning wildly. In just a short moment, the needle suddenly stopped, pointing in a specific direction. At the same time, a blood-red light burst forth from the compass, rapidly streaking toward that direction and disappearing from view.

Indeed, it was that item of legend, and Tan Sheng's eyes brightened at the sight. With this item, Lu Ye would have nowhere to escape.

"Let's go!"

Tan Sheng barked the order, taking the lead and flying in that direction, with the Jiang brothers closely following behind.

On the ground below, a figure watched silently—it was the same Haotian Alliance strong cultivator who had previously slain Loo Shu. He had been searching for the Jiang brothers in the vicinity but, unfortunately, had not been able to find them as they hid well.

It wasn't until now that the brothers voluntarily showed themselves, but there was a Level 9 cultivator with them, which caused him quite a bit of frustration.

"Tan Sheng?" he muttered softly to himself, "Since when did the New Moon Sect and the Changtian Sect team up?"

Tan Sheng hailed from New Moon Sect, while the Jiang Liuzi brothers came from Changtian Sect, both major sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Unable to figure it out, so be it, they're just two at Level 5 realm, if I can't kill them, then so I won't kill.

At the same time, in another part of the hunting grounds, Lu Ye, hidden in the shadows, suddenly furrowed his brow. Just a moment ago, an inexplicable sensation arose in his heart, as if someone was secretly watching him.

This made him shiver inwardly.

The Concealment Spirit Runes he used to hide his figure were somewhat similar in principle to the stealth techniques used by ghost cultivators. While he couldn't claim his concealment was perfect, someone would need to be at least in Level 7 and also quite close to him to see through it.

Had someone managed to approach him undetected?

Lu Ye was secretly alarmed and immediately stimulated his Insight Spirit Runes to enhance his eyesight, looking around in every direction.

Yet he found nothing, with no trace of anyone lurking around.

After some thought, he turned his head and whispered a sentence, and Yiyi immediately flashed out from the Amber and burrowed into the ground to search around.

After the time it took one incense stick to burn, Yiyi returned and slowly shook her head at Lu Ye. She had meticulously searched a range of five hundred yards but found nothing at all.

By then, that strange feeling of being watched had also vanished, which puzzled Lu Ye greatly.

Was it just his imagination earlier?

He calmed his mind and sensed again, making sure there was nothing unusual.

However, ever since he obtained that gold-hued spirit fortune stick, his luck hadn't been great. He had been lying in ambush here for half a day with nothing to show for it.

Looking up at the Kills Ranking, Tan Sheng's kill points, for some reason, hadn't changed for half a day, which was very odd. This allowed the person in third place to steadily close the gap, and now, that person was less than one hundred kill points behind Tan Sheng.

As time slipped by, after more than two Shichen, Lu Ye suddenly felt that sensation of being watched again, and this time, it was much more intense than before.

His expression turned grave.

Something was not quite right.

If it had been just one occurrence, he could have dismissed it as his imagination, but to feel it again, what did that mean?

He swiftly constructed the Insight Spirit Runes, scanning the surroundings, but still found nothing. Still, he instinctively felt that something was off, as if continuing to stay here would bring a grave crisis upon him.

With that thought, Lu Ye quickly messaged Li Baxian, informing him of his intention to retreat.

Whether or not someone was secretly watching him, it was better to be safe than sorry.

Just as he was sending the message to Li Baxian, more than ten miles away, three figures were following the guidance of a compass toward him, and as they drew closer, the light on that compass gradually became blood-red and more profound.

"He's nearby!" Jiang Liuzi's eyes flashed with joy. Considering the vastness of the hunting ground, he had thought that even with the compass to guide him, it would take a lot of effort to find Lu Yiye. Unexpectedly, they were not far from each other, arriving in the general area in just more than a Shichen.

This was a pleasant surprise indeed.

On the ground, Lu Ye had just finished communicating with Li Baxian and was about to pack up the array banners and leave when he suddenly saw three streaks of light heading straight for him from above.

The leader among them had particularly strong spirit force fluctuations, evidently a Level 9 cultivator.

Are Level 9 cultivators starting to move in groups now? Lu Ye was alarmed, but after sensing the spirit force fluctuations of the other two, he found they were only at Level 5.

He guessed that these three probably belonged to the same sect; otherwise, it made no sense for a Level 9 cultivator to be accompanied by two at Level 5.

Just as he watched the three streaks of light fly over him, to Lu Ye's dismay, they suddenly stopped in mid-air.

In the sky, Jiang Liuzi, holding the compass, stared at the suddenly changing needle and called out in a low voice: "They're right below us!"

Tan Sheng's eyes lit up and he immediately descended, with the Jiang Liuzi brothers following closely behind.

The moment he landed, Jiang Chengzi vanished without a trace, employing his ghostly methods of stealth.

Meanwhile, Lu Ye was intently observing Jiang Chengzi.

He had never imagined that, in this hunting field, he would not only encounter Wei Que but also these bothersome brothers. This was indeed like a bad haunting.

What made Lu Ye more cautious was that compass in Jiang Liuzi's hand; as he drew closer, Lu Ye's sense of alarm grew stronger. As if there was some mysterious connection between the compass and himself.

Somehow, Lu Ye felt that these three people were searching for him specifically; otherwise, there was no reason for them to have flown past only to descend again, and clearly, Jiang Liuzi was currently relying on that compass to search for something.

Chapter 527 Tracking Disc

Jiang Liuzi, holding a compass, stopped about 30 yards from Lu Ye. The light from the compass had turned blood-red, and the needle was fixed. Jiang Liuzi suddenly looked up, "He's right ahead!"

As his words fell, Lu Ye's figure appeared. Enhanced by Move-Like-The-Wind, he dashed out like lightning. Unsheatheing his Boulder Mountain Saber, he violently slashed toward Jiang Liuzi.

He didn't know exactly what the compass was, but he could be sure that he had indeed been exposed and it had something to do with this compass.

The other must have used that compass to pinpoint his location accurately.

In that case, he would seize the compass!

The flash of the saber startled Jiang Liuzi since he had suffered at the hands of Lu Ye before and knew well of Lu Ye's strength. Thus, he instinctively stepped back several paces when faced with the slash.

Tan Sheng, who stood by his side, made his move, sending a violent wave of spirit force. A magic and spell crashed toward Lu Ye.

The strike from a Level 9 cultivator was terrifying. Lu Ye, who was rushing forward, was directly blown away. His blood Qi churned within his chest and abdomen. While in mid-air, he reached out into the Void, grabbed an array banner, and fiercely shook it.

Eight pillars of light surged into the sky, interconnected and linking up with each other. In an instant, a hemispherical light screen enveloped the area within dozens of yards like an inverted bowl.

Lu Ye fell out of the light screen without hindrance, but Tan Sheng, who pursued opportunistically, was blocked by the light screen.

"A trap array!" Tan Sheng exclaimed in surprise, not expecting that someone had pre-arranged a trap array here which caught him off guard and trapped him inside.

Swoosh, swoosh..., the sound of tearing air arose, it was Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan who had been hiding nearby and now soared into the sky.

Since Lu Ye had even deployed a trap array, the two of them did not hesitate, knowing it was time to make a strategic retreat and hurriedly followed Lu Ye's lead.

Watching the three form three streaks of light fleeing into the distance, a trace of regret flashed through Tan Sheng's eyes. He was so close to killing that Lu Yiye, but the trap array had bound him, leaving him no choice.

The sounds of magic and spells began to boom, striking against the light screen, causing it to ripple in waves and rapidly dim.

Jiang Liuzi also made his move. Although the presence of the compass meant that Lu Ye couldn't escape, such things were risky with potential changes, and it was naturally better to resolve it sooner. Lu Yiye only had Level 3 cultivation, and if by some misfortune he encountered other powerful figures from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge during his flight, there was a chance others might profit from his plight.

Such a trap array couldn't hold Wei Que for too long, let alone Tan Sheng.

In less than twenty breaths' time, the light screen of the trap array had completely dimmed. Tan Sheng and Jiang Liuzi soared into the sky, heading in the direction where Lu Ye and the others were fleeing, and before long, they encountered a person approaching. It was Jiang Chengzi, who had previously concealed his presence.

He was luckier since the trap array had not bound him, so he followed behind Lu Ye and the others after their escape, although he didn't dare get too close. Alone against three, he couldn't afford to have his presence discovered.

"Over there! I saw them head in that direction," pointed Jiang Chengzi.

As his words fell, a sudden explosive buzzing and bursts of fire came from the direction he pointed.

Jiang Chengzi froze, feeling the scene looked vaguely familiar... as if he had seen it somewhere before.

Tan Sheng quickly rushed forth, with the Jiang brothers following closely behind.

However, having rushed only about ten yards, Jiang Liuzi suddenly exclaimed in surprise and halted, calling out, "Senior Brother Tan, wait a moment!"

Tan Sheng impatiently stopped, "What is it?"

"The reading on this... Lu Yiye is in that direction," Jiang Liuzi stared at his compass, pointing in a certain direction.

The direction he pointed to was clearly different from where the firelight had come from.

"Didn't you say they headed over there?" Tan Sheng frowned, looking at Jiang Chengzi.

Jiang Chengzi replied, "That's right, I saw it with my own eyes."

"Could there be something wrong with this device?" Jiang Liuzi was also puzzled. He did believe his brother's words, but the guidance from the compass in his hand pointed to a different direction, which was quite odd.

"Let's go and see," Tan Sheng quickly decided. Regardless of the compass's readings, the source of the firelight was only a few miles away, so checking it out wouldn't take much effort.

Having made a decision, the Jiang brothers naturally had no objections, and soon, the three arrived at a chaotic cave.

Jiang Chengzi gazed at the cave, growing more convinced that the scene seemed strangely familiar...

Two hundred miles away, atop another teleportation array, Lu Ye, who had escaped through teleportation, felt heavy-hearted. He was being targeted, and among them was a Level 9 cultivator!

He was still unclear about the role of the compass in Jiang Liuzi's hands, and why he felt a strange connection with it.

As though aware of Lu Ye's thoughts, Li Baxian spoke, "Junior Brother, that is a tracking disc!"

"A tracking disc?" Lu Ye frowned. Just from the name, he could vaguely guess its function.

"A rare treasure that serves to locate and track, extremely rare. The user has to write down the target's name in fresh blood on it, and then the tracking disc can provide precise guidance. I've only heard about this, never seen one before," explained Li Baxian.

"Such a rare treasure actually being used on me... interesting," Lu Ye mused.

Given the current situation, the tracking disc must be Jiang Liuzi's, otherwise it wouldn't make sense for him to be holding it. He had been exposed earlier and had attempted to seize the tracking disc from the opponent, but unfortunately, he hadn't succeeded, which he found quite regrettable. If he had managed to take it earlier, the crisis would have been averted.

"Does this mean they can find me anytime with that tracking disc?"

Li Baxian's voice was solemn, "Yes."

"What grudge, what grievances..."

He actually didn't have much of a personal grudge with the brothers Jiang Liuzi, only having clashed over the ownership of a spirit ground previously. Yet, those two cling to their resentment and even found a Level 9 cultivator to help them, clearly determined to kill him.

From their perspective, Lu Ye could understand; after all, his life was linked to a substantial bounty that had burdened him since he was in the Spirit Stream Level 5 realm.

He understood, yet he still felt some resentment.

"That Level 9 is Tan Sheng, from New Moon Sect; he's quite profound."

"That's Tan Sheng?" Lu Ye was surprised.

On the Kills Ranking, they were each other's closest competitors, holding the first and second positions. He had never met Tan Sheng nor known what he looked like, yet here he was, the helper the Jiang brothers had found.

It seemed this man not only wanted the bounty but also aimed for the top position on the Kills Ranking. If he could kill him, all the benefits would be his.

It was not surprising that Li Baxian could recognize the man, having been in the Spirit Stream battlefield for so many years and seen off numerous Spirit Stream Realm cultivators.

To be praised by him as profound surely meant he had once reached the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking.

"Junior Brother, it's not safe to stay here long. They'll soon find us with that tracking disc. We need to leave quickly."

Two hundred miles was truly nothing for someone of the Cloud River Level 9, who could arrive swiftly if they exerted their full power.

Lu Ye nodded and softly called out, "Fourth Brother, Senior Sister Feng."

Both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan looked over at him.

Boom...

The Boulder Mountain Saber was drawn, its fiery red light flashing, cutting a crescent-shaped arc.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan instinctively leaped backward, but immediately afterward, Li Baxian's expression changed as he yelled, "Junior Brother!"

The teleportation array lit up, and by the time everything had settled, Lu Ye's figure had disappeared.

Li Baxian hurriedly rushed to the teleportation array, trying to activate it with his spirit force.

However, it was useless; the formation under his feet remained unresponsive.

This formation had been set up by Lu Ye, who naturally left some contingencies to ensure that only he could activate it—others could not, even if they stood on the teleportation array and poured in their spirit force.

Under his boy mask, Li Baxian's expression grew heavy.

Feng Yuechan also realized Lu Ye's intentions, "He doesn't want to drag us down with him?"

As long as the tracking disc remained undestroyed, Lu Ye could not escape the pursuit. Even with the teleportation array at his disposal, his chances were slim unless he had enough teleportation arrays to play the enemy on his palm.

Once caught by Tan Sheng, the huge disparity in cultivation meant that he would have no power to fight back, even with Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan's help.

That's why he pushed Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan away and stepped into the teleportation array alone, sensing the immense danger ahead.

If possible, he wouldn't even want to involve Amber.

But ever since the Life Origin Method was established, his life had become inseparably linked to Amber's. If he perished, Amber would not survive either, and Yiyi would also meet her end.

Thus, bringing Amber was essential. Aside from that, in desperate times, Amber might help by entering the beast transformation state, known for doing well in monitoring and alerting.

"How reckless!" Li Baxian was infuriated, unwilling as a senior brother to see Lu Ye face peril alone, but Lu Ye's decisive blow had forced him and Feng Yuechan back without giving them a moment to think.

It could only be said that their junior brother was too decisive, making firm decisions the moment he realized his dire situation.

Battlefield markings brought incoming messages, and Li Baxian quickly checked them. As expected, it was a message from Lu Ye.

"What did he say?" Feng Yuechan asked.

Li Baxian said irritably, "He said we're too slow, holding back his escape!"

Feng Yuechan was at a loss for words, knowing full well this wasn't Lu Ye's real intention; he was merely trying to alleviate their guilt with such remarks.

"Junior Brother has his own plans..." Li Baxian relayed what Lu Ye had communicated.

After listening, Feng Yuechan nodded, "That means, Junior Brother Lu didn't act impulsively. He made his decision after thorough consideration. If things go smoothly, he might be able to escape this hunt."

The key to escaping this hunt is the hunt ground closing!

But who could know when the hunt ground would close?

Chapter 528

Just as Feng Yuechan had said, Lu Ye was not acting on a moment of bravery. He had set out alone on the road of escape, with some plans already in his heart, of course, the main reason was his unwillingness to involve them in his troubles.

Tan Sheng, a strong cultivator of Level 9, was definitely not someone the three of them could confront together.

To find a chance for survival, he had to persevere in the chase as long as possible. As soon as the hunting ground closed, he could start his journey to the nearest Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, and once he reached the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, he would be safe.

The hunting ground could close at any time, so what Lu Ye needed to do now was to delay as much as possible.

After communicating with Li Baxian, Lu Ye immediately used the teleportation array to teleport several times, creating as much distance as possible between himself and Tan Sheng.

After teleporting four times, the distance between them had increased by several hundred miles.

On the last teleportation array, Lu Ye could no longer detect any more teleportation points.

The number of teleportation arrays he had set up was not small, but many had been damaged over time, so there were not many left in working condition.

Without hesitation, he walked out of the mountain cave where the teleportation point was located and immediately began weapon control-flying, heading directly in the opposite direction of the way he had come.

He dared not fly too high or make too much noise. In this hunting ground, his enemies were not limited to Tan Sheng—every cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was an enemy.

His senses were heightened to the maximum extent, his mind constantly alert in all directions, ready to hide at the slightest disturbance.

Not until more than two hours later did Lu Ye stop and begin to set up a new teleportation array.

Having enough teleportation arrays was his guarantee for contending with Tan Sheng and others, so he needed to set up as many as possible.

While he was setting up the teleportation array, several hundred miles away, Tan Sheng and the Jiang brothers were rapidly approaching in his direction, guided by the tracking disc.

With Tan Sheng's powerful Level 9 cultivation, he naturally would not be as cautious as Lu Ye, so his speed was much faster.

By the time Lu Ye had set up the teleportation array, the distance between them was less than four hundred miles.

However, Tan Sheng's expression wasn't very good, because up to this point in the chase, he had not found any trace of Lu Yiye.

It made no sense; a Level 3 cultivator, no matter how fast, could not possibly be quicker than him. He was delayed by the trap array for less than twenty breaths, so there was no reason for him to not catch up.

If the tracking disc wasn't continuously pointing in that direction, he would almost suspect that something was wrong with it.

As the distance between them decreased, the light on the tracking disc also began to turn red, and the closer they got, the deeper the red color became.

Until at one moment, Jiang Liuzi, who was paying close attention to the tracking disc, suddenly spoke, "Within ten miles!"

At the same time, on the teleportation array, Lu Ye, who had been meditating with his eyes closed, suddenly opened his eyes.

That intense feeling of being watched had returned.

In other words, the opponent was very close to his current position now.

They were arriving quickly!

Without any hesitation, Lu Ye immediately activated the teleportation array, and his figure disappeared. Then, without stopping, he teleported time after time, returning to his original position.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had already disappeared. After Lu Ye left, there was no point for the two of them to stay. Moreover, they were unable to activate the teleportation array. If a strong cultivator trapped them here, they wouldn't have a chance to escape, so they had left shortly after Lu Ye did.

They were now quietly hiding in a concealed place, waiting for the hunting ground to close.

Like Lu Ye, they were accustomed to being hunted and deeply understood the art of concealment. Besides, Feng Yuechan had the spirit umbrella Spiritual Artifact, so as long as they weren't too unlucky to be directly caught, their safety was assured.

In midair, Jiang Liuzi, who had been staring at the tracking disc, suddenly stopped after saying those words, looking at the compass in his hand with confusion.

The compass, which had been emitting bright red light, was now back to its original state, and the needle that had been pointing forward was now pointing backward.

What... what was this? Jiang Liuzi was completely at a loss.

"What's the matter?"

Tan Sheng, who had been moving ahead, sensed something was wrong and stopped.

"Senior Brother Tan, the direction of the needle has changed," Jiang Liuzi said with a hard tone.

"It changed again?" Tan Sheng's face darkened, and he quickly moved forward to check, finding that the direction of the needle had indeed changed, now pointing back the way they came.

Frowning and pondering for a moment, he looked towards Jiang Liuzi, "Has this tracking disc been bumped or jostled?"

The tracking disc was a treasure, but it was not sturdy. If it had been bumped or handled roughly, it was very likely to be damaged, which would result in the loss of its tracking abilities.

Hearing Tan Sheng's question, Jiang Liuzi knew that not only did he suspect the tracking disc was damaged, but Tan Sheng also had the same doubt.

"It has not been bumped," Jiang Liuzi shook his head.

Jiang Chengzi said on the side, "Senior Brother Tan, the tracking disc should have no problem, otherwise it wouldn't have accurately located Lu Yiye's position before. The problem might lie with Lu Yiye himself."

Tan Sheng thought to himself that this made sense. They had already used the tracking disc to find Lu Yiye, but unfortunately, they were blocked by his trap array and failed to kill him. Since they could find Lu Yiye, the tracking disc was not the issue.

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know, but I'm wondering if he has some method that allows him to instantly move hundreds of miles?"

"Ridiculous, which Cloud River Realm cultivator would possess such a heaven-defying ability?"

"Then, is he relying on some kind of treasure?"

If not for that, there was no way to explain why Lu Yiye's movements were so strange. The tracking disc had been directing them straight ahead, and they were nearly upon him when he suddenly appeared behind them.

Tan Sheng frowned and pondered. He had to admit, although Jiang Chengzi's deduction seemed unrealistic, it was the explanation that best fit the current situation.

Lu Yiye hailed from the Righteous Blood Sect of Bingzhou, which more than thirty years ago, used to be one of the Overlord sects of the Nine Provinces. Even though it had declined now, a skinny camel was still bigger than a horse. Who knew what hidden depths it held? It wasn't impossible that they possessed some treasure that could instantly move hundreds of miles.

But such a treasure, Tan Sheng had never even heard of, so he found it difficult to confirm.

"If he's relying on the power of some treasure, then he surely can't use it frequently. Senior Brother Tan, I think we just need to continue tracking him and not let him slip away. Sooner or later, we will corner him."

"Keep pursuing!" Tan Sheng, furious, immediately changed direction and headed back the way they came.

On the Kills Ranking, his rank had already fallen to the third place, which made him quite frustrated. He had thought that with the tracking disc, Lu Yiye would be an easy solve. This way, not only would he gain a large bounty, but the first place on the Kills Ranking would be his as well.

But now, not only had Lu Yiye not been killed, but his ranking on the Kills Ranking had also dropped, truly leaving him empty-handed in both effort and reward.

However, at this point, trying to earn kill points and compete for rank on the Kills Ranking was now impossible. Compared to the rewards of the Kills Ranking, the bounty for slaying Lu Yiye was undoubtedly more tempting.

A day later, in a valley, Tan Sheng and his two companions sat cross-legged, silently recovering.

The expressions of the Jiang brothers were ugly, and Tan Sheng's face was so dark it seemed like water was about to drip from it.

The reason was simple. Over the course of this day and night, following the directions of the tracking disc, they had run back and forth along a path at least a dozen times, yet they hadn't even caught a glimpse of Lu Yiye.

Just when they were about to catch up to their target, the direction of the pointer would suddenly reverse, and they had to change direction to continue the pursuit.

Even though Tan Sheng was a Level 9 cultivator, after a day and night of relentless chasing, even he could hardly hold up. The Jiang brothers were even worse off, with depleted spirit force and pale faces.

If they didn't recover, they probably wouldn't even have the spirit force to control their weapons for flight.

Why couldn't they find Lu Yiye? The three racked their brains but could not understand.

Did Lu Yiye really possess a treasure that allowed him to instantly move hundreds of miles? If that were true, they could forget about ever catching him.

With such a treasure at his side, as long as he wasn't fully surrounded, escaping would be a breeze.

But did such a treasure really exist in this world?

The Jiang brothers exchanged glances, feeling inexplicably guilty. Tan Sheng had been dragged into this mess by them. They had thought to curry favor and gain some advantages, but now, not only had they seen none, but they were also being played for fools.

On the Kills Ranking, Tan Sheng's rank had fallen to fourth place, and Lu Yiye had also dropped to second place. Moreover, as time passed, their ranks continued to fall.

One was on the chase, the other on the run; neither had the chance to earn any kill points.

Tan Sheng sat to one side, touching his battlefield marking as if he was communicating with someone.

After a while, he raised his head to look at Jiang Liuzi and extended his hand, "Give me the tracking disc."

Jiang Liuzi immediately understood his intention, "Senior Brother Tan, do you wish to use its other ability?"

Tan Sheng nodded, "What other way is there to find Lu Yiye?"

"But by doing so, the person who ends up killing Lu Yiye might not necessarily be you, Senior Brother Tan," Jiang Liuzi said, then instantly realized, "Were you just now contacting other strong figures in the hunting grounds?"

Tan Sheng nodded, "I have already spread the word and made arrangements with them. In the end, no matter who kills Lu Yiye, I will take twenty percent of the bounty, and your benefits will come out of my share!"

According to their original agreement, the Jiang brothers were to take twenty percent of the bounty. But based on what was being said now, they would only receive a fraction of that twenty percent, a significant difference.

Jiang Liuzi was naturally not satisfied and said, "Senior Brother Tan, we might not need to resort to this step..."

"There's no time left!" Tan Sheng interrupted him, "The hunting grounds have been open for seventeen days, and they could close at any moment. If we can't kill Lu Yiye before the hunting grounds close, all our previous efforts will go to waste. Besides, I have already spread the message, and they are all waiting. Giving you a twenty percent share is not too little. Don't be too greedy!"

He had bet the rewards of the Kills Ranking to get involved in this matter. With his rank continuing to drop, the prospects of claiming the first or second prizes were hopeless. Such loss could only be compensated by slaying Lu Yiye.

Jiang Liuzi sighed, knowing that once Tan Sheng had spoken to this extent, no amount of persuasion would be useful. Even if reluctant, he had no choice but to hand over the tracking disc.

Chapter 529 The Secret Technique of the Tracking Disc

Upon receiving the tracking disc, Tan Sheng looked at the compass needle with a cold expression.

If he could reap the benefits alone, why would he want to share with others? But as things had developed to this point, just the three of them alone would be impossible to find Lu Yiye's whereabouts. A whole day had passed, back and forth a dozen times along the same route without catching a glimpse of Lu Yiye's shadow. Continuing like this, once the hunting grounds closed, Lu Yiye would surely escape.

Sighing to himself with great regret, twenty percent would have to do, he thought, better than nothing.

With that thought, his decision was made.

He raised his hand, bit his fingertip, and wrote the name Lu Yiye three times over on the tracking disc.

The deep red of his blood seeped into the disc and quickly vanished. In the next moment, the tracking disc suddenly shattered, turning into a rainbow light that shot up into the sky, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

The tracking disc had two different effects. One was the previous application by Jiang Liuzi, relying on the tracking disc's guidance to precisely trace someone's location, of course, on the condition that both parties were in the same space.

The other was the action that Tan Sheng was undertaking at this moment. After the tracking disc was shattered, it naturally could no longer provide any guidance; however, this effect would leave Lu Ye with nowhere to hide, no place to escape.

For the previous effect, one merely needed to use blood as the guide and write the name of the person being tracked, but for the latter, one had to write the name three times, which is why Tan Sheng wrote it twice more.

Meanwhile, some eight hundred miles away at the teleportation array where Lu Ye was sitting, he felt an inexplicable tremor in his heart. Before he could react to what was happening, a beam of blood light descended from the sky onto him, enveloping him completely.

Immediately thereafter, the sanguine light soared into the sky, turning into a column of light.

The disturbance was almost identical to when a special gold-hued spirit fortune stick was activated, but while that column was golden, the light erupting from him was blood-red and lacked any significant spirit force fluctuations.

Lu Ye had no idea what had just happened.

However, such a massive commotion would certainly attract nearby cultivators, so realizing that something wasn't right, he immediately activated the teleportation array and vanished from the spot.

Shortly after his disappearance, a group of cultivators, drawn by the disturbance, rushed into the cave. But before they had time to investigate, they triggered the explosion magic array left by Lu Ye. A humming shockwave and a burst of flames sent several cultivators running out of the cave, faces blackened from soot.

More cultivators converged toward the area. One of them stood in midair, exuding a formidable aura that was intimidating—this was a Cloud River Level 9 cultivator.

This person silently looked over the situation below and then sent out a message.

The message reached Tan Sheng, hundreds of miles away. After examining it, he took off into the sky and soon transformed into a stream of light, disappearing from view.

Jiang Liuzi and his brother were left behind with helpless expressions.

Jiang Liuzi had been reluctant to hand over the tracking disc, insisting on using it himself, precisely to avoid this kind of situation, but in the end, it still happened.

With the tracking disc no longer in their possession, Tan Sheng naturally wouldn't care about their life or death. A Level 9 alone could move much faster than if he were accompanied by two Level 5s. As for the reward distribution they had agreed upon, Tan Sheng would probably not go back on his word, but that would only happen once the deed was done and if the brothers were still alive to claim it.

Luckily, quite some time had passed and that powerful Haotian Alliance cultivator who killed Master Loo Shu likely wouldn't come after them again, giving them a little more sense of security.

On another teleportation array, Lu Ye calmed his mind and checked his body, but even after extensive searching, he found nothing unusual.

But what was the crimson light that had enveloped him just then?

The magnitude of the outburst was even more intense than the activation of a spirit fortune stick, clearly exposing his hidden position. No matter how well he hid, if there were any cultivators nearby, they would discover it and come to investigate.

He touched the battlefield marking and sent a message to Li Baxian, telling him about his recent encounter.

Li Baxian replied promptly.

"That's the tracking disc's other function..."

Only after Li Baxian's explanation did Lu Ye understand what he had encountered.

It seemed that the day and night of pursuit had made his pursuers impatient, to the point they had no choice but to resort to the tracking disc's second function. As such, although they no longer had the means to track him using the disc, it was now unrealistic for him to continue hiding.

Because according to Li Baxian, such an outburst would occur every two hours.

Lu Ye's heart sank.

In his previous attempts to evade, whenever enemies approached, he was always aware enough to escape early due to an invisible link between him and the tracking disc, allowing him a hint of detection when they were sufficiently close.

This was why Tan Sheng and his men had chased him around a dozen times to no avail.

Originally, he thought if things continued in this way, as long as his arranged teleportation array remained undisrupted, then they could never catch him. But now, it seemed he had oversimplified things.

Tan Sheng and his group indeed couldn't locate him through the tracking disc, but they had directly activated its second function.

This was to ensure he truly had no place to hide.

...

The gold-hued spirit fortune stick would burst every six hours, which was already frequent enough, but then that blood-colored light had to burst every two hours...

This was giving no room for survival.

"I've already asked someone to lend a hand, junior brother. You must hold on, you must last until the hunting ground closes!"

"Understood."

After the message ended, Lu Ye immediately left his hiding spot and headed outdoors.

Knowing that his location would be exposed every two hours, he couldn't continue to stay in the cave. There weren't many teleportation arrays left, and his location being revealed would inevitably lead to the destruction of one each time, so under the premise of ensuring his own relative safety, he had to set up more teleportation arrays.

As for Li Baxian's comment about getting someone to help, Lu Ye did not doubt it. Li Baxian's and Feng Yuechan's connections were something he couldn't match, and currently, in the hunting ground, there were quite a few strong members of the Haotian Alliance. Li Baxian should be able to mobilize some people to act.

But he couldn't place too much hope on this, one should prepare for the worst and respond most actively to everything.

Just as he made his move, inside the hunting ground, news about Lu Ye was rapidly spreading within the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge camp. In a short time, a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators converged towards the last place where Lu Ye was seen, especially those whose cultivation was not very high but not too low either.

For these people, the greatest benefit of the hunting ground was the various scattered opportunities. The Kills Ranking wasn't something they could touch; they didn't have the power, nor the capability.

At this moment, the news about Lu Ye was everywhere, naturally tempting people. Compared to the Kills Ranking, the reward for slaying Lu Yiye was much more abundant.

Moreover, it was rumored in the message that this Lu Yiye was only at the Cloud River Level 3 cultivation, and now someone had cast a secret technique from the tracking disc on him, causing his location to be exposed every two hours, giving everyone a chance to kill him if they encountered him.

Under such a momentum, in a short period of time, a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators gathered in this direction.

This caused some Haotian Alliance cultivators to be unlucky, as in the hunting ground, the two camps were evenly matched, but as soon as a large group from one side gathered in one direction, the cultivators from the other camp in that direction naturally couldn't hold out.

Uninformed Haotian Alliance cultivators retreated from the area after encountering numerous crises.

Two hours, four hours, six hours...

With each passing two-hour interval, there was a surge of news about Lu Yiye, and his exposed locations would quickly attract a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators to investigate.

But without exception, no one really found his trace. With the help of teleportation arrays, the moment his location was exposed, he could move nearly thirty miles away.

Months later, Lu Ye once again experienced being hunted by countless people, just like on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

But this time, it was much more dangerous than it had been on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

In the Spirit Stream battlefield, the cultivators only had the cultivation of the Spirit Stream Realm, and the various means they could use were no match for the power of the Cloud River Realm experts. Back in the Spirit Stream battlefield, once his cultivation reached 8th Heaven, Lu Ye didn't have to worry about his safety; he would be the one causing trouble for others. After reaching 9th Heaven, he became virtually invincible, and wherever he went, the big sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were all filled with dread.

The reason this ordeal was more dangerous than any he'd faced before was that, in the hunting ground, there was a way in but no way out, which was a great limitation for him.

Otherwise, he could have just found a Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union to burst into and use it to protect himself.

As time passed, there were fewer and fewer teleportation arrays left.

Now, there were only two remaining teleportation arrays he could use; if Lu Ye hadn't been finding opportunities to relocate after each escape, there would be no teleportation arrays left already.

Lu Ye could feel that the number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators in this region seemed to be increasing.

He couldn't stay in this damned place, even with two teleportation arrays remaining; continuing to stay in this area would eventually lead to disaster.

But if he didn't use the teleportation arrays, his exposure would definitely be very dangerous once his tracks were discovered.

Whether to go or stay was a truly difficult choice to make.

But soon, Lu Ye made up his mind to leave the area!

Only by leaving this area would there be a sliver of chance for survival; if he continued to stay, death was certain.

Looking up at the blood-colored sky, Lu Ye felt helpless in his heart. The hunting ground had been open for almost twenty days now — when would it close?

A blood-colored light emerged from his body again, followed by a blood-colored beam of light that shot up into the sky!

Another burst had come.

Lu Ye activated the teleportation array beneath his feet and was instantly transported to a place nearly thirty miles away.

After hastily leaving the cave where the teleportation array was located, Lu Ye travelled through the air, making as little commotion as possible, and flew at a steady speed not too high or too slow, just ten meters above the ground.

Chapter 530 Escape

The region swarmed with cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, so Lu Ye couldn't accelerate much. Every little noise around him forced him to stop and conceal himself using the Concealment Spirit Runes.

He silently estimated the time.

He needed to get as far away from this area as possible within two hours to secure a greater chance of survival for himself.

Soon, two hours had passed.

A blood-colored glow emerged once more on his skin, followed by a soaring crimson pillar of light into the sky. Such a conspicuous phenomenon was clear to any nearby cultivator who wasn't blind.

As the blood-colored light pillar burst forth, Lu Ye threw several Origin Spirit Pills into his mouth, flames surged on his back, and wings unfolded. Enhanced by the wings spirit runes, his wings flapped once, turning him into a streak of light that shot towards the distance.

With his position now exposed and no teleportation array to utilize, he could only rely on his speed.

Although only at Level 3 cultivation, under the enhancement of the wings spirit runes, his flying speed was on par with general Level 6-7 cultivators. If he activated the Move-Like-The-Wind, he would be even faster.

Not far into his flight, he encountered several streaks of light from the front; evidently, cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had noticed the disturbance and came to investigate. Upon seeing a red light streaking towards them at high speed, all their expressions stiffened, and they halted in their tracks.

The speed of flight often indicates the strength of a cultivator's cultivation; generally, the higher the cultivation, the faster the flight, whether controlling weapons or flying through air. Thus, the weak could hardly escape from the strong, as fleeing was futile.

Upon seeing the red streak that Lu Ye had transformed into, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge didn't think too much of it, assuming it was a powerful individual from their own ranks.

It was only when Lu Ye's figure passed near them that the battlefield markings on their hands began flashing red light, pulling them back to reality.

That certainly wasn't one of their own, but a member of the Haotian Alliance.

Moreover, the fluctuation of spirit force from the other party wasn't as powerful as they had imagined; it was at most that of a Level 3-4 cultivator...

Level 3-4, Haotian Alliance...

Suddenly, one of them realized, "It's that Lu Yiye!"

Screaming so, he immediately chased after Lu Ye, who was making his escape. With his Level 5 cultivation, he was not afraid of a Level 3 cultivator.

Seeing this, his comrades quickly followed suit.

However, in less than one incense stick's time, they were left far behind by Lu Ye, all wearing gloomy expressions, regretting that such an enormous opportunity had slipped by them.

Lu Ye no longer tried to conceal himself as concealment was no longer feasible. The wings spirit runes continued to be activated relentlessly, barreling through, encountering many cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge along the way. However, those cultivators were caught off guard by his bold actions, just like the first group he encountered. By the time they reacted and wanted to pursue him, it was already too late.

News of Lu Ye's current location was continuously sent out in all directions, with a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators hot on his trail, searching for signs of him.

While flying, Lu Ye continually tossed Origin Spirit Pills into his mouth to replenish the spirit force he was consuming.

The continuous activation of the wings spirit runes was a significant drain on him, and with his current Level 3 cultivation, he would have been depleted in less than half a day had he not taken the elixir pills.

Even with the elixir pills, he was still running a deficit.

And he hadn't even activated Move-Like-The-Wind yet, which would only increase his consumption.

Without resting for even two hours, the blood-colored pillar erupted again.

Moments later, a streak of light suddenly approached from the side, evidently drawn by the disturbance. The speed of this light was incredibly fast, faster even than Lu Ye with his wings spirit runes activated.

Seeing who it was, Lu Ye knew it was a Level 8-9 powerhouse and felt a touch of inevitability; ultimately, he was being targeted by such a strong cultivator.

With wings and Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, he was unconcerned by anyone below Level 7, including Level 7 cultivators, but those at Level 8-9 were genuinely beyond his ability to outrun.

Still, he had to try. Hardening his heart, he also activated the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, boosting his speed even as his internal spirit force flowed out like a breached dam.

This sudden increase in speed surprised the chasing powerhouse from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, who then shouted angrily, "Lu Yiye, you can't escape! Surrender now, and I promise you a quick end!"

The voice sounded familiar; Lu Ye immediately conjured the image of Wei Que in his mind.

What rotten luck, to encounter this guy everywhere he went!

As he dashed in desperation, another streak of light shot up from below, heading straight towards him.

Lu Ye's expression drastically changed, and he swiftly grabbed the Golden Body Token, readying the spirit force in secret, preparing to use this last resort to save his life.

There was no other choice; the surge of spirit force from below was powerful, clearly another Level 9 cultivator.

"Under such an attack from both front and back, how could there be any way out?"

This was also why Lu Ye had sensed that his situation was dire and had decisively acted alone earlier. The Golden Body Token was the only one. When forced, he could still use it to save his life, at least surviving for several more Shichen. However, if Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were with him, they would only suffer needless disaster.

As the distance between them swiftly closed, Lu Ye was preparing to activate the might of the Golden Body Token when an unfamiliar voice came from beside his ear, "Go!"

As the words fell, Liu Guang brushed past him, meeting the pursuit of Wei Que from behind.

In an instant, spirit force surged, and the two clashed fiercely.

"Thank you, Senior Brother!" Lu Ye called out loudly, his figure flashing like thunder and lightning toward the distance.

He did not know who had helped him at this critical moment, blocking Wei Que, but he could be sure that the person was from the Haotian Alliance.

Perhaps it was a helping hand summoned by Li Baxian, or perhaps someone who just happened to pass the area, but regardless, he had narrowly escaped disaster.

Lu Ye felt fortunate in his heart and continued forward.

A short while later, he landed and found a hidden spot to briefly recover. The continuous sprinting had genuinely exhausted him, and he could not afford to pass up any opportunity to recuperate.

Only one incense stick's time later, there were sounds of breaking air above; clearly, the cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had caught up.

Now, his location would be exposed every two hours, leaving him no way to fully hide. Although he was safe for the moment, his location would soon be exposed again, so he had to keep moving quickly and not stay in one place for too long. Otherwise, if too many cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge gathered, he would definitely be surrounded.

After eating something and swallowing some elixir pills, Lu Ye once again set out on his escape.

He didn't rush to activate the wings spirit runes yet, as his position had not been exposed yet, so there was no need to be too hasty.

About half a Shichen later, guessing that the blood-red pillar was about to burst again, Lu Ye once again activated the wings spirit runes, speeding away like a bolt of lightning.

The road of escape was incredibly arduous. The secret technique of the tracking disc could not be broken, and every time his location was exposed, he would attract a large number of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. With no way to hide himself, as a Level 3 cultivator, there was too little he could do.

He could only desperately flee, trying to buy as much time for himself as possible, praying for the hunting grounds to close soon.

However, this time, Heaven's Augury did not seem to favor him much. The blood-colored light curtain covering the hunting ground showed no signs of closing, and on the Kills Ranking high in the sky, Lu Ye's ranking continued to plummet, now already at the seventh position.

He had encountered several Level 8-9 cultivators difficult to compete with, but it often did not take long before one of Haotian Alliance's strong cultivators would come to intercept his pursuers.

Once might be coincidence, but two or three times—that was clearly the influence of Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan.

Currently, inside the hunting grounds, the scale of the pursuit by Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was so large it could hardly be hidden from the Haotian Alliance's cultivators. Initially, many were unclear what exactly had happened, but after Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan asked some people to take action, the news quickly spread.

This caused many areas where cultivators from the two major camps were fiercely clashing, constantly resulting in deaths.

According to the usual progress of the hunting grounds, at a time when the grounds could close at any moment, aside from the few powerful individuals vying for the Kills Ranking, most people would choose to lie low, for by that point, most benefits and opportunities would have already been secured, and it was naturally a time to prioritize preserving oneself.

But this time's situation was completely different from before. As time passed, the strife between the cultivators from the two camps not only didn't subside but showed signs of escalating even further.

In the skies, Lu Ye's figure flashed by, enhanced with both wings and Move-Like-The-Wind spirit runes, his speed far exceeding his own limits.

However, several miles behind him, a stream of light was in hot pursuit, and about fifteen miles further, another stream of light was quickly closing in.

The closer one was a Level 8 cultivator, while the one further away was Level 9.

With Lu Ye's current speed, only Level 8-9 cultivators could catch up to him.

It had been three people chasing him, but not long ago, a Haotian Alliance strong cultivator had intervened, engaging one of them, so now only two remained.

Yet even so, Lu Ye was driven to a desperate situation.

Both the Level 8 and Level 9 cultivators were closing in on him, clearly surpassing Lu Ye in speed, especially the Level 9 cultivator, whose approach was noticeably fast.

It had been over a day since Lu Ye started his great escape, and surviving so long under the pursuit of many powerful Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators with a Level 3 cultivation level was almost unbelievable. His survival was largely due to the help of many Haotian Alliance strong cultivators, but most importantly, his own speed was fast enough.

But he had reached his limit. Not to mention anything else, the spirit force inside his body was running low, and even though he had been continuously swallowing elixir pills, he was starting to struggle to keep up.

There was also the mental strain, as running on the edge of life and death was an immense burden on one's spirit.

Yet even so, he had no intention of giving up.

When he had stopped to recuperate earlier, he had managed to set up a teleportation array in a moment. Although the teleportation array was not very concealed and he had no time to set up other Cover-up Arrays, as long as he could have just one more moment, he could set up another teleportation array, instantly transporting himself over 30 miles away, thereby escaping these two pursuers.