

## Humanity 581

### Chapter 581 Forbidden Land

After several days, Lu Ye had figured out the situation in Fox Fairy Valley, but he still had no clue as to how he could safely take Li Baxian away.

Unless the Psyche Secret Technique of the Fox Demon was broken, Li Baxian would never willingly follow him, and killing the Fox Demon was nothing but a pipe dream. Besides the first encounter in the Fox Demon's sleeping chamber upon arrival, Lu Ye had not seen her again in these past few days. The creature had always stayed inside her private chambers, never showing herself.

Moreover, even if she did reveal herself, with Lu Ye's current strength, he would not be capable of killing her since she was protected by many cultivators.

However, there was a piece of good news from Feng Yuechan.

The wolf pack in the spirit ground had grown in numbers. Initially, the pack only had a little over a hundred members, but later on, no one knew how they had gathered more of their kind. By the time Tan Sheng and others penetrated the spirit ground, the pack had already expanded to over two hundred members. Just a day before, the pack brought back another group of their kin, ballooning their numbers to over three hundred.

In Lu Ye's plan, the task of killing the Fox Demon could only be carried out with the help of the wolf pack. Therefore, the growth of the pack was favorable to him.

He just had to wait for the right opportunity.

Given the large number of cultivators in Fox Fairy Valley, coupled with their reliance on formations, even a pack of more than three hundred wolves wouldn't stand a chance. If the pack could grow to five hundred, perhaps a forceful assault on Fox Fairy Valley might be attempted, but three hundred was still too few.

He could only continue to wait for the right moment.

On the second day of learning saber skills from Xia Liang, Zhou Yuntian came looking for him, conveying the Fox Demon's decree that henceforth, in matters related to the formations in Fox Fairy Valley, Lu Ye would take the lead with Xie Yunhan assisting.

Since it was a command from the Fox Demon, Lu Ye had no reason to refuse. He accepted the order immediately, finally confirming that Zhou Yuntian's preferential treatment towards him the day before was indeed due to his performance in the Array Path.

Xie Yunhan must have spoken highly of him.

In reality, who took the lead and who assisted on a daily basis made little difference, as the formations of Fox Fairy Valley had been maintained for many years. In the previous few days, both Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan had been meticulously maintaining and adjusting them. Now, what they needed to do was not much, only to walk around and inspect the operation of the formations in Fox Fairy Valley three times a day—in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

The change from leader to assistant was just a nominal shift, allowing Lu Ye to gain more attention and a higher status within Fox Fairy Valley.

Most of the time, Lu Ye was engaged in practicing saber skills with Xia Liang. He had never paid much attention before, but since he started learning this skill with Xia, he realized his own foundation was very poor.

Since the beginning of his cultivation journey, almost everything had been self-taught, particularly with saber skills; no one had systematically and completely taught him. The only help he got was the saber cultivation experience entrusted to him by his third senior brother on the Spirit Stream battlefield, which allowed him to learn the Blood Moving Technique.

However, this was merely a secret technique that all combat cultivators needed to practice, and it had no use in foundation improvement.

The careful guidance of Xia Liang would undoubtedly make up for Lu Ye's shortcomings.

Lu Ye treasured such an opportunity.

How to exert force, how to breathe, and how to change moves all required special attention. Previously, Lu Ye just swung his saber by instinct. Now, with Xia Liang's direction, he was having revelations that greatly enhanced his basic saber skills every day.

More than once, Xia had praised Lu Ye's talent for saber skills, even stating that had Lu Ye joined the Mad Saber Sect, he would have surely mastered its essence.

Time flew by, and several days passed.

One morning of those days, as usual, Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan inspected various formations throughout Fox Fairy Valley. After spending almost half a Shichen, they had checked all formations and ensured everything was functioning well.

Just as Lu Ye was about to go back and practice saber skills with Xia, Xie Yunhan suddenly spoke up, "Little brother, there's another place we need to inspect today."

Lu Ye was puzzled, "Another place?"

The places for routine inspections were always the same, and over these past few days, he had become thoroughly familiar with them, certain that no locations had been overlooked. So where did this additional place come from?

"It's the forbidden land of Fox Fairy Valley, which we only need to inspect once every half month. On normal days, no one is allowed to approach," Xie Yunhan clarified.

"Forbidden land?" Lu Ye's interest was instantly piqued; he had no idea that such a place existed within Fox Fairy Valley.

But since it was forbidden, it was only natural that he, a newcomer, wasn't aware of it.

Following Xie Yunhan in a certain direction, they headed towards the very depths of Fox Fairy Valley, where a big array emerged, enveloping the area ahead.

"This is the place," Xie Yunhan pointed to the array ahead, "No one is allowed to approach here, but by the Venerable One's order, I am to check it every half month. From now on, this task will be your responsibility."

Lu Ye examined the formation ahead; it was a concealing big array on the surface, with likely another protective array operating inside. However, because of the concealing array, it was impossible to see the situation within.

The array's span wasn't too large, just about a radius of ten or so zhang in a circular shape.

"What's inside?" Lu Ye inquired.

Xie Yunhan shook his head, "I don't know."

"You don't know?" Lu Ye was surprised.

"The forbidden land was already there when I joined Fox Fairy Valley. Normally, I just maintain the formations, and I've never been inside... Little brother, the Venerable One prohibits anyone from entering there. In the future, you only need to come and check once every half month," explained Xie.

"I understand," Lu Ye replied.

Thereafter, they acted separately, verifying the operation of the array, and confirming the array was undamaged before quickly leaving.

"Little brother, would you like to have a drink at my place?" Xie Yunhan invited.

"I will come to bother you later, big brother. I need to go practice saber skills with Brother Xia first."

Xie Yunhan let out a chuckle, "Then I'll wait for you."

"Fellow Daoist Lu!"

A voice suddenly came from not far away, and Lu Ye turned his head to look, only to see Zhou Yuntian over there watching him with a smile, looking as though he had been waiting specifically for him.

Xie Yunhan said, "Brother Zhou is looking for you, it must be for some matter, you go ahead first."

Lu Ye nodded, parted ways with Xie Yunhan, and walked toward Zhou Yuntian.

Upon approaching, he clasped his fists in greeting, "Fellow Daoist Zhou."

Zhou Yuntian said with concern, "These past few days have been hard on you, the Venerable One is very pleased with your performance."

Lu Ye immediately showed a delighted expression, and said, "Serving the Venerable One is the duty of us subordinates."

"Hmm," Zhou Yuntian nodded slightly, "Fellow Daoist Lu is right to think so, everything we have is bestowed by the Venerable One, protecting the Venerable One is our greatest mission!"

A look of fanaticism spread across his face, as if the Venerable One were to command him to die, he would not even frown.

Seeing this made Lu Ye's heart chill, and he changed the subject, "Does Fellow Daoist Zhou need something from me?"

"Oh." Zhou Yuntian came back to his senses, "When I met with the Venerable One the other day, I remember Fellow Daoist Lu saying you were proficient in the Path of Spirit Runes, as well as the Array Path and the Rune Tattoo Path?"

"Strictly speaking, I am a spirit runes master, and I have only dabbled a little in the Array Path and the Rune Tattoo Path."

"Only dabbled a little, yet Fellow Daoist Lu has such high attainment in the Array Path, what about the Rune Tattoo Path then?"

"The Rune Tattoo Path is something I have only begun to cultivate not long ago, it's incomparable to the Array Path."

"Can you perform rune tattoos?"

"I can, but I can only tattoo three types of rune tattoos."

"Which three?"

"The attack type Sharpness, the defense type Defense, and the auxiliary type Move-Like-The-Wind."

Zhou Yuntian's eyes lit up as he asked eagerly, "What about the success rate?"

"Generally speaking, the probability of failure is very small." He had previously practiced on a pack of wolves, failing seldomly. And even if it failed, it wouldn't matter, as after some time, once the tattoo site healed, one could simply re-tattoo it, causing no significant damage to the carrier of the tattoo.

"Very good, very good!" Zhou Yuntian was overjoyed, "Fellow Daoist Lu, could you demonstrate for me?"

"Naturally, I can, who needs the rune tattoo?" Lu Ye had plenty of tattoo materials in hand, enough for use.

"Tattoo on me," Zhou Yuntian said.

"Then, Fellow Daoist Zhou, please follow me." After saying this, Lu Ye led the way.

They quickly returned to his own loft, where he took out various materials for tattooing and gave Zhou Yuntian an introduction. This time he asked, "Which rune tattoo does Fellow Daoist Zhou want?"

Zhou Yuntian pondered briefly before saying, "The Defense one."

The Sharpness rune tattoo was not suitable to be tattooed on a person, unlike with the demon wolves. After all, cultivators usually have Spiritual Artifacts for battle, and nobody would scratch or bite people with their hands or mouth. The rune tattoos used on cultivators were either Defense or Move-Like-The-Wind.

One enabled the cultivator to have a stronger means of defense, and the other allowed a cultivator to run faster.

All things considered, Defense was the most suitable choice, and it was not strange for Zhou Yuntian to make that choice.

"Then where does Fellow Daoist Zhou wish to tattoo it?" Lu Ye asked again.

Zhou Yuntian stretched out his hand and tore open the clothes on his chest, pointing at his heart, "Here!"

A perfectly normal choice, with a Defense Spirit Rune guarding the vital area of the heart, it was likely to save lives at critical moments.

"Fellow Daoist Zhou, please lie down," Lu Ye gestured with his hand.

Zhou Yuntian then lay on Lu Ye's bed, opening his clothes.

Lu Ye picked up the tattoo needle, dipped it in the material for the Defense rune tattoo, and lifted his hand to tattoo Zhou Yuntian's chest.

As the needle descended, Zhou Yuntian's expression was visibly tense, but he quickly relaxed.

One needle after another, a triangular earthy-yellow mark gradually appeared on Zhou Yuntian's chest, within which complex lines were interwoven and fitted together, giving one the sensation of an impregnable fortress just by looking at it.

A Defense rune tattoo was no great challenge for Lu Ye.

In less than the time taken for one incense stick's burn, Lu Ye finished and said, "Fellow Daoist Zhou, it's done."

Zhou Yuntian sat up, looked down at the mark on his chest, and slightly urged his spirit force into it. Immediately, a triangular barrier emerged on his chest, clinging closely to his skin, visibly tougher by countless folds than his own protective spirit force.

Zhou Yuntian was overjoyed and couldn't help but praise, "Fellow Daoist Lu is truly remarkable, being able to tattoo rune tattoos in the Cloud River Realm is an unprecedented feat in my life."

Lu Ye responded, "Fellow Daoist Zhou flatters me, my skills aren't refined, these tattoos are of a temporary nature, they can be used only a limited number of times. I'm glad you're satisfied."

"Satisfied, extremely satisfied," Zhou Yuntian laughed and nodded, looking at Lu Ye, he felt more than ever like he had found a treasure.

Chapter 582 The Calligrapher's Benefits

In the sleeping chamber of the Fox Demon, Zhou Yuntian hurriedly arrived and bowed deeply.

"What's the matter?"

The Fox Demon, reclining on a soft couch, asked gently. A female cultivator stood in front of her, holding an incense burner from which wisps of smoke drifted out and were inhaled by the Fox Demon. This made her face look intoxicated and flushed, even her slightly open eyes were misty.

"Venerable One, this subordinate has been impolite. Please have a look," Zhou Yuntian said as he opened his chest, then stimulated his spirit force. The next moment, a Defense Spirit Rune appeared on his chest.

"Hmm?" The Fox Demon's eyelids opened slightly as she looked at the Defense Spirit Rune. She pointed a finger, and a burst of demonic power struck the spirit rune on Zhou Yuntian's chest.

The light of the spirit rune dimmed, but it did not shatter. Zhou Yuntian was forced several steps backward by the blast.

"Is this a rune tattoo?" The Fox Demon, who was quite knowledgeable, recognized the nature of the spirit rune at a glance.

"To the Venerable One, it is indeed a rune tattoo, and it was created by Lu Ye," he responded.

"He has such skill!" The Fox Demon was surprised. Although Zhou Yuntian had reported to her a few days ago about Lu Ye's involvement in rune tattooing, she hadn't really taken it seriously because someone with a Level 4 cultivation in Cloud River, even if they pursued the Rune Tattoo Path, couldn't possibly achieve a high level of proficiency.

But now, it seemed she had clearly underestimated him.

The Fox Demon immediately realized the value of this rune tattoo. Now that Fox Fairy Valley couldn't recruit more newcomers, if they had such a rune tattoo to assist, the strength of the entire Fox Fairy Valley could at least increase by one or two percent. Compared to recruiting more newcomers, this enhancement was more direct and convenient.

"How long did he take to create this rune tattoo?" asked the Fox Demon as she sat up straight, her expression becoming more serious.

"Only the time of one incense stick. Moreover, I observed his technique; it was extremely skilled, indicating that he is indeed well-versed in this path," Zhou Yuntian reported truthfully.

"The time of one incense stick..." The Fox Demon was astonished.

"Venerable One, perhaps all the fellow cultivators in the valley could visit him and request a rune tattoo? This could also enhance their chances of survival," he suggested.

The Fox Demon nodded slightly, "That could be arranged. I will leave this matter in your hands," she said.

"Yes, I will not disappoint you, Venerable One," Zhou Yuntian replied respectfully.

As Lu Ye was immersing himself in practicing his saber skills with Xia Liang, Zhou Yuntian suddenly arrived with a group of people, shouting from a distance, "Fellow Daoist Lu!"

Lu Ye stopped his movements and sighed silently to himself. What was expected had still come.

After granting Zhou Yuntian the Defense Rune Tattoo, Lu Ye had anticipated the follow-up since a rune tattoo was a convenient external force to utilize. Having experienced the benefits of the tattoo, it was unreasonable for Zhou Yuntian to ignore them.

Sure enough, after Zhou Yuntian arrived, he conveyed the Fox Demon's command, requesting Lu Ye to tattoo all the cultivators in the valley with rune tattoos. Lu Ye naturally could only agree.

Suspending his saber skill practice, Lu Ye prepared the materials and tools for the tattoo on the second floor of the pavilion. He said to Zhou Yuntian standing beside him, "Fellow Daoist Zhou, tattooing consumes much mental energy. I can only tattoo up to ten fellow Daoists per day. Any more would be too taxing."

In reality, he could tattoo more, but that would not only take up his time for practicing saber skills but also complicate his recovery.

Ten people per day wasn't too draining on him.

"No problem, Fellow Daoist Lu, you do what's convenient for you. Although the Venerable One has issued orders, she did not specify a timeline," Zhou Yuntian replied.

Considering that there weren't too many cultivators in Fox Fairy Valley, tattooing ten people per day would only take about eight or nine days in total.

"Then have them come up one by one," Lu Ye said.

Zhou Yuntian walked to the window and shouted, "Brother Zhao, come up."

Among the cultivators waiting below, Cultivator Zhao, who was called by Zhou Yuntian, climbed up quickly to the second floor and first respectfully bowed to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye allowed him to choose between the Move-Like-The-Wind and the Defense Spirit Runes. As expected, this Cultivator Zhao chose the Defense Spirit Rune, and like Zhou Yuntian, he chose to have the tattoo placed at the center of his chest.

Under Lu Ye's guidance, Cultivator Zhao opened his clothes and lay on the bed.

After the time of one incense stick, the tattoo was completed, and Cultivator Zhao tested it to ensure the Defense could be activated. He was delighted and thanked Lu Ye.

The next one came right after...

When it was the third person's turn, it was a female cultivator.

Standing in front of Lu Ye, the female cultivator blushed and lowered her head, saying, "Junior Brother Lu, could you tattoo it on my back... is that alright?"

"Of course, any location is fine," Lu Ye nodded.

"Then please... on the back." If the Venerable One hadn't personally ordered it, she would never have approached Lu Ye for a rune tattoo. Being a woman, having a man handle her body was incredibly embarrassing and tough to endure.

But the Defense Spirit Rune indeed offered some protection, so rather than having Lu Ye tattoo around her chest, placing it on her back was barely acceptable.

Lu Ye hadn't expected being a rune tattoo master to have such perks...

Such situations would likely be frequent in the future; he calmed his mind, remaining as serene as a still well.

"Senior Brother Zhou, you... you go outside!" the female cultivator blurted out, her face flushing even redder as she glanced at Zhou Yun standing by.

"Oh, I'll wait outside," Zhou Yuntian replied, suddenly recollecting himself. He hurried towards the door, making sure to close it behind him.

The female cultivator stood in place, nervously twisting the hem of her garments and pursing her red lips, her complexion full of hesitation. Even if ordered by the Fox Demon, it still required considerable courage and determination to undress in front of a man she was not familiar with.

Lu Ye turned around, his back to her, pretending to mix the medicinal solution. Moments later, a slight rustling sound came from behind him.

Following that, the trembling voice of the female cultivator rose, "Junior Brother Lu, I am ready."

Lu Ye turned around, and what met his eyes was a stretch of flawless snow-white skin and breathtaking curves.

The female cultivator sat on the bed, her back to him, holding her removed clothes in her hands, covering her front.

Lu Ye approached, his gaze fixed firmly ahead... primarily because he couldn't see anything, and he pressed down with a needle.

The body of the female cultivator suddenly tensed, and a brief sound escaped her lips.

Lu Ye's eyelid twitched. "Senior Sister, please do not make such strange noises, they disturb my concentration... Also, relax your body, don't move around, rest assured, I won't touch you."

The female cultivator's face instantly turned as red as blooming azaleas, even her fair back and slender neck flushed, she whispered with her head lowered, "I understand."

One needle at a time, he meticulously tattooed the Defense Spirit Runes, their patterns gradually emerging.

An incense stick's time later, Lu Ye withdrew his hand and breathed a sigh of relief, "All done, Senior Sister!"

"You... you turn around," said the female cultivator.

Lu Ye then turned away, quickly followed by the sound of her dressing.

"Thank you, Junior Brother Lu," the female cultivator hastily expressed her gratitude, then opened the door and fled as if escaping.

Zhou Yuntian peeked in to look at Lu Ye, his eyebrows twitched, a meaningful smile hanging on his face. "Fellow Daoist Lu, with such a skill, you truly make Zhou envious."

"Next!"

One cultivator after another entered the second floor, and each departed after the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

In Fox Fairy Valley, male cultivators were more numerous, with female cultivators making up about thirty percent, a ratio reflective of the general situation in the Nine Provinces cultivation world. Generally, there were more male cultivators than female ones, though the reason for this was unclear.

Male cultivators had no issue baring their chests and breasts in front of Lu Ye, but most female cultivators were shy by nature, and it was indeed a challenge for them to reveal their beauty in front of a man they barely knew.

But upon orders from the Venerable One, they dared not disobey.

Having the experience with the first female cultivator, the locations chosen by the female cultivators for the rune tattoos were mostly on the back, which was still a significant challenge for Lu Ye.

There were exceptions. One bold female cultivator entered the room, began undressing right away, and lay flat on the bed with areas for the rune tattoo chosen on her chest, which left Lu Ye parched and tongue-tied while she laughed her head off.

If it were not for Lu Ye maintaining his composure, he might have failed in tattooing the runes.

After tattooing ten people on the first day, Lu Ye, claiming mental exhaustion, closed his door to further callers, arranging with Zhou Yuntian to bring another ten people the next day.

Zhou Yuntian readily agreed.

After a brief rest, Lu Ye then went to find Xia Liang to practice saber skills under his guidance.

Come nightfall, he first visited Li Baxian to have a talk with his senior brother, then leisurely headed to Xie Yunhan's residence to fulfill the daytime agreement of drinking and chatting together.

In the middle of the night, Lu Ye staggered out from Xie Yunhan's place and returned to his room to meditate and cultivate.

An hour later, in the darkness, Lu Ye opened his eyes and softly called out, "Yiyi."

Yiyi immediately emerged from the Amber and darted downward, quickly vanishing from sight.

Lu Ye then constructed Concealment and Breath-concealing Spirit Runes on himself and, with a Single Flash, leaped out from the second floor.

The bright moon hung high, and the night was deep and still.

Lu Ye quietly headed in one direction, with Yiyi scouting ahead and his own body cloaked with Concealment and Breath-concealing Spirit Runes, reducing the chance of being discovered.

Furthermore, he had memorized the locations of all the arrays in Fox Fairy Valley, posing no risk of triggering any.

Soon, Lu Ye arrived at the forbidden land in the deepest part of Fox Fairy Valley.

During the daytime when he followed Xie Yunhan here, he had become curious about this forbidden area. Even Xie Yunhan, who had been in Fox Fairy Valley for twelve years, did not know what was inside, clearly hiding some secrets.

Lu Ye had decided during the day to explore and uncover whatever secrets lay here. Whatever was concealed must relate to the Fox Demon, and perhaps he could find some unexpected gains from this place.

Although this area was covered by an array, Lu Ye's best skill was infiltrating arrays.

Upon reaching the big array, Lu Ye looked around to ensure no one was near, then he constructed Insight Spirit Runes in his eyes to check for flaws in the array and locate its nodes.

He soon found what he was looking for, moved to where an array node was located, and raised his hand to insert several array banners nearby.

With additional actions from him, the flow of spirit force at the array node began to slow down until it completely stopped.

#### Chapter 583 The Secret of the Fox Demon

The grand array at this place was a concealment array and a protective array, perfectly combined. It was evident that the person who arranged the Formation was quite skilled in the Array Path, more so than Xie Yunhan, yet still somewhat inferior compared to himself.

Therefore, infiltrating such a Formation was not difficult for Lu Ye.

Once the array banner was embedded, spirit force ceased to flow. Raising his hand, Lu Ye collected the array banner and, with a flash, entered, his figure surging into the heart of the big array.

After he left, the spirit force on the light screen of the array began to flow slowly with the interference of the array banner gone.

Having entered the big array, Lu Ye immediately concealed his form and observed his surroundings alertly.

No danger presented itself; within this forbidden land, everything was clear at a glance.

For this was merely a not-too-large space.

Within an area of about twenty zhang in radius, an isolated grave stood; in front of the grave, there was a stele, and not far from the burial ground, there was an ancient altar, only a few zhang tall, appearing akin to something used for sacrifices.

Is this the forbidden land?

Lu Ye's brows furrowed. Even with the support of Insight Spirit Runes, he didn't see anything particularly noteworthy.

He walked forward, stopping in front of the stele of the burial mound, and looked up. Under the moonlight, the inscriptions on the stele caught his eye.

"Tomb of Master Lei Zhengyin."

There was only this single line of text. Lei Zhengyin was likely the name of the person buried in this mound, but the word "Master" inevitably sparked some conjecture.

According to what Xie Yunhan had previously stated, one could glean that this forbidden land had existed for at least a dozen years, and thus the person in the grave had been dead for at least as long.

However, the headstone appeared quite clean, without a speck of dust, just as the grave itself bore no trace of weeds—it seemed as if someone regularly came here to mourn and tidy up.

In the entire Fox Fairy Valley, the only one who could enter here was that Fox Demon.

Lu Ye's gaze flickered for a moment before shifting away from the grave and toward the altar.

The altar was evidently ancient and simple. Lu Ye stepped onto the altar and looked around, only to see the surface covered with complex interwinding patterns—it seemed to be shrouded in a sophisticated big array. He observed it intently for a moment but failed to ascertain what kind of Formation it was exactly.

He had some proficiency in the Array Path as well, and even if he encountered an array he was unfamiliar with, he could usually discern something of its nature.

If he could understand nothing, then either these complex patterns were not an array at all, or their profundity completely surpassed his comprehension.

After a careful examination for a while, Lu Ye suddenly noticed that there was a notch at each of the four corners of the altar.

This was something Lu Ye was familiar with.

Generally speaking, such notches required placement of a Spirit Stone, like the Spirit Gathering Arrays found within many sects.

Hence, if one wanted to understand the purpose of the altar, one would simply need to place Spirit Stones in the notches.

However, Lu Ye naturally would not act so rashly. Doing so could likely alarm the cultivators within Fox Fairy Valley, and surely result in him being caught red-handed.

He couldn't help feeling somewhat disappointed.

The Fox Demon had marked this place as a forbidden land, and he had thought it concealed some formidable secret—only to find an isolated grave and an ancient altar. Yet, he couldn't even confirm what the altar was truly for.

A wasted trip!

Just as he prepared to leave, an unusual sound suddenly reached him. Lu Ye's expression changed, and he immediately applied both Concealment and Breath-concealing Spirit Runes to himself, standing on the altar without daring to make the slightest move.

The figure of a seductive Fox Demon suddenly appeared before him. It was none other than the one from the valley.

Lu Ye cursed his bad luck inwardly. He knew from the unspoiled state of the headstone and the weedless grave that someone often came here to mourn; yet he had not expected to encounter anyone in the middle of the night.

Now, if not for the augmentation of spirit runes, he would have been discovered.

Under the moonlight, the Fox Demon came to a halt before the stele, looking down, her expression slowly shrouded by sorrow.

After a while, soft sobbing echoed as tears slipped from the corners of her eyes, leaving deep tracks on her face. The Fox Demon collapsed onto the stele, wailing in grief, mumbling something indistinctly.

Lu Ye could only catch words like "Master," "Xian'er," and "I'm so tired," but the rest was unclear.

He felt fortunate that the Fox Demon was engulfed in sorrow and probably hadn't expected anyone to defy her orders and visit the valley in the dead of night; otherwise, such proximity could have possibly led to his exposure despite the Breath-concealing and Concealment Spirit Runes.

After a lengthy period of crying, the Fox Demon finally raised her hand to wipe her eyes, then carefully cleaned the polished headstone, took a deep breath, and her full chest heaved.

The sadness on her face vanished, replaced by bitter rancor and resentment. Even her originally sultry voice turned quite grim, "Master, it won't be long, just another month and I will avenge you. This time, I will not fail!"

Possibly due to her intense emotions, as she spoke these words, her body surged with Demon Origin, and in the moonlight, several fluffy tails formed from Demon Origin appeared behind her alluring figure. From Lu Ye's perspective, this scene had a sinister beauty.

She gazed tenderly and reluctantly at the stele for a moment longer. Once her emotions had settled and the Demon Origin calmed, she turned and departed, crossing through the array that shrouded this place, her figure disappearing from sight.

Lu Ye stood silently on the altar, without stirring.

It wasn't until an hour had passed that he softly called out, "Yiyi!"

Yiyi's figure appeared, "It's safe outside."

Lu Ye nodded and immediately walked outside.

When he had come in from the outside, he had needed to use techniques to sneak in, but leaving this place, the formation posed no hindrance.

In just a moment, he quietly returned to his own loft.

Reflecting on the scene he had just witnessed, Lu Ye's brow furrowed deeply. Based on the term "Fox Fairy Valley," he had surmised that the Venerable One's true form was that of a fox demon. Today, after seeing the anomaly caused by her turbulent Demon Origin, he was even more certain of his initial conjecture.

It was indeed a fox demon, but not an ordinary one, for she had not just one tail but a full six!

A member of the Celestial Fox clan perhaps? And a Six-tailed Celestial Fox at that!

No wonder she possessed the eerie ability to bewitch the minds of others. If she was from the Celestial Fox clan, then it all made sense.

Although Celestial Foxes were not on par with the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, they were a kind of exotic beast with innate divine abilities. To Lu Ye's knowledge, a Celestial Fox of the Cloud River Realm would generally have only two or three tails. So even with their special innate divine abilities, they couldn't control a person's psyche to any significant extent, only slightly bewilder it. As long as one's psyche was strong enough, they could quickly break free.

To have six tails would mean that the fox demon was an anomaly within the Celestial Fox clan. Under normal circumstances, the strength of a Six-tailed Celestial Fox could be comparable to that of the Divine Sea Realm!

Although this trip didn't yield any tangible gains within the forbidden land, he had serendipitously uncovered the true identity of the fox demon, which was a gain in itself.

However, this discovery didn't provide much help in the current situation.

"Lu Ye," Yiyi suddenly spoke up from the darkness, "that fox demon seems very pitiful."

"What's pitiful about her?" Lu Ye retorted without much patience, "The pitiful ones are the cultivators trapped here, bewitched by her, utterly devoted to her cause."

"Her master died," Yiyi's eyes reddened, "She wants to avenge her own master."

Lu Ye turned to look at her, feeling that this young girl was overly sensitive. The fox demon's master had been dead for at least a decade—why the tears?

Yiyi sniffled, saying, "If one day you died too, Amber and I would definitely do everything we could to avenge you!"

Lu Ye chuckled, "Amber and I have performed the Life Origin Method. If I die, so does Amber, and so would you. What vengeance would there be to speak of? It would be a neat and tidy journey to Huang Quan together, and we wouldn't be lonely on the road."

Yiyi puffed her cheeks, "Anyway, that fox demon is just so pitiful."

Having said that, she stamped her foot and dived into Amber's body, refusing to deal with Lu Ye any further.

Lu Ye, speechless, let his eyes gradually sink in the darkness.

The fox demon had said that within a month she'd be able to avenge her deceased master—the question now was... who was the enemy?

Lu Ye hadn't been very clear on what the fox demon had been gathering so many cultivators to do, but now, it was quite obvious.

She had always been trying to find a way to avenge her master. Relying solely on her own strength wasn't sufficient to exact that vengeance, which is why she needed to recruit cultivators who ventured into the Great Wilderness Mountain.

And with the years that had passed, the fox demon must have acted more than once before, likely with previous attempts that had all ended in failure. The deaths of her subordinated cultivators must certainly be related to this.

Currently, the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley numbered over eighty, of which fifteen were of Level 9. Aside from Lu Ye and Li Baxian, the rest were all above Level 6.

Such a force, if deployed, might not sweep the Cloud River battlefield, but certainly could dominate a region and reign supreme without issue.

But the fox demon had yet to make her move, either due to a lack of confidence or because she was waiting for the right moment.

Whichever it was, her enemy's strength had to be extraordinary. Looking over the entire Cloud River battlefield, there was only one possibility for an enemy who would necessitate such caution on her part!

Lu Ye quickly pulled out the ten-part map and examined the annotations. After a moment, his gaze settled on a line of notes.

An Overlord-class demon beast, the Berserk Giant Ape!

A twitch passed across Lu Ye's eyelids.

If things were as he suspected, it meant trouble.

The strength of an Overlord-class demon beast of the Cloud River Realm was unknown to him.

But the strength of an Overlord-class demon beast of the Spirit Stream Realm was something he had personally experienced—power that completely surpassed the boundaries of the Spirit Stream Realm.

He had once been considered an Overlord-class presence among cultivators, essentially unmatched within his own realm.

The strength of Fox Fairy Valley was indeed impressive, but pitting such a force against an Overlord-class demon beast, it was genuinely hard to say who would have the last laugh.

One month... Lu Ye suddenly felt a headache coming on.

Should he try knocking Li Baxian unconscious and just take him away? Even if he discounted the chances of success, a mishap would inevitably expose some of his own secrets, potentially dooming them both.

Even if he did manage to knock Li Baxian out, the Psyche Secret Technique—if unbroken—would always be a cause for concern.

#### Chapter 584 Mental Eye

The days passed uneventfully as he patrolled the valley's Formations with Xie Yunhan, inscribed spirit runes on ten cultivators, and then practiced saber skills with Xia Liang.

It was a recurring cycle.

If it weren't for the lingering thoughts of the Fox Demon's previously mentioned quest for vengeance, such a life would indeed be quite pleasant.

Nine days later, all the cultivators in the valley had received their rune tattoos, specifically defense rune tattoos. During this time, Lu Ye had quite an eye-opening experience...

After finishing his tasks, Lu Ye sought out Xia Liang, ready to practice saber skills with him.

Unexpectedly, Xia Liang said, "I've already taught you all the basics I could; what remains must be understood through your own experiences in life-and-death battles. Mere instruction is no longer of much use now."

After all, the fundamentals of saber skills are limited, and with over ten days of teaching, Xia Liang had imparted all he could; indeed, there was nothing left to teach Lu Ye.

Moreover, the enhancement of saber skills primarily relies not on instruction but on the accumulation and sublimation through successive real combats. Each person needs to slowly refine their mastery of saber skills amidst bloody battles.

Over these ten days, Lu Ye felt that his saber skills had improved significantly; his foundation was more solid than before, and his comprehension of saber skills had ascended to a new level.

It's safe to say that just for this aspect alone, his strength had increased by at least ten percent, which undeniably was a huge gain.

So, even though there had been numerous grievances between him and Xia Liang, just for these days of instruction, Lu Ye formally bowed and said, "Thank you, Fellow Daoist Xia!"

It was uncertain how Xia Liang would react if he had the chance to break free from the Fox Demon's mental control.

He was originally supposed to kill Lu Ye, but due to an unexpected turn of events, he ended up teaching Lu Ye quite a bit about saber skills.

"I can no longer teach you the basics, but today I will teach you something else." Saying so, Xia Liang took out his long saber from the storage sack, assumed a stance, closed his eyes, and said, "Attack me!"

Seeing his demeanor, Lu Ye hesitated no longer. He reached for the hilt of his saber, his figure flickered, and he charged toward Xia Liang, slashing down with his saber while keeping a close watch on Xia Liang's movements.

When the Boulder Mountain Saber was less than a foot away from Xia Liang, Xia Liang suddenly moved, raising his long saber, and blocking the Boulder Mountain Saber first.

Lu Ye couldn't help but raise his eyebrows.

Xia Liang was at Cloud River Level 9, while he was only at Level 4; the vast difference in cultivation made it unsurprising for him to block his strike.

What surprised him was that Xia Liang, with his eyes closed, seemed to see his attack.

Using the force from the rebound, Lu Ye gracefully retreated.

"Again!" Xia Liang called out.

Lu Ye charged again, this time opting for a more concealed direct stab rather than a grand slashing attack.

This fellow was able to block his slashing attack with his eyes closed, possibly by listening for his position, but how would he block such a concealed straight stab?

To Lu Ye's surprise, still at half a foot away, Xia Liang's long saber suddenly moved, gently deflecting the Boulder Mountain Saber while his head tilted aside, letting the saber stab into the void close to his neck.

Lu Ye was greatly astonished.

"Again!"

Lu Ye struck a third time...

But the result was the same each time; each attack was blocked by Xia Liang as it neared half a foot away from him.

Although Lu Ye was not employing his full strength, Xia Liang's ability to do so with his eyes closed still seemed incredible to him.

After more than a dozen strikes, he had not even touched a corner of Xia Liang's clothes.

Then he opened his eyes and looked at Lu Ye, "Do you see what I mean?"

"Perception?"

"Mental Eye!"

"Mental Eye?"

"What the eyes see may not be real, but what the Mental Eye sees can never be false," Xia Liang earnestly explained. "This isn't a saber technique, but it is indeed a supplementary secret technique useful for all combat cultivators. You mentioned perception, which isn't entirely incorrect. Most combat cultivators have their perception of danger during combat, but the Mental Eye is based on that perception, yet it transcends it."

He paused, then continued, "The cultivators we deal with now are in the Cloud River Realm. Their draw speed might not be too fast, allowing the naked eye to catch them, but as your cultivation level increases, a day will come when many powerful opponents will move so fast, your eyes won't be able to follow. How will you respond then? Reliance solely on your perception might not give you time to react, but if you can master the Mental Eye Secret Technique, it will be different. Even if you are blind, with a long saber in your hand, no enemy could approach you unnoticed. The Mental Eye Secret Technique is unique to my Mad Saber Sect, possessing a curious parallelism with the Sword Heart of the Beixuan Sword Sect. My mastery of this technique is only just beginning, so I can only defend against attacks within half a foot."

Lu Ye suddenly understood why his attacks were always responded to by Xia Liang when they were about half a foot away; apparently, the technique had its range.

Excitedly, he asked, "How can I cultivate it?"

This was a secret technique exclusive to the Mad Saber Sect, not accessible to anyone but its elite disciples. Had Lu Ye not ended up in Fox Fairy Valley, he would never have come across this technique.

Suddenly, he remembered chasing after Xia Liang and fighting him. Xia's defense had indeed felt as solid as a fortress. Had Xia not been severely injured at that time, Lu Ye would never have been able to do anything to him relying solely on the Mental Eye Secret Technique.

Xia Liang wore a reminiscent expression: "When I first cultivated this secret technique, I was under the supervision of my seniors, fighting demon beasts of various numbers, all while blindfolded. So if you truly wish to cultivate this technique, you must experience it firsthand, allowing your body to memorize the sensation of impending crises. Over time and with enough repetition, you will naturally succeed. Unfortunately, we don't have the conditions for that here; you'll have to find an opportunity to do it later."

Lu Ye nodded slightly.

With prior instructions from Zhou Yuntian, Xia Liang would never lay a hand on Lu Ye. Thus, even if Lu Ye wanted to cultivate this secret technique, Xia could not serve as his sparring partner.

"Remember one thing – the execution of the Mental Eye Secret Technique relies on your own sensory perception; the stronger a person's perception, the easier it is to cultivate successfully."

"Understood," Lu Ye replied.

The strength of perception depends crucially on the psyche, and the strength of the psyche is closely tied to the psyche itself.

In short, the stronger a cultivator's psyche, the easier it is to cultivate this secret technique, and the psyche... was one of Lu Ye's strengths.

After parting ways with Xia Liang, Lu Ye returned to his own room, activated a Formation, assigned Yiyi to stand guard nearby, and then retrieved the Breath Fruit Core from his storage space.

Indeed, Fox Fairy Valley lacked the conditions for cultivating the Mental Eye Secret Technique due to the absence of suitable sparring partners. However, the Breath Fruit Core in Lu Ye's hand could provide him with the best cultivation environment.

In the past, whenever he entered the Mirage Realm, Lu Ye would relentlessly kill the monsters inside to hone his saber skills. However, as his cultivation increased gradually, his trips to the Mirage Realm had likewise become less frequent.

Firstly, each entry into the Mirage Realm consumed merit points. Secondly, he did not lack life-or-death combat experiences in his daily life, so he scarcely needed to enter the Mirage Realm for training.

But now that he wanted to cultivate the Mental Eye Secret Technique, the Mirage Realm was undoubtedly the best option.

Spending one hundred merit points and pushing open the massive door, Lu Ye stepped into the Mirage Realm, steadied himself, and closed his eyes.

He had just gotten ready when the fog nearby suddenly churned, and a figure burst forth, viciously pouncing toward him.

The attacking prowess of this figure was only at the Level 4 Cloud River Realm level, matching Lu Ye's own level; shrouded in fog, it was impossible to see the assailant's face or distinguish their gender.

Normally, Lu Ye could have easily knocked down such an opponent with a single strike.

But now, with his eyes tightly closed, Lu Ye had to rely solely on his own sensory perception and some sounds to track the enemy's movements, which was undoubtedly a huge challenge for him.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind hit his face. Following his instinct, Lu Ye unsheathed his long saber and slashed downward.

However, the strike did not hit anything. On the contrary, his abdomen ached from an injury inflicted by the opponent.

Another gust of wind struck, and Lu Ye turned around, slicing sideways with the Boulder Mountain Saber, still achieving no success and feeling another pang of pain.

Moments later, on the second floor, Lu Ye opened his eyes, a sharp pain throbbing in his head, causing the corners of his eyes to twitch.

An opponent of the same cultivation level, who he could usually defeat with a single slash, had managed to force him out of the Mirage Realm in less than the time it took to drink a cup of tea with his eyes closed!

How could Lu Ye tolerate this?

Again!

After another cup of tea, Lu Ye opened his eyes once more.

Again!

After repeating the process more than ten times, Lu Ye's face was visibly pale.

Even with his strong psyche, dying once or twice in the Mirage Realm had little effect on him, but dying too many times in a short period was something even he could scarcely endure.

Now, his headache was splitting, his entire head felt like it was about to explode; he had only felt this way a few times when he first got the Breath Fruit Core, and never since his psyche had grown stronger.

However, dying more than ten times was not without gains. With his eyes closed, he was able to last increasingly longer against his enemy, even accurately blocking several of the enemy's attacks on several occasions.

Xia Liang had said that to cultivate the Mental Eye Secret Technique, one needed to personally experience it, allowing the body to memorize the sensations of looming crises. Therefore, with each strike from the enemy inside the Mirage Realm, Lu Ye would intensely focus his senses, estimating the landing spots of attacks and feeling the crises brewing inside his body.

Xia's initial cultivation under the supervision of his seniors and fighting various demon beasts had gradually led him to success with this secret technique.

Compared to Xia's method of cultivation, Lu Ye undoubtedly had more advantages because he was in the Mirage Realm where, even if killed, he wouldn't suffer much loss. These experiences, remembered by the body, were undeniably more vivid and deeply imprinted.

Moreover, Lu Ye's psyche was much stronger than cultivators of the same level, which was another advantage for him.

He did not know how long Xia Liang had spent cultivating this secret technique originally, but he was certain that his own cultivation of this technique would definitely be much quicker.

Chapter 585 Guess Confirmed

In the Mirage Realm, Lu Ye's eyes were tightly shut, surrounded by an enemy whose face was obscured by fog and whose movements were unpredictable. However, no matter how the enemy attacked, Lu Ye's long saber accurately blocked each blow.

And such a struggle had already lasted for a full one incense stick's time.

If Lu Ye was willing, as long as his mental and spirit force did not deplete, he could even continue like this indefinitely.

After half a month of cultivating in the Mirage Realm, his Mental Eye Secret Technique finally made some progress.

Entering the Mirage Realm for cultivation more than a dozen times each day, he spent one or two thousand points of merit, and over this half month, he had spent a total of twenty thousand points of merit in the Mirage Realm.

The cost was not small, but so was the gain. If Xia Liang knew that it had only taken Lu Ye half a month to cultivate his Mental Eye to this level, he would probably be shocked to the core.

It had taken him a full half-year to barely touch upon the threshold.

And now, not only had Lu Ye made his entry in the Mental Eye Secret Technique, but the defensive range had also doubled in size compared to Xia Liang's, reaching a full foot in range.

Within a foot's range, he could clearly perceive any incoming danger and make a counterattack.

Such an achievement could be attributed to the haunting memories brought by dying time after time on one hand, and on the other, it was thanks to the strength of Lu Ye's psyche.

In the midst of fierce combat, Lu Ye, who stood unmoving, suddenly stepped forward and brought his saber down in a chop.

This slash unleashed an incredibly strong might, cleaving the fog-enshrouded enemy in two!

Single opponents could no longer pose any threat to Lu Ye; it was time to increase the difficulty of his training.

After a moment of waiting, the surrounding fog churned, and two figures emerged, one to the left and one to the right.

Although only one additional enemy had appeared, the difficulty had more than doubled.

Shortly after, Lu Ye was killed and ejected from the Mirage Realm.

A slight stabbing pain passed through his mind, quickly vanishing without a trace.

Just as he was about to re-enter the Mirage Realm for cultivation, Yiyi, who was standing by, suddenly spoke, "Lu Ye, someone is waiting for you outside."

Lu Ye frowned, stood up, and walked to the window to look down. He saw Zhou Yuntian and Xie Yunhan waiting below.

While he was cultivating in the Mirage Realm, he would always activate the formation in the attic. Thus, Zhou Yuntian and Xie Yunhan waited below, refraining from rashly disturbing him.

The two of them coming over together, who knew what it was for.

Noticing Lu Ye's gaze, Zhou Yuntian looked up and cheerfully called out, "Fellow Daoist Lu!"

Lu Ye said, "I was just in the middle of cultivation. I apologize for making you wait. Please, come inside."

As he spoke, he deactivated the formation.

Soon after, Zhou Yuntian and Xie Yunhan entered together. Once they were seated as host and guests and Lu Ye had served tea, he asked, "What brings you both here to see me?"

Zhou Yuntian didn't speak; he simply took out a storage sack and pushed it across to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye, curious, picked up the storage sack to examine its contents and found it filled with numerous materials, all of which were for the crafting of array banners.

His heart sank with a sudden uneasy feeling.

Sure enough, Zhou Yuntian said, "The Venerable One has ordered that you both refine more array banners as soon as possible to be prepared for any emergencies."

To refine more array banners obviously meant they were for setting up formations. The number of materials in the storage sack was substantial; if they were all crafted into array banners, at the very least, a few hundred could be made. The number of formations that could be set up would certainly be no small figure.

Taking into account the information he had previously gathered, Lu Ye knew that the Fox Demon was likely about to make a move.

Although he had his suspicions, Lu Ye still asked, "Fellow Daoist Zhou, why does the Venerable One suddenly want so many array banners?"

Zhou Yuntian hesitated for a moment, sighed softly, and said, "I'll let Fellow Daoist Xie explain to you. I have other matters to attend to. I'll leave the rest to you two. Remember, you must be ready within ten days at the latest!"

It was unclear whether he truly had other matters or felt uncomfortable discussing these things with Lu Ye.

After Zhou Yuntian left, Lu Ye turned his attention to Xie Yunhan.

The latter gave a wry smile and said, "Brother, you haven't been in Fox Fairy Valley for long, but haven't you ever wondered why the Venerable One would gather so many people here?"

Lu Ye nodded, "Of course, I've thought about it. But the Venerable One acts with her own reasons."

Xie Yunhan sighed and said, "Actually, the Venerable One gathered so many people mainly for the sake of revenge!"

"Revenge?"

"Indeed." Xie Yunhan nodded, "Although I don't know exactly what grudges the Venerable One has, what's certain is that it must be a deep and unforgettable hatred, an irreconcilable enmity. Moreover, such acts of vengeance, our Fox Fairy Valley has already undertaken more than once."

Lu Ye looked astonished, "With such an abundance of talented individuals within the valley, what kind of enemy can't be killed?"

A glint of reminiscence flashed through Xie Yunhan's eyes, his body trembled slightly, then he stared at Lu Ye and said word by word, "Overlord-class demon beast!"

Lu Ye showed a startled expression and exclaimed in a low voice, "Overlord-class demon beast? Could it be that Berserk Giant Ape?"

Even though he had already guessed, guesses were only guesses after all. Xie Yunhan's words undoubtedly confirmed Lu Ye's previous speculation.

The object of the Fox Demon's vengeance was indeed that Berserk Giant Ape.

Xie Yunhan was not surprised at Lu Ye's knowledge of the Berserk Giant Ape, since it was marked on the ten-part map. He nodded somberly, "Exactly, that beast!"

"Seeking revenge on an Overlord-class demon beast, does the Venerable One...?"

"As the Venerable One conducts herself this way, she naturally has her reasons. As her subordinates, all we can do is follow the Venerable One's orders. However, Fellow Daoist Lu, you don't need to worry. We two are array cultivators, and we won't need to confront the Berserk Giant Ape directly later on. We only need to support our fellows with array formations, so there is some assurance of safety."

Lu Ye realized why Xie Yunhan had managed to survive in Fox Fairy Valley for twelve years.

Although Fox Fairy Valley was capable of gathering many cultivators, from beginning to end, the number of array cultivators was extremely scarce. Whenever there was any action against that Berserk Giant

Ape, Xie Yunhan merely activated pre-set formations for support and didn't need to fight the Berserk Giant Ape directly. That's why, even if vengeance failed, Xie Yunhan could still save his own life.

As for the others... they weren't so fortunate, with a large number of cultivators dying during each operation.

"Is it very dangerous?" Lu Ye asked in a grave tone.

Xie Yunhan gave a bitter smile, "In my twelve years at Fox Fairy Valley, I've seen such operations six times... Almost every time, the valley's manpower would be reduced by over eighty percent. In all of Fox Fairy Valley, except for me, Fellow Daoist Zhou is the one who has lived the longest. He arrived six years ago. You have never witnessed the might of the Berserk Giant Ape, so you don't realize how formidable an Overlord-class demon beast is. If you ever see it, you will understand how dangerous it is to battle one. Lives are indeed as insignificant as weeds."

Lu Ye frowned and said, "If that beast is so powerful, why doesn't the Venerable One wait until she has accumulated enough strength to seek revenge, instead of repeatedly losing the valley's manpower like this?"

"The Venerable One naturally thinks so too, but this place is located deep within the Great Wilderness Mountain and is rarely visited by cultivators on a normal day. Gathering manpower is not as easy as you think. Ever since Fellow Daoist Zhou brought you and the others back last time, not a single newcomer has appeared, making it extremely difficult to accumulate enough power," Xie Yunhan explained.

"Then this time... in Brother Xie's view, is there a chance of success?"

Xie Yunhan said, "This time, the strength and numbers within the valley are much greater than before. Moreover, now we have Brother Lu, an array cultivator, so I think there's a great hope. However, we cannot afford to be careless. What we need to do now is to refine as many array banners as possible and set up more formations, relying on the power of the formations to weaken that beast. In this way, there will be a possibility for the Venerable One to get her revenge."

Lu Ye said, "It looks like we have quite a burden and a long road ahead!"

Xie Yunhan laughed, "Given that, you should understand why the Venerable One values you so much, right? To be honest, against such an enemy, the power we array cultivators can wield is what the Venerable One relies on the most."

"Understood," Lu Ye nodded solemnly. "I shall not disappoint the trust placed in me by the Venerable One!"

"Then let's hurry up and refine those array banners."

Perhaps because they were about to take action, the atmosphere in the entire Fox Fairy Valley became solemn and serious. Many cultivators were unaware of the specifics of the operation, but they knew that there would be a fierce battle in a few days. Under the Fox Demon's orders, a large number of cultivation resources were distributed, and everyone was busy cultivating, trying to improve their own strength as much as they could.

Every day, apart from recovering their own spirit force, Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan were occupied with refining array banners.

A large amount of material was consumed, and pole after pole of new array banners were produced. Six days later, all the materials had been consumed and over five hundred array banners had been refined.

With so many array banners, enough to set up more than a hundred formations, if they still couldn't do anything about the Berserk Giant Ape with the help of all these formations, then the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley could only resign themselves to their fate, and who knows how many would die.

While Fox Fairy Valley was busily making preparations for vengeance, Feng Yuechan and the person called Giant Armor, having received Lu Ye's message, also set out from their spirit ground, leading the wolf pack toward Fox Fairy Valley.

On their own, Feng Yuechan and Giant Armor might not have the power to venture too deep into the Great Wilderness Mountain, but with a wolf pack, it was different. Even if they encountered any powerful demon beasts, the wolf pack could handle them.

With the scale of the wolf pack now expanded to more than three hundred, except for a few dozen pups that weren't fully grown, the rest were all demon wolves comparable in strength to the Cloud River Realm.

No matter whether the Fox Demon's operation against the Berserk Giant Ape succeeded or failed, the strength of Fox Fairy Valley would surely be greatly diminished. This was the opportunity Lu Ye had been waiting for a long time.

If the Fox Demon died in the battle with the Berserk Giant Ape, that would be the best outcome; then, everyone's Psyche Secret Technique would be lifted.

If she didn't die, then they would let the wolf pack attack Fox Fairy Valley and surround and kill the Fox Demon!

There wasn't any overly complex plan, but often the simplest plans had the greatest chance of success.

Now, the only issue Lu Ye needed to consider was the safety of Li Baxian.

His cultivation, along with Li Baxian's, was the lowest in Fox Fairy Valley, but as an array cultivator, he didn't need to fight the Berserk Giant Ape directly. However, Li Baxian was different. No matter how deep his foundation in the Spirit Stream Realm was, facing an Overlord of the Cloud River Realm, Li Baxian's ability to contribute was extremely limited.

#### Chapter 586 Preparation

At Li Baxian's residence, Lu Ye had a casual drink with him by candlelight. As Lu Ye explained in detail, Li Baxian slowly understood the various plans that Fox Fairy Valley had in store.

"So it's a hunt for that Overlord-class demon beast." Li Baxian showed a look of realization, "No wonder I've felt the atmosphere in the valley has been a bit strange lately, and Fellow Daoist Yu seems to be preoccupied."

The Fellow Daoist Yu he referred to was none other than Yu Daiwei, who had been coming to spar with Li Baxian quite frequently these days.

It was clear that Yu Daiwei had a certain fondness for Li Baxian, yet it seemed that Li Baxian didn't reciprocate her feelings and merely regarded her as a comrade-in-arms with a shared path.

"Little Junior Brother, such confidential matters must not be discussed with others before the Venerable One publicly announces them," Li Baxian warned Lu Ye again.

Lu Ye replied, "I understand. I will only discuss this with Senior Brother. When it's time to take action, please be careful, Senior Brother."

Li Baxian nodded, "I will be cautious... Little Junior Brother, do you know when the action will start?"

"It should be within these few days," Lu Ye said gravely, "I've received a message that I'll be leaving to set up the arrays tomorrow. Once the Formations are properly established, that might be the day we begin our operation."

"Then you should also take care, Junior Brother. An Overlord-class demon beast... heh, I never thought I'd have a chance to face one." He didn't seem nervous at all; in fact, he seemed somewhat eager.

The next morning, Lu Ye stepped out from his dwelling and headed straight towards the entrance of Fox Fairy Valley.

From a distance, he saw more than a dozen figures already waiting there, with Zhou Yuntian leading them.

Lu Ye walked up, greeted everyone, and Zhou Yuntian nodded, "Let's set out."

With that, he led the way, and the others followed closely behind.

Aside from Zhou Yuntian, Xie Yunhan was also present. The rest, whose strengths were not to be underestimated, were all above Level 7. Their main job was to ensure the safety of Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan.

After all, with Lu Ye at Level 4 and Xie Yunhan at Level 7, their cultivations were not particularly high. If they were to encounter any powerful demon beasts, they might not be able to withstand them. Whether or not these two array cultivators could set up sufficiently strong arrays was key to their plan. During the array setup, Zhou Yuntian and his group would have to stay close by.

Along the way, they occasionally encountered demon beasts. Despite their utmost caution, they could not avoid some altercations.

However, with the strength of the group, and several among them at Level 9, they proceeded safely despite a few close calls.

It wasn't until a day later that Zhou Yuntian, who was leading the way, stopped, took out the ten-part map, and checked their location before saying, "This is the place. Fellow Daoist Lu, Fellow Daoist Xie, you two must set up various big arrays centered on this spot as quickly as possible. As for how to set them up and what Formations to use, you two shall discuss it among yourselves. The rest of you, spread out in pairs and keep watch. Alert us promptly if there's any anomaly!"

"Understood!" Everyone responded and scattered in different directions.

Only Lu Ye, Xie Yunhan, and Zhou Yuntian remained at the original spot.

Xie Yunhan looked hopefully at Lu Ye.

In terms of proficiency in the Array Path, he was no match for Lu Ye, so in this array setup, Lu Ye was to lead, and he was to assist.

Lu Ye didn't immediately start on the Formation, but instead looked at Zhou Yuntian, "Fellow Daoist Zhou, I have a question."

"What's the question?" Zhou Yuntian asked.

Lu Ye said, "How far is that Berserk Giant Ape from here?"

"Its location isn't fixed. However, it usually only moves within its territory, which is about fifty miles from here."

"In other words, the Venerable One plans to lure the Berserk Giant Ape out of its territory and ambush it here?"

"That's right."

"Since the Berserk Giant Ape is an Overlord-class demon beast, its spiritual intelligence should not be low. How can we ensure that it comes here? The cultivators from the valley have already fought with it more than once; wouldn't it be wary?"

"If Fellow Daoist Lu is worried about this, there's no need. Indeed, that beast has high spiritual intelligence and almost human-like awareness, but it is still an Overlord-class demon beast. Considering its status in the Cloud River battlefield, even if it senses something, it won't be overly concerned. The last two times we did the same, and although there were some twists, each time we were able to draw it into the designated area."

Upon hearing this, Lu Ye nodded, "Then there should be no problem."

He silently speculated that if this was the case, then the spiritual intelligence of the Berserk Giant Ape seemed not to be very high.

He suddenly remembered the Overlord-class demon beast he had encountered on the Spirit Stream battlefield; it had already taken human form, yet it was still easily deceived. It seemed that this was an unavoidable shortcoming of demon beasts.

Having cleared the doubts in his mind, Lu Ye rose through the air and observed the terrain below. After a moment, he had a concrete plan in mind.

The many spirit runes he now mastered were well-suited for array setup.

However, if they were to deal with an Overlord-class demon beast, some of the less significant auxiliary Formations could be omitted.

To successfully kill the opponent, the primary focus must still be on the killing array.

The most powerful killing array that Lu Ye could set up right now is undoubtedly the explosion magic array. A single explosion magic array wasn't a big threat to an Overlord-class demon beast, but if enough arrays were set up, they could still play a tremendous role.

There were also spirit runes like Lightning Attracting, Fiery Flames, and Earth Spike that could be used independently as magic and spells, but if used as the core for array setup, they would become the Lightning Attracting Array, Fiery Flames Array, and Earth Spike Array. Combined with the explosion magic array, they could also yield surprising effects.

At this moment, Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan began setting up arrays together.

With each array banner consumed, an Array would take shape. To enhance the power of the Arrays, Lu Ye even placed Spirit Stones in many of them, allowing the Arrays to operate in advance and accumulate energy.

Considering that the cultivators in the valley needed to confront the Berserk Giant Ape, the arrays set up this time were mostly those that required manual control, with very few being of the trigger type.

For three whole days, Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan barely rested, setting up hundreds of Arrays within a ten-mile radius, turning the area into a land fraught with danger.

In setting up these arrays, Lu Ye used all his knowledge without holding anything back.

Although it would benefit him if the strength of Fox Fairy Valley was diminished, he had even planned for the wolves to besiege the fox demons after this great battle, the premise being that they could win the battle against the Berserk Giant Ape.

If they were to lose this battle, then his and Li Baxian's safety could not be guaranteed, so no matter what, Lu Ye didn't dare to do anything underhanded while setting up the arrays.

He didn't have a clear understanding of just how strong an Overlord-class demon beast from the Cloud River Realm was, but judging from the current situation in Fox Fairy Valley, the strength of the Berserk Giant Ape would only exceed his expectations.

And the day after all the arrays were properly set up, the fox demon led the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley over.

All the people in Fox Fairy Valley mobilized without exception. Over eighty cultivators gathered together, with Zhou Yuntian stepping forward to report the situation here.

After listening, the fox demon looked at Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan with approval, "You two have worked hard. If we succeed this time, you two will be the main contributors!"

Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan both showed expressions of joy and excitement, saying repeatedly that serving the Venerable One was their duty. Such humble conduct undoubtedly pleased the fox demon greatly.

"Venerable One." Lu Ye spoke again, "Before we take action, I would like to take my Fellow Daoists to become familiar with the arrays in various places. This way, during the great battle, everyone will know where they can save their lives and where they can stop the enemy, potentially reducing some casualties."

The fox demon nodded, "You are considerate. Very well, do as you say!"

"Yes. Fellow Daoists, please follow me." Lu Ye said this and rose into the air, flying towards the area covered by the arrays, with a vast group of cultivators following behind him.

"Here we have a trap array. If any Fellow Daoist can't get rid of the enemy, you can come here to save your life," Lu Ye pointed to a place below and explained, and everyone silently took note.

"This area is filled with explosion magic arrays, controlled by me and Fellow Daoist Xie. Do not linger in this place, especially when being pursued by the enemy. Fellow Daoist Xie and I will activate the arrays at the appropriate time to help you kill the enemy."

"Here is the Lightning Attracting Array..."

"Over there is the Great Delusion Array..."

As Lu Ye continued to explain, the arrangement of the entire area's arrays unfolded one by one in the minds of many cultivators. Cultivators all have powerful memories, and with what they saw, they were soon able to sketch out a planning map of the array arrangements in their minds.

Zhou Yuntian's eyes sparkled as he listened on the side. He had participated in two operations against the Berserk Giant Ape before. Previously, the arrays had been set up by Xie Yunhan, but Xie Yunhan's array setups were nowhere near as comprehensive as this. They didn't provide much help to Fox Fairy Valley either.

But the various arrays set up by Lu Ye, while not necessarily intricate, were at least diverse. This gave him some added confidence in the upcoming mission.

Moreover, Lu Ye had them familiarize with the array layouts before the action, clearly considering their welfare, hoping it might indeed save lives when the time came.

An hour later, the crowd returned. Zhou Yuntian came forward, cupped his fists, and said, "Venerable One, we are ready."

A cold, murderous gleam flashed in the fox demon's seductive and misty eyes, "Move out. No matter the cost, we must kill it this time!"

"We will not disappoint you, Venerable One!" the cultivators replied in unison, their will to fight flaring up.

Lu Ye sighed inwardly. No matter whether they succeeded or not this time, these cultivators were destined to suffer heavy casualties, entranced by the fox demon, whose commands were an inviolable mission to them. Even if the fox demon ordered them to die at this moment, they would not even frown.

More than a dozen figures walked out of the crowd and under Zhou Yuntian's lead, they rose into the air and dashed in a certain direction, obviously going to lure the snake out of its hole.

This place was considered the edge of the Overlord-class demon beast's territory, so there were no traces of other demon beasts, and thus their flight didn't risk any demon beast attacks.

The others lay in wait silently.

Time kept passing.

Until a certain moment, Yu Daiwei, who had been standing beside the fox demon the whole time, spoke up after checking the battlefield marking transmission, "Venerable One, Fellow Daoist Zhou and the others have lured it out!"

Chapter 587 Berserk Giant Ape

"Very well!" the Fox Demon exclaimed with a shocked expression, "Get ready to make a move!"

At the command, all the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley silently stimulated their spirit force, readying themselves for battle.

"Roar!" A roar suddenly erupted from the depths of the wilderness, startling countless birds into flight. Although the roar came from at least twenty or thirty miles away, it still carried an overwhelming oppressive force when it reached here.

This is the might of an Overlord-class demon beast!

Some moments later, several streaks of light caught everyone's eyes. It was Zhou Yuntian and the others who had left earlier.

They had departed with more than a dozen people, but only seven returned, the whereabouts of the others could be easily imagined.

A tall figure moved erratically behind them, chasing them like a boneborer. This figure could not fly, merely leaping from the ground continuously, yet its speed was incredibly fast, no lesser than Zhou Yuntian and the others who were using weapon control-flying; each landing caused the ground to tremble violently.

The faces of those being chased were filled with panic. They exerted all their effort, pushing their speeds to the limit, yet they still couldn't shake off the pursuer behind them.

Lu Ye utilized all his Ocular Power to see that the dark shadow was none other than a giant ape covered in red fur. It was the Overlord-level demon beast, the Berserk Giant Ape, marked on the ten-part map!

Zhou Yuntian and his group must have done something to it, for at this moment, the Berserk Giant Ape had a ferocious look in its eyes, and its cold murderous intent seemed almost tangible, sending those few fleeing cultivators into an ice cave as ancient and unchanging.

The Berserk Giant Ape leaped high once again, and a large hand suddenly reached out, grabbing a cultivator at the back of the group.

Although Lu Ye was not very familiar with that cultivator, he had seen him a few times in Fox Fairy Valley and knew the man was from Level 8.

Yet at this moment, this Level 8 cultivator from Cloud River, who could be considered strong across the entire Cloud River battlefield, was held in the palm of the Berserk Giant Ape like a small chick.

"Save me!" the man cried out in terror, reaching out for help.

No sooner had his voice fallen than the giant ape squeezed its hand. With a loud burst, the man exploded into a blood rain, leaving no remains.

This scene struck the eyes of the many cultivators waiting there, causing everyone's eyelids to twitch in horror.

Before today's action, the Fox Demon had informed them of the entire mission and objective, but even though all of them were prepared to lay down their lives for the Fox Demon, seeing such a scene chilled their hearts, and an uncontrollable fear spread throughout their bodies.

Many cultivators instinctively took a step back, wondering in their hearts.

Could they really kill such a terrifying existence?

A Level 8 cultivator from Cloud River was squished to death with a single slap. This visual shock melted their previous full confidence like snowflakes under the blazing sun, leaving nothing behind.

Facing such a foe, no one felt safe!

"What are you afraid of? Today, either it dies, or you perish! No one is allowed to retreat!" the Fox Demon's red lips parted as she uttered these chilling, bone-piercing words.

As soon as she spoke, the cultivators stopped retreating, their faces gradually losing the look of panic, replaced by an expression of resolve.

The Psyche Secret Technique planted by the Fox Demon took effect, making her words an irresistible command for the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley.

Someone roared, "For the Venerable One, today we must slay this barghest!"

The crowd was invigorated, "We must slay this barghest!"

For a moment, the fighting spirit soared.

Twenty miles were covered in an instant as Zhou Yuntian and the others fled back in utter disarray, finally escaping with their lives, pursued by the Berserk Giant Ape.

"Make a move!" At the command of the Fox Demon, the scattered cultivators all struck simultaneously. Suddenly, spirit force became chaotic, and the might of many controlled weapons and magic and spells surged towards the Berserk Giant Ape, instantly turning the area where it stood into a vortex of death.

As the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley made their move, the Berserk Giant Ape was just leaping into the air. Amidst the explosive might of numerous controlled weapons and magic and spells, the massive body of the giant ape was blasted directly out of the sky, crashing heavily to the ground.

The ground cracked, and dust billowed.

"Roar!" The giant ape struggled to its feet and bellowed furiously. Visible shockwaves swept forward, uprooting trees nearby as if a tornado had struck.

However, what greeted it was only more attacks from controlled weapons and magic and spells. Multi-colored lights burst forth, rendering the area dazzling and colorful.

Dull thudding sounds echoed. These were the impacts of the continuous attacks bombarding the Berserk Giant Ape. Despite its immense size, about ninety feet tall, under this relentless assault, it staggered back, its body shaking uncontrollably.

Even after several losses, the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley still numbered around eighty. Such a force, gathered together, was terrifying.

Temporarily, they managed to suppress the might of the Berserk Giant Ape.

Seeing this, the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley were overjoyed, and many suddenly realized that this Overlord-level demon beast didn't seem so formidable after all; it wasn't as terrifying as they had imagined, so their attacks grew even more fierce.

Of all the cultivators present, only Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan did not participate in the attack on the Berserk Giant Ape.

The two were responsible for managing the array that had been set up in advance, thus both were controlling Spiritual Artifacts flying in mid-air.

Watching the massive figure being enveloped and forced back by the lights of controlled weapons and magic and spells, Lu Ye then turned his gaze to the Fox Demon standing among the crowd.

The Fox Demon's face showed not the slightest hint of joy; instead, her expression was grave.

This made Lu Ye's heart sink.

The situation was not as optimistic as it seemed. Within Fox Fairy Valley, if anyone understood the strength of the Berserk Giant Ape best, it was the Fox Demon, and her expression undoubtedly revealed something.

Yet, under such circumstances, Lu Ye couldn't think of any way the Berserk Giant Ape could turn defeat into victory. With more than eighty cultivators attacking together, what waves could even an Overlord-class demon beast make?

As he was thinking this, another earth-shaking roar came from the Berserk Giant Ape, seemingly enraged by the attacks, driving this Overlord-class demon beast into a complete fury. This roar was even more formidable than the previous ones, and as the shockwave swept through, even Lu Ye, who was floating in mid-air through weapon control, couldn't help but sway.

Lu Ye looked up ahead, and his eyelids twitched.

In the center of the tumultuous spirit force, wrapped in multicolored lights, a dazzling red glow suddenly expanded like an exploding sun, terrifying Demon Origin swept in all directions, causing a series of exclamations among the cultivators as they inadvertently lost contact with their controlled weapons in that moment.

Clink, clank, clink—a succession of sounds followed as various uniquely shaped controlled weapons fell beside the Berserk Giant Ape, their glow clearly dimmed, devoid of spirit.

This was caused by the impact of the Overlord-class demon beast's Demon Origin.

The next moment, the previously suppressed Berserk Giant Ape suddenly leaped high, breaking through the multiple blockades, its towering and massive figure carrying an indescribable oppressive force as it plummeted towards the densest part of the crowd.

In that instant, Lu Ye's pupils dilated dramatically.

With many controlled weapons and magical interferences now absent, the current state of the Berserk Giant Ape was clear at a glance. To Lu Ye's horror, despite enduring the bombardment of numerous cultivators for several breaths, not a single wound appeared on the Berserk Giant Ape; not even its red fur was damaged. The thick and solid Demon Origin enveloped its body, forming an impenetrable protective barrier as solid as gold.

Lu Ye finally understood why the Fox Demon's expression was so grave.

The power of this Overlord-class demon beast was even greater than he had anticipated.

Under such earlier conditions, even a cultivator who had just advanced to the True Lake Realm wouldn't have emerged unscathed, yet the Berserk Giant Ape was completely unhurt.

While Lu Ye was not clear about its exact strength, such defensive capabilities were undeniably more terrifying than those of some cultivators in the Early Stages of the True Lake Realm.

Without breaking its protective Demon Origin on its surface, they couldn't harm it at all.

Without even the ability to inflict damage, talk less of slaying it?

Lu Ye inwardly felt fortunate—thankfully, he hadn't tampered with the array setup but had exerted his full effort and displayed all his skills; otherwise, this time might have ended very badly.

Amidst exclamations, the Berserk Giant Ape thunderously landed.

The ground trembled, and from the point of impact, cracks spread outward like a spider's web.

Some quick-reacting cultivators had already fled, but a few were too slow to react and only thought of escaping when they saw the Berserk Giant Ape land right before them.

But it was already too late!

The Berserk Giant Ape reached out and grabbed a cultivator nearest to it, and amid the cultivator's terrified and desperate screams, brutally smashed him into the ground.

The despairing scream abruptly ended, leaving behind a gory mark on the ground.

The Berserk Giant Ape then took a few more steps, caught up with another cultivator, and with a strike of its enormous hand, the cultivator couldn't even utter a sound before being smashed into a pulp.

Turning around, it let out short roars from its mouth and, with a speed that no one understood, grabbed the third cultivator and then opened its massive maw to bite down hard.

Blood splattered as the upper half of the cultivator vanished!

The giant ape did not pursue the fleeing cultivators any further. It spat out the upper half of the body it held in its mouth, its jaws stained with fresh blood, and stood proudly, chest thrust out, slapping its chest with both hands.

The thumping sound was dull, like a war hammer beating a war drum, sending tremors that made everyone's eardrums quiver.

And with each slap, it also issued a roaring sound, displaying the might of an Overlord-class demon beast.

In mid-air, Lu Ye's hand flicked the array banner.

The Berserk Giant Ape seemed to sense something, but before it could react, a wild surge of spirit force suddenly welled up around it, followed by dazzling flames shooting up into the sky, turning a vast area into a hell of fire.

A rumbling sound spread in all directions, engulfing the figure of the Berserk Giant Ape in flames.

An explosion magic array!

However, a moment later, the giant figure of the Berserk Giant Ape burst forth from within the flames, its body swirling with Demon Origin and still completely unharmed.

This was an explosion magic array that Lu Ye had set up with Spirit Stones, which allowed the array to accumulate power in advance and unleash a force at least half as powerful again as any explosion array he had set up ordinarily. Yet even so, it was unable to shake the protective Demon Origin of an Overlord-class demon beast.

"Kill it!" the Fox Demon roared.

The alarmed cultivators snapped out of their shock and attacked the Berserk Giant Ape again.

Chapter 588 Besieged

Boom, boom, boom...

Huge roaring sounds continued to spread, accompanied by the chaos of spirit force, and Explosion Magic Arrays were triggered one after another, leaving the Berserk Giant Ape dazed and disoriented.

Seizing this opportunity, the cultivators launched another offensive, with many weapons and magic and spells striking from all directions at the giant ape.

In mid-air, Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan occasionally waved the array banners in their hands, activating the power of the Formation, but there was not a trace of joy on their faces.

Because until this moment, there was no sign that the protective demon origin of the Berserk Giant Ape had been disturbed; without breaking its protective demon origin, it was simply unthinkable to harm it in the slightest.

Crack... a loud noise resounded, and a bolt of lightning struck down from the sky, hitting the crown of the Berserk Giant Ape's head, set off by Lu Ye from a previously laid Lightning Attracting Array.

The lightning serpent traveled along the body of the giant ape and then extinguished, having no effect on it whatsoever.

The attacks of the cultivators and the outburst of the Formation undoubtedly completely enraged the Berserk Giant Ape, which roared and rampaged over a vast area, leaving a trail of blood and carnage wherever it went.

Screams resonated intermittently; within just the duration of one tea session, over ten people had fallen victim, gruesomely slaughtered by the Berserk Giant Ape focusing on them; none survived intact.

The smell of blood permeated the air, with pools of blood and gore marking the ground.

Under normal circumstances, facing such a situation, the correct response for the cultivators would undoubtedly be to scatter and flee, each escaping as far as they could.

But the cultivators from Fox Fairy Valley were all bound by the Psyche Secret Technique instilled by the Fox Demon, so even now, with great losses, under the Fox Demon's orders, not one fled; everyone was desperately stimulating their own spirit force, attacking the Berserk Giant Ape.

This was a battle that allowed no hint of retreat, a battle of survival through a desperate situation.

The figure of the Berserk Giant Ape rose and fell on the battlefield; its methods of attack were simple and brutal to the extreme, consisting merely of grabs, slaps, and squeezes, but even these simple and brutal attacks were too much for all the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley to handle.

The trap array and Great Delusion Array previously set up by Lu Ye played a significant role; some cultivators targeted, remembering his instructions, hurriedly rushed to the location of the Trap Array or Great Delusion Array. As the array operated, the Berserk Giant Ape was trapped within, allowing the cultivators to barely escape calamity.

Even with Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan controlling the formation, they could trap the Berserk Giant Ape for only two or three breaths' time, making Lu Ye truly understand the phrase, 'overpowering force.'

Whether it was the Trap Array or the Great Delusion Array, it could break them easily in its presence.

Time passed, and casualties continued to increase.

Standing at the very edge of the battlefield, the Fox Demon watched with a cold, frosty expression. She was indifferent to the death of the cultivators. Reflected in her eyes, depthless as abysses, was the towering figure of the Berserk Giant Ape, harboring deep-seated, bone-chilling hatred.

Years ago, she was just a typical Fox Demon, following her master into the Great Wilderness Mountain to cultivate, but they accidentally trespassed into the territory of the Berserk Giant Ape, and she watched helplessly as her master was flattened into a pulp by that towering figure.

From that day on, only hatred remained in her heart.

It seemed as if fate was on her side, or perhaps the seeds of hatred sprouted in her heart; unexpectedly, her bloodline began to awaken, endowing her with powers beyond the expected scope of the Cloud River Realm, giving a slight possibility for her vengeance to succeed.

Over the years, leveraging her unique abilities, she continually gathered cultivators venturing deep into the Great Wilderness Mountain, expanding her forces, seeking revenge on the Berserk Giant Ape repeatedly, only to return disappointed each time.

This time was the strongest her forces had ever been, additionally aided by a highly skilled Array Cultivator, hence it held the greatest hope.

Missing this opportunity, there likely wouldn't be another.

Xie Yunhan told Lu Ye that the Fox Demon also wanted to accumulate enough power to take revenge on the Berserk Giant Ape, but it was difficult to recruit newcomers, so the strength of Fox Fairy Valley never grew.

But that wasn't entirely true.

The Fox Demon indeed had the ability to manipulate minds, but such ability had its limits. With over eighty cultivators in Fox Fairy Valley, she had nearly reached her limit; she could enslave no more cultivators.

It wasn't that she didn't want to gather enough power, but that she couldn't.

Moreover, for every additional cultivator she enslaved, an intangible sense of crisis grew within her heart; over the years, that sense of crisis had almost solidified.

She knew that was the attention of Heaven's Augury because she possessed powers that should not belong to someone of the Cloud River Realm level, and she had used them to enslave human race cultivators.

To the inherently fair Heaven's Augury, this was unacceptable.

Once that sense of crisis accumulated to a certain level, she would inevitably face punishment from Heaven's Augury.

This time was her last chance—if she couldn't succeed now, there would be no more opportunities.

She had to succeed no matter what!

What reassured her was that the newly arrived Array Cultivator indeed had exceptional proficiency in the Array Path; Formation after Formation erupted, continually weakening the power of the Berserk Giant Ape, and many valley cultivators escaped calamity with his help. It could be said that without the Arrays set up by Lu Ye, the side of Fox Fairy Valley would have already been utterly defeated.

Boom, boom, boom...

The loud noises continued, and Lu Ye's expression was grave.

He and Xie Yunhan had spent three days setting up hundreds of Formations in this area, yet barely one incense stick's time into the battle, half of the Formations were already depleted. Observing the Berserk Giant Ape, it remained completely unscathed, its protective demon origin solidified; in contrast, over twenty individuals from the Fox Fairy Valley side had perished, and although the rest hadn't retreated and were still striking with all their might, the effect was minimal.

Could they really win this battle?

A sliver of doubt inevitably arose in Lu Ye's mind, as, so far, he had not seen any sign of hope for victory.

Stealing a moment amid the chaos, he glanced toward the Fox Demon.

Only one person was next to the Fox Demon—Li Baxian!

Lu Ye didn't know why the Fox Demon insisted on keeping Li Baxian by her side, perhaps it was due to Zhou Yuntian's much praise of Li Baxian, which made the Fox Demon value him more.

If this operation failed, Li Baxian could undoubtedly become the most anticipated pawn under the Fox Demon's command. Perhaps for this reason, the Fox Demon had Li Baxian stay safely by her side, not participating in the battle.

However, this scenario was actually to Lu Ye's pleasure.

His fourth senior brother only had the cultivation of Level 5 realm. Although his foundation was robust and his strength was comparable to a typical Level 7, on such a battlefield, not to mention Level 7, even at Levels 8-9 one might be killed instantly.

Fifteen cultivators from the valley, all at Level 9, three had already died, including one physique cultivator known for his formidable body!

Lu Ye witnessed with his own eyes how the physique cultivator burst like a bubble under the palm of the Berserk Giant Ape.

In front of the absolute difference in strength, whether it was physique cultivators or combat cultivators, there was no difference—all could be ended with a slap.

The number of Formations continued to decrease, and the casualties among the valley's cultivators continued to rise, yet under the Fox Demon's command, all cultivators did not slow their assault on the Berserk Giant Ape. The relentless, uninterrupted attacks had been ongoing since the battle began, bombarding the body of the giant ape with resounding impacts.

Another cultivator screamed in agony as he was crushed by the giant ape, leaving the remaining survivors covered in dust. Since the battle began, in just one hour, out of over eighty individuals, only fifty remained, and the Formations set up by Lu Ye had dwindled to fewer than ten.

In the midst of his heavy heart, the Berserk Giant Ape suddenly let out an enraged roar, leapt high from the spot, and lunged towards the outskirts of the battlefield.

This scene brightened Lu Ye's eyes!

In the previous battles, the Berserk Giant Ape also jumped around, but each leap had been into the densest clumps of people. However, this time was different—the stance of the giant ape seemed to indicate it was trying to break free from the battlefield.

While it was displaying its formidable power, such peculiar behavior led Lu Ye to speculate.

This guy...must be reaching its limit!

Not to mention, out of the nearly a hundred Formations, eighty percent were killing arrays. One or two Formations might not pose a great threat, but over a prolonged period, even if it didn't injure it, it would surely exhaust it enormously.

Not to mention, the valley's cultivators had been continuously besieging it from the start.

So even though this Overlord-class demon beast might still appear mighty, it was probably nearing the end of its strength.

If Lu Ye could think of this, the Fox Demon, who had been keeping an eye on the giant ape, would undoubtedly consider it too. Seeing the giant ape attempting to leave the battlefield, she immediately shrieked, "Stop it! Don't let it escape!"

Throughout the years of repeated assaults on the giant ape, every attempt had ended in utter defeat, with not a single instance of the giant ape actively attempting to leave the battlefield before.

This was the first time!

And it was also the closest they had come to success!

Therefore, they absolutely could not permit it to flee, otherwise all their previous efforts would be in vain.

At the Fox Demon's command, several cultivators courageously took to the air, flying towards the giant ape and attacking in an attempt to bring it down.

However, with a mere swing of its hand, the cultivator closest to it burst into a mist of blood, the attacks of others hitting the giant ape having no effect whatsoever, akin to a giant ant shaking a tree.

The Fox Demon watched with mounting anxiety.

Just then, as the giant ape reached the highest point of its leap, Lu Ye suddenly swung an array banner in his hand.

On the ground below, intricate patterns lit up with dazzling light, followed swiftly by an invisible pressure descending from the sky.

The few cultivators flying mid-air, preparing to intercept the giant ape, immediately felt as though a mountain was pressing down on them; they screamed and tumbled from the sky.

The giant ape, too, experienced the same but fell at a speed even faster than the cultivators. As it fell, its face unexpectedly showed a bewildered human-like expression, clearly oblivious to what had just occurred.

Sky Prohibition!

Once, in the spirit ground, Lu Ye had activated the Great Sky Prohibition Array, catching Xia Liang and others off guard. Now, facing an Overlord-class demon beast, he naturally included the Great Sky Prohibition Array.

He hadn't known whether this Overlord-class demon beast could fly, setting up the Formation just in case, but little did he expect it to have such a remarkable effect at this moment.

Chapter 589 Dead End

Boom...

The Berserk Giant Ape landed awkwardly, its massive body sending dust flying upon impact.

What surprised everyone happened next, as it landed, the solid protective demon origin on its body suddenly shook violently!

Previously, whether it was the power of the Formation or the attacks from the cultivators, none could even cause a tremor to its protective demon origin. Now, a simple fall from midair caused such an intense shake, which was clearly abnormal.

It was almost reaching its limit!

That thought popped up in the minds of all the cultivators witnessing this scene.

"Kill!" A roar erupted, sending an even more ferocious and denser wave of attacks towards the place where the giant ape had fallen.

The already unstable protective demon origin began to tremble even more violently.

The Berserk Giant Ape struggled to its feet, bellowing furiously, its roar sweeping through the air. The cultivators who were close by immediately felt their eardrums ache as blood trickled out of their ears, but they didn't retreat a single step, instead frantically stimulating their spirit force to strike at the giant ape.

The giant ape leapt up again, but under the Great Sky Prohibition Array, the higher it was from the ground, the greater the pressure it faced. For an Overlord-class demon beast, leaping hundreds of feet was usually not a problem, but this time it barely managed to jump less than thirty feet before losing strength, and under the pressure of the Great Sky Prohibition Array, it rapidly fell back to the ground.

It seemed to realize that something was wrong and no longer made futile efforts, but instead charged in one direction, obviously attempting to forcibly break through.

"Don't let it escape!" the Fox Demon shouted angrily.

Immediately, more than a dozen cultivators dashed out, blocking the direction in which the giant ape was trying to break through, with several broad and burly physique cultivators wielding spirit artifact big shields at the forefront.

Despite the fierce bombardment of magic and weapon control, they couldn't stop the giant ape from breaking through. As it drew near, the physique cultivators roared, bracing their big shields in front, their blood Qi surging as they stubbornly withstood the charge.

The giant ape swiped with its hand, and the cultivator at the very front let out a muffled grunt, getting swept away in an instant, bleeding non-stop from the mouth while still in mid-air and fainting upon landing.

Then came the second physique cultivator, the third...

Wherever the giant ape went, it swept through the cultivators like autumn leaves before the wind, with none able to withstand its might.

Just as the giant ape seemed about to break free, a fierce burst of fire suddenly exploded, with deafening booms shattering the air. The surging flames enveloped the giant ape.

The few remaining explosion magic arrays released their final splendid light.

The next moment, the towering figure of the giant ape tore through the flames, charging out. However, before it could go far, another big array was triggered, and a transparent dome-like barrier instantly enveloped it. The giant ape crashed into the barrier, causing ripples to spread across it, but it did not break. Instead, the barrier bounced the giant ape back a few steps.

Trap array!

This was originally meant to protect the lives of the Fox Fairy Valley cultivators, but unexpectedly, it played an unforeseen role at this moment.

The giant ape roared in anger, its huge palms turning into fists, pounding the barrier of the trap array. With just a few simple punches, the barrier shattered with a loud crash.

But that brief delay allowed the surviving cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley to complete their encirclement of it.

As the barrier shattered, attacks from all directions arrived as anticipated. Multicolored lights swallowed the giant ape.

Anguished roars emerged from the center of the chaotic spirit force, vaguely accompanied by the sound of something breaking.

It took a full 5 breaths for the giant ape to charge out of the intense barrage.

But its current state caused a surge of excitement in all the Fox Fairy Valley cultivators.

The once impenetrable protective demon origin that shrouded it was now completely gone. Its red fur was mostly damaged, and not just that, its body was covered with numerous wounds, dripping with fresh blood!

"Good!" The Fox Demon, who had been closely watching the scene, showed a burst of joy on her face. Master, do you see it? The years of persistence and waiting have finally paid off. Today, Xian'er can avenge you.

With the giant ape's protective demon origin broken, the once mighty Overlord-class demon beast now looked utterly disheveled. As the Fox Fairy Valley cultivators sensed victory was within reach, their attacks grew even more fierce.

The giant ape roared and bellowed, raising its arms in front of it, but it was still unable to stop the barrage of magic and weapon control, accumulating more and more wounds on its body.

Had it been any ordinary demon beast, being without the protective demon origin under such a dense barrage would have likely left it with no bones intact, but an Overlord-class demon beast is, after all, an Overlord-class demon beast, with an unbelievably strong body. Although its wounds were numerous, they were all superficial.

It had lost the imposing grandeur it had upon its arrival, and it sensed the direness of its situation. The one that was supposed to be invincible in the Cloud River battlefield sensed the breath of death.

This caused its mind to panic.

Instinctively, it tried to break through in one direction, but after just a few steps, it was bombarded back by the violent attacks of the cultivators on that side. When it changed to another direction, the result was the same.

Although the Fox Fairy Valley had lost many cultivators, about fifty still remained, and they naturally had the upper hand against an Overlord-class demon beast with exhausted demonic power.

Without any unexpected developments, the Berserk Giant Ape would soon be overwhelmed and killed by the group of cultivators!

...

Killing an Overlord-class demon beast, an outcome that previously, no one even dared to contemplate, was now within easy reach. Under such circumstances, even without the command of the Fox Demon, the cultivators in the valley spared no effort.

However, just then, the Berserk Giant Ape suddenly roared and opened its mouth, from which a dazzling earthy-yellow light burst forth.

The halo transformed into a straight line, charging forward, rendering all magic and spells and spiritual artifacts in its path faint and lackluster, tearing through everything as easily as pulling rotten wood.

The first physique cultivator caught in its path stood frozen in place. Only when the earthy-yellow light disappeared from his field of vision did he blankly lower his head to look at his chest.

What he saw made his eyelids shrink.

There was a bowl-sized hole in his chest that he couldn't recall forming, one that pierced straight through him. As his sight darkened, he collapsed to the ground.

As if a chain reaction had been triggered, following the collapse of the first physique cultivator, seven or eight cultivators who were in that direction all fell to the ground, each with a bowl-sized hole in their bodies, their vitality weak.

Most people didn't know what had happened.

Hovering in mid-air, Lu Ye, who was always vigilant of the battlefield's dynamics, saw everything clearly. That earthy-yellow light was unmistakably the color of a demonic pill, and just now, the Berserk Giant Ape had actually sacrificed its own demonic pill.

He had heard of demon beasts attacking by sacrificing their demonic pills when cornered, but not every demon beast possessed such an ability. After all, the demonic pill was the crystallization of a demon beast's entire strength. Once it left the body, at the very least, their vital energy would be greatly damaged, if not immediate death, so even if some demon beasts were capable, they would not dare to do so unless it was absolutely necessary.

The Berserk Giant Ape's decision to sacrifice its demonic pill at this moment clearly indicated it was making a desperate final attempt after being driven into a corner.

The result was the death of the seven or eight cultivators in the path of the demonic pill's attack!

This scene left Lu Ye feeling a chill envelop his entire body.

Battling an Overlord-class demon beast truly leaves no room for carelessness. Despite appearing to be at the end of its strength, it still possessed such a terrifying method.

He felt fortunate that his role within Fox Fairy Valley was that of an array cultivator and not required to participate in this slaughter. Otherwise, he very well might have been among the dead cultivators.

There really was no avoiding this simply by being careful and cautious; those who survived were not necessarily stronger but luckier.

The originally impenetrable encirclement around the ape had been tight, no matter which direction the Berserk Giant Ape tried to break through, it could have been pushed back by the cultivators. But with the strike from the demonic pill, a gap had now appeared in the circle.

Almost the instant the earthy-yellow light faded, the Berserk Giant Ape broke through the front and fled towards the distance, reabsorbing its demonic pill halfway through its escape.

The surviving cultivators, clearly shaken by that single strike, failed to stop it in time.

"What are you dawdling for?" the Fox Demon yelled, her face, which should have been extraordinarily beautiful, now twisted and ferocious, spewing extremely vicious words, "If it escapes today, all of you will die!"

Upon these words, the cultivators' faces changed dramatically.

Zhou Yuntian, covered in blood, raised his arm and called out, "Chase!"

Immediately taking to the air, he led the way toward the direction of the giant ape's escape, with the surviving cultivators closely following.

The giant ape first had its demonic power drained from the beating, and then, out of desperation, launched an attack with its demonic pill, which left it severely weakened. Now, despite having escaped the range of the Great Sky Prohibition Array and unable to fly, its speed was not fast. Within moments, the group of cultivators caught up with the giant ape.

The battle resumed, but this time the cultivators completely gained the upper hand.

The Fox Demon followed suit, as taking revenge with one's own hands made it all the more meaningful.

Xie Yunhan gave Lu Ye a shout and flew towards the scene.

Lu Ye lagged a bit behind, and while everyone was distracted, he raised his hand and pressed the battlefield marking, sending a message out.

By the time Lu Ye arrived at the battlefield, the situation had already become clear.

The Berserk Giant Ape was putting up a resistance but its Demon Origin was depleted, and the attack from its sacrificed demonic pill had greatly impaired its vital energy. Now, its body was covered in wounds, and its strength was less than half of what it was at its peak.

Although the number of cultivators from Fox Fairy Valley had been reduced by more than half, there were still nearly forty people left. Without the ability to fly, how could the giant ape stand a chance?

Time passed, and the giant ape grew weaker and weaker, its wounds increasingly severe, the blood flowing from its body dyeing the ground beneath it red.

Until a certain moment, it couldn't hold on any longer and its towering body crashed to the ground.

It wasn't dead, but it had lost the strength to continue fighting.

The surviving cultivators surrounded it tightly, without cheers or excitement, feeling only a deep reverence. The toll of today's battle had been far too grievous.

The Fox Demon parted the crowd and walked forward with a seductive gait, the hatred in her eyes solidifying.

"Be cautious, Venerable One!" Zhou Yuntian warned in a low voice, following closely beside the Fox Demon with several other cultivators.

The Fox Demon took to the air, stood a few meters above the giant ape, looking down coldly but her eyes filled with satisfaction, "You too have met your day!"

Chapter 590 Backstab

The giant ape lay quietly on the ground, gasping for air, its eyes dull and lifeless.

"Seal its limbs!" the Fox Demon ordered through gritted teeth.

Immediately, numerous cultivators rushed forth, wielding Spiritual Artifacts, and fiercely stabbed into the limbs of the giant ape, nailing it firmly to the ground.

Blood splattered everywhere. A pained expression appeared on the giant ape's face as it instinctively struggled, but to no avail.

It had completely exhausted its strength.

The Fox Demon reached out and snatched a longsword from a cultivator's hand. She gracefully descended, standing on the chest of the giant ape with one leg bent, her bosom largely exposed. However, none of the cultivators dared to admire this rare beauty at such a moment.

"Do you still recognize me?" the Fox Demon's eyes were filled with satisfaction as chilling words burst from her mouth, "I told you that one day you would die by my hand, and I have waited eighteen years for this day! Eighteen years!"

A mixed expression of laughter and tears appeared on her face.

Eighteen years of waiting, time and again of failures, and a heart full of hatred was finally unleashed at this moment.

She gripped the sword hilt with both hands, aimed at the chest of the giant ape, raised it high, and gritted her teeth, shouting, "Die!"

The longsword plunged down forcefully, a soft 'pfft' sound followed by blood flying, the sword burying itself up to the hilt.

Struck so heavily, a hint of clarity flashed through the dull eyes of the giant ape. A roar emerged from its mouth, and unexpectedly, one of its arms, which should have been immobilized on the ground, suddenly lifted, sweeping toward the Fox Demon amidst the exclaimed shock of the cultivators.

The Fox Demon's complexion changed, having never expected that her foe, even in such a state, still had the strength to counterattack, let alone the ability to break free from restraints.

Her reaction was quick, drifting backward almost instantly as the giant ape raised its hand. Yet, she was still affected by the giant ape's violent strike.

Her tall and graceful body tumbled through the air like a drifting fallen leaf.

"Venerable One!" the cultivators exclaimed in shock.

The Fox Demon landed awkwardly, coughing up a mist of blood, her complexion turning instantly pale, her aura fluctuating wildly.

Merely grazed by the giant ape's strike, she was severely injured. Had her reaction not been swift enough moments earlier, she might have already died.

"Kill it!" the Fox Demon roared vengefully.

The cultivators obeyed, launching a myriad of attacks upon the giant ape, but it no longer responded.

The strike that had targeted the Fox Demon was its final act in life.

The heavily injured Zhou Yuntian rushed to the Fox Demon's side, asking anxiously and concernedly, "Venerable One, how severe are your injuries?"

The Fox Demon slowly shook her head. Zhou Yuntian quickly retrieved a healing pill from his storage sack and offered it up. Without any hesitation, the Fox Demon took it and swallowed.

Moments later, the pale-faced Yu Daiwei approached, holding a yellowish demonic pill, and reported, "Venerable One, the giant ape has died!"

The Fox Demon opened her eyes, looked at the demonic pill in front of her, nodded slightly, her expression calm yet slightly bewildered.

For eighteen years, she had lived every day amidst hatred. Now that her great revenge had been achieved, she felt pleased, yet inexplicably empty, as if suddenly without a purpose in life.

She looked up at the many cultivators under her command, almost everyone injured, all in disheveled states.

She raised her hand to pick up the Overlord-class demonic pill, and said, "In today's battle, you all performed well, especially Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan. The killing of this barghest was mainly thanks to you two. Once we return to the valley, there will be a reward for you."

Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan promptly bowed and expressed their thanks.

"Regroup here, and we return to the valley after six hours!"

"Yes!" the cultivators responded.

After the battle, everyone relaxed their tense moods, each seeking a place to recuperate and meditate. As for guarding, it was unnecessary, as this area was part of the territory controlled by the Overlord-class demon beast, and other demon beasts dared not trespass ordinarily.

However, out of more than eighty people who had come, less than half were left alive now. Even among this half, many were severely injured.

It should be noted that this was after Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan had set up over a hundred Formations in advance to assist, and the cultivators, under the control of the Fox Demon, fought desperately with no one retreating, and the cultivators from the Fox Fairy Valley generally had high cultivation.

Without the cultivators forming groups to besiege the Berserk Giant Ape, it would have been impossible to succeed with fewer than two to three hundred people.

The terror of an Overlord-class demon beast was evident.

Among all the cultivators, only three were unharmed: Li Baxian, who stayed close to the Fox Demon, Lu Ye, and Xie Yunhan, who were in charge of the Formations.

While the cultivators meditated and recuperated, the Fox Demon also healed her injuries.

Lu Ye said, "Fellow Daoist Xie, you should rest as well. I will set up some alarm arrays."

Xie Yunhan nodded, "Thank you, Brother Lu."

Lu Ye walked to a nearby spot, started setting up the Formations, and placed his hand on the battlefield marking, sending out a message. Soon, a response came back. Lu Ye checked it, a spark of sharpness flashing in his eyes.

A moment later, he quietly returned and sat down cross-legged not far from the Fox Demon, stuffing several elixir pills into his mouth and silently refining them.

Time passed.

At a certain point, the tranquil forest suddenly echoed with rustling noises. As cultivators all have exceptional hearing, those who were meditating and recuperating opened their eyes upon hearing these sounds. However, before they could understand what was happening, huge wolves with silvery-white fur suddenly filled their vision.

The wolves surged from all directions, encircling everyone so tightly that there was no escape.

The next moment, as if by agreement, about six or seven giant wolves targeted each cultivator and launched an attack.

"Enemy attack!" A shout of alarm and fury broke the silence, and many cultivators stood up, immediately clashing with the incoming demon wolves.

Zhou Yuntian shouted, "Protect the Venerable One!"

While shouting, he ran towards the Fox Demon. However, after only a few steps, several demon wolves that had burst forth entangled him.

Somewhere in the crowd, Li Baxian looked on in shock at the familiar scene of demon wolves dashing about the battlefield. An uneasy thought surfaced in his mind, but before he could figure it out, a figure descended from the sky, landing in front of him.

Li Baxian's face changed, "Yuechan?"

He never expected Feng Yuechan to appear before him like this.

"Senior brother!" Feng Yuechan stared intently into Li Baxian's eyes. Although she couldn't see anything unusual from his expression, with all that had been relayed by Lu Ye before, how could she not know that her senior brother had been enthralled by the Fox Demon? His appearance showed no signs of abnormality.

"How could you..." Li Baxian stopped mid-sentence, suddenly realizing something, and quickly turned his head to look towards where the Fox Demon was.

The scene that met his eyes filled him with dread.

Unbeknownst to him, Lu Ye had reached the side of the Fox Demon, adopting a guise of loyal protection. Yet, as everyone's attention was drawn by the suddenly appearing wolf pack, he suddenly set his longsword ablaze. With the rapidity of lightning that allows no covering of ears, he thrust straight at the back of the Fox Demon.

With a soft 'puchi' sound, the Boulder Mountain Saber pierced through the Fox Demon's back, emerging from her chest.

The eyes of the Fox Demon widened instantly, and the other cultivators guarding her felt a chill run through them.

No one expected Lu Ye to suddenly strike a deadly blow against the Fox Demon!

A faint ghostly light flashed on the Boulder Mountain Saber, augmented by Cactus Spirit Runes.

Undoubtedly, the Fox Demon herself was very powerful. From her previous action of killing the giant ape with one sword strike, it was clear that her strength was comparable to someone at Cloud River Level 9. With such cultivation, Lu Ye couldn't possibly be her opponent in a direct confrontation.

However, she had been previously injured by the giant ape, and her attention was currently distracted by the unexpected appearance of the wolf pack. Moreover, she had never anticipated that her own followers would strike a deadly blow, and hence, she was completely unprepared.

The Fox Demon was stabbed through the body, her already painful expression twisted further. The sudden eruption from the Cactus Spirit Runes made her scream miserably, spewing a mist of blood from her mouth, with fragments of her internal organs faintly visible.

"Lu Ye!" A roar filled with anger sounded as the cultivators at the Fox Demon's side finally reacted, launching their attacks toward Lu Ye.

However, Lu Ye had anticipated this situation when he made his move. As his blade struck, he drew it back, splashing blood from the Fox Demon's body, and layers of Defense Spirit Runes appeared in front of him.

Boom, boom, boom...

The massive impact sent Lu Ye flying backward, landing hard on the ground as he saw those cultivators, carrying boundless murderous intent, rushing towards him.

A moment ago, he was still a highly praised hero in Fox Fairy Valley, earning the envy of all other cultivators. Now, he had become their most hated enemy.

For the cultivators of the valley, the Fox Demon was their heaven, and Lu Ye's sudden betrayal was utterly intolerable.

Standing in place, Lu Ye didn't move an inch, watching as the cultivators nearly pounced on him. From behind, a wolf's howl echoed as demon wolves the size of calves surged forward, clashing with those cultivators immediately.

Separated by a dozen yards, the Fox Demon and Lu Ye's gazes collided. Her beautiful eyes trembled, brimming with disbelief, "You... how could you?"

Even now, she couldn't accept that one of her own cultivators had suddenly stabbed her.

Meanwhile, Li Baxian, seeing the Fox Demon injured, moved to protect her. However, as Feng Yuechan mobilized her spirit force, a giant Cloud Giant, several meters tall, appeared before Li Baxian, blocking him.

Her heart filled with deep sorrow, she could not bring herself to persuade Li Baxian. She knew that to break the Psyche Secret Technique, Lu Ye had to kill the Fox Demon, and her only task now was to keep Li Baxian away from Lu Ye.

Boom, boom, boom...

As if a war hammer struck, the ground trembled. From one direction, a towering figure rapidly approached the Fox Demon. Upon nearing, he threw a punch that created a sound of breaking the air, attesting to its terrifying force.

It was the Giant Armor attacking!

Given the state of the Fox Demon, if this punch were to land, even her strength, comparable to Cloud River Level 9, wouldn't save her from certain death.

As she floated backward, her eyes shone with a demonic glint, reflecting the towering form of the Giant Armor.

A peculiar surge of power fluctuated and burst forth.

As Lu Ye charged towards the Fox Demon, feeling this peculiar power, a sudden unease sprouted in his heart.