

Humanity 591

Chapter 591 Battle Giant Armor

Looking up, he saw the Giant Armor maintaining the posture of throwing a punch, his face showing a violent struggle; in just an instant, he had positioned himself in front of the Fox Demon, and threw a punch at the incoming Lu Ye.

Lu Ye leapt aside, dodging the strike, his heart filled with unparalleled horror!

In just a short encounter, the Giant Armor had already had his psyche enslaved by the Fox Demon!

What kind of heaven-defying method was this?

How exactly did the Fox Demon enslave someone's mind? Lu Ye did not know, merely guessing it was an innate ability she was born with, but according to the information Lu Ye had, even if the Fox Demon wanted to achieve that, she needed direct contact with the person.

When he pretended to be unconscious and was taken back to Fox Fairy Valley, the Fox Demon had touched his forehead and then cast a secret technique.

He had never imagined that, without direct contact, the Fox Demon could also cast this secret technique through the air.

Moreover, the Giant Armor had once followed him deep into the Soul Cleansing Pool, undergoing a psyche purification in the pool. Though the benefits he received were not as significant as Lu Ye's, his psyche was still much sturdier compared to other cultivators of the same level. Despite that, he had been enslaved by her with a single glance; the power of the Fox Demon's innate divine ability far exceeded Lu Ye's imagination.

Having an ally he thought he could rely on suddenly turn against him truly caught Lu Ye off guard.

What puzzled Lu Ye even more was how the Fox Demon survived after being struck by his saber.

His strike had targeted the heart of the Fox Demon, piercing her body while also being reinforced by the Cactus Spirit Runes; there was no reason for the Fox Demon to still be alive.

Yet, despite the Fox Demon's weakened state, as fragile as a candle in the wind, she refused to die!

With a punch that forced Lu Ye back, the Giant Armor quickly turned, scooped up the continuously bleeding Fox Demon, jumped up, and flew towards the depths of the Great Wilderness Mountain.

This is bad!

If the Giant Armor managed to take the Fox Demon away, all of today's planning would be for naught.

He had waited in Fox Fairy Valley for such a long time, finally, catching a good opportunity today; the chance of another such moment was absolutely impossible.

Moreover, he had already exposed himself today. If he allowed the Giant Armor to take the Fox Demon away, he might never find them again!

While Lu Ye was thinking this, a slender figure suddenly appeared in front of the Giant Armor, startlingly it was Yiyi lurking nearby.

At that moment, Yiyi charged towards the Giant Armor, her hands casting several magic and spells. The Giant Armor, undaunted by the assault, sturdily met the stars set off by the spells with one arm holding the severely injured Fox Demon and with the other, smashed his fist ruthlessly towards Yiyi without any mercy.

Lu Ye's heart tightened as he watched.

But just then, the Nine Arrays Diagram appeared in Yiyi's hand, enlarging in the wind and transforming into a large curtain covering the sky, aiming straight for the Giant Armor.

Caught off guard, the Giant Armor's punch hit the diagram, as if striking an invisible space, swallowing his entire arm.

The Giant Armor tried to retreat, but Lu Ye had already charged forward, fiercely kicking his back as if he were kicking steel, producing a dull sound, and directly kicking him into the Nine Arrays Diagram.

In that diagram, an environment filled with chaotic rocks soon had two additional figures.

"Well done!" Lu Ye praised loudly, following closely behind the Giant Armor and plunging into the Nine Arrays Diagram.

Inside the Nine Arrays Diagram, the dark sky was like a thick layer of cotton, oppressively heavy, making it hard to breathe, with strange whirlpools slowly rotating in the sky, giving the whole space an extremely uncomfortable feeling.

This was clearly not a real world; this was merely a space within the Nine Arrays Diagram.

The Giant Armor still held the Fox Demon, standing quietly under a stone pillar, glaring fiercely at Lu Ye who had chased him in; his expression was strangely unfamiliar to Lu Ye.

The Fox Demon was still bleeding, panic like never before evident on her face. More shocking to her than her tragic situation was the unexpected betrayal by Lu Ye.

She had never imagined that a cultivator under her command could one day betray her, inflicting such great pain on her.

They stood about dozens of meters apart, neither the Giant Armor nor Lu Ye moved.

Although the Giant Armor's cultivation was on par with his, no one probably knew the strength of the Giant Armor's body better than Lu Ye.

If it really came down to a fight to the death, he could certainly defeat the Giant Armor, but he himself would not get off lightly.

But now that the Giant Armor had his psyche enslaved, without settling him, it would be impossible to cause any harm to the Fox Demon, indeed a headache.

"Just who are you!" the Fox Demon spat, bearing her teeth.

Lu Ye gave her a calm look, his gaze as serene as if he was looking at a dead person.

Once inside the Nine Arrays Diagram, the Fox Demon was undoubtedly doomed. Now, what he needed to consider was how to get past the Giant Armor to kill the Fox Demon.

"You have never been affected by my secret technique, have you?" the Fox Demon asked again; at this point, she had finally understood some things.

Today's events were definitely not coincidental, but had been meticulously planned by Lu Ye. Taking advantage of the moment Fox Fairy Valley was weakened and mentally relaxed after the battle with the Berserk Giant Ape, he had suddenly attacked, truly catching her off guard.

Just then, Yiyi's voice suddenly entered Lu Ye's ears: "Lu Ye, do you want me to send some demon wolves in to help?"

"No way!" Lu Ye hastily refused.

If he hadn't known that the Fox Demon could enslave minds from afar, it might have been okay, but now that he knew, he absolutely couldn't let any other person or demon beast enter the Nine Arrays Diagram. Otherwise, far from helping, it would only make the situation worse.

Even the Giant Armor couldn't block the Fox Demon's secret technique, let alone those demon wolves. If they were really sent in, they would only end up aiding the Fox Demon.

So in today's battle, only he himself would fight!

Apart from Yiyi, he could not rely on any outside help.

"Play it by ear!" Lu Ye muttered softly, slightly bending his figure as he held the Boulder Mountain Saber vertically in front of him, fixing his gaze on the Giant Armor, and adopted an offensive stance.

In the next instant, the dust beneath his feet billowed up, and with the Move-Like-The-Wind augmentation, he surged forward like thunder and lightning, pouncing towards Giant Armor. In the blink of an eye, he was in front of the Giant Armor, the long saber wreathed in flames harshly chopping down directly at the Fox Demon in the Giant Armor's embrace.

The Giant Armor raised its right arm, and a flash of mystic light bloomed on that arm, forming a shield.

The long saber struck down, making a loud clang, and the rebounding force slightly pushed Lu Ye back, but the mystic light shield on the Giant Armor's arm merely trembled slightly.

In the next instant, the Boulder Mountain Saber fell again, showing no mercy, still aiming for the Fox Demon.

The Fox Demon's pupils constricted. During Lu Ye's days in Fox Fairy Valley, he had always been positioned only as an array cultivator. The Fox Demon's greatest recognition of him was his profound accomplishments in the Array Path; the many formations he directed and set up in Fox Fairy Valley had played a significant role in successfully slaying the Berserk Giant Ape.

But the Fox Demon had never imagined that this array cultivator she valued so greatly could burst forth with such strength!

Lu Ye was only at Level 4 in his cultivation, but his strength already seemed not far behind those at Level 6-7 in the valley.

What surprised her even more was the performance of the Giant Armor.

Enslaving the Giant Armor was just an act of desperation. She had never expected that this robust man, who had the same level of cultivation as Lu Ye and whom she was seeing for the first time, would also perform exceedingly well.

These two people... where did these monsters pop up from?

Had she actually enslaved an incredibly formidable fellow?

While the Fox Demon's psyche wavered, Lu Ye and the Giant Armor had already exchanged more than ten blows. With each slash Lu Ye delivered, he did so with full force, holding nothing back. Every strike he made was completely blocked by the Giant Armor.

Although he knew well that the Giant Armor's physique was strong and its defenses were outstanding, it was only by personally fighting against it that he could truly appreciate the terrifying strength of its defense.

Although the Giant Armor remained unharmed, it still looked extremely awkward under Lu Ye's relentless offensive. Firstly, it was on the defensive, and secondly, it had to spare extra effort to protect the Fox Demon in its arms.

Even if it had no worries and was just fighting against Lu Ye, it might not necessarily be his match, let alone under these circumstances.

Under the repeated heavy hits of the saber, the Giant Armor kept retreating while Lu Ye, with every slash, pressed forward bit by bit, feeling an increasingly intense pressure.

The Fox Demon sensed something ominous and suddenly looked up at Lu Ye, her beautiful eyes immediately turning into an abyss as that eerie power fluctuated once more.

Even though she guessed that Lu Ye might not be affected by her secret technique, the Fox Demon couldn't help but try.

The eerie power invaded Lu Ye's psyche, and a faint grey mist immediately flared up as his innate ability reacted.

The light in the Fox Demon's eyes dimmed slightly. Indeed... this guy had absolute resistance against her secret technique, but she really couldn't understand how someone of Cloud River Level 4 could resist like that.

Even if his psyche was powerful, there was no reason it shouldn't be affected by her secret technique.

Another saber fell, and as it did, a glint of brilliant light flashed on the Boulder Mountain Saber, bolstered by the Hefty Weight Spirit Runes!

The Giant Armor, blocking this hit with its arm, suddenly felt shorter, as if a massive force was pressing down on it. It roared ferociously, a wild strength bursting from its body, trying to counteract this overwhelming force.

But the next moment, the hefty weight suddenly disappeared.

The abrupt change caught the Giant Armor off guard, and its solid defenses finally revealed a hint of vulnerability, staggering slightly in its stand.

Lu Ye drew back his saber and thrust directly towards the Fox Demon's face.

A look of terror appeared on the pale face of the Fox Demon, her beautiful eyes reflecting the fiery red saber light, which rapidly enlarged in her field of view.

However, this strike ultimately did not claim her life; in the critical moment, the Giant Armor grabbed the Boulder Mountain Saber, letting its sharp blade slice his large hand bloodily, yet he clenched his teeth and did not let go.

Lu Ye's eyes twitched, his body leaped up, and he kicked out, taking advantage of the rebounding force to distance himself from the Giant Armor.

Pfft... The Fox Demon spat blood, her face so pale it lacked any hint of color.

Although she had been constantly protected by the Giant Armor and was not hurt by Lu Ye, the ferocity of his exchanges with the Giant Armor was such that, even with the best protection, she still suffered considerable shock.

In normal times, such a shock wouldn't have affected her much, but having been injured by the Berserk Giant Ape and then ambushed by Lu Ye, her seriously wounded body now found these repeated shocks from their clashes extremely unbearable.

The Giant Armor clearly noticed this as well, and it looked down at the Fox Demon in its arms with a gaze full of concern.

Chapter 592 Six-tailed Celestial Fox

Before Lu Ye could execute his own plan, he had never imagined that Giant Armor would be the one to interfere with its completion.

This was truly an ironic joke.

At this point, to kill the Fox Demon under the protection of Giant Armor, unless he killed Giant Armor first, which was an outcome Lu Ye absolutely could not accept.

His previous attack had been utterly merciless and extremely violent, but that was because he knew Giant Armor could withstand it, so he held nothing back.

The moment he saw the Fox Demon spitting blood, Lu Ye's eyes lit up, and he suddenly realized that to kill the Fox Demon, he did not necessarily have to kill Giant Armor, he just needed to maintain his previous level of aggression. Giant Armor could withstand it, but the heavily injured Fox Demon definitely couldn't withstand the shock from the clashes between the two, even if Giant Armor protected her well.

With this thought, Lu Ye attacked Giant Armor again, his blood Qi and spirit force surged together, and he boldly swung his saber.

With each ferocious slash, and each time being blocked, every clash caused Giant Armor to tremble, and the Fox Demon he held in his arms was affected as well.

As time passed, the spirit force protecting Giant Armor continuously shattered and reformed, and Lu Ye was also gasping for breath.

Against a cultivator of the same level, with his current strength, he could basically resolve the fight with one slash, but facing Giant Armor, Lu Ye deeply felt powerless as this fellow's defense was unreasonably strong.

But the effect was very significant. Although Giant Armor was not injured, the Fox Demon he protected in his arms continued to spew blood, her aura growing weaker.

Until a certain moment, as Lu Ye slashed down with his saber, Giant Armor punched out, hitting the Boulder Mountain Saber squarely.

The spirit force on the fist peak shattered, a slight imprint appeared on Giant Armor's fist, and Lu Ye was also sent flying by this punch.

At that moment, the fragile Fox Demon, who had been protected in Giant Armor's arms like a candle in the wind, suddenly leaped up and lunged at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye was startled.

Since being pulled into the Nine Arrays Diagram, the Fox Demon had appeared weak and on the brink of death, and as the clash between Lu Ye and Giant Armor progressed, her condition seemed to worsen, leading Lu Ye to believe she was almost dead.

But now, seeing her posture, everything just appeared to be a disguise, all for this moment of counterattack.

This caught Lu Ye off guard. As he stabilized his form in midair, he saw the Fox Demon's pale face filled with a ruthless and resolute expression, and her extended hand suddenly shot out five sharp nails, clawing straight at Lu Ye's head.

Lu Ye hurriedly steadied his form and slashed with his saber, cutting the Fox Demon's figure in half.

There was no scream, no blood flowed, and even where the blade passed, there was no sensation of having cut through anything...

A great crisis struck from behind, accompanied by Yiyi's cry of alarm.

The figure of the Fox Demon that scattered in front of him was merely an afterimage!

At the same time, Lu Ye clearly sensed a deadly force invading within one foot behind him.

In the time that Xia Liang had taught him, cultivating the Mental Eye Secret Technique daily in the Mirage Realm, his Mental Eye Secret Technique had seen minor achievements. Any attack coming within one foot of him was clearly detectable.

His body reacted before his mind, a Defense Spirit Rune suddenly appearing behind his head while Lu Ye's hand thrust the long saber backward.

With a crack, the newly formed Defense dissipated explosively, and Lu Ye felt an icy pain on his head, a sharp force piercing his skin and pressing against his skull.

An unprecedented crisis enveloped him, and Lu Ye knew that if the enemy did not pull back, he would be dead in the next moment.

Fortunately, as he activated the Defense Spirit Rune, he had also stabbed backward with his saber, and this saber strike enabled him to avoid a fatal attack.

The Fox Demon decisively pulled back, flipping away, because if she hadn't, she would have ended in a mutual destruction with Lu Ye.

This was something she absolutely could not accept.

Ahead, Giant Armor stabilized his form and was about to lung at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye roared, "Yiyi!"

As the words fell, an invisible force emerged spontaneously, the space beside Giant Armor distorted, and then, Giant Armor vanished altogether!

It was indeed Yiyi forcefully removing him from the Nine Arrays Diagram.

The Nine Arrays Diagram, a spirit treasure, grew more powerful as Yiyi's cultivation improved. Now, almost comparable to the Cloud River Level 3, controlling the Nine Arrays Diagram meant she could not only trap enemies inside but also interfere to some extent.

Giant Armor had always protected the Fox Demon in his arms, and Lu Ye had been considering how to separate them because if they were separated, Yiyi could use the power of the Nine Arrays Diagram to send Giant Armor away, allowing him to attack the Fox Demon without any reservations.

But Giant Armor had never given him that chance, yet, unexpectedly, the Fox Demon, in her attempt to kill him, had created such an opportunity.

How could Yiyi miss such a chance? Even without Lu Ye's command, she would have immediately sent Giant Armor away.

The Giant Armor suddenly vanished. A look of panic flashed across the Fox Demon's pale face as she realized she had made a vastly stupid decision.

She instantly regretted it so much that she could feel her guts turning green.

Her original intention was to kill Lu Ye. In fact, in that instant, if she hadn't backed off, Lu Ye would have undoubtedly perished, but how could she wish to die alongside Lu Ye?

Now that the Giant Armor was sent out of the Nine Arrays Diagram, she was left to face Lu Ye alone, which was much more likely to end badly for her.

A mournful smile appeared on the Fox Demon's face. She had just avenged a great wrong, only to find herself in such peril in the blink of an eye—presumably, it was retribution for all the bad deeds she had done over the years?

Lu Ye turned around with five bloody fingerprints on his forehead, the blood trickling down his cheeks, adding a gruesome aspect to his otherwise calm expression.

"It's just you and me now," he stated flatly as the fire rekindled on his Boulder Mountain Saber.

A resolute look crossed the exhausted and feeble face of the Fox Demon. Despite knowing the likelihood of peril this time, she wouldn't just sit and wait for death! She hadn't yet returned to comfort her master, to tell him that his great revenge had been avenged, so she could not die no matter what.

Somehow finding the strength, the Fox Demon, who should have been at the end of her strength, burst with rolling Demon Origin, and with a muffled bang, she suddenly revealed her true form.

She was a Celestial Fox over ten feet tall, covered in white fur, with a sharp nose and jade-green eyes, stunningly beautiful. Behind her, six fluffy tails flicked willfully.

Despite being in her true demon beast form, the Fox Demon exuded an immense sense of allure, one that would likely cause anyone who saw her to succumb to enthrallment.

Even Lu Ye, whose mind was firmly set on killing, felt a slight disturbance at the sight of the Fox Demon's true form, though his eyes quickly cleared again.

The Fox Demon let out a low roar from her throat, her green eyes reflecting Lu Ye's figure, filled with unwillingness and anger.

Before Lu Ye could launch an attack, she suddenly flicked her fluffy fox tail, shooting several pink kitsunebi toward Lu Ye with astonishing speed.

At the same time, she bolted forward, charging directly at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye's long saber struck repeatedly, shattering the kitsunebi, but the shattered kitsunebi didn't vanish; instead, they turned into even finer flames.

Lu Ye was slightly careless, and a few kitsunebi landed on him, instantly burning holes in his clothes and causing a slight stinging sensation on his skin, but his mind began to shake violently.

It felt as if an invisible shock had fiercely shaken his mind, causing stars to burst in front of his eyes and illusions to proliferate, a time when green, purple, white, gold, and colorful glows filled his vision, blotting out everything else.

This kitsunebi... didn't have much killing power, but it had the ability to shake one's spirit!

Lu Ye quickly realized this, but it was already too late. The Fox Demon had pounced in front of him, her sharp claws tearing down fiercely, with a ripping sound, Lu Ye's chest clothes shattered, revealing several deep, bone-deep wounds, blood and flesh blurred at his chest.

In the battle with the Berserk Giant Ape, the Fox Demon had never made a move, only stabbing it with her saber when it was about to die, so Lu Ye's understanding of her was only as a demon beast comparable to a Cloud River Level 9 cultivator.

He had not anticipated that her kitsunebi would have such a bizarre capability.

Besides, the Fox Demon inherently had the Innate Divine Ability to manipulate minds, so it made sense that the kitsunebi, though not highly lethal, could impact the spirit.

But such eerie abilities were indefensible at the Cloud River Realm level.

In one encounter, Lu Ye was wounded, his body retreating with the force of the blow, slashing out with his saber in a flowing motion, yet the Fox Demon's movements were so fast, she quickly dodged.

No sooner had he steadied himself and his shaken mind settled, the Fox Demon's fluffy tail flicked again, sending another few blobs of kitsunebi crashing towards him.

Learning from his previous mistake, Lu Ye swiftly dodged, but the lingering kitsunebi were like bone-burrowing maggots that couldn't be shaken off.

As they approached, they suddenly exploded, sending sparks flying everywhere; even though Lu Ye quickly activated the Defense Spirit Runes, he could not completely avoid them.

More sparks landed on him, and once again, Lu Ye's vision was filled with illusions, rendering him unable to see.

In that instant, the Mental Eye Secret Technique displayed its remarkable effectiveness.

Caught off guard the first time, his mind had been shaken, preventing him from defending against the Fox Demon's attack, but this time, being wary, he immediately sensed an attack approaching within a foot to his left.

The Boulder Mountain Saber cut through the air with a boom, the flesh on his right arm bulging slightly.

From somewhere, a faint cry like a baby's wail sounded, and by the time Lu Ye regained his senses, the Fox Demon had already stopped ten yards away from him, her white fur stained with bright red blood, clearly wounded. Her jade-green pupils were full of doubt and surprise, apparently not expecting Lu Ye to be able to counterattack so accurately under those circumstances.

"Yiyi!" Lu Ye softly called out, hoping she could provide some assistance.

"I can't, Lu Ye, the Giant Armor is chasing me!" Yiyi's voice came through.

If undisturbed, Yiyi could have used the power of the Nine Arrays Diagram to help, but since she had forcibly sent the Giant Armor out, it had been relentlessly pursuing her, leaving her helpless. Now, all she could do was maintain the operation of the Nine Arrays Diagram, providing Lu Ye a space to kill the Fox Demon.

Fortunately, while the Giant Armor had a formidable physique, its biggest drawback was its lack of speed, so for now, there was no worry on Yiyi's side.

Chapter 593 Killing the Fox Demon

Gently inhaling, Lu Ye looked up at the Fox Demon. Since he could not rely on Yiyi, he had no choice but to depend on himself.

He was secretly glad that he had learned the Mental Eye Secret Technique from Xia Liang, and having such a perfect training ground as the Mirage Realm had allowed him to make minor accomplishments in the Mental Eye Secret Technique in an exceptionally short amount of time; otherwise, this battle would have been tricky.

But the threat of the kitsunebi was still not to be underestimated.

His psyche was strong, so his mental power was also very resilient. Even so, when struck by the kitsunebi, his mind still trembled momentarily. Had it been an ordinary Cloud River Realm cultivator who was hit by the kitsunebi, they would likely have no choice but to submit.

This Fox Demon had been able to rule over Fox Fairy Valley for nearly twenty years, and it truly was not just relying on that strange Psyche Secret Technique. This kitsunebi was probably a power she had never revealed in front of others.

Watching the cautious Fox Demon in front of him, Lu Ye slowly closed his eyes.

"!" The Fox Demon's green pupils contracted slightly.

Cloud River Realm cultivators had some degree of perception, but since they had not yet reached the level of psyche cultivation, such perception was very weak. It was barely sufficient to sense certain things normally, but during a fight to the death, the perception of the Cloud River Realm was not reliable. Yet the enemy before her was closing his eyes.

This left the Fox Demon unsure of what Lu Ye was planning.

But she didn't have time to ponder too much. Only she knew how severe her injuries were; the strength she could exert now was extremely limited. She must eliminate the traitor in front of her in the shortest time possible if she wanted a chance to survive.

So, after only a moment's hesitation, several more balls of kitsunebi flew towards Lu Ye, followed closely by the Fox Demon's fierce killing intent.

The kitsunebi floated to within a foot of Lu Ye, then exploded with a loud bang, transforming into small sparks that fell on his body. At that instant, Lu Ye's eyebrows furrowed, clearly impacted again by the strange force, his mind unsettled.

It was at that moment that the pouncing Fox Demon extended her sharp claws.

The sabre whirled up, piercing at an inconceivable angle. The Fox Demon couldn't help but shrink her pupils and hastily retreated.

Gazing doubtfully at Lu Ye, who still had his eyes closed.

She quickly launched another attack, still leading with kitsunebi, her true body following close behind.

But the same scenario played out once again.

The Fox Demon retreated, her heart overwhelmed with shock. If it was a coincidence the first time, the second time was definitely not.

This guy... was able to block her attack with his eyes closed?

Based on what?

She had finally avenged a great wrong, and now she had only one wish: to return to Fox Fairy Valley and comfort the spirit of her master in front of his grave. Yet this final wish seemed ever more distant!

Based on what? Why was fate so unfair!

A mournful and piercing fox cry echoed, its sound also carrying the power to shake one's mind, causing Lu Ye's eyebrows to lock tightly.

Accompanied by the cry of the fox, a sky-covering barrage of kitsunebi attacked, continuous and unending, with the Fox Demon's true body hidden within, unleashing a frenzied assault on Lu Ye.

Lu Ye stood his ground, defending tightly. The physical damage from the kitsunebi was negligible since it was not inherently lethal, but the impact on his mind was unavoidable. Moreover, the enraged attacks of the Fox Demon were not to be underestimated; even though she was severely injured and could not perform at her full strength, she was still comparable to a Cloud River Level 9 cultivator—an enraged, decisive assault from her was hard to block unless Lu Ye had a far superior foundation than cultivators of the same level.

Fresh, bloody wounds continuously appeared on his body.

The Mental Eye Secret Technique indeed allowed him to react correctly to dangers entering within a foot of him, but he could not avoid the mental impact of the kitsunebi, and often he simply couldn't respond in time.

This was not going well!

Even though Lu Ye knew that the Fox Demon was at the end of her strength and couldn't maintain this level of assault much longer, if this continued, it was still hard to say who would die first.

He must find a way to negate the impact of the kitsunebi on himself!

But what could possibly negate such a strange kitsunebi?

Lu Ye's mind raced, and suddenly he realized something.

No matter why the kitsunebi could shake the mind, its external manifestation was ultimately fire...

If it was fire, then there was no reason for him to fear.

He recalled his time in the Spirit Stream battlefield, entering the Land of Fiery Flames.

The Land of Fiery Flames and the Ten Thousand Poisons Forest were both forbidden lands of the Spirit Stream battlefield, places where cultivators found it difficult to venture. Some cultivators with profound backgrounds from the Spirit Stream Realm might be able to set foot in the peripheries of these two lands, but their deepest parts remained unexplored.

Especially the Land of Fiery Flames, even Overlord level female demons found it hard to approach, and it is known that those Overlord level female demons are of the fire attribute.

But Lu Ye had entered, not only had he entered, but he also was only at 7th Heaven cultivation level at the time and had even acquired the Phoenix True Fire. Subsequently, he activated the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes on the Talent Tree.

His ability to delve into the heart of the Land of Fiery Flames depended not on his own cultivation, but on the Talent Tree. In a hopeless situation, he had a sudden inspiration to activate the powers of the Talent Tree, letting its intangible roots spread throughout his body, isolating the harsh conditions of the Land of Fiery Flames from affecting him.

The power of the Talent Tree could isolate even an environment like the Land of Fiery Flames, so could it also block the kitsunebi's effect on him?

If possible, he would no longer be impacted by the kitsunebi, allowing him to freely slaughter the Fox Demon.

With this thought, Lu Ye immediately activated the Talent Tree. As his psyche immersed, he saw the Talent Tree, nestled at the position of his Root Spiritual Orifice, suddenly sprout numerous roots that spread out as if exploring an unknown space, vanishing from sight.

If Lu Ye were to activate his Insight Spirit Runes to inspect his body at this moment, he would see many root-like things covering his body, swaying gently with the flow of his spirit force.

His psyche felt as if burdened with a heavy load, rapidly depleting his mental power.

Activating the Talent Tree did not consume his spirit force, but his mental power!

On normal days, when Lu Ye had the Talent Tree devour Earth's Core Fire, the consumption was minimal. However, the consumption now was hundreds of times what it usually was, as his entire body was enveloped by the Talent Tree's roots, whereas usually only a few roots would extend from his body when devouring Earth's Core Fire.

He suddenly opened his eyes and saw the crazed and persistent green pupils of the Fox Demon, hopping and leaping not far in front of him, disrupting his judgment.

With Move-Like-The-Wind's enhancement, his figure dashed forward, directly facing the incoming kitsunebi.

Hit fast and hit hard!

The Fox Demon, unaware of the changes in Lu Ye, was shocked and enraged to see him charging into her kitsunebi.

However, the next moment, the Fox Demon was enveloped in a chill.

It was because Lu Ye's figure burst through the kitsunebi, unconcerned as it exploded upon him, his resolute gaze unwavering.

"Impossible!" In shock, the Fox Demon suddenly spoke human language.

But for her, a demon beast capable of transforming into human form, speaking human language even in her true form was not a difficult feat.

She knew the power of her kitsunebi well; typical Cloud River Realm cultivators touched by it would immediately fall into an illusion, becoming ensnared for at least 5 breaths or as many as several dozen.

Yet this betrayer, this traitor to Fox Fairy Valley, had previously shown great resistance to her kitsunebi, only momentarily affected!

This could still be explained by the strength of his mental power, but how could he be completely unaffected? Was his mental power comparable to someone in the Divine Sea Realm?

From his undisturbed gaze, he indeed appeared completely unaffected.

In her astonishment, the distance between them closed rapidly, and a gleaming saber light flashed through the Fox Demon's field of vision. She felt a pang of pain in front of her, a heavy impact flinging her backward, spilling blood across the sky, and landing in a sorry state.

Boom...

As she lifted her gaze, a figure wrapped in a fierce killing intent landed in front of her, a storm-like saber assault enveloping her, each stroke aiming to kill.

The kitsunebi appeared again, but this time, it couldn't cause the slightest disturbance to Lu Ye. Without the kitsunebi to rely on, the severely weakened Fox Demon faced such an onslaught, powerless to resist.

Blood splattered, with sounds of the saber slicing through flesh spreading, and the stark white fur became dyed with shocking crimson, painting endless desolation.

As Lu Ye swung another saber strike, the Fox Demon hit the ground hard, unable to rise this time. Lying there, she gasped for air, her eyes dimming.

Lu Ye, holding the Boulder Mountain Saber, stepped forward and looked down at the Fox Demon.

The Fox Demon's eyes rolled, but her vision was blurred, no longer able to see Lu Ye's face clearly, barely making out a vague silhouette.

"So it turns out... Heaven's Augury... had already dispensed punishment!"

In the last moments of her life, it seemed she understood something, muttering to herself.

Over the years, she continuously used her Psyche Secret Technique to enslave cultivators on the Cloud River battlefield, those daring enough to venture deep into the Great Wilderness Mountain; they were the best among the Cloud River Realm cultivators. Over eighteen years, the cultivators who died because of her numbered nearly a thousand, and as the number of enslaved cultivators grew, so did an inexplicable sense of crisis.

She knew that one day, Heaven's Augury would punish her actions.

She thought it would be a penalty similar to the Soul-Destroying Divine Lightning of the Spirit Stream battlefield.

But she never expected that the punishment would come in this form, especially without her noticing.

Only at the last moment of her life did she keenly perceive the truth.

Lu Ye stood in front of the Fox Demon, sensing her current state, but the words she spoke baffled him deeply.

However, he didn't delve into it, treating it as the dying delirium of the Fox Demon. The Boulder Mountain Saber was raised high.

"Just as well..." A stroke of saber light flashed in his view, and the Fox Demon felt relieved at heart. Regardless, she had avenged her lord, which might be considered Heaven's Augury's final grace.

Lord, Xian'er is coming to join you...

Chapter 594 Pill Fire

In the Nine Arrays Diagram, as Lu Ye's long saber fell, the Fox Demon's corpse was severed, and its vitality was utterly shattered.

He took a deep breath, flicked the blood off the Boulder Mountain Saber, relaxed his mind, and staggered slightly.

The battle with the Fox Demon wasn't particularly perilous, but the short-term massive consumption of mental power tired him somewhat.

His body was covered in wounds, but none were severe enough to impact his bones or tendons; with his robust physique, recovery wouldn't be difficult.

"Yiyi, what's the situation outside?" Lu Ye asked.

In theory, with the Fox Demon dead, the Psyche Secret Technique it had implanted should self-destruct, but he couldn't be sure of that.

Yiyi's voice quickly reached his ears, "Everyone has returned to normal, but a few cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge ran off immediately, including Xia Liang and Tan Sheng."

"Those damn cowards, quick on their feet!" Lu Ye inwardly cursed.

He had planned to eliminate Tan Sheng and Xia Liang after killing the Fox Demon; although he had been cultivating with Xia Liang lately, he never forgot the animosity between them.

If he hadn't been trapped inside the Nine Arrays Diagram, he could have intervened in the battlefield immediately after killing the Fox Demon, but being inside, he had no way of influencing the outside situation.

Xia Liang and Tan Sheng knew the wolf pack, having recently suffered a significant loss on spirit ground, so the first thing they did after breaking free from the Fox Demon's control was to flee far away.

Both being Level 9, if they focused solely on escaping, the wolves really had no way to stop them.

Though he felt a sense of regret, there was nothing he could do but accept it.

Lu Ye walked a few steps forward, approached the corpse of the Fox Demon, and fumbled around, retrieving a storage sack.

This was the Fox Demon's storage sack, always worn on its body, and now naturally it became Lu Ye's spoil of war.

He wasn't sure what other treasures it contained, but he knew it included a demonic pill from an Overlord-class demon beast, the one he obtained from slaying the Berserk Giant Ape, which she had stored in the sack.

This was a prize rarely encountered even in a century.

Overlord-class demon beasts on the Cloud River battlefield have rarely been slain historically; just considering the effort made by Fox Fairy Valley this time, if the cultivators attempted to handle it alone, without a group of two to three hundred, success would be impossible, coupled with enormous losses, hardly worth the effort.

Thus, cultivators generally wouldn't provoke or attempt to kill any Overlord-class demon beasts on the Cloud River battlefield.

This time, killing the Berserk Giant Ape was possible because the Fox Demon was driven by hatred, the cultivators were bound by her Psyche Secret Technique, fearlessly brave, and Lu Ye and Xie Yunhan had set up many formations in advance as aids.

This Overlord-class demonic pill, merely holding it, Lu Ye could feel the robust energy within; entrusting it to Amber for refining would surely be greatly beneficial.

But the spoils of war consisted of more than just this.

Lu Ye reached his hand back to the corpse of the Fox Demon, probed for a moment in silence, and plunged the Boulder Mountain Saber down, extracting another demonic pill shortly after.

This was the Fox Demon's demonic pill, which, while not as valuable as that of an Overlord-class demon beast, was still quite valuable.

Wiping the blood off the demonic pill, Lu Ye stared at it in his hands, slightly astonished.

The demonic pill was the size of an infant's fist, exuding a weird pink color, with a faint halo on it, almost as if it were flames burning.

Could this be... pill fire?

Pill fire wasn't the flame used in Alchemy, but the inner core of fire attribute demon beasts; Lu Ye had purchased many in the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, all of which he had the Talent Tree absorb.

Thinking about it, the Fox Demon had activated kitsunebi that could impact the psyche during their fight, so indeed, it could be considered a fire attribute demon beast.

In the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, pill fires had different prices, ranging from a few hundred to tens of thousands of merits; there was even a strange fire called the Extreme Icy Flames, worth a whopping eighteen thousand merits.

He didn't know the worth of this Fox Demon's demonic pill, but it couldn't be cheap.

Since it was pill fire, it naturally could be absorbed.

Lu Ye thought and a few roots sprouted from the Talent Tree, reaching into the invisible space. The next moment, the luster of the pill fire in his hand quickly dimmed, its energy devoured by the Talent Tree.

Immersing his mind to check the changes in the Talent Tree, this was just a habit, as Lu Ye didn't expect a single demonic pill to cause much change in the Talent Tree. Yet, to his surprise, as the energy within the demonic pill was absorbed, a leaf on the upper part of the Talent Tree suddenly reacted and visibly caught fire at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Unlike other leaves that caught flames, this one burned with the same pink color as the Fox Demon's demonic pill.

This was the first time Lu Ye encountered such a phenomenon, and he was momentarily stunned.

Moments later, as the energy in the demonic pill was depleted, it turned to dust and fell, and the Talent Tree added a leaf burning with pink flames, distinct from the others.

Lu Ye faintly felt that he may have underestimated the value of the Fox Demon's demonic pill.

After all, it was the demonic pill of a Six-tailed Celestial Fox, not something to be taken lightly. Just from the transformation it caused in the Talent Tree, one could tell that the value of that demonic pill was immense.

Lu Ye suppressed the doubts in his heart and did not immediately explore the information carried by the burning leaves.

Currently, he was injured, his mental power severely depleted, and there were many matters outside that awaited his attention; he could not afford to delay.

"Yiyi!" Lu Ye called out softly.

Yiyi understood and activated the power of the Nine Arrays Diagram. The next moment, Lu Ye's figure was expelled from the Nine Arrays Diagram.

Just as he steadied himself, Amber leapt over from one side and perched on his shoulder.

Amber was very clever. The moment the Fox Demon enslaved the Giant Armor with one glance, it had jumped off Lu Ye's body and stayed far away, fearing that it might also be enslaved by the Fox Demon.

There were no sounds of battle around. Many demon wolves quietly stood by, and the surviving cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley gathered together, each with a face full of sorrow.

While enslaved by the Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Technique, they did not feel anything wrong with their actions. But the moment the Fox Demon died and the Psyche Secret Technique was broken, the experiences of these years suddenly flooded their minds. Each of them questioned themselves, "What have I been doing?"

Especially Xie Yunhan, who had stayed in Fox Fairy Valley for a full twelve years, had completely lost contact with his sect and relatives, with hardly any progress in his cultivation, merely wasting his time away.

Although the others had not stayed as long as Xie Yunhan, they had been there for at least one or two years. Thinking about their days in Fox Fairy Valley, they all felt deeply ashamed.

Seeing Lu Ye appear, everyone crowded around him.

"Fellow Daoist Lu," Zhou Yuntian, covered in blood, saluted Lu Ye and asked somewhat apprehensively, "Is the Fox Demon... dead?"

Even though they knew the Fox Demon must be dead when the Psyche Secret Technique was broken, they could not be sure until they received an answer.

The psychological shadow cast by the Fox Demon was indeed too great.

"The Fox Demon has been slain by me; Fellow Daoists need not worry anymore," Lu Ye spoke. Not only had it been slain, but its demonic pill had been swallowed by the Talent Tree. He just did not know whether he could obtain any new spirit runes.

Hearing this, many heaved a sigh of relief, and the tension in their expressions relaxed significantly. Zhou Yuntian saluted again, "We were trapped and blinded by the Fox Demon, unknowingly; we owe Fellow Daoist Lu a great debt for this rescue, akin to being reborn. If you ever have any commands in the future, we dare not disobey."

The rest also solemnly saluted and thanked him.

Lu Ye responded to the salute, "Fellow Daoists need not act this way. I was merely saving myself. It's just regrettable that many Fellow Daoists have still lost their lives."

Xie Yunhan sighed, "It was time and fate. Brother Lu being able to save so many of us is already quite admirable."

Although the crowd did not know how Lu Ye managed to command such a wolf pack to assist in battle, even if the wolf pack was strong and numerous, facing the flourishing power of Fox Fairy Valley at its peak, they might not have been up to the task.

Lu Ye's choice to make a move in Fox Fairy Valley after a fight with the Berserk Giant Ape was undoubtedly the wisest. Also, previously, when the demon wolves had surrounded them, they were clearly following prior orders to encircle but not kill them; otherwise, the few who could still stand here would be rare.

"Anyway, we have finally escaped the control of the Fox Demon, which is indeed a fortunate event. There is no need for you all to look so gloomy. Think of your sects, think of your brothers and sisters. From now on, we need not serve as slaves or bow our heads," Zhou Yuntian said.

Someone sadly said, "With Fellow Daoist Zhou mentioning this... I suddenly miss home."

The crowd suddenly fell silent, their eyes filling with longing. In Fox Fairy Valley, under the Fox Demon's orders, no one dared to make contact with the outside world. Over these years, the friends and relatives of the cultivators from Fox Fairy Valley had been searching and trying to communicate with them. Previously, under the Fox Demon's control, they did not feel the significance, but now that they were free, a tidal wave of longing surged forth instantly.

"Then... shall we go home?" someone whispered softly.

Zhou Yuntian raised his arm and called out, "If not now, then when?"

Once longing surged up, it was no longer under control; everyone was eager to return to their sects, their homes, to share the sorrows of separation with their long-separated families.

"Go home!" someone called out.

Momentarily, emotions ran high.

Zhou Yuntian turned to look at Lu Ye, "Fellow Daoist Lu, what are your plans?"

Lu Ye pondered for a moment, "My fellow disciple and I just entered the Cloud River battlefield not long ago, so we will not return for now. Moreover, I am still injured and need some time to recover. Fellow Daoists, please feel free as you wish."

Zhou Yuntian initially wanted to persuade Lu Ye to leave with them as this was deep within Great Wilderness Mountain, full of powerful demon beasts. Suddenly remembering that Lu Ye had a wolf pack to protect him and that he was unlikely to be in any danger, he said no more, nodded, and spoke, "If that's the case, then take care, Fellow Daoist Lu. If you ever need help in the future, just call on us."

The crowd said their goodbyes to Lu Ye and exchanged battlefield markings with him.

Moments later, many cultivators rose on their weapons, and under the watchful eyes of Lu Ye and Li Baxian among others, they rapidly departed. Being such a group of cultivators, each with not

insignificant cultivation, as long as they did not encounter an Overlord-class demon beast, they were basically safe.

Almost at the same moment Zhou Yuntian and the others left, Lu Ye suddenly felt a strange sensation. Amidst an undefined sense, something fell from the sky and alighted upon him, and the back of his hand felt slightly warm.

Chapter 595 Bewitchment

The sudden, alien sensation that had fallen from the sky seemed familiar, as if he had encountered it somewhere before.

Lu Ye thought carefully and soon remembered what this familiar feeling was all about.

It was Heaven's Augury's favor!

Back in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's secret realm, he had acquired the Beast Seal Method and Life Origin Method from the Great Elder of the Ten Thousand Beasts Sect. Xia Qianqian had told him that such things, capable of changing the pattern of a sect, could earn Heaven's Augury's favor and enhance one's fortune if sold to the Heaven's Augury Treasure Vault.

Indeed, it had proven to be true. After he left the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain and sold the jade slip engraved with the Beast Seal Method and the Life Origin Method to the Heaven's Augury Treasure Vault, not only did he earn many merits, but he also felt the descent of Heaven's Augury.

It was exactly the same sensation as just now.

The greatest reason he had turned misfortune into fortune in the hunting ground was that he had acquired a Golden Body Token, an object against the heavens so precious that even those in the Divine Sea Realm coveted it. Yet, it was he, a cultivator from the Cloud River Realm, who obtained it, and it happened through war spoils. Not only did he turn misfortune into fortune, but he also won the top position on the Kills Ranking, earning a reward from Heaven's Augury.

All of this, were these not manifestations of his own fortune?

Fate, intangible and elusive, yet constantly influencing him at every moment.

Last time, because he brought something from the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's secret realm that could change the pattern of a sect, he gained Heavenly favor.

What about this time?

He had slain the Fox Demon, rescued those cultivators, and yet there was favor again?

He suddenly recalled the Fox Demon's enigmatic words before her death.

"So Heaven's Augury had already decreed the punishment."

Lu Ye didn't understand what she meant just then, but now, piecing it together with his own experiences, he vaguely sensed something.

The Fox Demon had ruled over Fox Fairy Valley for twenty years, enslaving many cultivators with Psyche Secret Techniques that should not have appeared on the Cloud River battlefield, seeking revenge. Over the years, countless cultivators had died because of her. His slaying of her, though primarily for self-preservation and to save Li Baxian, arguably benefited the people.

Had he not killed the Fox Demon, perhaps even more cultivators would have suffered in the future.

And his venture into Fox Fairy Valley was because he followed Li Baxian to pursue Tan Sheng and Xia Liang, encountering Zhou Yuntian and others.

Now, looking back, when Tan Sheng and Xia Liang fled from the spirit ground, they should have escaped towards the outskirts of the Great Wilderness Mountain, but for some reason, they fled deep into it...

This clearly did not match their situation at the time, and two Level 9 Cloud River Realm cultivators should not have made such a foolish choice.

He and Li Baxian chased after them, and ended up encountering Zhou Yun and others, which led them into Fox Fairy Valley. Coincidentally, he possessed the Talent Tree, which made him immune to the Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Techniques, and even more coincidentally, he had a pack of wolves he could command!

Even the battle in Fox Fairy Valley against the Berserk Giant Ape went suspiciously smoothly.

The Fox Demon had failed to get her revenge for twenty years, but soon after Lu Ye arrived at Fox Fairy Valley, he had helped her fulfill her plans for revenge...

Everything seemed reasonable, but upon deeper reflection, it revealed many incomprehensible coincidences.

It seemed as if behind it all, an invisible hand was orchestrating everything.

Heaven's Augury... what exactly is it?

Was he the punishment that Heaven's Augury had decreed for the Fox Demon?

Having killed the Fox Demon and resolved the local calamity, did Heaven's Augury once again increase its favor towards him?

His thoughts swirling, Lu Ye suddenly felt a chill down his spine.

Looking down at the back of his hand, when Heaven's Augury's favor had descended earlier, his hand had also warmed up slightly. Now looking at it, Lu Ye looked surprised.

For there appeared a golden mark on his hand, just like the one he had received when he topped the Kills Ranking and was granted a mark by Heaven's Augury!

Not only had it increased its favor towards him, but it had also awarded him?

However, Lu Ye did not know what this reward specifically was. The reward for topping the Kills Ranking was clear, but now, what this particular reward entailed could only be revealed by revisiting the spirit ground and using the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Collecting his thoughts, Lu Ye looked sideways, where Giant Armor stood with drooping eyes and a gloomy expression.

Clearly, he was troubled about having struck Lu Ye and chased Yiyi just now.

Dispelling the distractions in his mind, ली moved forward, patted his arm, and reassured, "Don't mind it, even the Fourth Senior Brother couldn't resist the Fox Demon's secret technique, let alone you."

Giant Armor looked up at him, still silent, but his expression finally eased somewhat.

Lu Ye then turned to look towards Li Baxian, where Feng Yuechan was chuckling, "Senior Brother, what's with that Fellow Daoist Yu? It seems like she has a rather good relationship with you?"

Just before the group of cultivators left Fox Fairy Valley, Yu Daiwei had made a point to bid farewell to Li Baxian, and her unusual attitude and tone caught Feng Yuechan's eye, infuriating her.

Li Baxian's expression remained unchanged, "She's also a sword cultivator. Back in Fox Fairy Valley, she often came to me to discuss swordsmanship. Actually, I'm not very close with her... Eh, why am I even explaining this to you? Also, I'm your Master Uncle! Stop shouting nonsense!" He raised his hand and thumped Feng Yuechan on the head.

Feng Yuechan's cheeks puffed slightly, looking huffy.

Li Baxian approached Lu Ye with concern, "How are Junior Brother Lu's injuries?"

"They're just superficial wounds, nothing serious."

Li Baxian sighed, "I didn't expect that the Cloud River battlefield would still have such dangerous demon beasts. When she enslaved us with her Psyche Secret Technique, I didn't feel anything wrong at all. Now thinking about it... it's truly terrifying. Speaking of which, Junior Brother, how did you break free from the Psyche Secret Technique?"

This was what he least understood. On that day, he and Lu Ye, along with others, were taken back together. Logically, they all should have been subjected to the Psyche Secret Technique. These past days, Lu Ye had not shown any loopholes, and only today did he learn that his Junior Brother had never been affected by the Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Technique and had been secretly planning to kill the Fox Demon all along.

Before Lu Ye could answer, Feng Yuechan took the lead, "Silly Senior Brother, did you forget how strong Junior Brother Lu's psyche is? That Fox Demon, no more than a Demon General level beast, even if it could use the Psyche Secret Technique, what impact could it have on Junior Brother Lu?"

Lu Ye once received quite a bit of Soul Cleansing Water, which both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan knew about. The Soul Cleansing Water, a divine object, could strengthen a cultivator's psyche. Li Baxian had even received some from Lu Ye before, and the fact that Lu Ye could give it to others meant he must have used a lot himself.

Feng Yuechan naturally thought that Lu Ye's ability to escape the influence of the Fox Demon's secret technique was related to his strong psyche.

This was actually something Lu Ye was pleased to hear. The Talent Tree was something he didn't want to explain too much about, so he went along with Feng Yuechan's words, "Senior Sister Feng is right."

"But I owe much to Junior Brother this time, otherwise I fear it would have been more misfortune than fortune for me."

Feng Yuechan said, "Junior Brother is still injured; let him heal first. Senior Brother, I have something to ask you. Come with me."

Li Baxian immediately frowned, but before he could speak, Feng Yuechan pulled him to one side.

Lu Ye shook his head and smiled, though he indeed needed to recuperate for a while.

With a wolf pack guarding them, there was no need to worry about danger.

He found a spot, sat down cross-legged, popped several elixir pills and a healing pill into his mouth, and quietly refined them.

Half a day later, his depleted spirit force was mostly restored.

Lu Ye immersed his mind, examining a pink leaf on the Talent Tree. As his psyche gathered, a large amount of information flooded into his mind, causing his psyche to tremble slightly.

Carefully examining this information, Lu Ye's expression turned odd.

This time he was lucky, directly receiving a spirit rune.

But this spirit rune...was different from all the spirit runes he had obtained before.

It's not that it was overly complex; of the spirit runes Lu Ye mastered, the most complex was undoubtedly the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, followed by the Void Spirit Runes, but he had learned the latter from books. He couldn't construct them at will like the ones from the Talent Tree.

Moreover, it was just a single leaf's worth of information; no matter how complex it was, it could only be so complex.

The reason it was special, was because according to the information, the energy required to activate this spirit rune was not spirit force but Soul Power.

In short, it was Psyche Force.

Lu Ye's mind stirred slightly, this was actually a Psyche Spirit Rune, also known as a divine rune!

The Path of Spirit Runes is profound. Currently, all the runes Lu Ye learned could be constructed with spirit force, but if Lu Ye's cultivation reached the Divine Sea Realm, owning his own Soul Power, many runes could be constructed with Soul Power to unleash more abilities.

For example, Sharpness, merely constructed with a spirit rune could increase the lethality of a Spiritual Artifact, but with Soul Power, it could transform into a psyche attack.

Protection as well, constructed with Soul Power, could form a Psyche Barrier.

However, among the spirit runes, there were some special ones that could only be constructed with Soul Power, and these runes were called divine runes.

The one he acquired this time was precisely a divine rune.

Bewitchment!

According to the myriad of information from the leaf, this Bewitchment Divine Rune had the effect of bewildering minds, quite similar to the Psyche Secret Technique used by the Fox Demon.

The Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Technique was incredibly powerful, being an Innate Divine Ability of a Six-tailed Celestial Fox, something ordinary cultivators or demon beasts could never master. If the Bewitchment Divine Rune could exert even a tenth of the Fox Demon's technique's power, it would be quite remarkable.

Regrettably, as this was a divine rune that required Soul Power to activate, Lu Ye's current Cloud River Realm cultivation level simply could not utilize it. He could construct it with spirit force, but even if he did, it would not be of any use.

However, one day his cultivation would reach the Divine Sea Realm, and then this divine rune could be put to use.

This single divine rune alone represented a significant gain, not to mention that he had also received Heaven's Augury's favor, which would probably make his personal fortune even more prosperous in the future.

There was also a reward bestowed by Heaven's Augury, though he didn't know what it was...

Slowly opening his eyes, Lu Ye stood up.

Li Baxian, waiting nearby, saw him arise and asked, "Junior Brother Lu, are we returning to the spirit ground?"

The Fox Demon was dead, and the cultivators of Fox Fairy Valley had dispersed; there was naturally no need to go back there.

"Hmm," Lu Ye nodded, then suddenly remembered something, "Let's go to Fox Fairy Valley first; there's something there that has caught my attention."

Li Baxian didn't ask what it was but just nodded, "Alright."

Chapter 596 Heaven's Augury's Reward

Returning to Fox Fairy Valley, his state of mind was completely different.

"So this is Fox Fairy Valley, quite beautiful," Feng Yuechan stood in mid-air, overlooking below.

Speaking of scenery, Fox Fairy Valley was indeed not bad, after all, it had long been the dwelling place of the Fox Demon, how could it be poor, but compared to the spirit ground, it still fell short.

Having been accustomed to the beautiful scenery of the spirit ground, the Fox Fairy Valley was rated as merely quite beautiful in Feng Yuechan's eyes.

"What is Junior Brother Lu doing back here?" Li Baxian asked.

"There is a place here that caught my attention," Lu Ye replied as he led the way, with the others following.

Moments later, they arrived at a place shrouded by a big array.

Li Baxian pondered, "This place is... a forbidden land?"

Although he and Lu Ye had only spent a little over a month in Fox Fairy Valley, he had heard of the forbidden land. More than one cultivator had told him that all places in Fox Fairy Valley could be visited, except for two places.

One was the Fox Demon's chamber, where one must not intrude unless summoned.

The other was the forbidden land located at the deepest part of Fox Fairy Valley.

At least there was a chance to enter the chamber of the Fox Demon, but as for what exactly this forbidden land was, no cultivator in the entire Fox Fairy Valley knew, even Xie Yunhan, who had previously been in charge of the entire valley's formation, was unaware because this was a place strictly forbidden by the Fox Demon, forbidding anyone to even approach within a hundred paces.

Li Baxian understood why Lu Ye wanted to come back.

Honestly, he was somewhat interested in this forbidden land too, the unknown always elicits curiosity.

Lu Ye stood in front of the big array, his eyes enhanced with Insight Spirit Runes, observing the array's nodes. After a moment, he raised his hand and threw out several array banners.

During his last visit, he had sneaked into this array relying on his proficiency in Array Path, so he did not cause any damage to the array, but this was no longer necessary.

Strictly speaking, the strength of this array was not high, and to him, solving it was not difficult.

As each array banner was thrown out and embedded into the nodes, Lu Ye placed his hand on the array. As he stimulated his spirit force, the spirit force flowing on the surface of the array's light screen began to slow down, until it completely halted.

The supplies box at his waist buzzed as 9th Dao Liu Guang shot out in succession, directly bombarding a certain part of the array.

With a crunching sound, like a mirror shattering, web-like cracks immediately spread across the array and within three breaths, it completely shattered.

The land once covered by the array was now visible to the group.

A solitary grave, an ancient altar.

"Why is there a grave here?" Feng Yuechan approached with curiosity and saw a tombstone standing before the grave, with a line of large characters on it.

"The grave of master Lei Zhengyin?" Feng Yuechan murmured softly.

"This Lei Zhengyin should be the original master of the Fox Demon, but for some reason, he was killed by the Berserk Giant Ape, so since twenty years ago, the Fox Demon began its plan for vengeance, gathering cultivators all these years until today," Lu Ye casually explained.

Li Baxian thoughtfully asked, "Junior Brother Lu, have you been here before?"

Lu Ye replied, "Once, out of curiosity, I sneaked in here, and just happened to encounter the Fox Demon mourning here, so I heard a few things."

"I see," Li Baxian nodded in understanding.

"The grave is an ordinary creation by the Fox Demon, it's nothing special. What I'm interested in is this altar," Lu Ye spoke while stepping forward and walking onto the altar, "Senior Brother Li, Senior Sister Feng, can you tell what this altar is for?"

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan went forward to have a closer look. After a long time, Li Baxian shook his head, "I can't tell, but it has four grooves, probably for placing Spirit Stones. Maybe if enough Spirit Stones are placed, it might activate something."

"Activate what?"

"A secret realm?" Feng Yuechan speculated boldly.

Her words piqued the interest of both Lu Ye and Li Baxian. If this altar could indeed open a secret realm, that was something they could not miss.

The Cloud River battlefield possessed many secret realms, so Feng Yuechan's suspicion had a high likelihood of being true.

"Let's give it a try!" said Lu Ye excitedly.

Immediately, all four of them took positions at each corner and took out Spirit Stones from their storage sacks, placing them into the grooves.

An astonishing scene unfolded, as each mid-grade Spirit Stone was placed into the grooves, its spirit force was drained in an extremely short time, turning into waste stone.

And after the altar absorbed the spirit force from the Spirit Stones, the intricate patterns on the altar's surface lit up a small area. This small lit-up area was only a negligible part of the entire altar but was enough to brighten up Lu Ye and his group's eyes.

They exchanged glances and then each took out more Spirit Stones to place in the grooves.

As more Spirit Stones turned to waste, the range of lit patterns on the altar increased.

Until a certain moment, after the four of them had consumed a total of over a thousand mid-grade spirit stones, the altar's surface burst into a dazzling light, with all the runes fully illuminated.

At the same time, Lu Ye felt a warmth on the back of his hand. He quickly looked down and saw the golden mark on his hand suddenly flying out, turning into a golden beam that fell into the altar.

In an instant, his vision was filled with blinding golden light that was too intense to look at.

Several breaths later, when Lu Ye and the others' vision returned, an oval-shaped golden light screen had appeared before them.

"Junior Brother, what was that just now?" Li Baxian asked with a mix of surprise and confusion.

The phenomenon of the golden mark on Lu Ye's hand falling onto the altar had been clearly seen by Li Baxian, but he had no idea what the golden mark was or why it would fall onto the altar.

Lu Ye realized what had happened.

So this was the reward granted by Heaven's Augury!

He had seen that golden mark before, just like the last time he received it in the hunting ground, and he thought he needed to find a Heaven's Augury Pillar to investigate his gains. Unexpectedly, the golden mark was actually used to activate the altar.

That meant even if the people from Fox Fairy Valley returned here and found the altar, no matter how many spirit stones they arranged, without his mark, they wouldn't be able to activate the altar.

"It's a reward from Heaven's Augury. I received it from Heaven's Augury after slaying a Fox Demon," Lu Ye explained briefly.

Li Baxian was utterly astonished, "Killing a Fox Demon and getting a reward from Heaven's Augury?"

This was unheard of.

Lu Ye shared his previous conjecture and what the Fox Demon said before dying. After hearing this, Li Baxian nodded and said, "With that said, Junior Brother, slaying the Fox Demon did indeed remove a great calamity from the Cloud River battlefield, bringing benefits to all. It makes sense that Heaven's Augury would grant a reward."

Feng Yuechan's expression flickered slightly, "Since it's a reward from Heaven's Augury, it must be beneficial. Junior Brother Lu, good people truly receive good fortune."

Lu Ye let out a chuckle; his main purpose in killing the Fox Demon was to save Li Baxian. If Li Baxian hadn't been ensnared by the Fox Demon, he would have slipped away long ago. These many mishaps were all a series of fortunate accidents.

Feng Yuechan's eyes brimmed with anticipation as she looked at the golden light screen, "I wonder what's behind this?"

Li Baxian said, "You mentioned benefits, so it surely won't be anything bad. Junior Brother, shall we explore inside?"

Lu Ye nodded, then suddenly recalled something and spoke up, "Giant Armor, have the wolf pack guard the surroundings."

Giant Armor nodded, brought his hand to his mouth, and blew a loud whistle. In the next instant, a large pack of demon wolves, led by the head wolf, rushed over, creating an impressive scene.

Giant Armor casually drew a circle with his hand and said succinctly, "Keep watch."

The wolf pack immediately split to either side, encircling the area securely.

Lu Ye watched in amazement. Although he had previously gotten along with the wolf pack reasonably well, he could never achieve the level of control that Giant Armor had, as if directing his own limbs.

"Giant Armor, scout ahead!" Lu Ye ordered.

Despite this being a reward from Heaven's Augury and likely safe, prudence was always the best policy.

Among the group, Giant Armor had the strongest physique, so it was natural for him to take the lead.

Without a word, Giant Armor strode towards the golden light screen, and in a few steps, he stood in front of it. Without any hesitation, he plunged into it.

Lu Ye's gaze never wavered as he watched ripples spread across the golden light screen before it completely swallowed Giant Armor's figure.

Lu Ye followed closely behind Giant Armor, with Feng Yuechan after him and Li Baxian bringing up the rear.

Stepping through the golden light screen, they instantly entered another world. However, this world was shrouded in mist. The already present Giant Armor was not far ahead, but in the hazy mist, Lu Ye could only make out his silhouette vaguely.

Lu Ye stood still, his eyes revealing a look of surprise.

That was because the environment around him felt incredibly familiar.

Soon after, Li Baxian's low exclamation came from behind him, "A baptism from Heaven's Augury?"

Among the four present, except for Giant Armor who had never been on the Spirit Stream Ranking, the other three had all been on it and were no strangers to the monthly baptism from Heaven's Augury.

The baptism granted by Heaven's Augury would take cultivators on the Spirit Stream Ranking to a completely secluded and special environment where both their physical and mental states could be tempered, enhancing their capabilities.

It could be said that the future prospects of those who had been on the Spirit Stream Ranking differed from those who had not.

Wei Que was at Cloud River Level 9, and so were Tan Sheng and Xia Liang. All three had advanced to Cloud River Realm through the ascension of 360 orifices. However, comparing them, Wei Que at Level 9 was more than just a little inferior in strength to Tan Sheng and Xia Liang.

The fundamental reason was that Tan Sheng and Xia Liang had both been on the Spirit Stream Ranking, and both had held high positions on it.

The Spirit Stream Realm is considered the initial realm of a cultivator's journey, laying the foundation for the entire cultivation path. Receiving the baptism of Heaven's Augury in this stage undoubtedly solidifies the cultivator's foundation and broadens their future horizons. The higher the ranking on the Spirit Stream Ranking, the greater the benefits received from the baptism of Heaven's Augury.

When Lu Ye was in the Spirit Stream Realm, he could barely manage to kill those who were a minor realm above him, but once in the Cloud River Realm, he found it not challenging to surpass two minor realms. This was certainly related to the varied strength levels among Cloud River Realm cultivators, but it could also be attributed to the benefits he received from occupying the first place on the Spirit Stream Ranking. As one's cultivation level increases, surpassing another is more difficult because each incremental rise enhances one's abilities all the more significantly.

Chapter 597 Killing Someone with a Borrowed Knife

Heaven's Augury Baptism was an honor exclusively awarded to cultivators on the Spirit Stream Ranking. There was no equivalent Cloud River Ranking on the Cloud River battlefield, and Lu Ye had never heard of any Cloud River Realm cultivator receiving the Heaven's Augury Baptism—until he and his companions stumbled upon it here.

It seemed that the altar they had activated did not lead to the secret realm Feng Yuechan had speculated about; it was simply a Heaven's Augury Baptism.

But for Lu Ye and his peers, this was the best and most direct reward they could receive.

In his excitement, Lu Ye suddenly realized a problem.

On the Spirit Stream battlefield, he had received Heaven's Augury Baptism four times, each time with diminishing effects. By the fourth, the effects were almost negligible, which was one reason he resolutely advanced to the Cloud River Realm. If he had still been able to obtain significant benefits, why would he have left the Spirit Stream battlefield?

Not just him; Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had experienced the same. Having dominated the Spirit Stream Ranking for over ten years, they heard that the augury no longer lured them by the end. They held their places on the ranking in vain, without any tangible rewards.

Among the four present, including Amber, only Giant Armor had never experienced Heaven's Augury Baptism.

So... even if this place was meant for Heaven's Augury Baptism, would it truly be effective for them?

If it were of no use, even as a site of Heaven's Augury Baptism, they would receive no benefits.

Li Baxian had obviously realized this issue too; he quietly refined the power surrounding them. After a while, he looked thrilled, "It's effective!"

Lu Ye tested it as well, and indeed, as Li Baxian had said, the mist here was slightly different from that received during the Spirit Stream Ranking's baptism—markedly superior. While the Spirit Stream Ranking's baptism no longer benefitted Lu Ye and the others, the mist here did.

"Spread out," Lu Ye suggested.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan both nodded in agreement.

Giant Armor had already sat down cross-legged, eyes closed in cultivation, and with each breath, he drew massive amounts of the thick white mist into his mouth, filling his lungs.

Lu Ye walked in one direction, but after travelling less than thirty meters, an invisible barrier blocked his path.

He tried to push with his hand, only to find the barrier extremely solid, impervious to his current level of cultivation. He changed direction and moved sideways.

After walking a few dozen meters more, predictably, another invisible barrier appeared before him.

It became clear that the space here was not large, measuring only a few dozen meters in length and width.

Looking back, he could no longer see Li Baxian and the others. The dense white mist rolled and obscured his vision.

He stopped exploring; it was no longer necessary. Lu Ye sat down on the spot and began to construct a mini spirit energy gathering funnel around himself.

Yiyi emerged from Amber's body and sat down to cultivate about ten meters from him, while Amber opened her mouth wide, gulping down the omnipresent mist voraciously.

With the addition of each mini gathering funnel, the mist around him was drawn in by an invisible force, continuously flowing into Lu Ye's body. As the number of funnels grew, the movement of the mist around Lu Ye became visibly discernible.

His cultivation aptitude was indeed poor; he couldn't normally absorb nature's spiritual energy and was even incapable of drawing out spirit force from Spirit Stones.

However, under his unique cultivation method, in an environment like this, he could reap benefits unmatched by anyone else.

He remembered back at Dragon Spring and in the Soul Cleansing Pool, he had used such a cultivation method to obtain unimaginable benefits.

From his cursory experience, he was certain that the white mist here was of a higher grade than that of the Spirit Stream Ranking's Augury Baptism, but he found it difficult to judge the exact extent of the superiority.

Until this moment.

A look of surprise crossed Lu Ye's face.

As the invisible force from around him poured into his body, every piece of his flesh slowly writhed; it was a sign of bodily strengthening. His entire psyche felt as if it were in the clouds, buoyant and almost celestial, with his mental power also increasing at a remarkably rapid pace.

And not just that, a surging force poured into the river of spirit force within him, not only enlarging it but also significantly accelerating its flow.

This Heaven's Augury Baptism here... could actually enhance cultivation!

The Spirit Stream Ranking's Augury Baptism did not have this effect. On the Spirit Stream battlefield, the four Heavenly rewards that Lu Ye received had strengthened both his physique and psyche, but never once did his cultivation increase.

But here it could!

On further thought, it made sense.

Generally, the cultivators who made it onto the Spirit Stream Ranking were of the 9th Heaven cultivation. In the Spirit Stream Realm, that was already the limit. To advance further, one had to ascend to the Cloud River. Therefore, the Spirit Stream battlefield's Augury Baptism lacked the effect of enhancing cultivation because it was useless to the powerhouses on the Ranking.

Lu Ye was the first person in history to ascend to the Spirit Stream Ranking with 7th Heaven cultivation, and also the first to occupy the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking with 8th Heaven cultivation.

The baptism from Heaven's Augury not only strengthened the physique and mental power but also enhanced cultivation level; this time, it was much better than what the Spirit Stream Ranking could offer.

It was foreseeable that, after this time, his own strength would see a significant increase again.

It was just unknown how long he could cultivate here.

Although this was a reward from Heaven's Augury, it was impossible to cultivate here indefinitely. Realizing this, Lu Ye grew even more eager.

While several people were cultivating here, in the Great Wilderness Mountain, two figures were flying through the air in a disheveled escape; they were Xia Liang and Tan Sheng.

Just as Lu Ye killed the Fox Demon and broke the Psyche Secret Technique, these two realized something was amiss. They immediately took to the air and fled, ending up here.

"Brother Xia, let's take a break," Tan Sheng said breathlessly. Today's experiences were truly unreal; they had fought a bloody battle with an Overlord-class demon beast and hadn't fully recovered yet when a pack of wolves launched an attack.

The two survived not just out of luck but also by relying on their own formidable strength, after all, as cultivators of the Cloud River Level 9, they possessed depth that was not comparable to ordinary cultivators.

Even so, Tan Sheng was nearly at the end of his strength.

Xia Liang still had some strength left but wouldn't last much longer. Seeing Tan Sheng's disheveled state, he nodded, "Then let's rest a bit."

They immediately landed and each took an elixir pill to recover their energy.

A moment later, Tan Sheng had partially recovered, and with a look of lingering fear said, "I never expected that there would be such an exotic beast on the Cloud River battlefield."

Thinking back on the past month in Fox Fairy Valley, Tan Sheng felt as if he had been living in a dream. When enslaved by the Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Technique, he didn't notice anything amiss until the secret technique naturally dissolved with the death of the Fox Demon, and only then did he awaken as if from a dream.

"There are many wonders in this world. Even though we are at the Cloud River Realm, our knowledge and experience are still too limited."

"What I can't fathom even more is how Lu Yiye managed to get away." Considering past events, it seemed that Lu Yiye had never been affected by the Psyche Secret Technique. Otherwise, he wouldn't have directed the wolves to attack them. Today's events must have been in Lu Yiye's plans for a long time; otherwise, the timing would not have been so coincidental, coming precisely when the Fox Fairy Valley was battling the Overlord-class demon beast and was greatly weakened.

Xia Liang had been thinking about this problem too and voiced his suspicion, "There's only one possibility, that fellow's psyche is strong enough to resist the Fox Demon's Psyche Secret Technique."

Tan Sheng's eyes twitched, "He's merely at the Cloud River Level 4. Even if his psyche is strong, how strong can it really be?"

Though he said this, he also knew that this was the only plausible explanation; even the Fox Demon would not have expected that among so many cultivators in Fox Fairy Valley, she would eventually die at the hands of the one with the lowest cultivation.

"This Lu Yiye... has done many things out of the ordinary on the Spirit Stream battlefield, not to be underestimated." Since the last time, Xia Liang had deeply researched Lu Ye's information. When he saw the various reports about Lu Ye, he was truly shocked.

Since ancient times, there had never been a cultivator who stirred up such a commotion on the Spirit Stream battlefield, nor one who, through their own efforts, repeatedly made the Core Circle's sects suffer losses.

Also, since ancient times, there had been no cultivator who occupied the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking with 8th Heaven cultivation.

Before this trip, he had already warned himself not to underestimate Lu Yiye, but now it seems that his so-called high estimate was still an underestimate. Three cultivators of the Cloud River Level 9 joined forces for revenge, and now Wei Que was dead while the two of them fled like bereaved dogs.

Tan Sheng let out a hollow laugh, "Are we considered to have received his life-saving grace?"

Xia Liang snorted, "Does Brother Tan intend to be grateful to him?"

Tan Sheng's expression chilled, "How could I? He killed my New Moon Sect disciples and destroyed our New Moon Sect base, I dare not forget it! It's just... seeking revenge is as difficult as ascending to the heavens!"

Even if they now knew the location of Lu Ye's spirit ground, so what? The place was shrouded in formations and guarded by a wolf pack. Not just the two of them, even if they found dozens more helpers, they might not succeed.

With their connections, they could indeed find that many helpers, even a hundred if needed.

But even then... could they really take down that spirit ground, could they really kill Lu Yiye? Even if possible, the cost in lives would be terrifying.

Xia Liang clenched his fists, his knuckles cracking. He couldn't understand how Lu Yiye deserved to command such a wolf pack!

He also thought back to his time in Fox Fairy Valley, where he diligently guided Lu Yiye in saber skills every day, even generously sharing the secret technique of Mental Eye... The frustration in his heart was nearly overwhelming.

That damn trickster had never been influenced by the Psyche Secret Technique, but he was using false authority to seek his saber skills guidance. He himself was a complete fool, teaching whatever he knew!

"There are more than just the two of us from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge who seek his life," Xia Liang said, trying to calm his emotions with a light voice.

"What does Brother Xia mean..." Tan Sheng mused thoughtfully.

"If we quietly spread the location of Lu Yiye's spirit ground, there will always be people who go looking for trouble with him, especially those large spirit grounds... In order to expand the size of their spirit grounds and improve the grade, they are plundering spring spirits everywhere. A Class A spring spirit is very attractive to them, and then there's Lu Yiye..." He suddenly paused, "I remember there's a spirit ground nearby dominated by cultivators of the Sacred Fire Order. The Sacred Fire Order hates the Righteous Blood Sect more than anyone. If those fanatics learn of Lu Yiye's whereabouts, what do you think they would do?"

Chapter 598 Cloud River 5th Level Realm

Over thirty years ago, the Sacred Fire Order was a 1st grade sect, renowned and respected, but now it is merely 4th grade. The main reason for this decline is that all of their cultivators in the Divine Sea Realm were wiped out, with the Righteous Blood Sect being the instigator.

Back then, a great battle between the two factions resulted in three 1st grade sects from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge being brutally toppled from their lofty positions, including the Sacred Fire Order, Golden Clouds Tower, and Hundred Refinement Valley.

In terms of hatred for the Righteous Blood Sect, these three were the most intense, and Weh Ying had mentioned these three sects to Lu Ye the first time they met.

Tan Sheng's eyes lit up, "Driving away the wolves to swallow the tiger and reaping the fisherman's benefit. Brother Xia has a good strategy!"

With just their two strengths, they were already incapable of posing a threat to Lu Ye, but asking them to call for help to take revenge wasn't realistic either. If they really did that, there would certainly be many casualties, especially considering the numerous demon wolves in Lu Ye's spirit ground.

However, if they let the people from Sacred Fire Order know about the situation in Lu Ye's spirit ground, there would definitely be action taken. By then, they could simply hide and watch as events unfolded, seizing opportunities to strike, or at the very least, share in the spoils.

As for how to pass the news here to the Sacred Fire Order without leaving any trace, naturally it wasn't a problem for the two of them.

After a brief rest, the two once again controlled their weapons and flew toward the periphery of Great Wilderness Mountain, already starting to send out messages along the way.

As time passed, in the Heaven's Augury Baptism area, Lu Ye and his companions were spread out, each cultivating on their own.

Originally, Lu Ye thought they wouldn't be able to stay in this place for very long, but to his surprise, it wasn't until three days later that a strong repulsive force came from all directions, prompting him to quickly get to his feet.

Before Lu Ye could make another move, his vision suddenly blurred, and he found himself directly above the altar, stumbling slightly before hastily steadying himself.

Looking up, he saw Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, Giant Armor, and Amber Yiyi all repelled, with spirit force swirling around each of them.

From the fluctuations of spirit force on them, it was clear that each had made progress in their cultivation.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were originally at the Cloud River Level 5 realm, but now they had reached the level of Level 6, and it had been just over a month since their last breakthrough.

Yiyi and Amber had reached a level comparable to Level 4.

Lu Ye and Giant Armor had both reached Level 5!

Lu Ye had made his breakthrough a day before. The speed of cultivation in that baptism area was even higher than using the gold-hued spirit fortune stick. Had he not experienced it himself, he would have found it hard to believe.

"Junior Brother, did you feel it?" Li Baxian clenched and unclenched his fist slowly, as if he was experiencing the increase in his own strength.

Lu Ye nodded in agreement.

During these three days, his perception was the clearest because he didn't need to immerse his psyche in cultivation. With the spirit energy gathering funnel continuously working, he didn't need to do anything; he could naturally keep absorbing the mist, and his efficiency was much higher than the others.

It was different for Li Baxian and the rest. They had been completely engrossed in their cultivation until just now when they could sense the changes in themselves.

This improvement wasn't limited to just an increase in cultivation; it also included the strengthening of their bodies and psyches, as well as an increase in the flow rate of the spirit force rivers within them. Compared to before, the flow rate of the spirit force rivers was at least thirty percent faster.

Clearly, this was a benefit of the Heaven's Augury Baptism.

The elevation in cultivation meant a rise in strength, and with the strengthening of bodies and psyches, along with the faster flow of the spirit force rivers, their strength surged even more.

One could say that this cultivation session was certainly not as simple as just a slight advancement in cultivation level.

Compared to three days ago, the change in their strength was earth-shattering.

However, one cannot realize the extent of their strength without going through a real life-and-death battle, so Lu Ye also wasn't clear about his current level of strength.

Li Baxian's face still held an expression of disbelief and it was quite a while before he sighed, "As the ancients say, when one person achieves the Tao, even chickens and dogs ascend to heaven. This time, we really have to thank Junior Brother for slaying the Fox Demon."

If it weren't for Lu Ye killing the Fox Demon and receiving the reward from Heaven's Augury, they wouldn't have had this opportunity. As for the thousands of mid-grade spirit stones they had used to activate the altar before... compared to the reward they got, it was nothing at all. Not to mention thousands, even tens of thousands could not be exchanged for it.

"What are you talking about with chickens and dogs... I'm certainly not one," Feng Yuechan pouted, clearly not pleased.

Li Baxian laughed heartily, "That's the gist of it!"

Feng Yuechan's smile was radiant as she turned to look at Lu Ye, "But really, this time we must thank Junior Brother Lu. With this opportunity, our path of cultivation will surely become easier and broader."

Her words were indeed true. Though the Cloud River Realm wasn't the foundational realm for cultivators, their cultivation in the Cloud River Realm was not considered high. The benefits they had gained this time could arguably be said to lay a much more solid foundation, greatly benefiting their future cultivation and growth.

"We are one family, there's no need for such formalities, Senior Sister," Lu Ye said with a smile.

Feng Yuechan misunderstood the implication, glanced at Li Baxian, and her cheeks blushed with a rosy hue.

"This altar..." Li Baxian turned his head to look at the altar. He originally thought to return after stabilizing his cultivation for further training, but one glance revealed the altar was now in pieces, and he swallowed his words.

Lu Ye also noticed the change in the altar and appeared contemplative, "It seems that the reward from Heaven's Augury is one-time only."

"Returning to our previous topic, even if the altar had remained intact, without the golden seal reward from Heaven's Augury, there would be no way to reactivate it."

And deep within Fox Fairy Valley lay such an altar; it now seemed like Heaven's Augury had prepared this reward well in advance.

"Let's go back to the spirit ground," Li Baxian said.

With the altar destroyed, there was no longer any need to stay in Fox Fairy Valley.

A moment later, streaks of light shot up into the sky, darting towards the direction of the spirit ground, while on the ground, the vast wolf pack galloped along, closely following behind.

"Junior Brother Lu, are you worried about something?" Li Baxian moved closer and asked.

Lu Ye said, "Tan Sheng and Xia Liang are not dead, and the location of the spirit ground has been revealed. They will surely return with force."

Li Baxian's expression also grew somber; it was indeed a pity that they could not kill Xia Liang and Tan Sheng. When Feng Yuechan and Giant Armor led the wolf pack to help, orders had already been given: apart from Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, everyone else was to be encircled but not slain. This was because it was impossible to confirm the allegiance of others, and in a pitched battle, the wolf pack would certainly suffer heavy losses.

Though the orders were given, the wolf pack, after all, wasn't composed of cultivators and didn't possess high spiritual intelligence. At the time, Feng Yuechan had to contain Li Baxian, and Giant Armor

was enslaved by the Fox Demon using the Psyche Secret Technique amidst the chaos, which ultimately allowed Tan Sheng and Xia Liang to escape with their lives.

After all, those two were Level 9 cultivators and not so easily killed.

Last time, they had been completely oblivious to the existence of the wolf pack, and as a result, they suffered a major loss. Not only were both injured, but Wei Que was also killed.

Now, they were thoroughly familiar with the forces within the spirit ground. If they were to return, they would undoubtedly make thorough preparations.

"It may not be as bad as you think," Li Baxian shook his head.

"How so?"

Li Baxian said, "Since they are aware of our spirit ground's strength, they also understand that bringing too few people would be futile. Yet, if they do bring a sufficient number of people, the battle will inevitably result in heavy casualties and losses they cannot afford. To achieve an absolute crushing force against our spirit ground, they would need no fewer than a hundred people."

"What if they indeed bring a hundred or more?"

Li Baxian furrowed his brows slightly, "That seems unlikely..."

"It's just a matter of our personal grudge, and that might not compel them to go that far. However, Senior Brother, do not forget that I also carry an immense bounty on my head. From ancient times, wealth has been known to tempt hearts. Even if they simply leak the location of the spirit ground, we will continuously face troublesome situations in the future."

"So, Junior Brother Lu means..."

Lu Ye fell into contemplative silence; he had thought that choosing the spirit ground deep within Great Wilderness Mountain and having the protection of the wolf pack would be enough for peace of mind. Yet, it hadn't been long before troubles arose again and again.

Reflecting on the Class C Spirit Ground he had acquired before, he hadn't been able to hold onto it for long, and after a single journey into the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's secret realm, it was stolen.

Despite being favored by Heaven's Augury and blessed with great fortune, why did he seem to have such little affinity with spirit grounds?

"There are two options: relocate the spirit ground or ensure multiple escape routes."

"Relocate the spirit ground..." Li Baxian shook his head, "With the Heaven's Augury Pillar invited by Junior Brother in the spirit ground, relocating it would mean wasting the hundred thousand merit points, and the relocation of the spirit ground would also cause the spring spirit's grade to drop..."

Lu Ye was extremely astonished. "Relocating the spirit ground would cause the spring spirit's grade to drop?" He was unaware of this.

Li Baxian nodded, "Though it's possible to extract the spring spirit again, each extraction results in the spring spirit's grade dropping by one level."

"So, if we relocate the spirit ground, we could only get a Class B Spirit Ground?"

And lose a Heaven's Augury Pillar in the process.

By that logic, when the spring spirit of the previous Class C Spirit Ground was stolen, the thief could only obtain a Class D spring spirit, what a waste.

"Correct. Therefore, unless absolutely necessary, we should avoid relocating the spirit ground."

Lu Ye nodded, "Then we'll need to prepare additional escape routes. After we return, I'll set up several more teleportation arrays, just in case."

With the teleportation arrays in place, even if the spirit ground were truly breached, the safety of the individuals could be somewhat guaranteed.

In the hunting grounds, Lu Ye's Cloud River Level 3 cultivation allowed him to set up teleportation arrays that covered about 30 miles. Now that his cultivation had reached Level 5, and his foundation had greatly increased, the range he could cover would definitely be even wider.

No matter what Tan Sheng and Xia Liang planned, it was always good to be prepared.

After further discussion with Li Baxian, Lu Ye's plans gradually took shape in his mind.

Rushing all the way, it wasn't until dusk that Great Reversal Valley finally came into view. Having been away for several days, the spirit ground had been unguarded. Fortunately, the formations Lu Ye had set up before were still perfectly operational. From a distance, there appeared to be no signs that the spirit ground had been attacked.

Chapter 599 Sacred Universe Spirit Ground

The spirit ground remained untouched, after all, it was deep within the Great Wilderness Mountain. Even if a cultivator happened to pass by nearby, the formations set up by Lu Ye were enough to conceal everything, making it unlikely for anyone to notice anything amiss.

The Great Array Jade Cluster was activated, and the group entered one after another, greeted by a beautiful scenery. On the soft emerald grass lay many wolf pups frolicking and playing. There weren't many adult demon wolves left guarding the spirit ground, only about a dozen or so. Sensing the disturbance, they all looked over, but upon recognizing that it was Lu Ye and the others returning, they lost interest and ignored them.

It was four to six hours later that the entire wolf pack finally returned.

As the demon wolves could not travel through air, their speed was much slower than that of Lu Ye and the others.

At this very moment, Lu Ye stood in front of the Heaven's Augury Pillar, his consciousness connected to the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, purchasing a large amount of materials.

Now that the location of the spirit ground had been exposed, Tan Sheng and Xia Liang would certainly not let things rest, and it was foreseeable that it wouldn't be long before cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would come to attack. Having decided to stay within the spirit ground for the time being, it was necessary to set up the required formations, especially the teleportation arrays... Although the spirit ground had a Heaven's Augury Pillar that allowed everyone to return to the Nine Provinces at any time, having a few teleportation arrays set up wouldn't be a bad thing either.

After purchasing the materials, Lu Ye started refining array banners.

He had just refined a large number of array banners at Fox Fairy Valley not too long ago, but they had all been consumed, resulting in assisting the Fox Demon in killing the Berserk Giant Ape.

Not many days had passed before he began refining array banners once more, but the feeling was completely different; it was simpler now.

This wasn't just a result of the improvement in his Level 3 cultivation, but also because his consciousness had grown stronger, allowing for more precise control over the spirit force.

What had taken him the time to refine two array banners a few days ago, now allowed him to refine three, greatly increasing efficiency.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were responsible for scouting suitable locations to set up the teleportation arrays around the area. Giant Armor couldn't be of much help; not causing any trouble was good enough, and he had been in a state of cultivation since returning.

While the several individuals were busy here, in another valley less than three thousand li from Great Reversal Valley, a big array enveloped the area, with cultivators constantly coming and going.

This place was the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, and even on the ten-part map sold by the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, this spirit ground was marked.

The Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had been around in the Cloud River battlefield for over twenty years and was one of the relatively well-known spirit grounds in the vicinity.

Compared to the spirit ground inhabited by Lu Ye and the others, the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground was undoubtedly a large-scale spirit ground. Over the twenty years of development, the spirit ground had continuously expanded, and now housed hundreds of cultivators. Looking across the Cloud River battlefield, there weren't many with a scale greater than that of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

What was particularly noteworthy was that a few years ago, Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had advanced from a Class B to a Class A spirit ground.

The grade of a spirit ground can be upgraded, and its scale expanded, simply by merging with more spring spirits. Take Lu Ye's spirit ground for example, a Class A spirit ground is indeed the highest quality of spirit ground, but if Lu Ye could obtain more spring spirits of different qualities and integrate them into the Spiritual Spring, then the quality of the spirit ground might not improve, but the scale certainly could. The higher the quality of the merged spring spirits, the larger the expansion would be, allowing accommodation for more cultivators for cultivation.

Essentially, this was how the large spirit grounds in the Cloud River battlefield had developed, step by step.

Many sects possess their dedicated spirit grounds, passed down from one generation of cultivators to the next.

This has an incredibly far-reaching significance for the development of sects; once their cultivators ascend to the Cloud River Realm, they can cultivate in the spirit ground in peace.

However, for many cultivators, cultivating in a spirit ground is safe but also a shackle. Being too safe and lacking in struggle, one loses their cutting edge.

Thus, even the sects with spirit ground heritage don't confine their cultivators solely within their spirit grounds; they often venture out for experience and training.

Sacred Universe Spirit Ground is not the ancestral spirit ground of any one sect, but two sects.

One is the Sacred Fire Order, and the other is Universe Sect.

Both sects are part of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge and are located in Youzhou, having longstanding relations with each other. Naturally, their disciples would assist each other when in the Cloud River battlefield.

Now in the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, two Level 9 cultivators lead over a hundred people; one is Huo Liaoyuan of the Sacred Fire Order, and the other is Tu Guanxiong of the Universe Sect.

A spirit ground with over a hundred people and two Level 9 cultivators is a rather small ratio. It is not that both major sects only have two Cloud River Level 9 cultivators; being 4th-5th grade sects, how could they possibly have only two Cloud River Level 9 cultivators?

It's just that Cloud River Realm cultivators do not always remain in the Cloud River battlefield, especially after reaching a higher level of cultivation, they spend most of their time in the Nine Provinces. Advancing in cultivation is secondary; tempering oneself is more important.

It's unlikely for them to stay in the spirit ground year-round unless they need to oversee it and take care of their junior brothers and sisters.

Even such overseeing is performed on a rotating basis, a three-month term at a time, and when the time is up, other Cloud River Level 9 cultivators would come to replace them.

In a secret chamber, Huo Liaoyuan was cultivating when the battlefield marking suddenly stirred, but he did not check it immediately and continued to sit quietly.

It was only after one incense stick's time that he slowly opened his eyes and exhaled a breath of turbid air.

Touching the battlefield marking, he checked it briefly and his expression shifted slightly. This message came from a junior brother wandering and honing their skills in the Cloud River battlefield. The content of the information piqued his interest.

After a moment of thought, he sent out a message and hurriedly got up.

He walked out of the secret room and directly to the front of another house. Before he could knock, the door opened on its own, revealing a figure—it was Tu Guanxiong, another Level 9 cultivator from the spirit ground.

As Huo Liaoyuan entered, Tu Guanxiong asked, "Senior Brother Huo, is the news reliable?"

"It's from Nan Cheng who transmitted it from the outside, whether it's credible or not can't be determined," Huo Liaoyuan replied.

Upon recalling briefly, Tu Guanxiong remembered who "Nan Cheng" in his words was. There were more than just the two of them as Level 9 cultivators from the two sects, and obviously, there were more than merely a hundred cultivators from the Cloud River Realm.

However, the spirit ground could only accommodate a hundred cultivators for cultivation, so many more disciples were scattered across the Cloud River battlefield, seeking their own opportunities.

"Where did he get the news from?" Tu Guanxiong asked again.

Huo Liaoyuan said, "Someone transmitted it to him, and the person who got this information also heard it from somewhere else. The message has been passed around multiple times, so it's impossible to determine its source now."

"How credible does Senior Brother Huo think this message is?"

"Until I see it with my own eyes, any news is hard to believe. However, since it concerns that Lu Yiye, it's worth investigating. What makes me curious is that the intelligence in the message is too detailed."

The information he had received was not just about Lu Ye's current location, but also the various forces within the spirit ground, including the cultivations of people like Li Baxian and the numerous packs of wolves.

"Senior Brother Huo suspects that...?" Tu Guanxiong mused thoughtfully.

"If I'm not mistaken, someone must have suffered a big loss at the hands of that Lu Yiye and now has no hope for revenge, so they want to use us to kill him!" he paused, "Nearly three hundred demon wolves, that Lu Yiye isn't from the beast-taming faction, how could he command them?"

Even if he was from the beast-taming faction, he wouldn't possibly be able to control so many demon wolves.

"If that's really the case, we might not be able to handle it," Tu Guanxiong worried, but he knew about the grudges between the Sacred Fire Order and the Righteous Blood Sect, and that it was Lu Yiye carrying a hefty bounty, so he was also clear that Huo Liaoyuan must be tempted; otherwise, he wouldn't have come to discuss this matter with him.

Not to mention Huo Liaoyuan, even he himself was tempted. Since the last incident in the hunting grounds, Lu Yiye had extorted a vast amount of resources from the major sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge at the Spirit Stream battlefield, and the bounty on him from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had thus increased significantly.

In recent days, countless people had been searching for Lu Yiye's whereabouts in the Cloud River battlefield, to no avail. No one knew where he was. Now that there was an exact location, who could remain unmoved? If this news were to spread, it would probably only be a few days before that place would be crowded with people.

The one who secretly leaked the information chose not to disseminate it but sent it with precision to the Sacred Fire Order, clearly not giving up hope.

"The number of demon wolves is indeed substantial, but as long as we plan carefully, it's not impossible to kill Lu Yiye."

Some time ago, Lu Yiye had only reached Level 3 cultivation, and even after receiving the reward from the Kills Ranking, his cultivation level could not have changed drastically. Fighting such an enemy, as long as they found an opportunity, they could surely kill him in one strike—why bother entangling with a pack of wolves?

"Regardless, let's send someone to check it out. We have to make sure the news is reliable, and as for someone wanting to profit from the fisherman's fortune..." Huo Liaoyuan's eyes flashed coldly, "They'll also have to see if they have the capability to snatch food from a tiger's mouth!"

The person acting so sneakily was clearly alone and weak. With the entire strength of the spirit ground on their side, what was there to fear?

"I understand," Tu Guanxiong responded, and immediately transmitted a message.

Investigating such news naturally required the work of a ghost cultivator, and since ninety-nine percent of the disciples from the Sacred Fire Order were magic cultivators and it was difficult to find a ghost cultivator, they had to rely on someone from the Universe Sect.

Soon after, a short, lean man stepped in: "Senior Brother Tu, Senior Brother Huo."

Tu Guanxiong said, "Yean Gui, there's a place I need you to check out."

The ghost cultivator named Yean Gui said, "Please instruct me, Senior Brother."

"Great Reversal Valley!"

Yean Gui took out the ten-part map, checked it briefly, and located the position of Great Reversal Valley, raising an eyebrow, "This place is deep into the Great Wilderness Mountain. What's there, Senior Brothers?"

"You'll know once you get there," Tu Guanxiong didn't elaborate, not wanting to give his junior brother a preconceived notion, "Remember, investigate carefully and be aware of your safety. There... might be danger."

Yean Gui was unconcerned: "Don't worry, Senior Brother, I will be careful."

Although his cultivation was not very high, he was at least at Level 7 of the Cloud River Realm and, as a ghost cultivator, was most adept at the Path of Concealment. For him, gathering intelligence was but a trivial matter.

"Report back immediately if you discover anything."

"Yes!" Yean Gui took the order and left the room, controlled his weapon, and soared into the sky.

Chapter 600 Significant Increase in Strength

His cultivation had advanced another level, aided by the blessings of Heaven's Augury Baptism, greatly increasing his efficiency in producing array markers. In just two days, Lu Ye's hand held nearly three hundred array banners.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had also found several suitable locations for setting up teleportation arrays.

As a large number of array banners were used up, Formation after Formation took shape. Soon, all three hundred array markers were gone.

On the fourth day after returning from Fox Fairy Valley, as Lu Ye was crafting more array banners, he suddenly looked up toward a direction outside the spirit ground.

The next moment, he rose to his full height and darted toward the outside of the spirit ground. The instant his body dashed out of the protective array, the Concealment and Breath-concealing Spirit Runes enveloped him, and his figure swiftly vanished.

Less than a li away from the spirit ground, Yean Gui concealed his presence and quietly hid behind a large tree.

After receiving orders from Tu Guanxiong, he had hurried to this place. With his Cloud River Level 7 cultivation, it shouldn't have taken him four days to arrive here.

But this place was deep within the Great Wilderness Mountain, and the journey was fraught with dangers. Fortunately, as a spirit cultivator, he could avoid many unnecessary battles, though this did delay his time.

He had barely arrived at Great Reversal Valley today when he accidentally triggered an alarm array.

He immediately moved away from the location of the alarm array and hid in the shadows, silently observing.

Tu Guanxiong had only asked him to scout out the situation in Great Reversal Valley and hadn't specified what exactly was here, but something that Tu Guanxiong and Huo Liaoyuan highly valued was undoubtedly hidden here.

If there was an alarm array, there must surely be someone who set it up.

Who was hiding here?

Now that he had triggered the alarm array, the person who set it up would definitely come to investigate. He would learn their identity then. What was strange to him was that he waited for a long time and saw no one.

A few hundred zhang away, Lu Ye had concealed himself and was secretly observing the surroundings; there were no traces of wild beasts or demon beasts, and the view presented nothing out of the ordinary...

Someone had been here!

And from the current situation, it was likely a spirit cultivator!

He had rushed out the moment the Formation was triggered, but had still not seen any sign of the person; the other party was obviously hiding. This spirit cultivator was indeed a cautious person.

Could it be someone Tan Sheng and Xia Liang sent?

It didn't seem likely. Both of them knew the situation of the spirit ground very well; why would they send a spirit cultivator here?

Was it just someone passing by?

Maybe ... or maybe not...

Lu Ye quietly moved, not revealing the slightest hint of his aura as he silently surveyed the surroundings. Now his mental power had significantly strengthened; within a thirty-zhang range, even without using the Insight Spirit Runes, he could detect any anomalies instantly.

One tea stick of time, one incense stick's time...

The covert game of cat and mouse silently unfolded.

It was nearly one hour later when Lu Ye suddenly turned his head and looked behind a large tree; there... something seemed to be subtly off.

Enhancing his eyes with the Insight Spirit Runes, his vision altered, multicolored lights began to flow, and sure enough, among the mix of colors moving back and forth, the outline of a slightly short figure was drawn out.

He immediately sneaked up quietly.

Yean Gui suddenly felt a sense of unease, faint though it was. But, as a spirit cultivator who often ventured into dangerous places, he was always careful and cautious; if not, Tu Guanxiong wouldn't have been reassured to have him come here alone to scout the area.

Immediately, he held his breath and concentrated, silently sensing his surroundings, trying to find the source of his uneasy feeling.

At that moment, suddenly, there was a surge of spirit force from behind. Without thinking, he hastily turned around, and his hand flashed with a glowing curved saber, swiping it backward.

Not far behind him, a figure had appeared out of nowhere. When the red saber light slashed down, Yean Gui felt a massive force accompanied by the burst of spirit force attacking from the front, sending his body flying backward; his chest churned with blood Qi.

His concealment was broken, revealing his figure.

While mid-air, he got a clear look at the face of the person who had ambushed him, and his eyes flashed with recognition, exclaiming, "Lu Yiye!"

So that's how it is! It makes all sense!

No wonder Senior Brother Tu and Senior Brother Huo had him come to scout out this place; it turned out this was where Lu Yiye was hiding.

He had seen Lu Ye's image before. Sacred Universe Spirit Ground was led by the Sacred Fire Order, and the Sacred Fire Order had a deep-seated grudge with the Righteous Blood Sect. Huo Liaoyuan had somehow acquired an image message stone that had an imprint of Lu Ye's image.

With this action, Huo Liaoyuan evidently wanted all disciples of the Sacred Fire Order to remember Lu Ye's appearance.

So even though he had never met Lu Ye before, Yean Gui immediately recognized him.

His heart surged with excitement... But what followed was boundless horror.

A storm-like barrage of saber strikes enveloped him, each strike carrying the breath of death. Yean Gui kept retreating, and in a short amount of time, the base of his palm cracked, his arms went numb, and the spirit force within his body surged wildly!

How is this guy so strong?

Although he was a ghost cultivator and not adept at direct combat, he was at least at Level 7. The spirit force fluctuations exhibited by Lu Yiye seemed to be only at Level 5, yet he was completely unable to withstand it. Facing that ferocious, continuous saber onslaught, he couldn't help feeling utterly crushed.

I'm going to die! This terrifying thought uncontrollably sprang up in his mind. The excitement on Yean Gui's face had long since faded, replaced by nothing but fear and panic.

When Lu Ye struck the first blow, he hadn't used his full strength because he couldn't be certain which faction the newcomer was from.

However, once Yean Gui blurted out his name, the other's stance became clear.

If he recognized him, then he certainly knew of his background. If the other party were from the Haotian Alliance, they would have voluntarily shown the glow of the battlefield marking. Since that didn't happen... they must be from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

Thus, from the second blow onward, Lu Ye held nothing back.

A ripping sound was heard, accompanied by Yean Gui's agonizing scream. His chest clothing tore apart, revealing a bloody wound.

Under the agony, Yean Gui's defense became even more chaotic. Taking advantage of this, Lu Ye delivered another saber cut which nearly decapitated Yean Gui. Fortunately, he managed to block it with his Spiritual Artifact at the last moment, but even so, his body was sent tumbling through the air, blood spraying amidst the chaos.

As he landed awkwardly, Yean Gui didn't attempt to flee right away but instead pressed his hand on his battlefield marking...

He didn't understand why Lu Yiye was so powerful; he only knew he had been exposed and that his chances were slim. Given that, he had to pass the message back no matter what, refusing to die in vain.

He didn't even entertain the idea of begging for mercy, as he knew it would only bring greater humiliation and torment.

However, the next moment, his heart contracted violently, and his vitality and vigor rapidly dissipated. Looking down, he saw a fiery long saber had somehow pierced his chest. The violent spirit force exploded within him, causing him to spit blood and stagger.

As the light in his eyes quickly dimmed, Lu Ye withdrew his saber, and his body toppled forward.

Lu Ye shook the blood from the Boulder Mountain Saber and sheathed it.

A speck of red light floated from the corpse of the ghost cultivator in front of him, like a firefly, and landed on the back of Lu Ye's hand.

Frowning at the corpse in front of him, Lu Ye suddenly realized... he might have underestimated his own strength.

Even though the opponent was a ghost cultivator not skilled in direct confrontations and was at Level 7, he stood no chance against the current him.

Recollecting his previous experience in the hunting grounds with that Level 7 combat cultivator, he and Li Baxian Feng Yuechan had fought fiercely, and if he hadn't successfully activated the Beast Transformation Secret Technique, it was uncertain whose game it would have been.

In just two months, those Level 7 figures who had once forced him and his brothers to exhaust all their methods, now couldn't last even thirty seconds against him – his growth in strength could almost be described as earth-shattering.

Of course, back in the hunting grounds, he was only at Cloud River Level 3. Although it's only been a little over two months, his cultivation had jumped two minor levels to Cloud River Level 5.

Undoubtedly, the Heaven's Augury Baptism he received at the altar in Fox Fairy Valley had considerably fortified his foundation.

Especially, the increased flow speed of the spirit force river inside his body contributed to this, as the quicker the spirit force circulates within a cultivator, the stronger the burst of power they can unleash instantaneously.

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan approached and upon seeing the body, Li Baxian asked, "What happened?"

Lu Ye replied, "Someone came to probe the situation."

Li Baxian frowned. "Xia Liang? Tan Sheng?" He then denied his own guess, "No, that's not right. They are very familiar with the conditions of the spirit ground, there's no need for them to send someone to investigate. Was this just a passerby?"

"Doesn't seem like it." Lu Ye shook his head. If it was merely passing by, it made no sense to precisely target Great Reversal Valley. Recalling the ghost cultivator's immediate reaction upon seeing him, Lu Ye felt that, as if oblivious to the actual situation, the ghost cultivator had been sent here specifically to gather intelligence.

Raising his hand, spirit force surged, and he grabbed two storage sacks from the corpse.

In just a moment, the restriction locks on the storage sacks were opened, and Lu Ye rummaged through them quickly, soon pulling out a jade tablet similar to an identity tag, with an image of a palace engraved on the front, and a large character in the center.

Universe!

Looking at the back, it likely bore the name of the deceased ghost cultivator, Yean Gui.

Lu Ye tossed the jade tablet to Li Baxian, who examined it and pondered, "It might be someone from Universe Sect."

Universe Sect...

Lu Ye carefully recalled, barely remembering that it was a 5th grade sect. He had seen the sect's location marked on a ten-part map during his time in the inner circle of the battlefield.

"Sacred Universe Spirit Ground!" Li Baxian murmured again.

"What?"

Li Baxian took out the ten-part map, examined it, and frowned, "If it's someone from Universe Sect, then he might be from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground! Sacred Universe Spirit Ground is a large spirit ground shared between Universe Sect and another Ten Thousand Demons Ridge power, and it's marked on the ten-part map. It's only about two or three thousand miles away from us."

Two or three thousand miles, undoubtedly a vast distance for a Spirit Stream Realm cultivator.

But for those at Cloud River Realm, it wasn't much at all. With Lu Ye's current speed, even only relying on weapon control-flying, he could reach there in about a day if he traveled at full speed.