

Humanity 601

Chapter 601 Crisis Strikes

"That other power from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, junior brother should not be unfamiliar with it."

"Which one?"

"Sacred Fire Order!"

Lu Ye was indeed not unfamiliar with this power; his first contact with their people left an extremely deep impression on him.

It was atop Golden Light Peak on the Spirit Stream battlefield where his last battle took place against a Saintess from the Sacred Fire Order who had shattered her spiritual orifice, causing her cultivation to drop from Level 7 to Level 6.

That battle could be said to be extremely fierce; in the end, both sides were exhausted. He finally used the last bit of his spirit force to cast the Fire Phoenix Technique, killing his opponent.

Later on in the inner circle of the battlefield, when Lu Ye was pulling out a unit of the Haotian Alliance's Allied Forces, he specifically led the forces to destroy the Sacred Fire Order's base, because his eldest senior sister had mentioned that the Sacred Fire Order had a deep grudge with the Righteous Blood Sect!

The sudden appearance of a person suspected to be from the Universe Sect here, and the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground jointly controlled by the Sacred Fire Order and the Universe Sect just two or three thousand li away, naturally led Li Baxian to many speculations.

"If this person really comes from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, then we might have quite some trouble coming our way soon," Li Baxian spoke up.

Not to mention other things, just the fact that a huge 1st grade sect was beaten down so hard that it fell in rank and only today has it recovered to the level of 4th grade. Such hatred is fundamentally

impossible to resolve; once the people from the Sacred Fire Order learn of Lu Ye's current location, they will surely take action.

"We'll have to play it by ear," Lu Ye's eyes flashed.

He had thought that with a Class A spirit ground, he would be able to cultivate in peace with Li Baxian and the others, but fate had other plans. It hadn't been long before Xia Liang and Tan Sheng and others attacked, and now they might also be targeted by the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground...

Lu Ye wasn't panicked though. In the spirit ground, there was the Heaven's Augury Pillar he had invited, as well as many formations and a pack of wolves to guard. The worst outcome would simply be the spirit ground being breached and he, along with Li Baxian and the others, being forced to retreat back to the Nine Provinces.

"Did this person send out any messages before dying?" Li Baxian asked.

Lu Ye nodded: "Yes, but whether he was successful, I'm not sure."

This Yan Gui fellow, upon sensing something wrong, suddenly raised his hand and pressed it on his battlefield marking. Although Lu Ye quickly killed him, Lu Ye didn't know whether he had managed to send out his message successfully.

"Let's prepare for the worst and respond appropriately," Li Baxian said. The three quickly returned to the spirit ground.

Amber was sound asleep. The reason for this was that Lu Ye had fed it the demonic pill of an Overlord-class demon beast.

The storage sack he had obtained from the Fox Demon had already been opened by him, yielding rich gains, with hundreds of demonic pills alone.

Thinking about how the Fox Demon had lived in Fox Fairy Valley commanding respect and awe for twenty years, it wasn't surprising that it had accumulated so many demonic pills.

Amber had swallowed quite a few demonic pills before, but there were never many reactions. However, after swallowing that Berserk Giant Ape's demonic pill, it fell into a deep sleep not long after, clearly needing to sleep to refine the immense power contained within the pill.

This caused Yiyi to also enter a state of silence.

However, Lu Ye was actually looking forward to it. With Amber showing such an unusual reaction this time, when it awoke, it would surely gain considerably. Perhaps it would even make a breakthrough.

Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

Tu Guanxiong suddenly felt a reaction from his battlefield marking and hurriedly checked it, discovering it was a message from Yan Gui, who had left a few days ago. The message was very simple, comprised of only three words.

"Lu Yiye..."

It wasn't that Yan Gui didn't want to send more information; he simply didn't have the time. Managing to send these three words was already his limit.

And as Tu Guanxiong finished checking this unclear message, Yan Gui's battlefield marking disappeared completely.

Tu Guanxiong's face changed dramatically.

The disappearance of the battlefield marking undoubtedly meant Yan Gui's downfall, something completely unexpected to him. After all, Yan Gui was at Level 7 and, as a cultivator who specialized in the Path of Concealment, had posed little danger even when faced with Level 9 practitioners of the Cloud River Realm if he didn't expose himself intentionally.

That was why he had felt relieved sending Yan Gui out.

He had only been sent to Great Reversal Valley to gather some information; how could he have fallen?

But the last message sent by Yan Gui undoubtedly indicated that he had seen Lu Yiye, suggesting that the intelligence Huo Liaoyuan had received before was true!

Lu Yiye was in Great Reversal Valley!

"Damn it!" Tu Guanxiong cursed under his breath, the mysterious death of his junior brother causing him immense grief.

Suppressing the sorrow in his heart, Tu Guanxiong left the room, found Huo Liaoyuan, and informed him about Yan Gui's fate.

Huo Liaoyuan was utterly astonished: "Yan Gui is dead?"

Tu Guanxiong responded somberly: "He's dead!"

The disappearance of the battlefield marking was the most definite proof.

Huo Liaoyuan's mouth twitched, and in the end, all he could say was, "Please accept my condolences."

"Yan Gui must not die in vain!" Tu Guanxiong said coldly.

Huo Liaoyuan nodded, "Of course, we will not let him die for nothing. Since Lu Yiye is in that Great Reversal Valley, I will take people there to kill him immediately!"

"If the intelligence that Lu Yiye is in the Great Reversal Valley is true, then the rest should also be accurate. It won't be easy to deal with a few hundred demon wolves. Brother Huo, it might not be successful if we don't have enough people!"

Huo Liaoyuan nodded, "Don't worry, I will send the message out right away and have the disciples of the Sacred Fire Order nearby gather at the Great Reversal Valley. In addition, I will take half of the people from the spirit ground!"

Taking half of the cultivators from the spirit ground meant fifty people, and counting the disciples of the Sacred Fire Order who were summoned, they could easily form a contingent of a hundred. Such a force could contend with what lay in the Great Reversal Valley... if their intelligence was correct.

"Take seventy percent!" Tu Guanxiong commanded, "If we are to make a move, then we must do so with overwhelming force!"

Huo Liaoyuan wanted to say that it wasn't necessary, but seeing the hatred in Tu Guanxiong's eyes, he ultimately nodded and said, "Then I will follow Brother Tu's instructions. I will personally kill that Lu Yiye and bring his head back."

Tu Guanxiong warned, "Brother Huo, you must not be careless. Last time at the hunting field, Lu Yiye summoned the Heaven's Augury Pillar and escaped back to the Nine Provinces. Now, he might still have the ability to call upon the Heaven's Augury Pillar."

"I have heard about the incident at the hunting field. The main reason he was able to escape was not because of the Heaven's Augury Pillar, but the protection of the Golden Body Token, which no one could breach. This time, without the Golden Body Token, even if he summons the Heaven's Augury Pillar, he might not have a chance to escape back to the Nine Provinces." Huo Liaoyuan said with a cold smile, "Moreover, Brother Tu, don't forget, I still have that thing with me. As long as I find an opportunity, he's as good as dead!"

Tu Guanxiong was startled at first, then as if he remembered something, he slightly nodded, "That's true, but using that item on Lu Yiye... seems somewhat of a waste."

"I will seize the right moment to act, Brother Tu, just wait for my good news."

With a resolution made, Huo Liaoyuan immediately sprang into action. All the cultivators in the spirit ground who were not in closed-door cultivation were gathered, selecting seventy percent of them.

Following that, Huo Liaoyuan continuously sent out messages, summoning the scattered disciples of the Sacred Fire Order to assemble on the periphery of the Great Wilderness Mountain.

In no more than half a Shichen later, a gigantic spirit ark soared into the sky, heading in the direction of the Great Wilderness Mountain.

In the Spirit Stream battlefield, large spirit arks capable of transporting many cultivators are not uncommon, especially in the inner and Core Circle areas—almost every sect has one.

These massive spirit arks, though not as fast as smaller Flying Spirit Artifacts, are not much slower either and are essential for a sect or the same force to travel together.

However, in the Cloud River battlefield, such large Flying Spirit Artifacts are rarely seen because Cloud River Level cultivators seldom gather in large numbers. Only some large spirit grounds would be equipped with such Flying Spirit Artifacts in case of unexpected need.

Tu Guanxiong watched the spirit ark depart. Although he was eager to avenge the death himself, someone needed to be left in charge of the spirit ground. Between him and Huo Liaoyuan, one had to stay behind, and since Huo Liaoyuan held that item, it was decided that Huo Liaoyuan would lead the expedition.

As the spirit ark was deployed, a few dozen miles away, another pair of eyes watched silently.

It was none other than Xia Liang and Tan Sheng. After several days of recovery, the two were nearly back to full health.

"Brother Xia is prescient indeed. The Sacred Universe Spirit Ground could not hold back after all and has mobilized in full force. And it seems that the news has not been completely leaked."

Xia Liang snorted coldly, "Money moves the heart. How could they bear to let the news leak out? Otherwise, wouldn't everyone want a share of the spoils?"

"Shall we set off too?"

"Let's go."

The two of them did not follow directly behind the spirit ark from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground. After all, they had known the location of the Great Reversal Valley well in advance and could arrive there first to await quietly.

In the spirit ground, all was quiet.

Li Baxian and the others were in the midst of cultivation, Amber was still asleep, and Lu Ye was holding a broken arrow, examining it back and forth.

This broken arrow belonged to Wei Que. When he was on the verge of death, he used this broken arrow, which unleashed tremendous power, piercing through the Giant Armor's body.

Later, as Lu Ye and Li Baxian pursued the severely injured Tan Sheng and Xia Liang, Feng Yuechan stayed behind to watch over the Giant Armor and collected the broken arrow.

This object looked quite old; it was unclear where Wei Que had found it.

However, according to Feng Yuechan, this broken arrow was an exotic treasure.

Exotic treasures are so named because it is difficult to judge their quality by common standards.

For example, the Golden Body Token used by Lu Ye in the hunting field, or the tracking disc Tan Sheng once used to trace his location, are exotic treasures.

The Nine Provinces have many exotic treasures, most of which have emerged from various secret realms or have been gifted by Heaven's Augury. Anything related to exotic treasures cannot be considered ordinary; they often possess a variety of strange and unusual functions.

Take this broken arrow for example. According to Lu Ye's investigation, the number of restrictions within it was not very many, at best equivalent to a supreme-grade spirit artifact.

But no supreme-grade spirit artifact could display such formidable lethality; after all, this thing could penetrate the Giant Armor's defenses.

And this was just a segment of the broken arrow!

It was hard to imagine what kind of power it could wield if it were intact.

There was a crack on the broken arrow, so it probably couldn't be used many more times. Feng Yuechan had handed it over to Lu Ye because activating it required an enormous amount of spirit force. Even though she had reached Cloud River Level 6 in her cultivation, if she truly wanted to unleash the broken arrow's full power, it would likely exhaust all her spirit force.

Therefore, in her hands, it was difficult to utilize effectively.

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Wei Que of the Cloud River Level 9 had a cultivation reserve of spirit force much greater than Feng Yuechan. Had he not been driven to desperation, he wouldn't have resorted to using the broken arrow.

Firstly, each use of this exotic treasure brought it closer to complete destruction, which Wei Que was usually reluctant to use; secondly, the consumption was too great—once used, it was either the enemy dies, or I perish.

However, no matter what, he had never expected that even being forced to use this exotic treasure, he would still end up dead.

Lu Ye's cultivation was even lower than Feng Yuechan's, and under normal circumstances, he should not have been able to activate this exotic treasure. However, he still wore a spirit energy-storing ring on his hand, which he had specifically purchased for the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes. Over many days, the spirit force stored in the ring had become remarkably considerable, enough to activate the broken arrow's power once.

This was precisely the reason why Feng Yuechan had handed the broken arrow to Lu Ye.

Refining the broken arrow was not difficult; classifying it by the standard of spirit artifacts, it was merely equivalent to a supreme-grade spirit artifact. Lu Ye had refined it in just half a day.

Strictly speaking, this object was similar to weapon control, albeit slightly more powerful. Currently, with enemies possibly attacking the spirit ground at any moment, an additional method like this could also provide extra strength to respond.

Several leisurely days passed in tranquility.

Lu Ye had almost thought that Yean Gui, whom he had previously killed, had merely passed by accidentally.

Until one day, a massive shadow covered the sky outside the spirit ground, followed by several probing attacks striking down upon the big array.

In the empty valley, layers of ripples suddenly emerged, revealing the location of the big array.

Lu Ye immediately flashed out from inside the house, looking up to see a huge spirit ark floating in the mid-air nearby. Atop the spirit ark, figures looked down, and on the front of the spirit ark, a blazing flame insignia was incredibly conspicuous.

"They came after all!" Li Baxian's sigh could be heard nearby as the worst prediction came true.

Staring at the blazing flame insignia, Lu Ye knew the people from the Sacred Fire Order had arrived.

The cultivators of the Sacred Fire Order had such insignias on their foreheads, easy to distinguish.

If there were only the four of them in the spirit ground, the only option now would be to use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to escape back to the Nine Provinces. But now, with the help of the wolf pack, facing the assault of the Sacred Fire Order, they might not be without the power to resist.

Because of the first prize in the Kills Ranking, they could obtain such a Class A Spirit Ground. Although Lu Ye didn't rely much on his cultivation environment, such a Class A Spirit Ground could make the cultivation of Li Baxian and others easier, and they might not get such spirit ground again, so they had to try to keep it at all costs.

"Senior brother, there's a formation covering below. Given the scale, it's very likely a spirit ground," a cultivator reported excitedly beside Huo Liaoyuan as he stood on the spirit ark.

Huo Liaoyuan looked down indifferently, without a word.

The camouflage big array set up here was extremely ingenious; had it not been for the accurate information received beforehand, even if he passed by nearby, he might not have paid attention to this valley.

But under several probing attacks, the big array here had been exposed, which meant the intelligence he got was true—that Lu Yiye was hiding inside.

He stepped out from the spirit ark and stood in the air, his presence fully displayed as he slowly spoke, "Lu Yiye, do you come out on your own, or should I capture you?"

The voice was not loud, but powered by spirit force, it was enough to spread throughout the entire Great Reversal Valley.

A stir occurred atop the spirit ark immediately.

Lu Yiye?

Although they had followed Huo Liaoyuan here, they were unclear of the purpose. Huo Liaoyuan had never explained the purpose of this journey to any cultivator before. Just now, seeing that there was a

big array covering the area, suspected to contain a spirit ground, many cultivators thought Huo Liaoyuan had come here to plunder spring spirits.

They had committed such acts frequently over the years; otherwise, the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground wouldn't have expanded into a large Class A Spirit Ground.

But when the name 'Lu Yiye' entered their ears, everyone suddenly awakened.

This place might not only contain a spirit ground, but the famous Lu Yiye was also hidden here!

In an instant, the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground became excited, knowing that for cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, the three words 'Lu Yiye' meant unimaginable wealth.

Looking towards the direction of the spirit ground again, each person's gaze was filled with fervent expressions, especially the cultivators of the Sacred Fire Order, whose eyes ignited like flames.

For the people of the Sacred Fire Order, Lu Ye was not only a target carrying huge wealth, but he was also the main culprit responsible for the demotion of their sect's grade, a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect. Even without any bounty, if they encountered Lu Ye in the wild, they were bound to kill him.

Huo Liaoyuan's voice echoed in the valley but did not receive any response, and there was no change in the big array below.

"Obstinate!" Huo Liaoyuan snorted coldly, slightly raising a hand and gently lowering it while softly uttering a few words: "Surround them!"

Aboard the spirit ark, figures darted out, swiftly surrounding the spirit ground.

Inside the spirit ground, Li Baxian looked up at the numerous figures above, his expression turning grave in an instant.

Because the number of enemies was even more than he had imagined—about a hundred and fifty-six people!

Seventy people were dispatched from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, and earlier, Huo Liaoyuan had sent a message to gather the disciples of the Sacred Fire Order at the periphery of Great Wilderness Mountain. This had rallied so many people. If there had been more time, even more would have come.

Such a force was not something the current defenses of the spirit ground could withstand. Although the number of demon wolves was greater, they could not fly, and their effectiveness in battle against cultivators was greatly diminished.

With the power of the spirit ground, it was already the limit to withstand an attack from a hundred people, let alone a hundred and fifty-six—they simply couldn't hold them off.

It seemed that the Sacred Fire Order had a detailed understanding of the situation here; otherwise, it wouldn't make sense to deploy so many people.

Xia Liang, Tan Sheng... these two guys were really harming others profoundly.

He was just about to persuade Lu Ye to retreat to Nine Provinces, but turning to look at him, he saw Lu Ye's calm expression, showing not even a hint of worry. The words at his lips were swallowed back, and he asked doubtfully, "Does Little Junior Brother have a plan? "

Lu Ye shook his head, "We'll block the warriors with warriors, and stem the flood with soil."

Li Baxian thought for a moment, "We shouldn't push too hard. If the situation turns bad, retreat to Nine Provinces immediately."

"I understand," replied Lu Ye.

Meanwhile, in another direction, Xia Liang and Tan Sheng were also watching quietly. However, when Sacred Universe Spirit Ground was fully prepared here, instead of being pleased, their expressions darkened.

"This is bad." Tan Sheng frowned. "Huo Liaoyuan, that incompetent fool, brought so many people here, but instead of breaking the big array immediately, he's showing off his might. That Lu Yiye might have already fled!"

Xia Liang was utterly confused, "How did Sacred Universe Spirit Ground get so many people?"

The reason he had sent the message there was mainly to indirect kill, making use of others to eliminate Lu Ye. In his plan, Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, upon receiving the news about Lu Ye, would ideally deploy seventy to eighty percent of their forces. Then, when they clashed with Lu Ye, he and Xia Liang would benefit from the turmoil.

But things were developing wrongly. Sacred Universe Spirit Ground abruptly brought so many people. Unless Lu Yiye was brainless, he would have escaped immediately and would not have stayed in place waiting for death.

Lu Ye's spirit ground had Heaven's Augury Pillar, a fact he had noticed when he'd come here last time with Tan Sheng and Wei Que. One Heaven's Augury Pillar was worth a hundred thousand merits. Last time in the hunting grounds, he had requested one, and now another in the spirit ground; that guy's wealth was enviable and irritating.

Only an evenly matched battle would give Lu Yiye hope of not fleeing immediately with the help of Heaven's Augury Pillar. Now that Sacred Universe Spirit Ground displayed such a lineup, how could there be a Lu Yiye in the spirit ground? Most likely, it was already empty by now...

Annoyed with himself, he thought he should have shared the news of the Heaven's Augury Pillar with Sacred Universe Spirit Ground too, so they would act more cautiously.

As he stewed in self-reproach, Huo Liaoyuan slightly raised one hand and then gracefully swung it down, uttering the chilling word, "Kill!"

In an instant, many weapon controls and magic and spells lit up, bombarding the big array's position with great momentum.

Ripples spread out, and the big array's protective barrier was fully visible to all. With such an attack, the big array set up by Lu Ye that concealed their presence also lost its effect.

The concealing big array itself had no defensive or offensive capabilities; its function was merely a disguise that could conceal the existence of the entire spirit ground, rendering it unnoticed to passersby without careful investigation.

The previous few probing attacks from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground were not enough to break the effectiveness of the concealing big array, but now, with a concerted effort, how could it hold up?

A protective barrier enveloped the entire spirit ground, appearing clearly before everyone's eyes. Through that barrier, the situation inside the spirit ground was completely visible.

The presence of many demon wolves immediately caught the attention of the cultivators from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

Many of them were shocked, unable to understand why there were so many demon wolves here, especially since a few of them possessed demonic power fluctuations comparable to those of the cultivators from Cloud River Level 8-9.

At this very moment, all these demon wolves were looking up at the sky. Although they were demon beasts, there was no chaos, not even a wolf howl could be heard; they resembled a well-trained army, quietly lying low, concealing their fangs and claws.

The people from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground didn't know the situation inside the spirit ground, but Huo Liaoyuan did. Yet, even having verified the accuracy of the information with his own eyes, he couldn't help but be moved.

Could that Lu Yiye really control so many demon beasts? He had heard that there was always a white small beast accompanying him, but for a cultivator of Cloud River Realm to control so many demon beasts was a bit exaggerated.

Silently relieved, he hadn't underestimated his opponent and had instead brought out overwhelming force, otherwise, it would have been really difficult this time.

After the initial panic, the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground gradually calmed down. The strength of their own lineup gave them the confidence to deal with these demon wolves, and since the demon wolves seemed unable to fly, as long as they were careful, the threat wasn't too great.

Chapter 603 A Difficult Start to Accept

"Lu Yiye didn't run away!" Somewhat farther away, Tan Sheng's expression perked up.

He had thought that as soon as the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground showed an overwhelmingly powerful lineup, Lu Yiye would surely use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to flee back to the Nine Provinces at the first chance. Unexpectedly, he didn't leave and at this moment stood within the spirit ground, looking up at the sky, his expression showing not the slightest hint of panic.

How odd!

However, Tan Sheng found this turn of events to his liking; if Lu Ye didn't run, then there was hope to kill him.

"It seems that he doesn't want to give up this spirit ground unless absolutely necessary," Xia Liang said indifferently.

Class A Spirit Ground, vastly valuable, even a small one is not something ordinary people could possess; anyone would be unwilling to give it up easily.

"Now there's a good show to watch," Tan Sheng said, grinning widely.

"He has hidden the Heaven's Augury Pillar." Xia Liang gazed at a certain part of the spirit ground; the last time he and Tan Sheng had come here, the Heaven's Augury Pillar was in that position, but now, looking over, the place where the Heaven's Augury Pillar had stood was now empty, clearly concealed by an array.

Hiding the Heaven's Augury Pillar was obviously to avoid revealing its presence; what on earth was Lu Yiye planning?

As if having realized something, Xia Liang was visibly moved.

If things were indeed as he suspected, then Lu Yiye's audacity was tremendous.

In midair, when the large protective array lost its effectiveness, Huo Liaoyuan's eyes also reflected the figure of Lu Ye. Despite this being their first encounter, Huo Liaoyuan recognized him instantly, his eyes burning like flames as he stared coldly at the figure below, as if looking at a dead man.

Boom, boom, boom... The ceaseless rumbling continued to spread, accompanied by the turmoil of spirit force as the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground struck one after another, bombarding the spirit ground's protective array.

The sight of over one hundred and fifty cultivators taking action together was spectacular. Even though their levels of cultivation differed, the array of colorful light they emitted was dazzling and resplendent, their mighty power overwhelming; the light screen of the protective array visibly dimmed at a speed visible to the naked eye, and then it began to waver as if it might collapse at any moment.

Xia Liang, who had been watching in secret from the shadows, frowned.

Something seemed not quite right.

This protective array... was far too fragile.

The last time he, Xia Liang, and Wei Que had come here, they had also attacked the protective array, but its sturdiness at that time was far greater than it was now.

Could it be because of the reconfiguration?

Before he could figure it out, the protective array suddenly shattered with a loud crash, and the scattered glimmers filled the sky, fully exposing the spirit ground to the eyes of the cultivators from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

A large number of cultivators, like cats that had caught the scent of fish, lunged forward, surging into the spirit ground.

Strands of killing intent homed in on Lu Ye and others from afar, bursting forth.

At that moment, Lu Ye, who had stood motionless until now, made his move. He took out a Great Array Jade Cluster from his bosom and infused it with spirit force.

In the next instant, a layer of light cover, more dazzling and brilliant than the array from before, suddenly emerged out of nowhere and quickly enveloped the entire spirit ground.

Following one layer came a second...

However, the second layer of light that surged out seemed to be slightly different from the first, but the sudden change made it impossible for the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground to distinguish. Those who had not yet entered the spirit ground slammed into the light cover, stopping in their tracks, their faces showing shock and astonishment.

Protective arrays are generally set up only once in a location because the strength of an array's defense is directly linked to the stored spirit force on a normal day. Even if a second array is constructed, it can't exert much effect without a substantial amount of stored spirit force, which would only divide the power of the array.

Furthermore, if the invaders have the ability to break through the first array, they surely have the ability to break the second; thus, instead of dividing the strength and adding unnecessary risks, it's better to concentrate the power in one place.

Yet, Lu Ye's spirit ground oddly had two protective arrays, and even the power of this second array seemed to surpass the first by a wide margin.

Xia Liang's earlier suspicions were confirmed, and he couldn't help but exclaim in a low voice, "This guy... has a most malicious plan!"

Tan Sheng furrowed his brow, "Brother Xia, what did you notice?"

Xia Liang said, "The first layer of the protective array was just a ruse to feign weakness; the second one is the real protective array!"

No wonder that protective array felt so incredibly fragile just now; it was all intentional on Lu Yiye's part.

It seems the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground... is in for some bad luck!

The group of over one hundred and fifty had now been split into two by the protective array, with about seventy inside the array and slightly less than eighty outside, isolated from one another.

This sudden development surprised many cultivators. However, they quickly steadied themselves because, under the lead of Huo Liaoyuan, they had come with an absolutely crushing power, and anything the enemy did was nothing but a futile struggle.

Only Huo Liaoyuan himself, with a frown on his brow, felt an inexplicable surge of unease, as if some misfortune was about to occur.

Without his command, the cultivators outside the array once again took action and bombarded the array.

They had the ability to break through the first protective array, so naturally they could break through the second one. Although nearly half of their manpower had reduced by now, at worst it would just take some more time.

Within the big array, over seventy cultivators ignored the dense pack of demon wolves below. Their gazes were fixed on Lu Ye and the others as they flew forward in unison. Once they were at the right distance, they stimulated their spirit force and were about to make their move.

Lu Ye raised his hand to grasp an array banner and gazed up at the sky. With a gentle swing of the banner in his hand,

Sky Prohibition!

The space of the entire spirit ground seemed to twist at that moment. The next instant, those uninvited guests who had barged into the spirit ground showed expressions of shock and confusion, yelling as they plummeted from mid-air.

In that moment, everyone felt as if a mountain was pressing down on them, the weight so heavy that it left them gasping for air.

As the anomaly arose, Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, who were hiding in the dark and watching, both jerked involuntarily. They had suffered from the Great Sky Prohibition Array before, and the memory made them still feel a sense of dread.

And Huo Liaoyuan, whose eyes were bulging in anger, exclaimed in horror, "Sky Prohibition?"

How could it be the Great Sky Prohibition Array?

How could there be a Great Sky Prohibition Array!

Although he had heard that Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect was highly skilled in Array Path, he was just a cultivator at the Cloud River Realm, after all. How could he have the ability to set up a Great Sky Prohibition Array?

That kind of array is something even an ordinary cultivator at the True Lake Realm might not be able to set up.

Moreover, there was not the slightest bit of information about the Great Sky Prohibition Array in the intelligence he had obtained. Had the informer deliberately hidden this?

With many thoughts flashing through his mind, Huo Liaoyuan no longer maintained his calm composure. He transformed into a streak of fire and rushed forward, shouting, "Break the big array quickly!"

Almost half the manpower had fallen into the array, and under the Great Sky Prohibition Array, everyone was falling towards the ground. The situation was unprecedentedly dire. Before bringing people here, he had never imagined such an inconceivable event would occur.

Accompanying the fall of his words was a series of miserable shrieks.

The dazzling sword light moved through the spirit ground, and the formidable power of magic and spells began to shine forth—it was Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan striking simultaneously.

Wherever the sword light and spells passed, blood spurted, life force dissipated, and several cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground lost their vitality before they even touched the ground.

In just an instant, five or six people had died on the spot.

Giant Armor directly charged out, leaping several meters high and smashing a punch onto the head of a wobbly Sacred Fire Order cultivator. Without uttering a sound, the cultivator's head burst open like a watermelon. Giant Armor emerged from the blood mist with his gaze already fixed on the second target, causing the cultivator to be scared out of his wits.

The wolf pack that had been still until now also sprang into action at that instant. Their agile bodies rushed forward, their snow-white fur fluttering in the wind. Some demon wolves, while in flight, opened their mouths to release crescent-shaped Wind Blades, slashing vivid red onto the bodies of the invading enemies.

However, the number of demon wolves capable of launching Wind Blade attacks was limited after all. Many more simply pounced directly, knocking down the unstable cultivators and ripping into them with biting and scratching.

The screams grew even more dense and piercing.

Outside the big array, led by Huo Liaoyuan, the faces of the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground turned pale as if they had fallen into an ice cellar, chilled to the bone.

They had thought they held an absolute advantage, enough to crush their enemies in battle, yet the situation unfolded in a way that was incredibly hard to accept. Watching familiar faces perish before their eyes, torn to pieces, the rage and sorrow in everyone's hearts erupted like volcanic lava.

"Run for it!" someone yelled.

The cultivators fortunate enough not to have died snapped out of their trance and fled in all directions. Some managed to reach the edge of the big array, only to find out in despair that they couldn't leave at all. A layer of thick light-screen blocked their hope of escape.

The big array had two layers, one to fend off the outside, which was the protective array, and the second to ward off the inside, which was a trap array!

From the moment these cultivators had stepped into the spirit ground, they were destined not to end well.

"Don't come here!" A cultivator who had fled to the edge of the array screamed in terror, managing to wield his Spiritual Artifact once before being overwhelmed by the silhouettes of more than a dozen demon wolves pouncing on him. The sounds of tearing flesh and blood being ripped apart were hair-raising.

Xia Liang and Tan Sheng both felt their eyelids twitch incessantly. It wasn't just the people of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground who hadn't expected the situation to unfold like this, but even they hadn't foreseen it.

They had assumed that Lu Yiye would use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to escape back to the Nine Provinces the moment he saw the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground's attack. But as it turned out, the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground suffered heavy casualties, and from beginning to end, Lu Yiye had merely activated the Great Array Jade Cluster and waved the array banner in his hand.

The role a powerful array cultivator could play in such a situation was truly as terrifying as this.

Boom, boom, boom...

Loud explosion noises suddenly came from all over the spirit ground. It was those cultivators who had fled in panic unintentionally activating the explosion magic arrays that Lu Ye had set up.

Fire surged, spiritual force went berserk, and screams were drowned out.

In just a short period of about a dozen breaths, more than half of the cultivators in the spirit ground were dead or injured, and the rest were enveloped in a sense of utter despair.

Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, and Giant Armor, attacking from three directions, entered an almost uninhabited domain, inflicting even greater casualties on the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

Chapter 604 Heavy Casualties

Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were now both in the Cloud River Level 6, but with their profound backgrounds, the strength they could exert was far beyond that of ordinary cultivators in the same level.

As for Giant Armor... this creature was a monster, built as if from steel, powerful and invincible. While Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had to dodge the enemy's counterattacks when they killed, Giant Armor charged straight ahead, disregarding the attacks that fell on him. His body thudded loudly with impacts that did not affect him at all.

Under normal circumstances, the trio, despite being powerful, should not have been able to handle so many enemies.

But the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground were first suppressed by the Great Sky Prohibition Array, and now they were trapped by a big array, with numerous demon wolves attacking them. In the chaos and panic that ensued, the scene became extremely chaotic, allowing the trio to exploit the situation to their advantage.

"Break the array, break it fast!"

Huo Liaoyuan roared furiously, his eyes nearly bursting as he shouted, his whole body burning like a flame. His powerful presence of Level 9 swept through the surroundings—a giant fireball, like the big

sun, smashed fiercely against the protective array, which dipped inward under the force of the impact, its bright light dimming suddenly.

Many cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground acted at that moment too, making the scene intensively lively.

Inside the spirit ground, the number of dead cultivators from Sacred Universe had already surpassed thirty, and as time passed, more cultivators continued to perish.

Li Baxian and his companions moved about swiftly, the wolves stampeded, playing a deadly symphony.

At this moment, inside the spirit ground, the surviving Sacred Universe cultivators finally organized a defensive line. More than thirty people backed against the light of the trap array; physique cultivators brought out big shields to the front, forming a human wall, tugging a fierce battle with the incoming wolf pack.

But since the trap array was not broken, they could barely escape; under such circumstances, preserving themselves was the extreme limit, let alone breaking the array.

Their only hope now was that Huo Liaoyuan and the others could break through the protective array and come to their rescue.

Boom, boom, boom...

The sounds of huge impacts kept coming, and the protective array's screen quickly dimmed.

Although the second array was much more robust than the first, it could not withstand the relentless attacks of so many cultivators. After all, this protective array had been set up single-handedly by Lu Ye, and its endurance was already quite remarkable.

Inside the spirit ground, Lu Ye still stood in the same spot, remotely controlling the operation of the array.

An array with someone in command was completely different from one without. Although he also knew that the protective array could not last much longer, prolonging it a bit longer still had its benefits.

Just then, he suddenly shifted his figure, and a dirk nearly grazed his neck, stabbing into the void. A few steps behind him, a figure eerily appeared.

Apparently not expecting Lu Ye to dodge such a concealed attack, the face of the specter attacker was full of shock.

It had to be said, this specter was very bold, thinking about assassinating Lu Ye in such a situation.

Their main objective this journey was Lu Ye — if they could kill him, then the many losses previously would be somewhat acceptable.

Yet, such a guaranteed strike had failed.

With his figure exposed, the specter immediately retreated; however, a fiery red saber light fell before him, followed by attacks as intense as a storm...

Watching quietly from the shadows, Xia Liang twitched at the corner of his eyes, unable to help but remember the days when he meticulously taught Lu Ye saber skills in Fox Fairy Valley, even passing on the Mental Eye Secret Technique...

Although Lu Ye had implanted a defense rune tattoo on him, that tattoo was only temporary and would lose its effect after a few uses. Compared to what Lu Ye had gained, what was that worth?

What shocked Xia Liang even more was that, in such a short time, Lu Ye had already mastered the basics of the Mental Eye Secret Technique, and, judging by his response speed, the range of his Mental Eye was even greater than Xia Liang's own.

What kind of freak was this?

And... this fellow had reached Cloud River Level 5?

Xia Liang seriously could not comprehend what elixir pill or miracle cure he had taken to improve his cultivation so swiftly.

Recalling their first encounter two months ago, this guy was only at Cloud River Level 3, running away in a panic when pursued by him, and he was just at Level 4 realm during their time in Fox Fairy Valley. Now, in just a few days, he had advanced yet another level.

"Pah!" The specter spat out blood and flew backward, a huge gash rolling open across his chest and abdomen. Before he hit the ground, several demon wolves had already pounced on him, soon followed by the ghastly sound of screams and tearing flesh.

This specter, like Yean Gui whom Lu Ye had previously killed, was of Cloud River Level 7, but the Level 7 he had once needed to exhaust multiple methods to defeat now collapsed before him without a fight.

Crack...

The sound of fracturing came out.

The protective array cracked, swaying on the brink of collapse.

Although the specter's desperate resistance had not managed to harm Lu Ye, he had distracted Lu Ye enough to prevent him from controlling the array, inadvertently speeding up the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground's rate of breaking the array.

More intense sounds erupted until the entire array's screen completely shattered.

"Save them!" Huo Liaoyuan gritted his teeth and roared furiously. Although he desperately wanted to tear Lu Ye into pieces, at that moment, he was not consumed by his anger but issued an extremely correct command.

Many cultivators swarmed in, passing through the trap array's light curtain unobstructed, and merging with the surviving cultivators inside the spirit ground. They simultaneously resisted the attacks from Li Baxian and the wolf pack while turning to bombard the trap array's light curtain.

The trap array was much more fragile compared to the protective array; had it not been for the distraction of the wolf pack, the cultivators trapped inside would have broken through it long ago.

Now with the support of their fellow companions, it took only a mere thirty moments before the trap array was completely shattered.

Separated by hundreds of feet, Lu Ye and Huo Liaoyuan's gazes collided—one calm as water, the other erupting like thunder.

A few moments later, Huo Liaoyuan suppressed his rage and gritted his teeth, "Retreat!"

At his command, the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground fought as they retreated, quickly leaving the area of the spirit ground.

The wolf pack did not pursue; within the bounds of the spirit ground, with the Great Sky Prohibition Array, they could still confront the cultivators. But outside the spirit ground, the cultivators could fly through the air, greatly reducing the threat posed by the wolves.

The cultivators fled back in disarray, each of them shaken to the core. Some of the more psychologically fragile female cultivators even burst into tears. Though they had faced numerous dangers on their cultivation journey, never had they felt as helpless as this time.

While trapped in the spirit ground, the scent of death loomed over them like an invisible beast, licking at their spirits and nearly driving them to the brink of collapse.

Many familiar fellow disciples had died brutally beside them, and after today, this battle would become a nightmare they could never escape for the rest of their lives.

"Lu Yiye, you are surely doomed to die!" Huo Liaoyuan roared, his clenched teeth oozing blood.

He had thought this mission would be an easy feat, yet it turned out to be a disastrous loss, all within merely the time it took to drink a cup of tea!

As the decision-maker and leader of this operation, he was bound to be held accountable in the future, possibly even punished by his sect.

And the root of all these calamities was Lu Ye. His hatred for Lu Ye was so deep that not even the waters of the three rivers and five lakes could wash it away.

And there was still that sneaky informant...

He had previously guessed that the informant must have suffered greatly at Lu Yiye's hands, which is why they wanted to use him to strike indirectly. He had overestimated Lu Yiye's strength based on the information obtained, else he would not have brought so many people. Yet, upon engagement, it was his side that was utterly defeated with severe casualties.

Before coming here, he could never have envisioned suffering such a setback, but here it was, unfolding right before his eyes.

A great Sky Prohibition Array... How could a Cloud River Realm possibly set up such a massive Sky Prohibition Array!

Within the spirit ground, Lu Ye gazed calmly at him, silent, showing none of the triumph of a victor. Then he waved the array banner, reactivating the covering array to envelop the whole spirit ground, vanishing from everyone's view.

This unremarkable response only fueled Huo Liaoyuan's raging fury, almost exploding his lungs with anger.

"Senior Brother Huo," a Level 8 combat cultivator approached Huo Liaoyuan, his body bearing numerous wounds and his face smeared with blood, clearly after a tough battle, "What do we do now?"

Huo Liaoyuan looked around. What he saw were faces filled with lingering fear and panic, mixed with relief from having survived a disaster.

He had brought over one hundred and fifty people, and now fewer than a hundred were still alive.

In other words, during that brief duration of a tea time, more than sixty people had died within the spirit ground!

Huo Liaoyuan's mouth moved slightly, his mind in turmoil, at a loss for what to do!

With their current strength, if he organized a strong offensive, there might be a chance to kill that Lu Yiye, but it would surely result in even more severe casualties.

Having already lost so many, he dared not risk losing more.

The opponent clearly wouldn't counterattack either. Inside the spirit ground, with the aid of the Great Sky Prohibition Array, they could greatly weaken the cultivators' powers, letting the demon wolves join the battle. To counterattack now would be suicide.

In other words, under these circumstances, whoever took the offensive would not fare well.

"Regroup here, wait for reinforcements!"

After a long while, Huo Liaoyuan's dry lips finally uttered these words.

Sacred Fire Order and Universe Sect still had many forces that could be mobilized, but it would take more time. Since one hundred people were not enough, then they would gather two hundred, or if not two hundred, then three hundred, no matter what, Lu Yiye must die.

Upon receiving the order, the Level 8 combat cultivator visibly relaxed, genuinely fearful that Huo Liaoyuan, in his fury, might make an unwise decision.

The spirit ark hovering in the air slowly descended, and the disheveled cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground set up camp at the entrance of Great Reversal Valley, restoring their bodies and spirits.

In the shadows, Xia Liang and Tan Sheng remained silent. They had hidden here hoping to profit from the chaos, yet found themselves witnessing an unimaginably intense drama, leaving them with mixed emotions.

Chapter 605 Night Exploration

Not long after the great battle at Great Reversal Valley had ended—mere moments it seemed—Tu Guanxiong received intelligence from the Universe Sect cultivators, which left him utterly shocked once he read it.

Under Huo Liaoyuan's leadership, not only had the two sects failed to breach Lu Yiye's spirit ground or capture him, but they had also suffered a resounding defeat and heavy losses!

Sixty-three cultivators had died in the conflict, among them forty-five from the Sacred Fire Order and eighteen from the Universe Sect.

A mere sentence conveyed an overwhelming stench of blood.

Tu Guanxiong hardly dared to believe it, personally contacting Huo Liaoyuan for confirmation, and it took a while before his shock turned to stupefaction.

How could this happen?

How could this possibly be?

Huo Liaoyuan had taken more than seventy cultivators from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, and had gathered almost the same number of Sacred Fire Order cultivators, totaling over one hundred fifty men to deal with a lone Lu Yiye. How could the losses be so heavy, even if the adversary could command a wolf pack?

After contacting several Universe Sect cultivators again, Tu Guanxiong eventually understood the root cause of such massive losses.

It was the Great Sky Prohibition Array!

The Sacred Universe Spirit Ground on their side lacked a Great Sky Prohibition Array, yet Lu Yiye had one? Just how advanced was this fellow's mastery over array paths?

The deceptive weakness shown by the first layer of the protective array isolated the cultivators who rushed into the spirit ground, making it impossible for them to coordinate; the sudden strike of the Great Sky Prohibition Array left the cultivators who were trapped inside completely unprepared. Unable to fly freely, they naturally struggled against the numerous demon wolves.

With this understanding, Tu Guanxiong sighed deeply. Although he was annoyed at Huo Liaoyuan's carelessness, he couldn't really blame him. Anyone in Huo Liaoyuan's position would find it impossible to reverse such a situation.

After some thought, all he could do was send a message to Huo Liaoyuan, informing him that he would gather disciples of the Universe Sect scattered nearby to come help, and advised him not to make any rash moves until he had sufficient forces.

That was Huo Liaoyuan's plan as well, so he naturally agreed.

Moments later, across the Cloud River battlefield, numerous cultivators from both sects received the message and set off toward the direction of Great Wilderness Mountain. But these cultivators were at varying distances and the quickest among them would need seven to eight days to arrive, while the slowest could take up to twenty days—there was no immediate hope of reinforcement.

Inside the spirit ground of Great Reversal Valley, several people were cleaning the messy battlefield and collecting the spoils of war.

Li Baxian and others were all unharmed; only a few demon wolves had died in battle. Compared to their victory, such losses were almost negligible.

However, Giant Armor seemed slightly saddened. Although initially, the wolf pack had followed him willingly, much to his annoyance, the time spent together had changed his initial thoughts.

The ability to station the spirit ground inside Great Reversal Valley relied on the protection and guardianship of the wolf pack, rather than the protective arrays set up by Lu Ye.

Indeed, today's battle proved that without the wolves' aid, no matter how many formations Lu Ye set up, they would be useless. There were only four of them in total. No matter how capable they were in fighting beyond their levels, how many could they actually kill?

So even though only a few demon wolves had died, Giant Armor felt deeply saddened.

"Junior Brother Lu, the people from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground are stationed at the mouth of the valley. It seems they are waiting for reinforcements," Li Baxian said slowly, observing the mouth of the valley from within the spirit ground.

The battle today resulted in great losses for Universe Spirit Ground. Realizing that this side was covered by a Great Sky Prohibition Array, they definitely wouldn't come uninvited anymore.

But having suffered such a major defeat and yet not retreating, instead taking up a strict defensive stance as if they were fearful that Lu Ye and others might escape, it was clear they were gathering more manpower.

Once they had gathered enough reinforcements on their side, they would surely attack the spirit ground fiercely.

"Should I call some people over to help as well?" Li Baxian asked.

Lu Ye shook his head, "Money is easy to pay, favors are hard to repay. This is our own matter; we'll handle it ourselves without bothering others."

Although with the connections of Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan it would certainly be no problem to call for help, during the last incident at the hunting grounds, when Lu Ye was being chased by many strong

cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, Li Baxian had already asked many people for help. These favors were debts that would weigh on Li Baxian.

If they asked for help again today, the burden would only increase.

Hearing this, Li Baxian sighed, "You have a point."

Lu Ye said, "Before today, if we had escaped back to the Nine Provinces, it wouldn't matter much, but after today, trying to escape back to the Nine Provinces... the losses would involve more than just a Heaven's Augury Pillar and a spring spirit."

Li Baxian was momentarily stunned but quickly understood what he meant.

While they could certainly escape back to the Nine Provinces and avoid trouble here, the wolf pack wouldn't be able to leave. Today's battle saw dozens of cultivators from both sects slaughtered by the wolf pack. Once they left, the rage of the cultivators from both sects would undoubtedly be vented on the wolf pack. How many of the pack would survive then, they could only guess—it likely wouldn't be long before they were completely annihilated.

Given such worries, Giant Armor might not be willing to abandon the wolf pack and return with them to the Nine Provinces. If Giant Armor didn't leave, how could they possibly go?

"Compared to the situation at Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, I'm more concerned about something else," Lu Ye frowned slightly.

"What is it?"

"Xia Liang and Tan Sheng," Lu Ye said the two names, "The Sacred Universe Spirit Ground was able to accurately find the location of our spirit ground and even dispatched so many people at once. They clearly had an understanding of our situation, and this intelligence could only have been leaked by Xia Liang and Tan Sheng. But today, I didn't see either of them... Moreover, while Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had a lot of information, there were two things they were unaware of. First, they didn't know that the spirit ground had a Great Sky Prohibition Array; otherwise, they wouldn't have been so careless today. Second, they didn't know we have Heaven's Augury Pillar."

If Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had known about the presence of Heaven's Augury Pillar in the spirit ground, they might not have been willing to advance all the way here, because even if they really pushed Lu Ye to a dead end, he could use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to return to the Nine Provinces.

"This means the information Xia Liang and Tan Sheng revealed was held back," Lu Ye said, nodding.

"Hiding the existence of Heaven's Augury Pillar is nothing more than sitting on the fence and waiting to profit from the fisherman's benefit. As for not revealing the Great Sky Prohibition Array, it's probably to intensify the hatred."

"So, these two must be hiding in the dark!"

"How sinister!" In the midst of speaking, Lu Ye stood up. "Senior Brother, I'm going to scout their position. At least these covert enemies must be brought to light. I won't let these two scoundrels spy on us from the shadows."

Li Baxian quickly intervened, "That's too dangerous."

"Just waiting here is like sitting ducks. Don't worry, Senior Brother, I'm confident. I'm certainly not their match, but it's not so easy for them to kill me either," Lu Ye reassured.

"Then I'll come with you!"

Lu Ye smiled wryly, "Senior Brother, aren't you well aware of my capabilities? If you come with me, I won't be able to employ my methods effectively."

Li Baxian was about to say something more when the usually silent Feng Yuechan tugged at his sleeve and spoke up, "Junior Brother Lu is right. Just waiting here is like sitting ducks. We must find a way to break the situation. Junior Brother Lu has the means of a ghost cultivator; you following would only add to the chaos."

Li Baxian furrowed his brows and remained silent.

Feng Yuechan took out a small umbrella and said, "Junior Brother Lu, if you insist on acting alone, then refine this and take it with you. Otherwise, neither your Senior Brother nor I will agree!"

Lu Ye looked at the small umbrella. Although he didn't know what kind of power it possessed, given that Feng Yuechan had brought it out at this moment, it must have strong protective capabilities.

"Okay!" He didn't refuse Feng Yuechan's goodwill, took the small umbrella, and quietly sensed it only to be amazed to find that it was a magic-artifact class object.

Cultivators of the Cloud River Realm naturally couldn't unleash all the power of a magic artifact, just like Yiyi had been unable to fully activate the Nine Arrays Diagram's power all this time. Their strength wasn't sufficient, they hadn't reached that level yet.

Moreover, forcibly activating it would definitely consume a lot.

However, with this object in hand, he had at least some extra means to protect his life.

But to unleash its power, he needed to refine it first.

Lu Ye immediately began to refine it with his spirit force, with Feng Yuechan, the original owner, cooperating, which made it not too difficult. After the refinement was complete, Lu Ye discovered not only did the small umbrella possess strong protective capabilities, but it also had the ability to isolate breath and conceal presence.

However, when activating its effect of isolating breath, he couldn't move, which was similar to a trace-erasing bangle Lu Ye had obtained before.

This effect wasn't of much use to Lu Ye. He could already construct Concealment and Breath-concealing Spirit Runes; with the dual enhancement of these two spirit runes, his concealing ability was stronger than that of an average ghost cultivator, so he had no need for external aid.

Now, with the moon at its zenith and the night deep and quiet, it was a good time to act.

Lu Ye walked directly to a corner of the room, where a teleportation array he had set up a few days ago was located.

People from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground were camping at the valley entrance, certainly keeping strict watch over the situation on this side of the spirit ground, constantly monitoring any movement here.

However, a big array concealing the area covered the spirit ground, so they couldn't see the inside. If Lu Ye walked out from inside, he would surely disturb the concealing big array, revealing some traces.

Teleporting directly out would spare him this worry.

Standing in the teleportation array, Lu Ye connected his mind with the positions of several other teleportation points.

Li Baxian, still worried, reminded him, "Be very careful, Junior Brother."

Lu Ye nodded. The space around him slightly twisted, and then his figure vanished.

Over 200 miles away from the Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground, in a secluded cave in the mountains, spirit force suddenly surged, and Lu Ye's figure appeared.

The first thing he did was to sense in all directions. He didn't notice any signs of life, which reassured him enough to step out of the cave with composure.

He didn't summon his Spiritual Artifact, to avoid leaving conspicuous traces. With his spirit force activated, he took to the air and headed straight towards Great Reversal Valley.

In the past, demon wolves hunted every few days, which resulted in very few demon beasts being encountered within a thousand miles around Great Reversal Valley, facilitating Lu Ye's current action. Otherwise, meeting a few demon beasts along the way would just add to the trouble.

Even so, he didn't fly too high, just more than ten yards above the ground.

Only when he was about thirty to fifty miles from the Great Reversal Valley did Lu Ye land, fully employing Concealment and Breath-concealing, and completely disappeared.

Chapter 606 Accidental Encounter

Lu Ye surmised that since Tan Sheng and Xia Liang were lurking in the dark, they must not be too far from Great Reversal Valley, possibly within a ten to thirty li range.

Moreover, to avoid the cultivators of the two sects from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, they definitely wouldn't be in the direction of the valley's entrance.

Great Reversal Valley was surrounded by mountains on three sides, especially the back side, which was full of rugged cliffs rising steeply to great heights, not really suitable for hiding.

That left only the two flanks for Xia Liang and Tan Sheng to choose from.

This made Lu Ye's search much easier.

However, while concealing himself, Lu Ye did not move quickly, so even with a rough idea of where they might be, finding the two of them was not an easy task.

Luckily, Lu Ye's fortune was always good.

In less than four hours, Lu Ye sensed the presence of life nearby; the location was only a little over ten li from Great Reversal Valley, within the range he had estimated.

He moved quietly forward and soon, under the moonlight, he spotted two figures seated under a tree.

Upon close inspection, who else could it be but Xia Liang and Tan Sheng?

Lu Ye did not continue to approach further. Both of those fellows were in the Cloud River Level 9 realm, especially Xia Liang, whose senses were sharp. If Lu Ye got too close, they might detect him.

Having pinpointed their location, Lu Ye silently withdrew.

As he meditated, Xia Liang suddenly opened his eyes and looked around, frowning slightly. Just now, he felt as if someone was spying on him, yet after careful scrutiny, found no one around and decided it must have been his imagination, not giving it further thought.

At the entrance of Great Reversal Valley, bonfires flickered, and groups of cultivators from the two sects gathered in clusters, the atmosphere somewhat stifling, with quite a few female cultivators sobbing quietly.

The day's ordeal was like a nightmare for all of them.

Under Huo Liaoyuan's command, they arrived strong and formidable, yet within a short tea time, over sixty of them had fallen within Great Reversal Valley. The lingering fear left everyone feeling cold to their core, with only the dancing bonfire before them offering a sliver of negligible warmth.

There were also those who were angry, clenching their teeth and vowing to kill Lu Yiye to avenge their fallen companions.

At this moment, it was the darkest hour before dawn.

A brief scream tore through the night sky, immediately alerting everyone.

"What's going on!" Huo Liaoyuan flashed over and saw the scene, his eyes about to bleed with rage.

Amongst the pool of blood, two figures lay in the blood, and another hadn't died instantly, but judging by their state, they wouldn't last much longer.

"Lu Yiye..." The person clutched at their throat, fresh blood spurted through their fingers, reaching towards Huo Liaoyuan with eyes full of desperation, "Senior Brother Huo, save... me..."

Huo Liaoyuan abruptly looked up, only to see a fiery-red streak in the night sky speeding away.

He erupted in rage, shooting up into the sky and chasing in that direction, quickly closing the distance between them.

Fury and the impulse to kill overwhelmed him, utterly oblivious to the fact that Lu Ye was not heading towards Great Reversal Valley.

Logically, after sneaking out to kill, the safest course of action for Lu Ye would be to escape back into Great Reversal Valley. Once he returned, the cultivators of the two sects, no matter how capable, would find it impossible to do anything to him. Yet, he did not head back to Great Reversal Valley, but chose another direction.

That direction was precisely where Tan Sheng and Xia Liang were hiding.

Sensing the activity behind him, Lu Ye looked back, frowning. Level 9 was indeed Level 9, their speed was outrageously fast.

Although his cultivation had advanced by two minor levels recently, making his flying speed much faster than it had been in the hunting grounds and faster than an average Level 5 realm cultivator, it was still a far cry from that of a Level 9 cultivator.

Fortunately, he still had Move-Like-The-Wind.

With the Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes activated, the spirit force in the rivers within his body flowed rapidly, and his speed surged.

But even so, the distance between them continued to close.

A single set of Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes was not enough to evade the pursuit of a Level 9, but if he added Wings to the mix, his speed could improve further, possibly matching Huo Liaoyuan's!

However, he wasn't trying to shake off Huo Liaoyuan, so he did not activate Wings.

Tan Sheng and Xia Liang were still deep in their cultivation when they were startled by the sound of breaking air approaching rapidly. Both lifted their heads to look.

They saw two streaks of light racing towards them in the sky, one after the other, both streaks blazing like fire.

"What is..." Tan Sheng did not immediately grasp what was happening, only feeling that the figure in the front streak of light looked vaguely familiar.

In the blink of an eye, the streak of light reached them.

"Lu Yiye!" Xia Liang exclaimed in a low voice, bewildered.

Why was Lu Yiye not hiding in the spirit ground, but out here instead? And it seemed like he was being pursued?

Just as Xia Liang instinctively thought to intercept, Lu Ye, who passed overhead, suddenly threw a Fire Phoenix Technique towards their location and shouted, "I'll leave them to you!"

As he spoke, he sped past!

Xia Liang and Tan Sheng were bewildered, but such a golden opportunity could not be missed. Easily deflecting the Fire Phoenix Technique's attack, they both rose into the air.

But before they could pursue Lu Yiye, the furious Huo Liaoyuan, following closely behind, launched a ferocious magic and spells attack towards them.

Huo Liaoyuan had been relentlessly pursuing his target all the way here, fuelled by raging anger with the sole thought of killing Lu Ye to vent his pent-up hatred. Yet, the sudden appearance of two Level 9 cultivators was like a bucket of cold water, dousing him with a bone-chilling realization.

Furthermore, the words that Lu Ye had spoken earlier dissipated his anger in a flash, leaving only fear. He cursed inwardly at his misfortune, afraid that he might have fallen into Lu Yiye's trap!

This wretch must have found two powerful allies to lie in ambush here and then lured him into their grasp...

Now, without any allies by his side, things looked grim. Given his concerns, he dared not hold back at all, unleashing his full strength as soon as he attacked.

Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, who were about to chase after Lu Ye, were instantly stunned and could only fight back in defense. For a while, three figures intertwined in mid-air, battling fiercely.

It only took a moment for Xia Liang to vaguely realize something...

The feeling of being watched before wasn't an illusion; Lu Yiye had been here. Otherwise, he couldn't possibly have known where he and Tan Sheng were hiding, let alone lead Huo Liaoyuan here.

Was this a scheme to use them as pawns to kill by proxy, or simply to prevent him and Tan Sheng from staying hidden in the shadows?

It was very likely the latter.

"Stop!" As Xia Liang slashed out a saber light, he bellowed angrily, and then pulled back, signaling his sincerity.

Tan Sheng quickly joined his side.

Dozens of feet away, Huo Liaoyuan appeared calm on the surface, but was shocked to his core. In his clash with the two Level 9 cultivators, he was outclassed on both counts. They were far beyond his ability to contend with when working together.

In those brief moments, he had almost believed he was surely doomed, but unexpectedly, the other party had stopped their assault first.

And the combat cultivator wielding the saber...

"Mad Saber Sect member?" As Huo Liaoyuan recalled the Level 9 cultivators of the Mad Saber Sect, one name slipped from his lips: "Are you Xia Liang?"

Xia Liang's expression turned cold and he stayed silent; being manipulated this way would sour anyone's mood.

What's more, he and Tan Sheng had originally planned to stay hidden in the shadows, and now thanks to Lu Yiye's machinations, their presence had been revealed.

Silence served as consent.

Huo Liaoyuan's heart relaxed slightly, thankfully. Xia Liang was from the Mad Saber Sect, an affiliate of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge—not an enemy, thankfully.

"And this Fellow Daoist is..." Huo Liaoyuan turned to look at Tan Sheng.

Tan Sheng helplessly clasped his fists: "New Moon Sect, Tan Sheng!"

Huo Liaoyuan returned the courtesy: "Sacred Fire Order, Huo Liaoyuan!" Then he asked, "What brings you two Fellow Daoists here?"

No sooner had he spoken than he suddenly realized something, his amiable expression faltering as his eyes narrowed.

Two Level 9 cultivators had no reason to be hiding here for no apparent cause, especially since a major battle had broken out in this area during the daytime.

Plus, it was said that within the hunting grounds, the campaigns against Lu Yiye were led by these two men, who in the end allowed Lu Yiye to break into the Spirit Stream battlefield, shatter the New Moon Sect's encampment, and extort a great deal from the Mad Saber Sect.

These two had significant grievances with Lu Yiye!

Tan Sheng turned to look at Xia Liang, only to see him calmly saying, "Just passing by. Who was Fellow Daoist Huo chasing just now?"

Tan Sheng had to admire him; to utter such a statement with an unchanging expression was something he could not match.

"Just passing by, huh..." Huo Liaoyuan clenched his fists tightly, his facial muscles trembling visibly, clearly struggling to suppress his burning anger.

With a vague understanding of the truth, how could he not realize that the substantial casualties suffered by the disciples of both sects were largely due to their own complacency, yet the root cause still lay with these two men withholding crucial information!

If he had known earlier about the Great Sky Prohibition Array in Lu Yiye's spirit ground, would he have let the disciples of both sects charge in so recklessly?

He had always been curious who it was that passed the information to him; now it was clear.

During the day, they must have been watching in secret from here, and now they were pretending to be clueless!

Huo Liaoyuan wished he could throw a massive fireball in Xia Liang's face to see just how thick his skin was, but he could only suppress the anger boiling within him.

Leaving aside the fact that the Sacred Fire Order was a 4th grade sect and couldn't afford to offend the Mad Saber Sect, now was not the time to turn against these two men...

If he couldn't beat them, what good would turning against them do?

"The one I was chasing was Lu Yiye!" Huo Liaoyuan's demeanor had become calm as he stated this.

"Oh? Lu Yiye!" Xia Liang raised an eyebrow as if he had just found out, "The Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect?"

What kind of a ridiculous question are you asking! Huo Liaoyuan nearly let his hard-suppressed rage surge forth again.

"Indeed!"

"What a coincidence; Brother Tan and I were also looking for his whereabouts. Unthinkably, he was right under our noses all this time, finding him without any effort after searching so hard!"

"Heh heh heh..." Huo Liaoyuan gave a pained, insincere laugh.

Tan Sheng spoke up, "Fellow Daoist Huo, we were used by Lu Yiye just now, allowing him to luckily slip away. Please forgive us."

Chapter 607 Strong Attack on Great Reversal Valley

"I dare not!" Huo Liaoyuan almost bit back his response through clenched teeth.

Just then, ripples of spirit force emanated from afar. Huo Liaoyuan's head snapped around, and he noticed that the commotion originated from the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground where the cultivators were stationed.

"Not good!" Huo Liaoyuan exclaimed lowly, immediately realizing what happened.

While he was entangled with Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, Lu Yiye had actually circled around and launched another attack!

He didn't have time to say much to Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, instead turning and streaking towards the entrance of the Great Reversal Valley.

Left behind, Xia Liang and Tan Sheng exchanged glances. Xia Liang said, "Let's go have a look."

They had already been exposed; there was no need to hide any longer.

At the mouth of the Great Reversal Valley, Huo Liaoyuan hurried back only to find two more disciples had been gruesomely murdered, lying in pools of blood.

"Where are they?" Huo Liaoyuan asked.

A disciple of the Sacred Fire Order replied, "They escaped!"

Huo Liaoyuan's chest seethed with surging blood Qi and rage, with nowhere to vent it, all while being completely baffled. Lu Yiye was a combat cultivator; how could he execute the maneuvers of a ghost cultivator? Even with the help of a Spirit Talisman, it was unlikely to be so mysteriously effective.

The enemy had struck twice, killing five cultivators. Though the losses were negligible compared to those during the day, such an enemy hidden in darkness was truly the most terrifying.

He had planned to block them here, waiting until enough reinforcements arrived to launch a strong attack on the spirit ground, but it would still take time.

If they continued to wait like this, they would only suffer greater losses—in fact, they might end up losing more than they could muster!

Withdrawing from this location was indeed a viable option, but where could they retreat to? Moreover, if they retreated, who knew if Lu Yiye would flee?

If they missed this opportunity, they might not have such a good chance again. Feeling the uneasy atmosphere surrounding him, Huo Liaoyuan knew that in order to capture Lu Yiye, they needed to fight quickly and decisively.

He turned his head to look at the figures of Xia Liang and Tan Sheng who had followed him here and said with a grave expression, "Fellow Daoists, how about we join forces?"

Despite his great resentment towards the two, in the current situation, he still needed the power of these two Level 9 Cloud River cultivators. The power they could unleash was not to be underestimated; with their help, he might stand a chance of success.

Xia Liang pondered briefly before saying, "Joining forces is fine, but if the enemy hides within the spirit ground, even if we join forces, what can we do? Unless Fellow Daoist Huo is willing to attack forcefully. But I think, Fellow Daoist Huo is not willing to take that step, are you?"

The Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had suffered heavy losses, but they still had the capital to attack forcefully. However, even if they could capture Lu Ye, the losses would be devastating. Xia Liang didn't think Huo Liaoyuan would be foolish to such an extent.

Huo Liaoyuan replied indifferently, "How can Fellow Daoist Xia be so sure that I will not attack forcefully?"

Xia Liang's expression shifted, looking at Huo Liaoyuan with some surprise, unable to discern his thoughts.

Huo Liaoyuan looked towards the direction of the spirit ground and said lightly, "After dawn, we'll attack the Great Reversal Valley forcefully. At that time, I'll need the help of both Fellow Daoists. Upon success, I will share with both Fellow Daoists two-tenths of the bounty on Lu Yiye's head!"

This confused not only Xia Liang but Tan Sheng as well.

Seeing Huo Liaoyuan's confidence, it was clear he had a considerable chance of capturing Lu Yiye. But with a forceful attack, there would surely be mutual destruction. Was Huo Liaoyuan really willing to do this?

"Forty percent!" Xia Liang, unable to understand, still tried to haggle.

Huo Liaoyuan shook his head and said, "Fellow Daoist Xia must be jesting. While your strengths are certainly formidable, to me, they are just icing on the cake. Even without your help, Lu Yiye is doomed to die. I am willing to share two-tenths of the bounty with both of you simply to minimize the losses to Sacred Universe Spirit Ground. If you don't wish to join forces, I will not insist."

He had an attitude of having Lu Ye in the bag, which truly baffled Xia Liang and Tan Sheng.

After a moment of silence, Xia Liang spoke, "Fellow Daoist Huo may not know this, but there is actually a Heaven's Augury Pillar inside that spirit ground of Lu Yiye."

This information had not been disclosed by him before, and during the battles of the day, the location of the Heaven's Augury Pillar had been concealed; neither sect of cultivators had noticed.

Huo Liaoyuan was astonished, "Are you sure?"

"Fellow Daoist Xia has seen it with his own eyes," Xia Liang affirmed with a nod. "So no matter what Fellow Daoist Huo intends to do, if you truly wish to kill him, you must first seize the location of the Heaven's Augury Pillar at the earliest possible moment, and never let Lu Yiye get close to it."

"I understand. I'll make the arrangements for this matter," Huo Liaoyuan nodded.

Xia Liang looked at him again, intently, and said, "It's good as long as Fellow Daoist Huo is aware."

With a few simple words, the matter of joining forces was settled. Xia Liang and Tan Sheng found a secluded spot to sit down and meditate to recuperate.

Huo Liaoyuan also issued orders for an attack on the Great Reversal Valley at dawn. While both sects of cultivators had yet to recover from the shadow of the previous battle, they began to sharpen their knives eagerly, quietly preparing.

In the place where Xia Liang and Tan Sheng were situated, after a long silence, Tan Sheng could not hold back and quietly asked, "Brother Xia, do you think Huo Liaoyuan will really forcibly attack Lu Yiye's spirit ground?"

"Since he has said so, there must be no falsehood in it."

Tan Sheng shook his head slightly, "Although it is the first encounter, Huo Liaoyuan seems to be quite scheming. Sacred Universe Spirit Ground has already suffered significant losses. Another attack would mean they would gain little even if they captured Lu Yiye. Would such a man really make this decision? And even willing to share a bounty of two-tenths with us... Brother Xia, we should still be careful. Huo Liaoyuan is not too friendly towards us."

Xia Liang nodded, "I am aware. We will just see how things go tomorrow. But what I'm concerned about is something else..."

"What's the matter?"

"Huo Liaoyuan actually didn't ask me about the location of the Heaven's Augury Pillar," Xia Liang said with a puzzled expression on his face.

He had decided to reveal the news of the Heaven's Augury Pillar to Huo Liaoyuan, not out of kindness, but for fear that Huo Liaoyuan would push too hard and drive Lu Ye away, resulting in all efforts turning to naught.

However, when Huo Liaoyuan heard the news, although surprised, he did not ask any further questions. This was clearly abnormal, as if the existence of Heaven's Augury Pillar posed no interference to his plans whatsoever and thus, he did not need to inquire further.

Tan Sheng, recalling the previous conversation, soon realized this point and frowned, "What exactly does he want to do?"

"No matter what he intends to do, it will become clear after dawn."

Dawn was not far off.

More than two hours later, as day broke, the cultivators from the two sects, already prepared, launched an attack on the Great Reversal Spirit Ground under Huo Liaoyuan's command. In an instant, the masking array lost its effectiveness, and the scenery within the spirit ground came into view.

There was no protective array to hinder them, for Lu Ye did not set one up.

Within the spirit ground, Lu Ye emerged, frowning as he saw nearly a hundred cultivators approaching the edge of the spirit ground.

Is this... a direct assault? Even if Huo Liaoyuan were furious, he shouldn't make such a foolish decision, right? Did he not care about the life and death of his own cultivators?

Or did the two surprise attacks he suffered yesterday enrage him to the point of foolishness? But considering the orderly array of the enemy, it seemed unlikely.

Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, and Giant Armor appeared one after another, standing beside Lu Ye.

"Junior Brother!"

"The situation doesn't look good," Lu Ye said with a grave expression, spotting Xia Liang and Tan Sheng among the enemy ranks.

This was within his expectations; Xia Liang and Tan Sheng, who had been forced out of hiding, naturally chose to ally with the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground.

It seemed to strengthen the enemy's forces, but a snake hidden in the shadows was the most dangerous. Now that they were out in the open, the threat was somewhat diminished.

Lu Ye turned to Giant Armor, "If we can't hold them off, use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to escape back to the Nine Provinces, understand?"

He wasn't worried about Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan; they would surely flee if things went wrong. It was Giant Armor he was concerned about.

Following the demise of a few demon wolves yesterday, Giant Armor had been immersed in grief all day. Asking him to abandon the wolf pack and flee for his life might not be something he was willing to do.

Giant Armor looked at the nearby demon wolves and remained silent.

"Once a person dies, it's all over, but alive, there's still a chance for revenge!" Lu Ye coaxed earnestly.

Giant Armor hung his head, still saying nothing.

Lu Ye couldn't help but sigh and said nothing more.

"Kill!" Outside the spirit ground, alongside Huo Liaoyuan's roar, the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground stepped into the range covered by the Great Sky Prohibition Array in unison, not daring to fly through the air after yesterday's lesson.

The Great Reversal Spirit Ground was small, covering a limited area.

But Lu Ye had set up a wide range for the Formation to accommodate the wolf pack. Whether it was the masking array, the protective array, or the Great Sky Prohibition Array, all of them extended far beyond the spirit ground itself, covering several hundred Zhang.

As the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground entered the edge of the big array, they were still hundreds of Zhang away from Lu Ye and the others, well out of attack range.

The numerous cultivators marched in step, pressing toward the interior of the spirit ground, each surging with spirit force, ready to unleash their power.

The wolf pack also began to stir, baring their teeth and snarling as demonic power surged around them.

A great battle was on the brink of erupting!

It wasn't until they were less than a hundred Zhang apart that the cultivators of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, on Huo Liaoyuan's command, struck in unison. Suddenly, weapon control and magic and spells shone brilliantly, engulfing the direction of the wolf pack.

At the same time, Wind Blades struck back from the wolf pack, although they were far fewer in number since only a limited number of demon wolves could employ such Demon Art.

Such long-distance exchanges were undoubtedly disadvantageous for the wolf pack. The head wolf clearly understood this and let out a long howl to the sky.

The next instant, the wolf pack surged forward, howls echoing in response, and snow-white figures darted toward the enemy, rapidly closing the hundred Zhang distance.

Some demon wolves were struck by spells or weapon control mid-charge, faltering, but they were strong and robust, protected by their Demon Origin. As long as their protective demon origin remained unbroken, they were essentially safe from mortal danger.

Giant Armor's towering figure mingled with the wolf pack, charging with them, followed closely by Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan. A hundred swords flew together, and magic buzzed, displaying their formidable foundations.

Only Lu Ye remained in place, simply activating the nine weapon control artefacts from his supplies box, mitigating the pressure on the wolf pack.

The great battle erupted, and the scene became lively in an instant.

Chapter 608 Deathmatch Arena

Under the assault of various weapon controls and magic and spells, shedding blood along the way, demon wolves lunged toward the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, leaping high in the air, their sharp fangs and claws flickering with a cold, chilling light.

The cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground were well-prepared, with physique cultivators and combat cultivators blocking at the front, stopping the charging demon wolves, while magic cultivators and ghost cultivators counterattacked opportunistically.

The howling of wolves and the angry shouts melded into one.

The number of demon wolves was more than double that of the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, but even though they were all Demon Generals, the methods they could employ were not as diverse as those of the cultivators, so the situation reached a deadlock for a while.

The demon wolves couldn't tear through the cultivators' organized defensive lines, and the cultivators couldn't advance any further either.

Standing in the midst of the spirit ground, Lu Ye activated his weapon controls while watching the battlefield, where he saw Giant Armor roaring, drawing the attention of many cultivators. Numerous attacks landed on him, making loud bangs, causing his body's spirit light to flash wildly, eliciting many exclamations of astonishment from the cultivators, probably because they hadn't expected someone to have such a formidable physique.

He saw Xia Liang and Tan Sheng among the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground cultivators, constantly making moves. With just the power of the two of them, they fortified their area of defense as solid as a rock.

It was clear they were holding back. If the two at Cloud River Level 9 had gone all out, they would have been able to cause significant trouble for the demon wolves in front of them. Even though the demon wolves were continually repelled, they quickly surged forward again.

It was understandable—so many people from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had taken action that, if the two of them hadn't held back their power, how could they snatch victory from the jaws of defeat? This showed that their cooperation with Sacred Universe Spirit Ground was just superficial.

Everything seemed normal, yet everything was so abnormal.

This battle had erupted too abruptly.

If Huo Liaoyuan truly intended to assault the spirit ground, yesterday was the best opportunity, not today.

Yesterday they had lost so many people; the fall of comrades would indeed make many cultivators feel panic and fear but also profoundly motivate their hatred and anger. If Huo Liaoyuan had ordered an assault yesterday, the spirit ground would definitely have been indefensible.

A night's rest couldn't give the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground much more strength; instead, it left them insecure.

Why would Huo Liaoyuan launch an assault? Just because of his actions last night? Or because he had the support of Xia Liang and Tan Sheng?

Lu Ye was somewhat puzzled.

Although the battle was intense, the casualties were very small, both for the cultivators and the demon wolves.

Because, even though the cultivators of Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had taken the initiative to attack, their posture was defensive. Thus, the casualties naturally weren't significant.

This was clearly an order issued by Huo Liaoyuan beforehand. Just by looking at the current situation, it seemed as if Sacred Universe Spirit Ground only needed to withstand the counterattack of the demon wolves to win!

This was completely contrary to their all-out assault...

If they really wanted an all-out attack, they should have rushed into the spirit ground without regard for losses, slaughtering every wolf and person they met, turning the Great Reversal Spirit Ground upside down, rather than defending their own camp impenetrably.

Moreover, from the start of the battle, Lu Ye had noticed a force firmly locking onto him.

That was a force from Huo Liaoyuan!

Gazing through the air, with anger burning in his eyes like flames, Huo Liaoyuan bellowed, "Lu Yiye, come here and meet your death!"

He looked completely consumed by hatred.

Lu Ye thought he was full of hot air. He was controlling his own 9th Dao weapon control, and he grabbed an array banner that appeared in his hand.

If it weren't for the need to control the formation, he would have already charged forward with his sword. Why would he be standing here immobile?

The protective array and trap array within the spirit ground were both broken, and he hadn't bothered to reset them, for it was pointless. But that didn't mean there were no other formations left within the spirit ground.

The moment he saw the array banner in Lu Ye's hand, Huo Liaoyuan's face changed, and he cried out, "Everyone be careful!"

As he finished speaking, Lu Ye's array banner swung down fiercely.

A loud boom followed by a burst of fire shot into the sky, screams erupted, and Huo Liaoyuan immediately turned his head to see that the line of his cultivators had been torn open, creating a gap where seven or eight cultivators were blasted gore-covered. Although they were not immediately killed, they were left dazed and in utter disarray.

The demon wolves took advantage of the opening, killing several people instantly.

Another loud boom sounded on the other side, with another formation being triggered, ensnaring several more in its array, bringing them terrible misfortune.

"Quick, block them! Don't let them break through!"

"Junior Brother Yun!"

"Brother, save me!"

...

The scene was chaotic. The sudden explosions of the two explosion magic arrays had everyone from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground trembling, even though they had already known that an all-out attack would come at a high price. But when that price became visible, it was still so hard to accept.

Claws pierced through chests, fangs tore through flesh, and screams rose one after another.

Fortunately, as Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had always maintained a defensive stance, after a brief period of confusion, the gaps in the defensive line were quickly filled by nearby cultivators, stabilizing once again.

But the dead cultivators could not be brought back to life.

Moreover, the explosions from the two explosion magic arrays left a shadow in everyone's hearts... Which array would be the next to explode on their side?

What somewhat reassured them was that no more magic arrays erupted.

Although Lu Ye had set up numerous Arrays throughout the spirit ground that could be actively triggered, they were scattered all over, and not many were near the location of the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground cultivators.

He hadn't triggered them all at once but left a few, so that at the right moment, he could create a greater deterrence.

"Lu Yiye, I'm going to kill you, ah!" Huo Liaoyuan screamed as if he had gone mad.

At the same time, Lu Ye felt that the aura locked onto him had deepened considerably.

"Brother Xia, something's wrong with Huo Liaoyuan," Tan Sheng said softly while dealing with the demon wolf in front of him.

After all, he was a Cloud River Level 9, and also the leader of this operation, he shouldn't be breaking down like this...

He should have known that a strong attack would come with huge losses, although the losses on the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground side were there, they actually weren't heavy.

Huo Liaoyuan's reaction was obviously somewhat exaggerated.

"So that's it!" Xia Liang returned a response that was completely irrelevant, with an expression of sudden realization dawning on his face.

Tan Sheng: "?"

Xia Liang said gravely, "It looks like I underestimated Huo Liaoyuan. This time Lu Yiye is surely doomed, what a pity." His regret was not that Lu Ye would die, but that after Lu Ye's death, he and Tan Sheng could only get 20% of the bounty, each of them getting merely 10%...

No wonder Huo Liaoyuan previously said that their help was just icing on the cake, if Huo Liaoyuan had such an asset, indeed, he and Tan Sheng were just embellishments.

His willingness to share 20% of the bounty was not because of their assistance, but because he couldn't afford to offend the Mad Saber Sect, and it was difficult for him to monopolize the bounty on Lu Ye, thus using 20% of the bounty to form good relations.

That said, their exposure had caused Huo Liaoyuan to feel a crisis, or perhaps it was because of Lu Ye's attack last night, and that's why he chose to assault the spirit ground today.

"Brother Xia, what are you talking about?" Tan Sheng was utterly confused, wondering how Lu Yiye was surely doomed.

"Just wait and see," Xia Liang did not explain much, as all would soon become apparent, and explaining was just a waste of words. However, he didn't forget to remind Tan Sheng, "Remember to flee in time later."

Tan Sheng became even more puzzled, but he still suppressed his doubts and silently made his move.

The fierce battle was still in full swing, and although the Sacred Universe Spirit Ground had lost more than ten people due to the explosion of two magic arrays, the remaining cultivators still held the line, not letting the wolf pack break through.

Huo Liaoyuan's expression became increasingly angry and distorted, and his body erupted with blazing flames, making him look as if he were on fire.

A sense of unease suddenly arose in Lu Ye's heart...

The aura Huo Liaoyuan had locked onto him with... was unreasonably powerful!

At the beginning of the battle, when this aura had locked onto him, Lu Ye hadn't cared much, considering that Huo Liaoyuan had suffered a great loss at his hands, and many of his cultivators had died, focusing on him during the battle was only too normal.

But now...

An aura of a Cloud River Level 9 being this powerful? Lu Ye even felt as though some invisible force had bound him, and with each passing moment, that feeling became clearer.

He looked up at Huo Liaoyuan, just in time to meet his gaze.

As their eyes met, Huo Liaoyuan was still shouting loudly, "Lu Yiye, I must kill you!" appearing frantic, yet his eyes were clear.

And from beginning to end, he had just been shouting and had not actively charged forward!

That was bad! A chill ran down Lu Ye's spine; he was not sure what Huo Liaoyuan was up to, but the one thing he was certain of was that he had fallen into some sort of trick.

Just at this moment, Huo Liaoyuan's continuous shouting suddenly ceased, and Lu Ye also discovered in horror that he couldn't move!

An invisible force bound him, locking him firmly in place.

Huo Liaoyuan smiled, a look of having succeeded in his trick, and gazed over faintly, "Lu Yiye, come and meet your death!"

As he spoke, an object in his hand slowly floated up, radiating brilliant light.

In an instant, everyone on the battlefield turned their attention to that object.

It was a square item, only the size of a child's palm, with a big character "Death" engraved on one side.

The other side had the character "Fight" engraved as well.

As soon as this object appeared, two rays of light shot out, one landing on Lu Ye and the other on Huo Liaoyuan, binding the two like ropes.

Li Baxian, who was controlling his flying sword to fight, turned pale and cried out in shock, "Fight to the Death Arena!"

As he spoke, 100 flying swords soared, all striking toward the palm-sized Fight to the Death Arena.

Feng Yuechan also changed her expression and intervened to help.

Then no matter whether it was Li Baxian's flying swords or Feng Yuechan's magic and spells, they couldn't damage the Fight to the Death Arena at all, let alone harm the Arena, not even Lu Ye and Huo Liaoyuan, who were bound by the Arena, could be harmed by external forces.

Chapter 609 Fight to the Death

...

"Deathmatch Arena!"

Tan Sheng, who was resisting the assault of the demon wolves, exclaimed in surprise as he looked at the gleaming square object, realizing an instant later, "So that's it!"

No wonder Huo Liaoyuan's performance was so bizarre today; he intended to use this artifact all along. Everything made sense now—their side had launched a ferocious attack, but ended up on the defensive the whole time. Huo Liaoyuan had seemed to lose his reason, but aside from shouting, he showed no other signs of irrationality.

All of it was an illusion, laid out just for this moment.

"Indeed..." Xia Liang murmured softly, the truth of the matter aligning with his suspicions—Huo Liaoyuan indeed possessed a Deathmatch Arena.

His realization came partly from Huo Liaoyuan's odd behavior and partly because the Qi machine locked onto Lu Ye was just too abnormal.

That Qi machine wasn't from Huo Liaoyuan at all, but extended from the Deathmatch Arena, which explained why it surpassed Huo Liaoyuan's own limits.

There are many exotic treasures in Nine Provinces, each with bizarre and fantastic effects. The tracking disc used by Tan Sheng to trace Lu Ye's movements is an exotic treasure; the Golden Body Token that Lu Ye used to save his life is one, too, and so is the Deathmatch Arena.

It has but one function: to pull the holder who activates the Deathmatch Arena, along with the targeted enemy, into a separate Death Combat Arena for a fight to the death!

In terms of value, naturally the Deathmatch Arena is not on par with the Golden Body Token that Lu Ye had used before, which was an absolutely lifesaving treasure. The Deathmatch Arena is not for preserving life but for forcing an enemy into a decisive death battle, hence it has significant limitations in its use—it only works if the enemy's strength is weaker than one's own.

Moreover, there are prerequisites to using it. The Qi machine released by the Deathmatch Arena must fully lock onto the enemy. In other words, the distance between Huo Liaoyuan and Lu Ye couldn't be too great, and it needs a bit of time to build up momentum. If Lu Ye moved beyond a certain range during this time, the effect of the Deathmatch Arena couldn't be activated.

This was why Huo Liaoyuan decided to launch a strong attack today, and why he didn't bother to inquire Xia Liang for the exact location of the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

What does it matter if there is a Heaven's Augury Pillar or not? As long as he successfully activated the power of the Deathmatch Arena, Lu Yiye would undoubtedly die.

All his previous behavior was just a ruse, meant to let Lu Ye lower his guard. Now it seemed his planning had been successful, for Lu Ye only realized the impending crisis at the very last moment.

However, it was already too late by the time he noticed, for as the two beams of light from the Deathmatch Arena locked onto him and Huo Liaoyuan, the exotic treasure fully unleashed its power.

Li Baxian's flying sword and Feng Yuechan's magic and spells continued to bombard the Deathmatch Arena tirelessly, but the tiny Deathmatch Arena remained unaffected.

As the light shone brilliantly, the figures of Lu Ye and Huo Liaoyuan, along with the small Deathmatch Arena, disappeared all at once.

"Junior Brother Lu!" Li Baxian cried out, utterly unable to stop Lu Ye's fate from being drawn in.

"Move!" Xia Liang ordered in a low voice, swiftly retreating.

Tan Sheng, already warned by him, quickly followed suit.

At the same time, all the cultivators from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground also fought while retreating, orderly and well-disciplined.

Although Li Baxian and the others, driven by rage, continued to pursue the wolves, their efforts bore little fruit. They could only watch as the cultivators from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground withdrew from the coverage of the Great Sky Prohibition Array and then soared into the sky, turning tail and running.

The wolf pack chased to the edge of the spirit ground, howling intermittently, but did not proceed further.

With the Great Sky Prohibition Array in place, they could still battle it out with the cultivators from Sacred Universe Spirit Ground, but once they went beyond the range of the array, they would become living targets.

Li Baxian, though angry and worried, still maintained his rationality. He halted his chase and immediately checked Lu Ye's battlefield marking.

In the current situation, with Lu Ye and Huo Liaoyuan drawn into the space transformed by the Deathmatch Arena, no matter how many techniques he had, he could not lend assistance. He could only determine Lu Ye's life or death through Lu Ye's battlefield marking.

"Senior Brother..." Feng Yuechan came over and called out softly, reassuring him, "It might not be bad, you've forgotten that in the hunting grounds, Junior Brother Lu, when at Level 3, killed a Level 7. Now he is already at Level 5."

Even though that battle was not solely Lu Ye's accomplishment but that of three people exerting their full strength, still, upon hearing Feng Yuechan's words, a glimmer of hope sparked in Li Baxian's eyes.

He nodded repeatedly, "Right, Junior Brother Lu may not be in trouble as long as he can unleash his final trump card..."

As he spoke, his complexion turned grim, and raising his head to look at Feng Yuechan, his eyes lost focus, "Amber... is in slumber!"

The trump card Lu Ye depended on required cooperation with Amber, but ever since it swallowed a demonic pill of an Overlord level last time, it had fallen into deep slumber, still unawakened to this day. Not only was Amber sleeping, but Yiyi had also fallen into silence.

In other words, Lu Ye currently had no assistance from external forces!

Alone, against an opponent four minor levels above his own cultivation level...

...

Li Baxian's figure wavered, and he couldn't help but stagger a step, his complexion suddenly turning pale.

The space of the Deathmatch Arena was an area roughly three hundred zhang in length and width, with a void overhead and restrictions around.

It's not that the space of Deathmatch Arena is only this big, but it varies according to the user's cultivation level, and so does the size of the arena.

With Huo Liaoyuan's cultivation at the Cloud River Level 9, the range is such after activating the Deathmatch Arena, but if a strong cultivator of the Divine Sea Realm were to use it, the range could cover dozens of miles or more.

When Lu Ye's figure suddenly appeared here, the invisible force locked on him also suddenly vanished, restoring his freedom.

His first action was to observe his surroundings, and at a glance, he saw Huo Liaoyuan standing at the other end of the Deathmatch Arena.

The environment around him felt familiar; he had been to such places before, more than once.

During the Spirit Stream Ranking challenges, some opponents chose terrains like this, and when others challenged him, he also picked such terrains, albeit smaller in scale, because it was convenient for combat cultivators to demonstrate their skills.

This being said, is this place similar to the Spirit Stream Ranking challenges? Only that Huo Liaoyuan had used an exotic treasure to bring both of them here.

He stimulated his spirit force without any hindrance, lifted off the ground, and tried to fly outwards, but the restrictions around prevented him, and feeling the solidity of those restrictions, he realized they were simply beyond his ability to shake.

Being trapped in such a small space with an enemy from the Cloud River Level 9, the situation was unprecedentedly dire!

Although his strength had greatly increased from the time in the hunting grounds, he never believed he was a match for a Level 9 cultivator. With his current abilities, he might stand a fighting chance against Level 8, but facing Level 9... he would have to activate the Beast Transformation Secret Technique.

But Amber was in slumber, so the Beast Transformation Secret Technique was out of question.

So the only trump card he had left to deal with the enemy was a single stroke of the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, but even that required time to gather momentum, and in this not-so-spacious area, the enemy certainly wouldn't be foolish enough to let him slowly gather momentum. The moment he tried to activate the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes, he would face a storm-like assault.

Trouble!

"Stop wasting your effort," Huo Liaoyuan's leisurely voice rang out as he saw Lu Ye making a move to escape, "Inside the Deathmatch Arena, it's a fight to the death. Today, only one of us can live. Only with one's death will the Deathmatch Arena be lifted!"

Deathmatch Arena? Lu Ye frowned slightly upon hearing this; he hadn't heard of such a thing. Although he was now a cultivator of the Cloud River Realm and had reached the Cloud River Level 5, his knowledge and experience were ultimately too shallow compared to an average cultivator.

There was no helping it; he had begun his cultivation too late.

But based on his own experience and Huo Liaoyuan's previous actions, the so-called Deathmatch Arena must be an exotic treasure with special functions.

"Who do you guess will be the one to die?" Huo Liaoyuan, with his hands behind his back, hovered about a dozen zhang above the ground, looking down at Lu Ye with cold eyes.

Lu Ye glanced at him indifferently, his thumb rubbing against the handle of the Boulder Mountain Saber.

The silver lining in this misfortune was that the Level 9 cultivator who had used the Deathmatch Arena against him was from the Sacred Fire Order!

The cultivators of the Sacred Fire Order, ninety-nine percent of whom were fire attribute magic cultivators, were something he feared the least!

If it had been Xia Liang or Tan Sheng who had used the Deathmatch Arena today, then he would have been undoubtedly doomed. But it just so happened to be Huo Liaoyuan, so the situation was not that desperate.

"Lu Yiye!" Huo Liaoyuan shouted angrily; Lu Ye's silence had undoubtedly infuriated him. With an angry expression, he said, "You better surrender to your death obediently, otherwise I have countless ways to torture you!"

In the Deathmatch Arena, outside forces and others could not interfere; he was a full four minor levels above Lu Ye in cultivation, and he was confident of his victory, but even so, he could not suppress the anger in his heart.

The loss suffered by Sacred Universe Spirit Ground this time was too severe; more than sixty people had died on the very first day, and nearly twenty more in today's assault. Such losses were almost half the number of people he had brought with him, and he was forced to use the Deathmatch Arena, such a precious exotic treasure. Even if he killed Lu Yiye today, the sect would surely hold him accountable.

He only hoped that he could compensate for his actions; otherwise, his future would surely be ruined.

He should be able to make up for it, after all, the bounty on Lu Yiye's head was simply too substantial. As long as he killed Lu Yiye, not only would he be blameless, but he would likely be credited with a great achievement. Which of the major 1st-grade sects in Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would not want Lu Yiye dead?

In response, Lu Ye launched an assault, his body darting out like a nimble cheetah, leaving a trail of afterimages behind as the Move-Like-The-Wind enhancement kicked in, rapidly closing the three hundred zhang distance.

Combat cultivator versus magic cultivator, the first tenet: close the distance, engage in close combat. Even though he was only at Level 5 and Huo Liaoyuan was at Level 9, as long as he could get in close, it was uncertain who would live and who would die. After all, magic cultivators spend years studying magic and spells, and are always relatively physically weak.

So even though stalling for time held no disadvantage for him, he still took the initiative to attack.

Chapter 610 Battle of Level 9

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"Good, very good!" Huo Liaoyuan laughed in rage, Lu Ye's reaction was within his expectations. If Lu Ye had really resigned himself to fate, then Huo Liaoyuan would have truly looked down on him.

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As his words fell, Huo Liaoyuan raised his hand and slapped the air in front of him, causing spirit force to surge around him. At the center of his palm, a fiery red spirit force disc several zhang in diameter rapidly unfolded. Within the disc, intricate and interlocking patterns flashed with light.

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The spirit force disc seemed to be embedded in Huo Liaoyuan's palm, and as his spirit force stirred, large and small fireballs appeared out of nowhere, pulling bright trails of fire behind them, hurtling towards Lu Ye like a meteor shower.

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As a magic cultivator at the Cloud River Level 9, who had spent years studying magic and spells, Huo Liaoyuan's mastery was naturally extremely high. The meteor shower he unleashed immediately showcased his prowess. The dense fireballs, dragging their red tails under Huo Liaoyuan's control, turned into arcs as they crazily surged towards where Lu Ye stood, their passage distorting the very space around them with scorching heat.

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Lu Ye's figure dodged and weaved, avoiding the first few fireballs that reached him. In the midst of that meteor shower, he found gaps to dart through as he rapidly advanced forward.

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His movements were swift, his reactions quick, far surpassing the standard expected of a Level 5 cultivator.

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Booming sounds echoed...

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As fireballs hit nothing but air, they struck against the surface of the Deathmatch Arena, and against the restriction barriers around it, erupting in dazzling flames and unleashing shocking heatwaves.

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A calm and composed Huo Liaoyuan's face showed a look of surprise.

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For him, a Level 9 cultivator, to personally deal with a Level 5 cultivator, he hadn't really put much effort into it. He believed that with such a huge disparity in cultivation, he could easily claim the other's life with a casual spell. Using the energy-intensive meteor fire shower was already an exceedingly secure move. Yet, Lu Ye's performance astonished him.

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The opponent could actually weave through his meteor shower...

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Was such a reaction possible for a Level 5 cultivator?

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Huo Liaoyuan's expression immediately turned serious. He had witnessed the embarrassment of capsizing in a ditch, and he had warned himself to take heed. His mental power began to surge, and the number of fireballs emerging from the spirit force disc in front of him grew even larger, their trajectories increasingly unpredictable.

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Lu Ye, like a fish swimming upstream against the tide of fireballs, felt the pressure mount the moment Huo Liaoyuan's mindset shifted, slowing his advance.

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A magic cultivator possesses a certain degree of control over the spells they cast, a capability that becomes evident once a cultivator reaches the Level 7 realm.

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Take Lu Ye, for instance. When he first started practicing the Fire Phoenix Technique, his cultivation was only at Level 3. Once he executed the spell, it would follow whatever trajectory it was supposed to, with no control on his part, resulting in incredibly poor accuracy.

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But once his cultivation reached Level 7, a cultivator could manipulate spirit force that had left their body, which is precisely why cultivators could control weapons at this level of cultivation.

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Being able to control the spirit force within a Spiritual Artifact naturally meant they could also control spells.

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The level of a magic cultivator's skill doesn't solely depend on how many spells they know, or how powerful those spells are, but also on the subtle control they have over their own spells.

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Huo Liaoyuan was undoubtedly a qualified magic cultivator. The overwhelming barrage of fireballs he released, while not entirely within his control, could still be partially manipulated.

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And these fireballs, under his control, followed trajectories that were very hard to predict.

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At this moment, even though Lu Ye had managed to dodge some of the fireballs, they could return from behind, attacking from the rear.

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The hand that had been resting on the hilt of his saber moved, and a fiery red saber light flashed past. The Boulder Mountain Saber burst forth with a fierce light, splintering the incoming fireballs one after another, causing a series of explosive booms.

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The protective spirit force enveloped his body. As stray sparks fell, they accelerated the depletion of Lu Ye's spirit force.

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He did not stimulate the power of the Talent Tree. That was the confidence backing his battle with Huo Liaoyuan, something he didn't want to expose unless absolutely necessary.

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Moreover, to defeat a Cloud River Level 9 cultivator, relying solely on the Talent Tree's power was far from enough. He needed to get Huo Liaoyuan to exhaust as much of his own strength as possible. Only then, at his weakest, could Lu Ye deliver a killing blow.

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In terms of cultivation, he was indeed far behind Huo Liaoyuan.

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But aside from that, Huo Liaoyuan no longer held any advantage.

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"Die!" Suddenly, Huo Liaoyuan let out a furious roar, his face contorted with ferocity.

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The long saber swung by Lu Ye stopped abruptly, and with a turn of his gaze, he saw a huge fireball right in front of him. This fireball was clearly different from the others; it contained extremely violent spirit force within.

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As he noticed the fireball, a chaotic and ferocious fluctuation of power simultaneously reached him. The huge fireball suddenly expanded in his field of vision, accompanied by an intense humming sound and a blinding flash of firelight.

Boom...

The firelight burst forth, engulfing Lu Ye's figure. Huo Liaoyuan did not stop his assault but seized the opportunity to pursue his attack. Under his exquisite control, more fireballs surged into that blaze one after another, triggering the aura of death.

Suddenly the firelight churned, and Lu Ye's ragged figure tumbled out from within, slightly leaning forward with one hand spread out in front of him. A massive Defense Spirit Rune shielded him, making it seem as though he was holding a shield, while the other hand, though burned and blurred with flesh, still tightly gripped his Boulder Mountain Saber.

He stood on the Deathmatch Arena, skidding back more than thirty yards from the massive impact before he could barely stabilize his posture.

With a crashing noise, the shield of defense in front of him shattered, revealing Lu Ye's figure, his clothes torn and tattered, his body dotted with burns, even some of his hair curled and singed.

He had put in so much effort to gradually close the distance with Huo Liaoyuan, but the opponent had easily nullified all his previous efforts, sending everything back to square one.

Indeed... I hate magic cultivators, Lu Ye turned his head and spat out a mouthful of Blood Water, calming the churning blood Qi in his chest.

These guys, relying on their far reach, act as they please, leaving no room for him to apply what he had learned.

"Hmm?" Huo Liaoyuan was slightly startled, looking at Lu Ye who had escaped the trap, his expression suddenly becoming excited, "Impressive, very impressive!"

He appeared as if he'd discovered some new and amusing thing, his eyes brimming with excitement and joy, "A mere Level 5 realm, and yet you can block my magic and spells, Lu Yiye, you truly are a monster. It's no wonder you cause such a headache for all the major forces of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. I was thinking, it would be a waste to just kill you off like this, especially since I used an exotic treasure like the Deathmatch Arena! Since you're so powerful..." his expression suddenly turned cold, and the words that popped out of his mouth were like the icy breath from the Deepest Hell, "then struggle as much as you can, no matter what, having spent so much, you'd better give me a good show!"

The spirit light flashed again, and on that spirit force disc, densely packed fireballs reappeared. After a brief pause when they appeared, the fireballs one after another surged toward Lu Ye.

After the setback just now, how could Lu Ye not know that with his current strength, it was a foolish dream to think he could rush up to his opponent under these circumstances.

It's true that magic cultivators have weaker constitutions, and most would meet bad ends if combat cultivators got close, but their reach is so long, and that reach is the truth. In the face of absolute strength disparity, it's unrealistic for combat cultivators to get close to them.

Indeed, I must keep depleting his strength.

Such a dense barrage of magic and spells, even if Huo Liaoyuan were at Level 9, would surely cost him greatly!

Making up his mind, Lu Ye immediately swept to the side. Fireballs closely followed, narrowly missing his body and striking the Deathmatch Arena, hitting the restriction barrier with thunderous noises. The blasts from the exploding fireballs unleashed shockwaves in all directions, tossing Lu Ye about like a solitary boat adrift on the high seas amid surging waves and howling winds.

Huo Liaoyuan was indeed going a bit mad, his expression contorted—perhaps due to the heavy casualties among his men the day before where over sixty people had perished, the psychological pressure was too great. Now that he'd gotten the chance, he was unleashing it all.

While relentlessly driving his magic and spells to attack, he laughed maniacally, and every so often, he taunted, "Run, run, look at you running like a rat, such an ugly posture. Want to kill me? If you want to kill me, come here; you won't have the chance if you just run away!"

Despite the mockery, he didn't forget to provoke, showing how meticulous Huo Liaoyuan's nature was. Even in a situation he fully controlled, he instinctively used words to affect Lu Ye's mental state.

Lu Ye would not be swayed by him. Having decided to first deplete his power, the longer the delay, the better.

The continuous booming sounds were unending as Lu Ye darted around the Deathmatch Arena. Occasionally, he would feign attempts to charge at Huo Liaoyuan in order to confuse him. Unsurprisingly, every time he did this, Huo Liaoyuan's offense would intensify, keeping him at bay.

The Boulder Mountain Saber he was holding might as well have been for decoration—he had no opportunity to swing it. The Defense Spirit Runes were constantly activated, blocking some attacks he couldn't avoid.

Not a single fireball caused him direct harm, but the shock of each explosion still left his body pained and his blood Qi in turmoil.

This was also why he had not immediately activated his Talent Tree. Indeed, by activating it, he could block the fire type's power, but the accompanying shock and turbulence could not be avoided.

Moreover, doing so would greatly exhaust his mental power, and even though Lu Ye's mental power was much stronger than that of cultivators at the same level, he could not maintain it for a long time.

This trump card must be used at the right moment to achieve the element of surprise.

Time passed, the duration of a cup of tea, one incense stick's time...

Lu Ye became more and more bedraggled, and Huo Liaoyuan's expression was no longer as relaxed as before.

The meteor fire shower technique was extremely taxing; he had never sustained it for so long. In just the short time of one incense stick, nearly half of his spirit force had been used up. However, to his frustration, Lu Yiye was still bouncing around energetically!