

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 61 - 59 The Mystery of the Talent Tree[1,434 words]

Lu Ye, when not deliberately probing, would not sense it, but if he deliberately did so, he could clearly perceive the existence of the Talent Tree.

This wondrous tree was rooted within his own Root Spiritual Orifice.

The pill energy from the Spirit-Nurturing Pill spread throughout his abdomen, transforming into spirit force. Lu Ye, while dividing his attention to guide the pill energy into his spiritual orifice, also kept an eye on the Talent Tree.

The spirit force obtained from the converted pill energy was not directly infused into any particular spiritual orifice, but had to first pass through the Root Spiritual Orifice. For example, Lu Ye's 21st orifice was not yet full, so the spirit force transformed from the elixir pill he consumed needed to go through the Root Spiritual Orifice before surging into the 21st orifice.

And if a particular orifice was too far from the Root Spiritual Orifice, it might even require the transfer through several spiritual orifices.

But without exception, the Root Spiritual Orifice was the starting point for receiving spirit force, which was why this initial opened orifice was called the Root Spiritual Orifice and was the most important spiritual orifice for a cultivator.

In Lu Ye's understanding, the Root Spiritual Orifice was similar to the Dantian of those martial arts experts.

However, it is true that the location of the Root Spiritual Orifice is at the Dantian, and the spiritual orifices opened by low-level Cultivation Techniques are all near the Root Spiritual Orifice, so they do not need too much transfer; just passing through one Root Spiritual Orifice would suffice.

In the past, Lu Ye had not scrutinized closely, but with deliberate attention this time, he was surprised to discover that the spirit force transformed from the pill energy of the Spirit-Nurturing Pill... did not seem as pure as his own spirit force. Mixed within it were some indistinct elements that were likely harmful to himself.

Is this pill poison? A thought popped into Lu Ye's mind.

The sect master had mentioned this to him before: all medicines have a toxic side, let alone the elixir pills that cultivators consume. The lower the quality of the elixir pill, the worse the pill poison. Therefore, after taking elixir pills for cultivation, cultivators need to find ways to resolve the pill poison, lest they leave some hidden troubles.

The impure spirit force flowed into the Root Spiritual Orifice, and through the Root Spiritual Orifice's transfer, it entered the 21st orifice. However, something miraculous occurred—the spirit force that flowed into the 21st orifice no longer had any trace of pill poison, becoming as pure as the spirit force in other orifices.

Lu Ye keenly noticed this detail, which confirmed that the change in spirit force occurred within the Root Spiritual Orifice.

He quickly put most of his attention into the Root Spiritual Orifice to observe closely and soon discovered the marvel within it.

The Talent Tree rooted in the Root Spiritual Orifice had grown roots, which seemed to be absorbing the spirit force within the Root Spiritual Orifice. The spirit force then flowed through the tree and was returned, purified. The impure spirit force, after this process, became pure.

During the entire process, a grey mist continually emanated from the Talent Tree's trunk, reminiscent of ashes after burning.

Indeed, the problem lay with the Talent Tree!

Judging from the current observations, the Talent Tree appeared to have a purification effect on spirit force, burning away all the pill poison.

Lu Ye recalled another matter: ever since he began his cultivation after opening his orifice, each cultivation session left him feeling somewhat uncomfortable, as if covered with a layer of dust.

This sensation became even more obvious after he entered the Spirit Stream battlefield and had enough Spirit-Nurturing Pills at his disposal.

On the contrary, there was a period when he ran out of Spirit-Nurturing Pills, and during the Essence Refinement-Qi Conversion cultivation, this phenomenon did not occur.

Piecing everything together, Lu Ye had an epiphany.

The Talent Tree had the capacity to purify spirit force; the pill poison from his elixir pill consumption was burned off by the Talent Tree, ensuring his cultivation bore no hidden dangers. And since the burnt-off pill poison could not vanish without a trace, it was expelled from his body, leading to the feeling of dust covering him after each cultivation session.

With everything now clear, Lu Ye's previous speculations were confirmed, although not overly unexpected.

But having understood all this, he would no longer have too much psychological burden when consuming elixir pills for cultivation in the future.

Relaxing his mind, Lu Ye continued to guide the pill energy in his abdomen, and the spirit force in the 21st orifice gradually increased.

Yiyi was originally watching him tensely, but seeing that he showed no more abnormalities, she couldn't help but fall asleep—Heaven only knows how a Spiritual Body like her could sleep...

She was awakened by the sound of piercing the air, and when she opened her eyes, dawn had broken, the bonfire beside her had long burned out, and not far away, Lu Ye, bare-chested, held a knife in one hand, continuously swinging it. Each movement was measured and slow, but his expression was meticulous.

This guy... is he made of iron? Yiyi's eyes twitched.

In fact, Lu Ye had slept for three Shichen last night. Though the constitution of a cultivator was stronger than that of an ordinary person, rest was still necessary, especially for a low-level cultivator like him, who hadn't completely left the realm of mortals.

However, he was acutely aware of the treacherous road ahead, so he was unwilling to waste time.

By the time Lu Ye had finished his morning cultivation session, Yiyi and the big tiger had already gathered enough firewood and lit it. Lu Ye then took a piece of snake meat out of his storage sack and tossed it to them to handle.

After eating their fill, the group continued on their way.

The journey wasn't as pleasant as imagined. Amidst the rough travel, Lu Ye swallowed a Spirit-Nurturing Pill; he wanted to try cultivating on the back of the tiger. If he couldn't resolve this issue, he would waste a lot of time.

Along the way, they occasionally bumped into some hurried low-level cultivators, but the big tiger always avoided them in advance. Those cultivators, upon seeing the tiger's silhouette from afar, wouldn't come to provoke it if they were sane, let alone catch up to it.

At night, they once again found a suitable place to rest.

Eat snake meat, practice swordsmanship, then pop pills and cultivate.

Today's progress was good. Although Lu Ye still felt the tiger's jolts, at least he could start cultivating. It was just that his efficiency was somewhat low.

At the break of day, Lu Ye took out the ten-part map to check his current position against his starting position and to determine the direction to head in and the nearest target.

After riding the big tiger for two days, they still hadn't left the bounds of Qingyun Mountain, which showed the vastness of this mountain range.

Another day later, by evening, Lu Ye looked at a marketplace not far away and exhaled a long breath—the nearest destination had been reached.

On the ten-part map, this place was marked as Qingyun Marketplace Five.

Lu Ye rode the big tiger into the marketplace, attracting quite a bit of attention.

He had seen cultivators with demon beasts at his side back in Qingyun Marketplace Three, but those demon beasts stirred up dust and stones wherever they went. None were as majestic as the big tiger.

Lu Ye had also considered having the big tiger wait outside for him, but the tiger's strength wasn't very high, and being unfamiliar with the area, there was a risk it could inadvertently wander into a demon beast's territory and suffer for it.

After weighing his options, he simply brought the big tiger with him.

He intended to rest here for the night.

It was undeniable that having the big tiger by his side was quite a deterrent; many timid cultivators kept their distance from Lu Ye.

About half a Shichen later, Lu Ye arrived at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union of this marketplace. He didn't possess any Spirit Stones, but the mercantile union also accepted elixir pills as payment. After Lu Ye gave them a Spirit-Nurturing Pill, he was led by the union's people to a guest room on the third floor.

The room wasn't very large, but it was quiet. The big tiger lay down on the floor to rest. Lu Ye fed it a Spirit-Nurturing Pill while Yiyi, who had been holding her breath, ran out to get some air.

Lu Ye, meanwhile, sat cross-legged on the bed, guiding the pill energy to strike at the spiritual orifice barrier of the 22nd orifice.

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 62 - 60: Gathering Spirit[1,451 words]

During the day, Lu Ye had cultivated his 21st orifice to its capacity, and all it took to get closer to reaching Spirit Stream Level 3 was to break through the barrier of the 22nd orifice.

He did not consume the Barrier-breaking Fruit, although that thing had marvellous effects on breaking the spiritual orifice barriers.

According to Lu Ye's estimate, the Barrier-breaking Fruit must be quite precious. He had consumed it last time because he was in a hurry to advance to Spirit Stream Level 1. Now, having plenty of Spirit-Nurturing Pills, he could achieve the same goal by simply spending more time, so naturally, Lu Ye would not waste them.

He planned to save these two spirit fruits until the right moment to use them, so they would yield the greatest benefit.

Now, the spirit force within his body was incomparable to what it was at the beginning, which made breaking through the spiritual orifice barrier much easier.

In less than two hours, the barrier of the 22nd orifice was broken, and a trickle of spirit force flowed into it.

Lu Ye continued to cultivate for a while, completely digesting the pill energy before stopping.

It had been three days since his last inspection of the Talent Tree and the spirit runes on the leaves. Tonight, Lu Ye planned to check the third burning leaf to see what kind of spirit runes it held.

Despite having prepared himself mentally, he still felt somewhat hesitant when the time came, mainly because the experience was rather unpleasant.

But it was an experience that had to be faced sooner or later. Better to get it over with quickly, Lu Ye steeled himself and focused his mind, "looking" towards the Talent Tree within his Root Spiritual Orifice.

The burning leaf rapidly enlarged, the intricate patterns on the leaf instantly blocking Lu Ye's vision and thoughts, bringing back that feeling of being hit hard with a hammer.

His mind was pried open as a vast amount of incomprehensible information poured in, and then was furiously stirred...

After a long while, Lu Ye finally opened his eyes, taking deep breaths. Big Tiger raised his head, and Yiyi stood by the bed, looking at him with worry.

Thankfully, having gone through such an experience three days ago, Yiyi was rather unfazed.

Lu Ye immersed his mind to check the new information that appeared in his sea of consciousness.

Gathering Spirit!

This was the name of the spirit runes carried on the third leaf.

Was the first rune offensive, the second defensive, and now the third one supportive?

The purpose of this rune was evident from its name; it was used to gather spiritual energy. Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force, constructing this rune in the palm of his hand. When the intricate and complex pattern of the spirit runes emerged, the spiritual energy in the room began to converge toward his palm, which then induced more of nature's spiritual energy to flow in from outside.

Lu Ye waited a moment and found that the nature's spiritual energy in the room did not seem to change much. It was probably because the spirit rune he constructed was not large enough or sustained long enough.

If he were to construct a rune that could cover the entire room, or even the entire mercantile union, then the effect of gathering nature's spiritual energy would likely be outstanding.

But never mind whether his spirit force could support such a massive rune, even if he actually did that, it would still be meaningless.

His body was not good at absorbing and expelling spiritual energy, so no matter how dense the outside spiritual energy was, it was not very useful to him.

Rubbish!

Lu Ye thought with a secret sneer, feeling somewhat disappointed.

Sharpness and Defense had provided him significant help in battle, and he had been very much looking forward to this third rune, but the result turned out to be such a seemingly useless one.

However, when comparing the Sharpness and Protective spirit runes, the energy consumption of the Gathering Spirit rune is very small. To cast the same volume of a single rune, the Gathering Spirit only consumes one-tenth of what the Protective rune does, and moreover, it seems that it can be maintained for a long time.

Both the Sharpness and Protective runes last for only a short duration, so if Lu Ye wants to use them during combat, he must seize the right moment. They can be maintained for a longer period, but doing so would increase the consumption of spirit force.

But the Gathering Spirit rune is different, as it gathers nature's spiritual energy and replenishes itself at the same time. Thus, once it is established, unless Lu Ye actively disperses it, it will continue indefinitely.

Thinking about it this way, this thing is not entirely useless. If a sufficiently large Gathering Spirit rune could be constructed at a big sect's residence, the spiritual energy in that place would become increasingly rich.

Yiyi watched this scene with some shock from the side.

Three days ago, she had personally witnessed Lu Ye casually create an unintelligible spirit rune, and now she saw him do it again, yet these two were completely different runes.

Yiyi wasn't clear about the use of the spirit rune from three days ago, but this time, the purpose of the rune was obviously to gather nature's spiritual energy.

Who exactly is this guy? His cultivation isn't high, but his research into spirit runes is so thorough. She knew that this would take a great deal of time and effort.

From this, it looked like he indeed had some relationship with a bigwig from a big sect...

It has to be said that the more Yiyi thought about it, the more her thoughts strayed. She was smart enough not to ask about things she shouldn't, and this reassured Lu Ye. Otherwise, he would have to consider whether to continue their cooperative relationship.

On the other side, Lu Ye had already dispersed the Gathering Spirit rune and began to take off his shirt, then drew his long knife and started to swing it, forcing Big Tiger to cower in a corner to avoid being accidentally wounded...

Strike after strike, Lu Ye hacked earnestly.

A night passed and when the sky brightened, Lu Ye went from the third floor to the first floor of the grand hall and found a manager in the mercantile union to trade two pieces of origin magnetic ore.

He still had fourteen pieces of ore, all fairly large in size, with the largest being as big as a washbasin. He didn't trade too much to avoid running into someone like Liew Ruyin again.

After all, on his journey, he would encounter many branches of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union. Selling off the mineral ores bit by bit would reduce some risks.

When he had left Qingyun Marketplace Three, if it hadn't been for the urgent need to buy a ten-part map, he wouldn't have risked selling a dozen pieces of origin magnetic ore like that; it was too easy to draw unwanted attention.

For the two pieces of ore, he got 103 Spirit Stones. This time he didn't purchase any Spirit-Nurturing Pills but saved the Spirit Stones instead.

At the moment, he had enough Spirit-Nurturing Pills to last him until he reached Spirit Stream Level 3, and then some, so there was no need to continue stockpiling them.

As for saving the Spirit Stones... it was because he needed to accumulate a large amount of them for another purpose.

He had just left the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union when a skinny-faced male cultivator approached, greeting him with a beaming smile, "Fellow Daoist, please wait!"

Lu Ye frowned at him, and Big Tiger stepped forward, issuing a menacing growl.

The male cultivator's smile suddenly stiffened, and he hastily retreated two steps, "Fellow Daoist, please don't be angry. I have no ill intentions; I simply wish to discuss a business proposition with you."

Lu Ye assessed the spirit light emanating from the man, confirming that he was only at Spirit Stream Level 2, and moreover, judging by the purity of his spirit light, which was below average, it was clear that this guy wasn't very strong.

Seeing Lu Ye and Big Tiger both staring at him, the male cultivator felt his scalp tingling and forced a smile, "I really just want to talk business."

"Make way!" Lu Ye said indifferently, his hand resting on the hilt of his knife as he led Big Tiger straight forward. The man quickly got out of the way, still not giving up, probably guessing that Lu Ye wouldn't do anything to him right there. He followed Lu Ye and said, "Fellow Daoist, I have a set of Cultivation Techniques that can aid in cultivation."

If used, it can at least double the efficiency of your cultivation. It's most suitable for someone with your level of cultivation. Are you interested?"

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 63 - 61: Try to Negotiate the Price[1,327 words]

An auxiliary Cultivation Technique that doubles efficiency! That's obviously nonsense.

If there really were such a Technique, it would undoubtedly be a secret tome that even the top big sects would treasure and consider extremely valuable. Why would anyone need to sell it by seeking customers everywhere?

Lu Ye watched the man's behavior and knew he wasn't seeking him out specifically, but rather was squatting outside the mercantile union, randomly choosing targets.

He just happened to catch his sight.

"Not interested," Lu Ye refused to get entangled with him further.

Yet unexpectedly, the man still pursued him persistently, continuously explaining the wonderful aspects of that Technique—how simple it was to practice, how highly compatible it was with various low-grade Techniques, how easily anyone could master it, and even solemnly stated, "If Fellow Daoist doesn't believe it, I am willing to swear by Heaven's Augury that every word I say is true and that I would never deceive Fellow Daoist."

Lu Ye stopped in his tracks and frowned at him.

He had taken oaths by Heaven's Augury before, so he knew that such oaths weren't to be taken lightly.

He couldn't help feeling skeptical. Could there really be such an impressive Technique in this world? One that could triple a person's cultivation efficiency—what kind of concept was that?

Seeing Lu Ye showing interest, the man gestured with his hand and said, "There are too many people here, not a good place to talk. Please, this way, Fellow Daoist."

After thinking for a moment, Lu Ye followed the man to a less crowded area.

"Swear the oath!" Lu Ye went straight to the point.

The man swallowed back the words he was about to say, then smiled wryly, "Alright, but Fellow Daoist, if I take the oath, you can't decide not to buy."

"If the price is right, I'll naturally buy," Lu Ye responded.

The man nodded, his expression became serious, and he intoned, "I, Chen He, an independent cultivator, respectfully call upon Heaven's Augury to witness that everything I just said is true. If I've spoken a half-truth, may I suffer all the tortures of the human world and die!"

In the unseen, an intangible force descended, landing on the back of the hand of the man named Chen He, which was clearly where his battlefield marking was.

Lu Ye's expression was stern. This guy was desperate to sell that Technique, even daring to make such a vicious oath.

"Bring out the item for me to see," said Lu Ye.

Chen He shook his head, "Fellow Daoist must be jesting. The Technique is straightforward; if I let Fellow Daoist see it, you could immediately memorize it, so why would you need to buy it?"

"What's the price?"

"Thirty Spirit Stones!" Chen He gave his price.

Lu Ye turned and walked away.

Although he didn't know the particulars of that Technique and despite Chen He's willingness to swear by Heaven's Augury, Lu Ye was certain there was some trick to the Technique; otherwise, forget about thirty Spirit Stones, even three thousand would be a bargain.

"Fellow Daoist, please wait. Business is all about bargaining. You should try making a counteroffer, not just walk away. One must have some integrity," Chen He hurriedly caught up with Lu Ye, earnestly persuading him.

"Three," Lu Ye agreed amicably and made a counteroffer just to see.

"Deal!" Chen He took out a jade slip and slapped it into Lu Ye's palm.

The corner of Lu Ye's eye twitched.

"Fellow Daoist, I have taken an oath by Heaven's Augury, and you also said you would buy if the price was suitable. The price of three was offered by you yourself; you can't go back on your word now, can you?"

Lu Ye had nothing to say. In the end, he took out three Spirit Stones and handed them over to Chen He, who left with glee after getting the Spirit Stones.

Holding the jade slip, Lu Ye hadn't yet had a chance to look at the content when someone walked over with a chuckle and teased, "Got tricked, huh?"

Lu Ye glanced at the person, who shrugged, "I was tricked by him too; that Cultivation Technique is useless."

Lu Ye understood, "You've been watching the whole time?"

The man laughed and said, "Two people being unlucky is always better than just me, right? I feel much better now." He even winked at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye said indifferently, "If I were you, I would compete with him for business. If he can sell that Cultivation Technique, why can't you? Instead of watching others get cheated, it's better to cheat some Spirit Stones for yourself. You might even make a good profit."

The man thought deeply about Lu Ye's words before slapping his thigh, "You're making sense!"

When he looked up, there was no trace of Lu Ye to be found.

Outside the marketplace, Lu Ye rode away on Big Tiger's back, leaving the dust behind without caring to deal with those sly merchants' schemes.

Although he could be sure that he had indeed been cheated, the cost wasn't high—just three Spirit Stones. He had just traded for over a hundred Spirit Stones from the mercantile union, so he was quite wealthy and didn't care too much.

However, Chen He had even initiated the Heaven's Augury oath, indicating that the Cultivation Technique was truly as he said, capable of increasing cultivation efficiency; otherwise, the oath would have already backfired on him.

What exactly was going on?

Curiosity piqued, Lu Ye started to investigate the true nature of that Cultivation Technique.

Bestial Gluttony Feast— that was the name of that Cultivation Technique.

Moreover, it was a Technique whose grade was difficult to judge because it encompassed only fifteen orifices!

Lu Ye knew that the Golden Cicada Carefree Method he was cultivating was already the lowest Yellow Rank Technique, with twenty-seven orifices opened.

The Bestial Gluttony Feast only had fifteen orifices, which was even inferior to a Yellow Rank Technique.

But considering this was not a Technique used for cultivation but rather an auxiliary one, it seemed understandable.

As Chen He had previously said, the cultivation pathway of this Technique was clear at a glance and extremely simple because it encompassed only a small number of orifices. Plus, since all the orifices were located near the lower abdomen, it had strong compatibility with all lower-grade Techniques.

The level of compatibility between two Techniques depends on how many orifices their respective cultivation pathways share; the more overlaps there are, the higher the compatibility.

All lower-grade Techniques open orifices scattered around the lower abdomen because the Root Spiritual Orifice is located there. Many lower-grade Techniques open nearly identical orifices, and they only differ in characteristics due to their different cultivation pathways.

The same nine orifices, linked in different sequences, result in different flow speeds of the spirit force, thereby affecting the cultivator's strength.

Therefore, the sequence in which the orifices are connected is a matter of precision.

The fifteen orifices of the Bestial Gluttony Feast's cultivation pathway mostly overlapped with the twenty-seven orifices of the Golden Cicada Carefree Method, with only two orifices not included by the Golden Cicada Carefree Method.

In other words, if Lu Ye fully cultivated the Golden Cicada Carefree Method and then opened those two additional orifices, he would be able to glimpse the secrets of the Bestial Gluttony Feast.

There was no rush. Once he had fully cultivated the Golden Cicada Carefree Method, he would see if the Bestial Gluttony Feast truly had the miraculous ability to double the efficiency of cultivation.

After tucking away the jade slip, Lu Ye took out the ten-part map to compare the distance between Qingyun Marketplace Three and Five on the map with the time he had spent.

He then looked at the route he had planned to head to the Righteous Blood Sect.

After a quick calculation, Lu Ye couldn't help but sigh. At this speed, even without any delays on the road, it would take a very, very long time to return to the Righteous Blood Sect's territory.

If anything happened to cause a delay, it would take even longer.

The journey ahead was long, but fortunately, Lu Ye was not alone, as he at least had Yiyi and Big Tiger as his companions.

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 64 - 62 Sky-Splitting Gorge[1,354 words]

Half a month later, a travel-worn Lu Ye appeared before a canyon, looking far more composed than when he had been riding Big Tiger previously.

On the first day of riding Big Tiger, he was jolted so much that he nearly fell apart, with the insides of his thighs chafed raw—these conditions made it utterly impossible to cultivate.

By today, he had achieved his initial expectation: being able to ride on Big Tiger while consuming elixir pills for cultivation, though not as efficiently as under normal circumstances, was still better than wasting time outright.

Over the half month, he had opened three more spiritual orifices. By now, he was a cultivator with twenty-five opened orifices, only two away from reaching Level 3 of Spirit Stream.

If he maintained this pace, in another six or seven days, he would be able to cultivate the Golden Cicada Carefree Method to perfection.

Not only had his strength grown, but Big Tiger had also clearly become stronger.

The snake meat in the storage sack had already been shared between him and Big Tiger, with eighty percent of it having gone to Big Tiger. The snake meat was highly beneficial to a demon beast like Big Tiger, not to mention the two Spirit-Nurturing Pills Lu Ye fed it every day.

In just half a month, Big Tiger seemed to have grown larger, becoming even more majestic.

Lu Ye couldn't judge exactly how strong Big Tiger was now, but he estimated that if he faced Big Tiger in combat, without relying on Spirit Talismans and spirit runes, he would gain little advantage, if any.

And since Yiyi was Big Tiger's minion spirit, as Big Tiger grew stronger, so did she.

Thus, although the average strength of the trio of one man, one tiger, and one spirit wasn't very high, if they joined forces, the power they could exert was not to be underestimated.

This increased Lu Ye's capital when traveling through the Spirit Stream battlefield, making him increasingly feel that bringing Big Tiger and Yiyi was a wise decision.

Along the way, Lu Ye passed through a neutral marketplace where he rested for a night, selling two pieces of origin magnetic ore and obtaining some Spirit Stones.

Now he had over two hundred Spirit Stones in his possession.

Just a bit more, and by the time the next branch of Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union met, he should have about enough.

Jumping down from Tiger's back, Lu Ye scrutinized the canyon ahead, pulling out the ten-part map for comparison.

This was a place called Sky-Splitting Gorge, a terrain fraught with danger, with cliffs rising sharply on both sides. According to the map, to the left of Sky-Splitting Gorge was a sect base called Nine Stars Sect, a subordinate of Ten Thousand Demons, and to the right was a Xuanmen base, under the Haotian Alliance.

Sky-Splitting Gorge lay in between these two sect bases, geographically closer to Nine Stars Sect.

Both sects were of low grade, Xuanmen was 9th grade and Nine Stars Sect was 8th grade—a common grade in the outer circle of the battlefield. Furthermore, since Lu Ye's planned route took a curving path almost skirting the edge of the battlefield, he had crossed the territories of several sect bases along the way, all of which were of 8th-9th grades.

He would not recklessly enter a higher grade sect base, even if that sect belonged to the Haotian Alliance. The sect master's final words before entering the Spirit Stream battlefield still echoed in his ears, and he dared not carelessly reveal his identity as a Righteous Blood Sect disciple, although he did not know what the consequences of doing so might be.

As evening approached, Lu Ye decided not to enter the gorge now. Having traveled for a day, it wouldn't be too late to rest overnight and cross the next day.

"Yiyi!" Lu Ye called out.

"Got it," replied Yiyi's voice. She soon floated up from Big Tiger's head and drifted into the distance.

She was scouting the surrounding environment.

After days together, they had established a tacit understanding. Before resting, Yiyi would always be responsible for scouting the surroundings to avoid hidden dangers.

Being a Spiritual Body, she could come and go without a trace, making this task convenient. On several occasions, it was because of her that they managed to avoid potential crises ahead of time.

However, she and Big Tiger have a symbiotic relationship, so she cannot stray too far from Big Tiger. According to Yiyi, ten miles is manageable, but once she goes beyond ten miles from Big Tiger, she would rapidly weaken. If this state persists too long, she is very likely to dissipate.

Lu Ye then looked for a suitable place nearby to spend the night.

Having wandered outdoors for nearly half a month, he was already well-practiced at this. A suitable place for the night needed to allow for easy access and escape, provide sufficient concealment, and offer shelter from the wind and rain.

After searching for a while, Lu Ye brought Big Tiger to a spot among some scattered rocks. Although not ideal, there were no better places nearby. Given today's weather, which didn't seem like rain, it was okay to make do for one night.

Lu Ye took some pre-prepared firewood from his storage sack and lit it, then took out a large piece of beast meat to roast over the fire, and threw an even larger piece to Big Tiger, who pounced to the side and gobbled it up voraciously.

Watching Big Tiger's fierce eating, Lu Ye felt a bit worried. He had thought that the Spirit-Nurturing Pills he had saved earlier would be more than enough to reach the Spirit Stream Level 3 and have some left over, but now it seemed just sufficient.

Big Tiger needed two Spirit-Nurturing Pills a day, and he needed eleven or twelve pills to open an orifice. Currently, he had only about thirty pills left.

By the time he opened up to twenty-seven orifices, these Spirit-Nurturing Pills would probably be all used up.

Moreover, he faintly felt that as Big Tiger's strength increased, the consumption of Spirit-Nurturing Pills would become greater.

It was troubling! However, this was the price he had to pay for traveling together with Big Tiger and Yiyi. At least, he could still cultivate while traveling, which saved a lot of time.

For a low-level cultivator like him, time in the early stages of cultivation was precious.

The beast meat sizzling on the campfire dripped fat and made crackling sounds. Big Tiger, who was eating the raw meat, suddenly looked up in a direction and let out a low growl.

Immediately, it dashed out towards that direction.

Lu Ye was stunned at first but then realized what had happened—Yiyi was in trouble!

Yiyi was a minion spirit transformed by Big Tiger, and they shared an extremely close bond, which meant Big Tiger could sense any mishap happening to Yiyi.

Big Tiger was very fast. Even though Lu Ye poured spirit force into his legs, he could only follow behind and eat dust. In his urgency, he could only shout, "Amber, don't be reckless!"

He still didn't know what exactly had happened to Yiyi, and rushing over recklessly was not a good idea.

Big Tiger, being somewhat human-like, slowed down a bit. After Lu Ye caught up, he climbed on its back, and only then did Big Tiger speed up.

Shortly after, behind a large rock, a glow of fire caught their eyes.

There were a few cultivators gathered around a campfire, seemingly preparing to spend the night there. In front of the cultivators, there was an upside-down large bell-like object with spirit light flowing on it and intricate, mysterious runes converging into a slowly rotating pattern around the bell.

There were faint sounds of impacts coming from inside the bell.

Yiyi was trapped in there!

Seeing this scene, Lu Ye knew what had happened. Yiyi was a Spiritual Body; ordinary means couldn't possibly trap her—the bell was clearly a Spiritual Artifact!

Fortunately, after Lu Ye's earlier warning, Big Tiger managed to suppress its animal impulses and didn't immediately pounce forward.

Lu Ye stimulated his spirit force and focused it in his eyes to observe the spirit light on the bodies of those cultivators.

Four cultivators: one at Spirit Stream Level 2, two at Level 3, and one at Level 4!

Sage of Humanity - Chapter 65 - 63 Throat Sealing[1,253 words]

Among the four cultivators, there were three men and one woman. The woman was a Spirit Stream Level 2 cultivator, dressed scantily with a seductive figure, leaning against another cultivator of Spirit Stream Level 3, who was holding her in his arms. Their appearance was very intimate.

The Level 3 cultivator was a handsome man with good features, dressed elegantly, with a sword at his waist and a storage sack that looked quite full, indicating his significant status.

The other Level 3 cultivator was a robust man, whose tight clothes outlined his clearly defined muscles. He stood in front of the couple as if guarding them.

The Level 4 cultivator was a man as thin as a reed, vigilantly scanning the surroundings.

The arrival of Lu Ye and big tiger did not alarm them; the pair hid about thirty feet away, peeking through the gaps between the rocks.

Lu Ye did not know how Yiyi had been trapped by them, but the methods of cultivators were mysterious and unfathomable, and there were always many things that Lu Ye did not understand.

The priority was to rescue Yiyi, and it was undeniable that the Level 4 cultivator put a lot of pressure on him, let alone that there were four of them in total.

"Young Master, what is that?" a pleasant and appealing voice asked. It was the woman speaking. Although the Mystic Spirit Bell had been triggered, almost none of them had seen exactly how it had been triggered. Only the owner of the Mystic Spirit Bell might understand the situation.

The handsome man holding her pinched a magic spell with one hand and sensed briefly, then raised an eyebrow and said, "Interesting, is it a Spiritual Body?" The Mystic Spirit Bell was his Spiritual Artifact, a very powerful and concealed protective Spiritual Artifact.

"A Spiritual Body?" The woman shrank back slightly, intentionally snuggling further into the man's embrace, "Young Master, I'm scared."

The Young Master laughed heartily, patting her tender waist, "Don't be scared, don't be scared." He signalled to the Level 4 cultivator and instructed, "Brother Zharng, go and try."

Brother Zharng nodded and replied, "Yes."

He walked towards the bell that was overturned on the ground, and once he was close, he suddenly punched it.

A loud clang sounded, followed immediately by a piercing scream from Yiyi inside the bell, clearly indicating she was hurt.

"Roar!" A tiger's roar echoed through the forest. A white figure burst out from hiding, charging straight at Brother Zharng.

It was big tiger, provoked by the sight of Yiyi getting hurt. Although Lu Ye had told it not to act rashly, and it had listened, seeing Yiyi in pain ultimately overpowered its reasoning... which was very limited to begin with.

This not only startled the four cultivators but also caught Lu Ye completely off guard.

He was still thinking about how to rescue Yiyi...

As big tiger charged, a bloody scent filled the air. The woman screamed in fright, genuinely scared this time. The robust man immediately changed position, standing in front of the Young Master and the woman, while Brother Zharng, the highest in cultivation, had a stern look, pinching a spell with one hand, with lightning beginning to flicker at his fingertips.

But his expression changed the next moment, all because behind the agile figure of big tiger, another figure shot out.

It was Lu Ye. With big tiger striking rashly, he had no time to think of a strategy and almost followed big tiger, using big tiger's bulk as cover, and managed to gain a brief moment.

He charged straight at the Young Master!

Among the four, the Young Master was clearly the most revered. Capturing the Young Master would solve all problems, which was the only option at the moment.

"Stop him!" Brother Zharng bellowed, raising his hand and striking at the big tiger with a palm, from which visible lightning struck the big tiger, causing it to roar in pain. A deafening roar from the tiger sent a visible shockwave surging forward.

This roar slightly distracted Brother Zharng, who thought to himself, "What a ferocious beast! If this creature were to grow, its strength would undoubtedly exceed that of its peers."

He reached into his storage sack and two curved blades appeared in his hands. Holding the blades upside down, he charged towards the big tiger.

Meanwhile, Lu Ye pressed one hand on his saber, infusing his legs with spirit force and dashed like the wind towards the sturdy man.

The opponent let out a low shout, his body surging with spirit force, causing his tight clothes to burst open. His already robust body seemed to expand, and reaching into his storage sack, he pulled out a two-foot-long hammer, positioning it horizontally in front of him.

Just standing there, he exuded an unbreakable fortress-like presence. Bypassing him to capture the Young Master behind him would not be an easy task, especially since the Young Master was a Level 3 Spirit Stream cultivator, accompanied by a Level 2 Spirit Stream female cultivator.

The distance between them quickly closed. Lu Ye placed his other hand on the hilt of his saber, miming a drawing motion. However, instead of a blade's light, a burning fire serpent appeared out of nowhere and slithered towards the sturdy man.

"Fire Serpent Talisman!" The sturdy man shouted, cursing silently at how cunning his enemy was. He had posed as if to draw his saber, yet he sneakily launched a Spirit Talisman, leaving him scrambling to respond.

The most prudent solution at that moment would have been to dodge the attack of the talisman. While the Fire Serpent Talisman's power was considerable, covering a vast area, he could have avoided it if he wanted, but doing so would certainly put him in a defensive position.

However, how could he dare to dodge when the Young Master was right behind him?

With clenched teeth, he quickly slapped a Golden Body Talisman on himself and activated protective spirit force around his body.

A burst of fire exploded, and the incoming fire serpent engulfed the sturdy man's figure. The next moment, he emerged unscathed from the fire, charging towards Lu Ye with his large hammer, roaring, "A mere Spirit Talisman, you think it could hurt me?"

His arrogant words had just fallen when a flash of blade light passed, and he staggered back uncontrollably, pressing his hand against his throat and dropping his weapon to the ground.

"Heh heh..." He gasped heavily, yet blood was spraying out from between his hands, impossible to stop.

He couldn't understand why his spirit force, tempered through countless battles, couldn't block even one strike from his opponent!

The Golden Body Talisman he had slapped on himself was broken by the Fire Serpent Talisman, but he still had his protective spirit force, and he was a physique cultivator, which was why he always stood in front of the Young Master.

In the cultivation world, physique cultivators were known for their durability. Strong physique cultivators could even resist the magic spells of magic cultivators with their bodies alone. Although he was a minor physique cultivator, unable to fully display the advantages of physique cultivation, he should not have had his defenses so easily breached.

However, in reality, Lu Ye had slashed open his throat with a single strike. If his body had not been so strong, that strike could have decapitated him!

The Spiritual Artifact long saber, enhanced by Sharpness spirit runes, possessed destructive power beyond the physique cultivator's imagination.

Lu Ye was surprised too. He had not intended to kill the opponent with a single strike. Instinctively swinging that strike, he only intended to force the opponent back, yet the result of this strike was unexpectedly powerful.