

Humanity 761

Chapter 761 Return to Spirit Ground

When the news broke out, the entire Cloud River battlefield was in a frenzy.

There were believers, and there were skeptics as well.

No matter what, fighting over two hundred people single-handedly within the same level of cultivation, and emerging as the sole victor in such a lopsided victory, was too bizarre to be true.

Indeed, earlier on, there were rumors that two thousand cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge had died at the hands of Lu Yiye.

But in that case, Lu Yiye had made use of some powerful poison, essentially assassinating those cultivators covertly, which had little to do with his own strength.

This time, the situation was completely different.

Even without experiencing it firsthand, just the thought of one man fighting against two hundred was enough to stir the blood, not to mention that Lu Ye left many dead or fleeing in his wake.

It was foreseeable that the aftermath of this event would ferment within the Cloud River battlefield for some time, and the news would inevitably spread to the Nine Provinces. By then, the big sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge would surely dread Lu Ye even more.

This matter was neither significant nor trivial, as it was just an affair at the level of the Cloud River Realm. The impact it could create was limited and with the passage of time, it would eventually be slowly forgotten, buried deep in memory.

While the news outside was causing a storm, Lu Ye had already reached the outskirts of Great Wilderness Mountain with Hua Ci and Yiyi and Amber, traveling all the way from Heaven's Augury City.

Months earlier, due to the intense pressure from numerous Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, he was compelled to leave the Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground.

Back then, he was only at Cloud River Level 5 realm.

Who could have imagined that, in just a few short months, he would be at Cloud River Level 8, making his return.

This time, even if the news leaked, probably no one would dare to trouble him.

Regarding the previous battle, many still expressed disbelief, yet Lu Ye's strength had been recognized.

After all, the killing of Xia Liang in front of Heaven's Augury City had happened for all to witness, and it couldn't be faked.

One could say this battle alone was enough to place Lu Ye among the top ranks in the Cloud River Realm.

And he was only at Level 8. He could still advance to Level 9!

History was again strikingly similar.

Once in the Spirit Stream battlefield, Lu Ye rose to the top of the Spirit Stream Ranking with his cultivation at 8th Heaven, dominating all around him, unbeatable. After advancing to 9th Heaven, he could even contend with Overlord-class demon beasts without faltering, overpowering the core big sects all by himself.

Now, it seemed a similar event was about to occur again.

This made many cultivators from the big sects of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge feel relieved...

The situation in the Cloud River battlefield was different from the Spirit Stream battlefield; there were no sect bases here, so even if Lu Yiye was very powerful, he couldn't really restrain the big sects.

In Great Wilderness Mountain, they quickly delved deeper, not stopping along the way.

They soon arrived before Great Reversal Valley.

The familiar scenery came into view; the big array was already open, and three figures stood at the valley entrance, gazing out. It was Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, and Giant Armor, who had received the news earlier.

"Fourth Senior Brother, Senior Sister Feng, Giant Armor, we're back!" Yiyi cheered joyfully, clearly in a good mood.

Li Baxian came forward with a smile, looking Lu Ye up and down to make sure he was unharmed, then nodded, "Little junior brother, you've suffered."

His emotions were somewhat complicated. His own little junior brother was now at Level 8, while he, who had been diligently cultivating here, was only at Level 7.

Not to mention that in terms of cultivation, he was already a level behind Lu Ye, but even in terms of strength...

The news of Lu Ye fighting alone against two hundred enemies had reached him, and he had confirmed it through Lu Ye himself, which although incredible, was believed since it came from Lu Ye.

Thus, he fully realized that he was no longer a match for his little junior brother, the gap in their strength notwithstanding.

However, no matter what, it was good news that his little junior brother was strong.

"Thank you for your concerns," Lu Ye also felt somewhat guilty; he worried most about his Fourth Senior Brother when causing trouble outside.

The sect master and his Second Senior Sister were in the Nine Provinces, where news was difficult to relay. They might not know what had happened on his end.

But Fourth Senior Brother was well aware, and the most distressing part was that he couldn't help much with Lu Ye's situation.

Last time he left Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground with Feng Yuechan and Giant Armor, planning to meet Lu Ye outside the Hundred Arrays Pagoda; they ended up doing nothing significant, and it was Hua Ci who ultimately put in a great effort to extract Lu Ye from danger.

Li Baxian shook his head slowly, patted Lu Ye on the shoulder, "It's good that you are safe."

He then turned to Hua Ci, nodding, "Sister Hua Ci, you've also had it tough."

Honestly, he still couldn't understand how Hua Ci, a healing cultivator, managed to get Lu Ye out of danger amidst so many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

And she had just advanced to the Cloud River realm...

His own junior brother and sister seemed to be creatures not of this world, which pleased him but also made him feel a sense of urgency.

Compared to most cultivators of the Cloud River Realm, he and Feng Yuechan were advancing rapidly. Their cultivation had reached this stage in less than two years on the battlefield, a feat 99 percent of cultivators couldn't achieve.

Moreover, because of the more than ten years of cultivation foundation at the Spirit Stream Realm, their actual strength was far superior to that of ordinary Level 7 cultivators.

At the very least, Li Baxian now had the confidence he could confront Xia Liang without losing!

You must know, sword cultivators themselves can defeat enemies above their level, let alone him being Li Baxian.

The pride in his heart made him realize he needed to speed up his cultivation efficiency, otherwise, if he were to be left behind by his junior brothers and sisters to the extent he couldn't even see their shadows, that would be truly embarrassing...

While they were talking, Amber had already jumped onto Giant Armor's head and settled down comfortably.

Although they hadn't seen each other in a long time, the affection between Amber and Giant Armor had never changed. Adventuring with Lu Ye as their master was undoubtedly thrilling, but it was by Giant Armor's side that she felt a unique sense of comfort.

Giant Armor grinned at Lu Ye, his white teeth gleaming in the sunlight.

Months apart, the giant seemed to have grown even stronger, his majestic body hiding an astonishing vitality and explosive power.

Lu Ye stood in front of him, only as tall as his chest.

He gently thumped his chest, making a clanging sound as if metal were being struck.

Lu Ye wondered, even with his current strength, whether he could break through this fellow's physical defenses without activating the Sharpness spirit runes.

Just in terms of physical robustness, Lu Ye felt that even three of him combined might not match up to Giant Armor.

But in a way, the creator is ultimately fair.

Giant Armor had exceptional talents; however, his spiritual intelligence was somewhat lacking. Compared to ordinary people, his intelligence was undoubtedly low.

He wasn't stupid; he just had a rather simple way of thinking.

Their reunion was lively and full of laughter.

Finally, Feng Yuechan couldn't help but sigh, "Are you just going to stand outside talking?"

Li Baxian slapped his forehead, somewhat amused, "Let's go back and talk."

Everyone then headed inside together.

Upon entering the area covered by the big array, the beautiful scenery of Great Reversal Valley immediately caught their eyes.

"Sister Hua Ci, isn't it beautiful here?" Yiyi boasted to Hua Ci. She had been happy for a long time when Lu Ye first chose this spot to plant the spring spirit.

Girls always like beautiful things.

"Yiyi is the most beautiful," Hua Ci said, dotingly pinching Yiyi's little face.

Yiyi was instantly overjoyed, clinging to Hua Ci's arm and acting coy.

In the midst of the resting demon wolves, several beasts slowly stood up and looked towards them. Among them, a particularly large white-furred wolf nodded slightly at Lu Ye in a human-like gesture.

It was Hua Ci's first time seeing so many Overlord-class demon beasts, and she couldn't help but marvel, somewhat puzzled about how Li Baxian and others managed to coexist peacefully with such a pack of wolves.

"The wolf pack has been a great help. When we left the spirit ground, they stayed to guard the place, and when we came back, there were no signs of invasion,"

Li Baxian said as they walked.

But then again, Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground is known to many as Lu Ye's territory, and no one foolhardy enough dared to cause trouble here.

Even Xia Liang and others only dared to chase after Lu Ye, not daring to target Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground.

Lu Ye had left some stern warnings before he left.

"Has the number of wolves increased?" Lu Ye asked.

He remembered that there were only about three hundred wolves when he left. Now, at a glance, there were clearly more than three hundred.

Li Baxian smiled and said, "The Wolf King has been bringing back kin every few days, and gradually their numbers have increased."

Fortunately, these wolves went hunting on their own, not disturbing Li Baxian and the others. All they needed were moonlit nights to practice cultivation alongside Giant Armor, absorbing the moon's essence.

Otherwise, just feeding these demon beasts would be a huge problem.

Now, Lu Ye's strength had undergone a tremendous transformation, and his mastery over Array Path had greatly improved. Coupled with so many demon wolves, aside from the various outlets of Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, probably only the defenses of Great Reversal Valley were the most robust in the entire Cloud River battlefield.

In the center of Great Reversal Valley, several wooden cabins were scattered about. Lu Ye's cabin was naturally still there, and next to it, a new cabin had been built right beside Lu Ye's.

"This is Sister Hua Ci's cabin, Feng Yuechan and I built it together. I'm not sure if it meets your expectations, Sister. If you're not satisfied, just say so, and I'll remodel it."

Hua Ci had nothing to complain about. She had spent almost a year in a place like Ten Thousand Poisons Forest, so she wasn't picky about her living environment.

"It's very nice, thank you Fourth Senior Brother and Senior Sister Feng."

"Then you two rest first. I'll prepare something, and later I'll throw a welcome back feast!" Li Baxian said with a laugh, pulling out an apron from his storage sack and tying it around his waist, ready to personally cook up a storm.

A great sword cultivator now donning a chef's apron—if those who knew Li Baxian saw this, they would certainly be surprised.

But this was another side of Li Baxian few knew about.

His cooking skills were actually quite impressive.

Chapter 762 Cloud River Hegemony?

Homecoming, reunion, joy.

There was wine, wild drinking, and a light buzz.

Under the moonlight, a few people sat around a wooden table, covered with delicacies carefully cooked by Li Baxian. The group talked and laughed, clinking cups and exchanging drinks.

Lu Ye's heart also settled down with them.

Within the Spirit Stream battlefield, there were sect stations that could make cultivators feel a sense of belonging.

Unlike at the Cloud River battlefield, where nine out of ten Cloud River Realm cultivators had no fixed home, wandering everywhere, seeking fortunes that belonged to themselves.

Though the number of spirit grounds wasn't small, they were not available to everyone.

The Great Reversal Valley Spirit Ground was created by Lu Ye himself, and he had also defended it against the invasions of many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. Because of this, he always felt a sense of belonging here, especially with the company of his fourth senior brother, Feng Yuechan, Giant Armor, and others...

The outside world was certainly exciting, but when looking across the entire Cloud River battlefield, this was the place he called home.

As the moon reached its zenith, its pristine light cascaded down, making the entire Great Reversal Valley seem covered with a layer of silver frost.

Giant Armor finished the wine in his jar and stood up, walking to the side. The wolf pack, led by the Wolf King, closely surrounded him. His towering, massive frame was particularly conspicuous even among the wolves, and from afar, it seemed he was the true Wolf King.

Arriving at his usual place of cultivation, he assumed that strange and unique posture. With each breath, visible moonlight spilled from the sky and into his system.

The continuous, resonant howls of the demon wolves began, many of them imitating, each basking in the moon's glow.

As Giant Armor breathed in and out, more and more moonlight gathered in the valley, becoming denser and denser until the whole valley was shrouded in a hazy halo, as if submerged in an ocean of moonlight.

"No matter how many times I see it, I still find it incredible," Li Baxian exclaimed in awe.

Giant Armor's unique method of cultivation was something he had never seen or heard of before; it didn't seem to be any Cultivation Technique, but rather an instinct, a unique talent.

He had tried to understand the mysteries of this method before, but unfortunately, he had made no progress.

Over the days, the wolf pack had significantly improved in overall strength by cultivating alongside Giant Armor.

Turning their attention away from Giant Armor, the two brothers continued to drink and chat until dawn approached, and then they each returned to their rooms to rest.

Uncharacteristically, Lu Ye did not cultivate but simply lay in his bed and had a good sleep.

Since leaving the Great Reversal Valley last time, he'd been rushing about and fighting, and even entered the secret realm of the Soaring Dragon World. Although he occasionally rested, it was only to restore his physical strength and spirit.

Now, lulled by the faint effects of the alcohol, he finally relaxed completely.

This sleep lasted until the evening. If Amber hadn't been licking his face, he might have slept even longer.

As he groggily caught Amber and tossed it aside, he slowly sat up, feeling refreshed and invigorated as the days of fatigue vanished, his mind serene and clear like never before.

The human spirit is like a bowstring; being taut for too long requires proper adjustment and rest, often leading to great satisfaction.

Outside came the light laughter of Yiyi, Hua Ci, and Feng Yuechan. They were chatting about something.

There was still a hint of fragrance in the air, suggesting that his fourth senior brother was cooking again.

Lu Ye got up, pushed open the door, and walked out. As expected, Li Baxian was bustling about the stove with an apron on, and the three women were helping, all in good spirits.

"Morning!" Lu Ye greeted instinctively, prompting a moment of surprise from everyone, followed by a burst of laughter.

Lu Ye looked up at the sky and saw the moon still high up, signaling that night was nearly upon them.

Soon, everyone sat around the table again to enjoy Li Baxian's cooking. This time, however, they did not drink, and the food prepared was lighter and more delicate.

Cultivation was, after all, the foremost task for a cultivator. No one wanted to waste time unnecessarily.

The idleness of the moment could very well be the root of future disadvantages in battles with enemies.

Having already delayed a day, they would each have to enter their cultivation regime after today.

At that moment, Lu Ye remembered something and took out two jade slips from his storage space, handing one to Li Baxian and the other to Feng Yuechan.

"What is this..." Li Baxian looked at Lu Ye, puzzled.

"A Sword technique," Lu Ye explained casually.

In the secret realm of the Soaring Dragon World, what impressed him the most wasn't the Vajra Temple's physically strong and vigorously blood-Qi fueled bald monk, nor the Imperial Heaven Sect's magic cultivators proficient in all sorts of mysterious magic and spells, but the swordsmen of the Haoran Academy.

Especially their Words and Sword Theorem.

While Lu Ye did not understand the way of the sword cultivators, it did not prevent him from seeing that this was a very profound Sword technique.

One day, when discussing it casually in front of Yuen Changcun, the latter quickly sent over an inscription rubbing of the Words and Sword Theorem.

Under normal circumstances, such a supreme secret of a big sect would never be taught to outsiders, let alone handing over an inscription rubbing for anyone to peruse.

But at that time, the collapse of the Soaring Dragon World was imminent, and Lu Ye had been recognized by them as the savior. More than just the Words and Sword Theorem, if Lu Ye wanted to become the Dean of the Haoran Academy, Yuen Changcun would probably have welcomed him with open arms and resigned in his favor.

Compared to the survival of an entire domain, what is one sword technique?

Not only did Yuen Changcun bring the Words and Sword Theorem, but Imperial Heaven Sect also brought many secret techniques, and Vajra Temple provided secret methods for refining the body...

Li Baxian hailed from Righteous Blood Sect and later joined Loyal Heart Sect, but after all, Loyal Heart Sect was not a sword cultivator sect. Although he had cultivated in Beixuan Sword Sect for a while, that was only through normal exchanges between different sects' cultivators. Even if the sword master of Beixuan Sword Sect admired him, he couldn't impart too many core techniques to Li Baxian since he wasn't a disciple of Beixuan Sword Sect.

Li Baxian was a born sword cultivator, famed for his prowess in combat. Had he been in Beixuan Sword Sect, he would have achieved much more than what he has now.

The sword master of Beixuan Sword Sect once personally visited Loyal Heart Sect and expressed his wish to take Li Baxian as his disciple.

Unfortunately, a villain interfered, and that wish never came true.

Afterwards, Li Baxian's spiritual orifice was damaged, and he wasted more than a decade in the Spirit Stream Realm.

Now, despite his rapid cultivation progress from deep accumulation, his journey as a sword cultivator was not much better than Lu Ye's current situation; he was basically groping his way forward on his own.

This Words and Sword Theorem was like sending coal in snowy weather to him at this moment. It played a far bigger role than what Lu Ye could imagine.

Therefore, as soon as Li Baxian picked up the jade slip and immersed his mind to explore it, he became utterly engrossed and couldn't extricate himself.

Feng Yuechan also picked up the jade slip placed before her and discovered that it contained records of many mysterious secret techniques. She, too, was reading it with great interest.

In Loyal Heart Sect, her status was much higher than Li Baxian's; after all, her mother was a Vice Sect Leader of Loyal Heart Sect.

But the rise of Loyal Heart Sect has been in the last few decades, and its foundation is not considered strong compared to those established big sects. The inheritance passed down from generation to generation in Imperial Heaven Sect is naturally stronger than Loyal Heart Sect's.

The contents of this jade slip undoubtedly held a great attraction for her as well.

Both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were immersed in exploring the jade slip, unable to extricate themselves, and Lu Ye did not disturb them, simply minding his own meal.

After quite a while, Li Baxian finally took a deep breath and regained his senses, looking at Lu Ye: "Junior Brother, between brothers, I won't say thank you. This sword technique has greatly helped your Senior Brother."

Although he didn't know where Lu Ye had obtained this sword technique, there was no doubt it was extremely precious, and Lu Ye must have gone through no small effort to obtain it.

"If it's useful to Senior Brother, that's good," Lu Ye said with a smile.

After a while, Feng Yuechan also came back to her senses and thanked Lu Ye with a smile.

"Senior Sister Feng is being too courteous. We're family; there's no need for such formalities," Lu Ye casually remarked.

Feng Yuechan seemed to reflect for a moment, her eyes curving into a more joyful smile, and she nodded repeatedly, "Junior Brother is right."

With such gains, both Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan were eager to comprehend the mysteries within the jade slip, for although these things couldn't help them increase their cultivation, they could enhance their strength.

Seeing this, Lu Ye spoke up, "Fourth Senior Brother and Senior Sister Feng, please go ahead. I'll take care of things here later."

Li Baxian nodded, "Then I'll leave it to you."

He stood up and headed for his own house. After a couple of steps, he turned back: "By the way, remember to sign up for the Cloud River competition; there's not much time left."

It was only after Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan had left that Lu Ye looked confused, "What Cloud River competition?"

And what's this about signing up?

He had never even heard of it.

Hua Ci explained from the side, "It's a grand event under the operation of Heaven's Augury." She slowly explained to Lu Ye.

Only then did Lu Ye understand what the Cloud River competition was all about.

On the Spirit Stream battlefield, there is the Spirit Stream Ranking, where countless Spirit Stream Realm cultivators vie for a spot on the list to gain rewards bestowed by Heaven's Augury and solidify their own foundation.

But on the Cloud River battlefield, there isn't anything like the Cloud River Ranking. There is only the Cloud River competition, which happens once every five years.

All Cloud River Realm cultivators who are interested in this event can sign up through the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

When the time limit is up, they fight and kill under Heaven's Augury's arrangement against different opponents.

After a series of battles, the strongest hundred are determined, similar to the Spirit Stream Ranking. These are known as the Cloud River's top hundred.

And these hundred individuals are all eligible for rewards given by Heaven's Augury.

"And the reward for the first place is 20 gold-hued spirit fortune sticks!"

"So generous?"

Lu Ye startled.

He had worked hard in the Soaring Dragon World secret realm, nearly losing his life; only after mobilizing the entire domain's powers and setting up the Great Sky-mending Array did he manage to collect nearly 20 gold-hued spirit fortune sticks. Moreover, this was after getting a 10% discount at the Hall of Battle Merits.

The reward for first place in this Cloud River competition was even more than what he gained in the Soaring Dragon World?

But on second thought, it wasn't so strange.

This was, after all, a grand event that only happened once every five years and all Cloud River Realm cultivators could participate. With talents emerging in droves and the gathering of the powerful, to emerge as the champion in such an event was bound to risk life and limb.

Chapter 763 Fate or Coincidence

In the hunting grounds, the reward for first place on the Kills Ranking included nine gold-hued spirit fortune sticks and a portion of Class A Spiritual Spring.

It's only logical that for an event as grand as the Cloud River competition, the rewards would be double those of the hunting grounds.

Moreover, Lu Ye's gains in the Soaring Dragon World couldn't be used as a standard for comparison.

Normally, a cultivator from the Cloud River Realm who had been through a secret realm would at most gain up to three gold-hued spirit fortune sticks.

In this light, the rewards for the Cloud River competition were astonishing indeed.

This grand event, which only took place once every five years, basically gave every cultivator from the Cloud River Realm at least one chance to participate, with some even being able to join twice.

Over two months ago, with Heaven's Augury revealed, the registration for the Cloud River competition had already started. Now, with just a few days left before it ended, anyone who missed the registration period, regardless of their status or strength, would have no qualification to participate and would have to wait for the next opportunity.

"Two months ago..." Lu Ye silently calculated. At that time, he had just entered the Soaring Dragon World not long ago and should have been cultivating the Tyrannical Saber Technique on the small island at the heart of Tyrannical Saber Villa's lake.

After returning from the secret realm of the Soaring Dragon World, he had stayed in the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union for a month, diligently engaging in cultivation. Hua Ci, although aware of the Cloud River competition, didn't mention it, fearing she might disturb him.

Thus, it was only today that Lu Ye learned about the Cloud River competition.

Luckily, there were still a few days left, so he hadn't missed it.

"Moreover, I heard that those who rank in the top ten of the Cloud River competition not only receive gold-hued spirit fortune sticks as rewards but also gain the favor of Heaven's Augury," Hua Ci added.

The favor of Heaven's Augury was intangible and invisible, its greatest benefit being to bless the cultivator with good fortune, making everything they undertake successful.

Lu Ye had received the favor of Heaven's Augury several times, but upon reflection... whether it truly had any effect, he couldn't say for sure, since luck was something intangible and elusive.

Sometimes, he was lucky, but there were also times when his luck wasn't very good.

But for ordinary cultivators, the favor of Heaven's Augury was undoubtedly a great temptation.

In any case, having encountered the opportunity, participating shouldn't be a bad thing. Setting aside whether the favor of Heaven's Augury was effective, those gold-hued spirit fortune sticks' rewards were definitely real.

And considering his current strength...

Thinking this way, his luck indeed seemed to be good.

Two months before, when registration for the Cloud River competition began, he was at Cloud River Level 6. Although his strength wasn't weak, he didn't stand much of a chance against Level 9.

Now, as a cultivator at Cloud River Level 8, the Cloud River competition was just about to begin.

Was this the will of fate, or merely a coincidence?

Registration was simple, done through the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Hua Ci hadn't registered either, so she went with Lu Ye to the spirit ground where the Heaven's Augury Pillar stood, each taking action.

Mingming in between, the decree of Heaven's Augury descended, and various information about the rules of the Cloud River competition flowed through Lu Ye's mind.

Understanding this, he didn't pay further attention. As of now, since he had the chance to be part of this grand event, all he had to do was his best. He believed he could achieve a good result, so there was no need to be too concerned.

After tidying up the bowls and chopsticks with Hua Ci, Lu Ye returned to his room and sat down cross-legged.

He swallowed an elixir pill and silently refined it.

For others, increasing one's cultivation too quickly in a short time would inevitably lead to an unstable foundation, requiring a long period of settling and polishing.

But during that month in the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye had not only increased his cultivation but had also continuously entered the Mirage Scene to temper himself, familiarizing himself with his growing strength.

Those life-and-death temperings were far more efficient than ordinary meditative polishing.

Therefore even though his strength had increased swiftly, there was no sign of instability in his foundation. He could fully utilize his power, which was why he could easily eliminate Xia Liang.

Otherwise, having strength but not being able to use it would be useless.

There were still several days until the Cloud River competition, enough time for him to explore the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World.

During a previous unintended attempt, he accompanied a cultivator from the Soaring Dragon World named Qin Zhao through life from an unusual perspective, witnessing Qin Zhao's major life achievements and drawing the essence of his lifelong cultivation.

Without this experience, Lu Ye wouldn't have been able to perform secret techniques like the Mental-lashing Whip.

With such an experience, how could Lu Ye not realize that the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World was an untapped treasure trove?

Last time he was uninformed, but this time he came prepared. Lu Ye wanted to find a record left by a saber-wielding cultivator in the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World.

If he could do so, his saber skills would surely leap forward!

As his mind immersed, he quickly re-entered the inner workings of the Origin, stepping into that marvelous world full of Myriad Stars.

Countless cultivators had lived in the Soaring Dragon World through the ages, each one leaving behind traces in the world. Time passes, and later generations may not remember them, but the Soaring Dragon World itself does not forget, and these traces remain in the Origin.

The stronger and higher achieving the cultivator, the brighter their corresponding star shone; the lesser, the dimmer.

Since Lu Ye wanted to gain something, naturally, he headed towards the bright stars.

Still, it was a challenge to make a choice.

Generations come and go, leaving countless dim stars in this unique Origin world, but the number of bright stars was also beyond counting.

How to choose, is a problem.

Fortunately, Lu Ye was prepared. His psyche sensed each bright speck of starlight, feeling the aura each emitted while constantly making choices.

In the end, he focused on a bright spot of starlight.

From this starlight, he felt traces of a faint but sharp aura. Although he couldn't confirm that the cultivator represented by the starlight used a saber, he could at least be certain that it was a combat cultivator!

Compared to that, the starlight representing Qin Zhao seemed deeper and lacked this distinct sharpness.

With a thought, the feeling was the same as last time—the spot of starlight in his psyche infinitely magnified, then obscured everything else.

The familiar cries of a newborn resonated again, clearly a scene of a recent birth.

This time, Lu Ye was mainly conducting some experiments.

He wanted to judge a cultivator's sect through the aura of the starlight while also trying to control the passage of time within such scenes.

In essence, he was leveraging the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World to trace the remnants left by powerful cultivators and subsequently relive their experiences.

Since it was an investigation, he could naturally choose time points instead of passively following the cultivator's growth.

If he could achieve this, then his efficiency in such acts would undoubtedly be much higher in the future, as he could choose to witness valuable scenes and discard meaningless ones.

With that thought, Lu Ye began to try.

He soon found a clue; perhaps because he had accessed the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World, this was not too difficult for him.

In an instant, the wailing infant had grown into a tall and strapping youth.

Unlike Qin Zhao, who was born in a mercantile family, the subject of this investigation was born within a cultivation sect, in an environment highly conducive for cultivation. With the aid of various elixir pills and miracle cures from the sect, he had built a solid foundation from a young age.

As time passed, the youth grew rapidly. His cultivation increased daily, and Lu Ye, as if attached to him, practiced and fought alongside him, facing life and death situations and rapidly becoming stronger...

The only thing that frustrated Lu Ye was...

This time, the object of his investigation was not a saber user. This was a combat cultivator who wielded a long spear. Dressed in snow-white attire, with his spear like a dragon, he had made a significant name for himself in that era of the Soaring Dragon World, attracting the adoration and love of countless female cultivators, with numerous wives and concubines at home.

Not everything can be perfect.

Fortunately, whether it's using a saber or a spear, both are combat cultivators. Although Lu Ye did not enhance his saber skills through this, he still had many enlightening insights.

So it wasn't without gain.

Moreover, with such an experience, if he were to pick up a spear or a similar Spiritual Artifact, he would certainly be able to exhibit the demeanor of someone well-versed in this art, just as he could wield Qin Zhao's unique Mental-lashing Whip at any time.

However, this cultivator's fate was not as good as Qin Zhao's.

Qin Zhao had died a natural death from exhaustion of his lifespan.

But this person had been ambushed by enemies, fought against adversaries on all sides with his own strength, and ultimately perished from exhaustion, not living past a hundred years, which was truly regrettable.

With the death of this person, Lu Ye's psyche also withdrew from the world within the Origin.

An encompassing sense of fatigue struck him, not as severe as the last time, but still enough to leave one feeling exceedingly weak.

"How long has it been?" Lu Ye asked.

Yiyi, who had been meditating nearby, replied, "About half a day."

Lu Ye nodded slightly. Half a day in the Cloud River battlefield, but in the inner world of the Origin, it had felt like a hundred years has passed by. Naturally, he hadn't lived through the entire hundred years meticulously but had selectively experienced some significant periods, which definitely amounted to more than half a day.

Such return to his senses unexpectedly gave Lu Ye an illusion as if he had lived through another lifetime.

He did not consume soul water to recover his body.

Soul water was ultimately precious, and there was no urgency at the moment. If it could be saved, it was better not to waste it.

Moreover, his psyche was powerful, and his mental power recovered relatively quickly.

During the recovery period, it was good timing for him to review the gains from this experience, thus killing two birds with one stone.

A day later, Lu Ye had fully recovered. Estimating the time, he realized he had enough time for one more investigation, and thus, he once again immersed his psyche to probe the Origin, searching for that bright starlight.

Time flew, and three days passed.

Lu Ye, who was in the midst of recovery and inspection, suddenly sensed something through the mingming.

Without any apparent reason, he realized something.

The contest for the Cloud River had begun!

He rose and exited his room, just in time to see Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, and even Hua Ci with his Giant Armor, all simultaneously opening their doors.

The few exchanged glances, and without prior agreement, headed toward the location of the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Moments later, everyone was sitting in a circle around the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Then, with a dull thud that was deafening, as the sound spread, all the clouds in the sky above the Cloud River battlefield instantly dissipated.

Chapter 764 Heaven's Augury's Flourish

Thud, thud, thud...

Continuously, the muffled, rhythmic sounds surged dramatically, as if an invisible giant was pounding heavy war drums above the clouds.

The beating of the drums rose and fell, and Lu Ye felt a tumultuous surge of blood Qi in his chest.

Looking around,

Whether it was Li Baxian, Feng Yuechan, Giant Armor, or even Hua Ci the healing cultivator, all of their auras fluctuated wildly, filled with high fighting spirits.

"No need to panic. It seems that before every Cloud River contest, such celestial phenomena occur. This is the operation of Heaven's Augury, meant to boost morale and stimulate the will to fight," Li Baxian's voice rang out.

Only then did Lu Ye relax his mind, as he had thought something had gone wrong a moment ago.

The drums sounded eighteen times.

Afterward, three lingering, long horn sounds melodiously spread out, carrying with them the faint sounds of thousands of horses and armies charging through the air, enveloping the air with an iron-blooded aura.

The entire Cloud River battlefield was bathed in a solemn and deadly atmosphere.

Lu Ye's expression was peculiar.

He couldn't understand why the Heaven's Augury of the Nine Provinces had to put on such a spectacle.

After a while, the sound of the horns gradually faded away.

It was as if there was a giant roaring above the vault of heaven.

"Battle!"

"Battle!"

"Battle!"

Even though Lu Ye had a steadfast mind, this whole spectacle stirred up a fighting spirit within him, making him itch to find a worthy opponent for an immediate battle to relieve the feeling in his heart.

Then Lu Ye saw a ripple suddenly sweep across the Heaven's Augury Pillar, spreading in all directions. As the ripples dissipated, Li Baxian's figure suddenly vanished, followed by Giant Armor, and almost simultaneously Hua Ci and Feng Yuechan disappeared.

At the same time, the battlefield marking on the back of his hand warmed slightly, and a strange pulling force came upon him, blurring his vision.

When he regained his senses, he found himself in a place similar to a combat arena.

"Roar!"

Before Lu Ye could even familiarize himself with the scene before him, a wild roar came from beside his ear. Turning his head, he saw a bull-horned demon cultivator with blood-red eyes staring at him, his nostrils emitting two streams of hot air resembling reality.

He held a supreme-grade spirit artifact big shield in one hand and a broad axe in the other, pointing at Lu Ye: "You there, boy, come and meet your death!"

With just one glance, Lu Ye knew that this demon cultivator had been affected by the Heaven's Augury spectacle too, feeling much like himself—eager for a battle.

What more was there to say?

Lu Ye took a step forward and charged towards the bull-horned demon cultivator, almost dragging an afterimage behind him.

"Well met!" shouted the demon cultivator, taking heavy steps towards Lu Ye. His huge build and large steps brought their figures close within moments.

Lu Ye raised his sword to strike.

The bull-horned demon cultivator advanced with his big shield, the other hand swinging the broad axe menacingly.

Joy filled his heart; in the initial fight, he met a combat cultivator renowned for his stubbornness, which was indeed lucky. Moreover, this combat cultivator seemed to have had his combat intent fully ignited and foolishly used his sword to strike the big shield—it was utterly unwise.

Cultivators have various schools, each having strengths and weaknesses against each other.

Generally speaking, physique cultivators have a certain suppression over combat cultivators because to kill the enemy, combat cultivators need to get close, whereas the superior defense of physique cultivators can naturally weaken various moves of combat cultivators.

Especially since the spirit artifact big shield in his hand was already of supreme-grade quality. Coupled with his Level 8 Cloud River Realm cultivation, it was unlikely he would make it into the top hundred of the Cloud River contest, but aiming for the top three thousand with hard effort was still hopeful.

As he thought this, a loud sound erupted.

Boom...

The moment the sword clashed with the shield, a visibly massive ripple violently spread out, hitting the barriers around the combat arena. The heavy airwaves caused the barriers to flicker with light.

Simultaneously, the bull-horned demon cultivator felt an irresistible immense force descending from above. Even with his strong physique, he was almost forced to let go of his spirit artifact big shield.

He stumbled, half-kneeling on the ground, and the counterattack he was attempting to make came to an abrupt stop.

"Moo?"

The infinite fighting spirit in the demon cultivator's eyes was instantly replaced by astonishment, a single thought surging through his mind.

How... how is this guy stronger than me?

While he pondered, Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber already descended like a tempest.

As a combat cultivator, the best tactic against physique cultivators is naturally to stick close and look for vulnerabilities in their defense to strike, rather than mindlessly slashing at someone's spirit artifact big shield like he was.

But stirred by the Heaven's Augury spectacle, Lu Ye's desire to fight boiled over, needing immediate release.

The bull-horned physique cultivator had terrible luck.

He had yet to get a clear look at Lu Ye's face when, under the storm-like assault, he found himself hiding behind his spirit artifact big shield. With each thunderous impact, his figure shrunk progressively lower, until finally he had no choice but to use his shoulder to prop up his own shield, otherwise he couldn't withstand it.

The spirit light on the big shield flickered wildly.

He watched helplessly as his spirit artifact visibly dimmed.

The confidence of moments ago had vanished completely, his heart nearly bleeding with pain.

This supreme-grade shield had cost him a great deal. He had it custom made by an Artifact Refiner of his sect to maximize his own advantages, specifically for the Cloud River contest.

But given the current situation, even if he continued to persevere, not to mention whether he would survive, his spirit artifact big shield might well be smashed to pieces.

Who was the other party? The horned demon cultivator was filled with sorrow and indignation.

"I concede!" Even though he was reluctant and had not even had the chance to clearly see his enemy, the horned demon cultivator still roared out loud.

If he didn't concede now, it would be too late.

Losing this match didn't matter, as long as his Spiritual Artifact wasn't shattered, he still had chances, but if the Spiritual Artifact was broken, then he would be at a great disadvantage in the following battles.

The combat style of the Cloud River Struggle was similar to that of the Spirit Stream Ranking battles, where one could actively concede.

As the voice fell, ripples spread out, and the figure of the horned demon cultivator instantly vanished.

Lu Ye brought his saber down another stroke, hitting nothing but air, and hastily stopped the blade just an inch off the ground.

A hollow voice arose from an unknown place.

"Righteous Blood Sect's Lu Yiye, victorious!"

As the sound fell, a gentle force enveloped Lu Ye, taking him away from that place.

When he regained his senses, he was back at the original location, but he saw no trace of others around him, presumably because they were still fighting.

Lu Ye didn't mind, and started to check his own battlefield marking.

The marking still recorded various information about him, but the number of battle merits had changed slightly.

Originally, Lu Ye had 3,232 battle merits, a number he remembered clearly, but now it had changed to 3,287.

He had gained an additional fifty-five battle merits.

And a Cloud River Level 8 cultivator represented a basic merit count of fifty-five points.

This meant that on the Cloud River Struggle arena, defeating one's opponent could actually yield the corresponding number of battle merits.

This information had been relayed to him by Hua Ci previously, and now he was checking just to confirm it.

It was for this reason that each time the Cloud River Struggle began, nearly all cultivators in the Nine Provinces of the Cloud River Realm, regardless of their cultivation levels, would participate.

Since the avenues for acquiring battle merits in the Cloud River Realm were limited, participating in the Cloud River Struggle was a chance to obtain them, who wouldn't be tempted?

Cultivators of lower cultivation didn't need to worry. There would always be those with even lower cultivation. Even if one only won a single battle throughout the struggle, they could still gain some benefits.

Of course, for Lu Ye, who had seen grand scenes and could easily amass two or three hundred thousand battle merits, fifty-five battle merits now hardly piqued his interest.

An additional piece of information appeared in the marking.

Right below the battle merit record.

Cloud River Struggle victories: one!

In the entire struggle, the number of battle merits obtained, along with the number of victories, and even the duration of the battles, would all be used as standards for determining the final rankings.

And judging all this was, of course, the high and mysterious Heaven's Augury.

The initial battle was won without any suspense.

The fighting spirit in Lu Ye's heart also eased a lot.

He leisurely raised his hand to press it on the Heaven's Augury Pillar, connected his mind to it, and after a brief moment, ripples once again surged on the pillar.

Lu Ye disappeared on the spot.

The second match, started!

At the beginning stages of the Cloud River Struggle, within seven days, cultivators could partake whenever they wanted, joining more battles as their abilities allowed, to accumulate their own battle merits and count of victories.

However, the maximum was one hundred matches.

That is to say, even if Lu Ye kept battling relentlessly, he could, at most, fight a hundred battles within those seven days.

After seven days, Heaven's Augury would screen the cultivators based on their performances in the battles and select three thousand individuals.

All others would be eliminated.

Afterwards, it was time to determine the top one hundred among those three thousand.

The entire Cloud River Struggle would last nearly a month.

During this period, not only the Cloud River Realm cultivators on the battlefield were immersed in this, but even the minor sects and big sects throughout the Nine Provinces kept a close eye, hoping that their disciples would achieve good rankings and bring glory to their sects.

For some cultivators, this was undoubtedly an excellent opportunity to make a name for themselves. Historically, the top ten in each Cloud River Struggle had very promising futures, and nearly all the Divine Sea Realm strong cultivators in the major sects today had proven themselves in this grand event.

To Lu Ye, the first battle was just a warm-up.

But upon seeing his opponent for the second match, Lu Ye lost even the interest for a warm-up.

The opposing cultivator appeared very nervous. He seemed young and not highly cultivated, being only at Level 5.

Against such an opponent, Lu Ye feared he might accidentally kill him before he could utter the words "I concede."

Uncertain of the opponent's factional alliance, it wasn't appropriate to attack lethally right away.

Lu Ye simply patted Amber on the shoulder.

Understanding the hint, Amber leapt down from Lu Ye's shoulder and with a roar, charged at the Level 5 cultivator, taunting him.

The opponent was clearly confused, but upon seeing Lu Ye casually sit down cross-legged, his face darkened, "Fellow Daoist, although your cultivation might be higher than mine, there's no need to look down on people like this, right?"

Lu Ye's posture clearly indicated his intention for Amber to fight him.

"Beat my pet beast first," Lu Ye casually replied, then closed his eyes to meditate. His mind was still busy with many gifts from the Hundred Arrays Pagoda that he hadn't yet digested, and this sporadic time was just right to attend to that.

Chapter 765 Leisure Time in a Busy Schedule

Amber rarely had the opportunity to confront enemies head-on; it usually perched quietly on Lu Ye's shoulder, lending him its power during combat.

Now that it finally had a chance, it naturally cherished it tremendously.

It didn't even reveal its true form, opting instead to fight in its small cat-like size.

It had the upper hand!

Within the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye's cultivation had leapt from Level 6 to Level 8 realm, so how could Yiyi and Amber not have grown as well?

Against a Level 5 realm enemy, even without going all out, Amber could easily emerge victorious.

The cultivator's emotions shifted from initial anger to shock and then to despair...

A few dozen breaths later, he conceded defeat.

There was no longer any need to continue fighting since he couldn't even beat someone's pet beast.

After his concession, his figure immediately disappeared from view.

Lu Ye then withdrew from the combat arena, ready for the next battle.

In this way...

Encountering enemies of varying cultivation levels, from Level 1 realm to Level 9 realm, Lu Ye couldn't figure out the selection principle, but it seemed to be a random choice.

If the enemy's cultivation wasn't high, he let Amber take the fight, only taking action himself against opponents above Level 7 realm.

There were also bouts that ended before they even began.

Because the opponents recognized Lu Ye right away.

After slaying Xia Liang in full view of everyone at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, Lu Ye had since been acknowledged as one of the strongest in the Cloud River Realm. What common cultivator would want to face off against him after recognizing him?

After all, one needed to fight a total of one hundred matches, and one or two losses wouldn't make much of a difference.

Occasionally, when returning from the combat arena, he would bump into his Fourth Senior Brother and the others, exchange a few words, and then start the next fight.

Lu Ye was incredibly efficient; it didn't even take him seven days. In just two days, he had completed all one hundred matches, naturally winning all of them.

The accumulated battle merits weren't much, only around two or three thousand.

He had nothing else to do for the time being and just waited for the list of the top three thousand names to emerge, signaling the beginning of the next round of battles.

Lu Ye had intended to take this time to probe the origin of the Soaring Dragon World. Even though a few days wasn't a long period, it was enough for him to try two or three times. With some luck, he might find a cultivator specializing in using sabers.

But then he suddenly remembered something else and started waiting in front of the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Before long, the void beside him twisted, and a figure appeared—it was none other than his Fourth Senior Brother, Li Baxian.

Li Baxian's progress was undoubtedly swift as well. Although he hadn't completed one hundred matches yet, he was getting close with around sixty or seventy under his belt. His foundation was robust, and his main disadvantage previously was a lack of experience in lethal techniques. Now, with the Words and Sword Theorem Lu Ye had given him, he was confident about breaking into the top hundred.

Yet the top ten did not seem achievable, not from Li Baxian's unduly modesty, but because there was simply no certainty in it.

Big sects across the Nine Provinces were brimming with talent. While Li Baxian was remarkable, his cultivation was ultimately a bottleneck. At present, he was just at Cloud River Level 7 realm.

Furthermore, many cultivators who had reached Cloud River Level 9 realm were deliberately putting off advancing to the True Lake in order to compete for supremacy in the Cloud River.

Some had been waiting for this grand event for one or two years!

While their cultivation levels wouldn't have increased much in those one or two years, their foundations certainly would have strengthened.

For these people, the rewards of the gold-hued spirit fortune stick were indeed important, but it was the favor of Heaven's Augury that they valued the most. To fight for the top ten, they would undoubtedly give their all.

"Do you need something, Junior Brother?" Li Baxian noticed right away that Lu Ye was waiting for him on purpose.

"I need to return to the sect," Lu Ye stated.

"At this time..." Li Baxian pondered, "That's fine then, Junior Brother. You may go."

The Cloud River battle would last for a month, and once a cultivator left the Cloud River battlefield, they wouldn't be able to return until a month later. By the time the Cloud River contest ended, Lu Ye would be able to come back just in time.

"I'll explain the situation to Hua Ci and the others," Lu Ye said.

"Then I'll leave right away."

Lu Ye set off without another word, laying his hand on the Heaven's Augury Pillar. With a thought, the scenery around him twisted rapidly.

The next moment, he was already present in the Heaven's Augury Hall within the Righteous Blood Sect.

He did not immediately seek the sect master or Second Senior Sister. Instead, he reached out and tapped into his battlefield marking to search for a specific imprint.

Soon, he found it and sent a message.

After waiting for a short while, he received a reply.

"Meet me at the usual place!"

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow. The message seemed somewhat ambiguous, especially since the sender was an exceptionally voluptuous woman!

Without overthinking it, Lu Ye laid his hand on the Heaven's Augury Pillar again, connected his mind to the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, and silently invoked.

"Upgrade the spirit artifact!"

Following this, a person appeared in a secluded small space with a stone platform in front of him, and beyond that, there was nothing else.

Almost the moment Lu Ye stepped in, a figure flashed before him, a woman who looked to be in her thirties, with fair and delicate skin, wearing a form-fitting floral dress that outlined her exquisite and graceful curves, materialized in front of him.

She was an old acquaintance, so there was naturally no need for superfluous words.

Lu Ye removed the Boulder Mountain Saber from his waist and placed it on the stone platform before him.

The reason he left the Cloud River battlefield in such a hurry to return to the Nine Provinces was precisely to take advantage of this period to upgrade his Boulder Mountain Saber.

His cultivation had improved too quickly, and the quality of the Boulder Mountain Saber was somewhat lagging.

Initially, the Boulder Mountain Saber was just a Restriction Level 9 low-grade spirit artifact; it then became mid-grade, and now it was top-grade.

However, with his current strength, a top-grade spirit artifact was no longer sufficient to fully unleash his power. During his previous encounter where he fought alone against two hundred enemies from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, Lu Ye felt that although he exerted his full power, the output was only nine-tenths of what he expected.

This was the result of the spirit artifact's quality not keeping up with his increase in cultivation.

Moreover, having wielded the Boulder Mountain Saber for so long in combat against numerous enemies, the saber, no matter how robust, had acquired some fine marks on it. While these had little impact, if left unaddressed, they could significantly affect the Boulder Mountain Saber's overall might and the lifespan of the spirit artifact.

The Boulder Mountain Saber had been upgraded twice, both times by this woman who claimed to be Feathered Master.

Lu Ye certainly could find someone else, but if he were to switch to another person, he couldn't be sure of their skills. At the very least, he was quite reassured of the Feathered Master's craftsmanship.

He had exchanged battlefield markings with her last time, so Lu Ye still wanted her to do this job.

However, the Feathered Master's cultivation was definitely above the Cloud River Realm, at the very least in the True Lake Realm, and very possibly in the Divine Sea.

If Lu Ye wanted to contact her, he could only return to the Nine Provinces to send a message; she couldn't be contacted on the Cloud River battlefield.

For other cultivators, at such a crucial moment in the Cloud River hegemony, no matter what, they would not likely make any changes to their trusted spirit artifacts, as this could potentially affect their own strength.

Every cultivator aiming for the top hundred would try to maintain their optimal condition as much as possible.

Yet Lu Ye just did that. If others knew, they would probably be astounded.

In front of the stone platform, the woman scrutinized Lu Ye up and down, seemingly trying to see his face clearly, but from her perspective, Lu Ye was shrouded in a mist at the moment, such that not just his face, but even his body shape was indistinct.

This was a kind of protective measure from Heaven's Augury, convenient for both parties in a transaction to conceal their identities.

However, this kind of concealment was meaningless to Lu Ye, who had received Heaven's Augury Bestowment before. In this place, it seemed he had some privileges that others did not, enabling him to see the woman clearly.

"Aren't you from the Cloud River Realm?" the woman asked with full of confusion, her voice aged as if an elderly person were speaking.

"Is there a problem?"

"Isn't it the Cloud River hegemony now? Why aren't you participating in it and instead coming to me to upgrade your spirit artifact?"

Her cultivation was indeed far above that of the Cloud River Realm, but it was natural for her to have heard of such a grand event as the Cloud River hegemony, as she had participated in it herself in the past.

She had determined that Lu Ye was from the Cloud River Realm because the Boulder Mountain Saber was a top-grade spirit artifact, and cultivators using such a quality artifact would naturally be of the Cloud River Realm level.

Of course, Lu Ye wouldn't tell her that the first hundred bouts had already finished, merely saying indifferently, "How so? Does doing business now require prying into other people's secrets?"

"Ahem..." The woman coughed lightly, "That's not it. Just casual questioning, if the young friend does not wish to say, then don't."

She reached out to grab the Boulder Mountain Saber in front of her, drew the saber to look at it, and nodded slightly, "State your requirements."

"Upgrade it to the magic-artifact class, other requirements are the same as before!"

A spirit artifact can have up to thirty-six restrictions as its limit; beyond that, it reaches the class of magic artifacts.

The woman's heart stirred, and she suddenly understood.

No wonder this youngster didn't participate in the Cloud River hegemony; he had already advanced to the True Lake. This was because artifacts of the magic-artifact class generally required the power of someone in the True Lake realm to activate.

Of course, some cultivators at the Cloud River Level 9 with strong backgrounds could also activate them, but at a great cost.

"This saber is currently top-grade, to upgrade it to a magic artifact, directly skipping the supreme-grade level, ordinary people can't do it..." Her meaning behind these words was obviously to say she was not an ordinary person, she was waiting for Lu Ye to ask her.

But Lu Ye had no intention of continuing the conversation.

So she had to go on by herself, "The materials needed won't be cheap either, and those materials are quite valuable as well..."

"Quote a price!"

Lu Ye cut her off directly.

Through several encounters, he had figured out that no matter if the woman was in the True Lake or the Divine Sea Realm, she was just a beggar; otherwise, she wouldn't have previously taken on the commission to upgrade the Boulder Mountain Saber from low-grade to mid-grade.

Furthermore, she seemed not to want too many people to know about her identity as an Artifact Refiner; otherwise, she could have used this skill to amass wealth openly and aboveboard.

Therefore, even if she asked for a higher price, it didn't matter as long as she could meet his requirements. Lu Ye didn't care too much about spending merits.

He had more than a hundred thousand merits in his hands. Even if he ran out, he could take some goods from the sect's treasure vault and sell them to Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

"Thirty thousand!"

The woman bit her lip and quoted a price she thought was quite high. She had figured out some of Lu Ye's details from their several encounters, just as she had seen some of his.

No matter where this youngster was from, he was the kind not short of money. Since it was not easy to open for business, naturally, she would take as much as she could.

Chapter 766 Master

"Expensive!" Lu Ye wasn't sure if it was truly expensive, but he said it anyway because he was certain there was no harm in claiming so.

Following that, they entered the familiar phase of haggling over the price.

Although he wasn't short on merit points, he also didn't wish to squander them recklessly.

After some mutual testing, they finally agreed on a price of 23,000 merit points.

Lu Ye raised his hand, and a Heaven's Augury Pact appeared in it. He quickly drafted various terms, branded his own seal on them, and then handed it to the woman.

The woman received it, branded her own seal as well, and thus, the Heaven's Augury Pact was completed.

"Within half a month, I will contact you, young friend. Just wait for the good news," the woman said at last.

"Why so long?"

Last time the upgrade of the Spiritual Artifact took only three days; even if it took a bit longer this time, it shouldn't need half a month.

"Recently, the old man has other matters to attend to," the woman casually explained, mainly because her own cultivation had reached a critical juncture. Had Lu Ye not contacted her this time, she wouldn't have come out of her retreat.

Lu Ye nodded; it wasn't a big issue for him, so half a month it would be. He then left the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

When he came to his senses, he heard the voices of Yiyi and Shui Yuan talking nearby.

It turned out that Shui Yuan had come to check up on him, sensing Lu Ye's presence.

"Second Senior Sister!" Lu Ye turned around and respectfully saluted her.

Having not seen her for many days, Shui Yuan's aura seemed even stronger than before, clearly indicating advancements in her cultivation.

This certainly showed that her natural talent was top-notch too.

For cultivators at the Divine Sea Realm, advancing in cultivation wasn't easy. There were many at the Divine Sea Realm in the Nine Provinces, but many were below Level 5. Those above Level 5 in the Divine Sea Realm only accounted for about thirty percent of the total.

Seeing Shui Yuan's progress in cultivation, her limit was obviously not just Divine Sea Level 5.

"Why have you come back at this time?" Seeing Lu Ye and Yiyi made her very happy, but this period was crucial for the Cloud River competition. Lu Ye's return at this time made her worry that he might have encountered some trouble.

"I went to see Feathered Master to upgrade my sabre," Lu Ye explained.

Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber had always been upgraded by Feathered Master, a fact known to Shui Yuan.

Relieved to know that nothing was wrong, Shui Yuan was put at ease.

Observing Lu Ye, Shui Yuan felt deeply moved, marveling at how fast her junior brother was progressing. Now he was already at Cloud River Level 8, and the various commotions he had caused on the Cloud River battlefield, though she was at the Nine Provinces sect headquarters, had reached her ears. She knew her junior brother was not merely a cultivator without corresponding strength, and she felt greatly reassured.

After talking with Shui Yuan for a while, Lu Ye then took Yiyi to meet the sect master.

The old man was his usual self, spirited and not overly profound. He simply asked about some interesting incidents Lu Ye and Yiyi had experienced during their adventures outside, laughing heartily from time to time.

The sect master was undoubtedly very pleased with Lu Ye, a disciple who could almost be considered fortuitously obtained.

The Righteous Blood Sect owed its current prospering state greatly to Lu Ye. Had he not made his mark in the Righteous Blood Sect years ago, it would have been removed by Heaven's Augury during the sect ranking session a few years back, and they wouldn't have today's thriving status.

A moment later, Lu Ye departed, and Yiyi stayed behind.

Though merely a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect, Yiyi could truly be considered a direct disciple of the sect master, as most of her magic and spells were personally taught by him.

With such a rare opportunity to meet, it naturally warranted a thorough examination of Yiyi's progress in the magic and spells and teaching her some more profound techniques.

An enticing fragrance wafted from the small kitchen at Righteous Peak, made by Shui Yuan, who was preparing food. Lu Ye walked in to assist her, and the two siblings casually chatted, enjoying their time together.

Although there were quite a few disciples in the Righteous Blood Sect currently, the sect itself still wasn't very flourishing, with disciples who returned from the Spirit Stream battlefield often hastily departing again.

This was mainly because the cultivation levels of the disciples were not high, with nearly all of them still training over at the Spirit Stream battlefield.

The few of them who were at the Cloud River Realm also spent most of their time at the Cloud River battlefield.

While the Righteous Blood Sect couldn't compare to other well-developed sects, time would change everything. One day, when the disciples' cultivation levels increased, the over hundred spirit mountaintops would surely become bustling.

Lu Ye eagerly looked forward to that day.

"I heard from Yiyi that your Fourth Senior Brother is now also training with you guys?"

At the dinner table, while serving Lu Ye some dishes, Shui Yuan casually mentioned, "When you go back, tell him to drink less and not to mimic the Beixuan Sword Master."

This was the first time Lu Ye had heard about his Fourth Senior Brother being influenced by the drinking habits of the Beixuan Sword Master.

"Since advancing to the Cloud River, Fourth Senior Brother hasn't been drinking much, Second Senior Sister need not worry," Lu Ye reassured her.

Previously, Li Baxian had been troubled by a broken spiritual orifice, feeling frustrated as his cultivation could not progress, so he had drowned his sorrows in alcohol. But after the spiritual orifice was repaired and he had advanced to the Cloud River, he rarely drank.

At least on the Cloud River battlefield, Lu Ye had only seen him drink once, and that was a few days ago when he had brought Hua Ci back and the Fourth Senior Brother had invited him to a welcoming feast.

After a hearty meal, bidding farewell to Shui Yuan, Lu Ye then rushed to Bright Heart Peak to meet Madam Yun.

He wasn't exactly a disciple of the sect master, but he could be considered a disciple of Madam Yun. Even though he had the divine object, the Talent Tree, the foundation of his Path of Spirit Runes was essentially taught by Madam Yun's personal instructions.

On the way, he also caught a few fish from Moon Lake as a gift.

Madam Yun was still the same, gentle as jade.

Now that Lu Ye had achieved not an insignificant level of mastery in the Path of Spirit Runes, Madam Yun no longer needed to instruct him in every little detail as in the beginning.

It was mostly Lu Ye raising some doubts in his mind, and Madam Yun answering them.

The saying goes, "A master leads you to the door, cultivation depends on the individual," which was precisely the case.

After a series of questions and answers, Lu Ye gained a lot, and Madam Yun was naturally very satisfied with the performance of her renowned yet unofficial disciple.

She had met countless people in her life, but she had never seen anyone with as high an aptitude for spirit runes as Lu Ye, which was why she initially wanted to take him as her disciple.

However, the sect master intervened, infuriating her so much that she ended up physically confronting him.

Actually, the sect master did not intend to ruin Lu Ye's future, because he knew that regardless of his own attitude, Madam Yun would instruct Lu Ye meticulously.

His intention was to use this situation as a way to draw a strong supporter to the Righteous Blood Sect, ideally having Madam Yun formally become an elder or Vice Sect Leader of the Righteous Blood Sect, thereby making Lu Ye's apprenticeship to Madam Yun completely justified.

And given that Madam Yun was a famous spirit runes master in the Nine Provinces, having her protection would also mean that Lu Ye had backing when traveling outside.

He could not rely on himself, his enemies were too numerous, relying on him would only lead to quicker death.

Naturally, things did not go as planned, and he ended up getting beaten for nothing.

Since then, Madam Yun never mentioned taking disciples again, but her instruction of Lu Ye remained consistent from beginning to end.

"Thank you for your teaching, Master."

Lu Ye rose and gave Madam Yun a respectful bow.

Madam Yun was slightly stunned for a moment, then broke into a smile, "What did you call me?"

"Master!"

Lu Ye had had this in mind for a long time. Although the two of them did not have the title of master and disciple, they did in essence. Constantly calling her Madam Yun also felt somewhat distant.

Thus, this address of "Master" was something Lu Ye was more than willing to use.

Madam Yun smiled even more happily, nodding continuously, "Good, good, good!"

Her gaze overflowed with tenderness and affection, feeling that her relationship with Lu Ye had grown much closer.

"That old man refused to let me take you as my disciple, but I want to see if he can stop you from calling me Master!" Madam Yun suddenly became proud, wishing she could run right now to the Righteous Peak to boast to the sect master.

Lu Ye dared not speak, only thinking to himself that since both of you are in agreement and are of considerable age, why persist with the conflict.

Being a great cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm, Madam Yun's mood was joyful, but she soon calmed down and said to Lu Ye, "I know you've made quite a name for yourself outside, and many people see you as a thorn in their side, desperate to eliminate you. Your master does not need you to dull your sharpness because it's too late for that now. However, should a day come when you face a crisis you cannot resolve, or an opponent you cannot defeat, you may try mentioning my name. Perhaps... just perhaps, it might give you a chance of survival."

Those who would be ruthless enough to strike at Lu Ye would definitely be powerhouses from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Though Madam Yun was once famous and, being one of the topmost spirit runes masters in the Nine Provinces, had numerous beneficiaries, many of whom were senior members of contemporary sects who ordinary people did not wish to offend, in such a situation, whether mentioning her name would be useful or not was uncertain.

Therefore, Madam Yun did not make her promise too absolute.

"You can call me Yun Xuechu as your master!"

"Disciple remembers," Lu Ye said, hearing her name for the first time. He had always addressed her as Madam Yun.

"Master, there is one more thing I wish to ask about."

"Go ahead."

"Master, have you also delved into the Cover Armorer Path?"

Surprise flashed through Yun Xuechu's eyes, "Why do you ask that?"

She recalled never having shown anything related to the Cover Armorer Path in front of Lu Ye.

"The maid on your mountaintop doesn't seem to be a living person?"

Lu Ye had always found the maid who greeted and saw him off every time he visited somewhat peculiar. Previously, his cultivation was not sufficient and his perspective was not broad enough, so he couldn't perceive anything substantial.

But this time, he immediately noticed some details he had overseen before.

Perhaps because he had once worn the Dragon Throne, even though he hadn't had much contact with the Cover Armorer Path, he still noticed something unusual.

That maid was not a living person at all, but rather something more akin to a Cover Armorer creation!

Only, it was so lifelike that it looked just like a real person.

Yun Xuechu was genuinely surprised this time, not expecting Lu Ye to have such discerning eyes.

With a thought from her, the maid stepped forward and came to stand beside Lu Ye, then suddenly spoke, "You think I am not a living person?"

Lu Ye was startled and stared at the maid for a long while before he finally realized, "Master?"

The maid had never spoken before, and Lu Ye initially thought she was mute, but now it seemed that it was not that she lacked the ability to speak but rather that she needed someone to compel her.

The one compelling her at this moment was a mental projection from Yun Xuechu.

This maid was indeed a Cover Armorer creation!

Chapter 767 Misfortune of the Sect

Bright Heart Peak, inside Yun Xuechu's bedchamber, Lu Ye walked around the maid without stopping, clicking his tongue in wonder.

No matter how he looked, this maid appeared no different from a living person, with hardly any flaws at all.

But it didn't take long for Lu Ye to notice something amiss.

Because on Yun Xuechu's body, there wasn't any surge of spirit force or mental consciousness!

In other words, this maid was not being manipulated by her!

Confused, Lu Ye wasn't sure what to make of it. It was clear that the maid before him was indeed a creation of a cover armorer, but... if no one was controlling her, how could she move? How could she speak?

"Master, what is going on here?" asked Lu Ye, looking towards Yun Xuechu.

Yun Xuechu gave a slight smile and waved her hand, and the maid retreated.

"The Clone Technique," Yun Xuechu explained, "Strictly speaking, Little Butterfly can be considered my doppelganger."

"A doppelganger!" Lu Ye gasped in shock.

Although he was only at the Cloud River Realm, far from the Divine Sea by leaps and bounds, and didn't understand the intricacies of cloning or mental splitting, he could still sense some of its profound mysteries and knew it must be an extremely remarkable secret technique.

"I didn't tell you these things before because I was afraid you would bite off more than you could chew," began Yun Xuechu. "You must have also noticed that, aside from the orthodox paths of cultivation practiced by the major factions in the Nine Provinces, there are many other subsidiary paths, such as the Array Path, Alchemy Dao, Path of Artifact Refining, or even the Cover Armorer Path. Each of these is closely related to spirit runes, and even the magic cultivators who cast magic and spells do so in relation to spirit runes. All of these could be considered branches of the Path of Spirit Runes."

Lu Ye nodded.

As a spirit runes master, how could he not have noticed this?

"For all subsidiary paths, the Path of Spirit Runes is the foundation; if the Path of Spirit Runes is powerful, then any other path you cultivate will yield twice the result with half the effort."

Just as Lu Ye made rapid progress in the Array Path.

Of course, his advancement was attributed to the rewards of challenging the Hundred Arrays Pagoda twice, but it also had much to do with his solid foundation, a benefit brought by the Path of Spirit Runes.

Since Lu Ye had already delved into the Array Path, Yun Xuechu had refrained from discussing other subsidiary paths with him.

If Lu Ye hadn't asked about it this time, she wouldn't have planned to tell him.

On the outside, the Cover Armorer Path might appear mysterious and skillful, but truly mastering it to gain renown requires a tremendous amount of energy and resources. For a cultivator like Lu Ye, whose cultivation wasn't high and whose primary task was to advance his cultivation level, it wasn't appropriate to delve too much into it.

Especially given that Lu Ye was already cultivating in the Array Path.

"How did you realize it?" asked Yun Xuechu.

When she settled in Bright Heart Peak years ago, Shui Yuan had visited a few times but never spotted any flaw. It should be noted that Shui Yuan was already at the True Lake Realm then.

She didn't think Shui Yuan's eyesight back then would be less sharp than that of the current Lu Ye.

"Master, please look at this object," Lu Ye said as he took out the broken Dragon Throne from his storage space.

"This is..." Yun Xuechu's expression immediately turned grave. Taking the Dragon Throne, she gently caressed it, her eyes filled with flickering light as she scrutinized it closely.

After a long while, she showed a shocked expression and looked up at Lu Ye, "Where did you get this from?"

Even though this piece of cover armor was so damaged it barely retained its original shape, she could still glimpse the terrifying power it boasted when it was intact.

This object, she thought, was beyond her own ability to make, and indeed beyond anyone's in the entire Nine Provinces!

Lu Ye briefly shared his experience in the Soaring Dragon World and explained the origin of the Dragon Throne.

The reason he had inquired about the Cover Armorer Path with Yun Xuechu was to ask for her help in repairing the cover armor.

Originally, he had planned to wait until his own cultivation was more profound and then personally visit the Thousand Contraptions Pavilion to seek out the strong cultivator at the Divine Sea Realm there.

Although they were strangers with no previous acquaintanceship, as a cover armorer, the sight of such a divine object would surely be irresistible. If the cover armor could be repaired, it would benefit the repairer greatly.

But if his own master was also an excellent cover armorer, why turn to others for help?

Learning that the Dragon Throne had experienced such a spectacularly tumultuous war, Yun Xuechu's eyes revealed an unmistakable pang of distress.

If the object was intact, she would certainly be able to deduce much from it; even in its current broken state, the value was beyond measure.

This was, indeed, an extremely precious gift for her!

"I'll keep this object here and find a way to repair it," Yun Xuechu declared. "However, the person who crafted this object has far greater expertise in the Cover Armorer Path than I do. I can't guarantee absolute success, and even if I manage to repair it, it might not compare to the original armor's might."

"Disciple understands," Lu Ye nodded. "Please do as you see fit, Master. Even if it can't be properly repaired, it's alright."

As he spoke, he took out the colossal Dragon Spine Saber and laid it horizontally in the chamber.

"This item goes as a set with it."

The Dragon Spine Saber was also damaged, its luster dim and surface mottled. Even so, Yun Xuechu could still feel the overwhelming ferocity hidden within.

Suddenly in possession of such divine items, Yun Xuechu wished nothing more than to immediately begin a closed-door meditation to comprehend their secrets. Seeing this, Lu Ye knew better than to disturb his master and respectfully made his leave.

He went to Yun Xuechu's Bibliotheca to return the books he had borrowed last time and picked out some others he had not read yet.

While the library held an extensive collection, Lu Ye had already read nearly half of it, and he believed it wouldn't be long before he had read all the books there.

It was Little Butterfly who saw him off again, this time making sure not to show any disrespect.

No matter whether she was a clone, she was indeed his master.

He bowed respectfully and departed.

Having gained two more figures he called Master, Lu Ye's feelings were inevitably a bit complicated.

Having left Bright Heart Peak, Lu Ye didn't return to Righteous Peak but headed straight for Emerald Bamboo Peak.

This was his spirit mountaintop within the Righteous Blood Sect. Strictly speaking, he was still the Peak Master of Emerald Bamboo Peak. In other big sects, the master of a single peak would be qualified to take disciples and teach them.

However, the Righteous Blood Sect's headquarters had a sparse population now, and on Emerald Bamboo Peak only Lu Ye resided alone. Moreover, his cultivation was still low, so naturally, he wouldn't

undertake the task of accepting disciples and teaching. His own understanding of the Dao had only just begun; how could he qualify to teach others anything?

He didn't see Yiyi, who was apparently still with the sect master receiving teachings, but Amber, who had been fed until her belly swelled by the Second Senior Sister, was sprawled on the peak napping.

Several days remained until the second round of the Cloud River competition, so Lu Ye spent his time cultivating while taking medicinal pills and immersing his mind, perceiving the Soaring Dragon Origin.

Time passed.

Feeling that it was almost time, Lu Ye finally got up and made his way to Righteous Peak.

The Heaven's Augury Pillar of the Righteous Blood Sect was located there, and participating in the Cloud River competition required using the Heaven's Augury Pillar, so he needed to go to the Heaven's Augury Hall.

He had just set off when he saw a streak of light swiftly crossing from Bright Heart Peak straight to Righteous Peak.

"Master?"

Lu Ye was surprised. The figure flying out from Bright Heart Peak was none other than Yun Xuechu.

The other party also saw him, but just gave him a slight nod before accelerating away with an impressive momentum.

On Righteous Peak, the sect master seemed to realize something and immediately came out to greet him, just in time to see Yun Xuechu's figure descending from the sky.

Sensing that the visitor had ill intentions, the sect master asked in alarm, "What's wrong?"

"Come with me!" Yun Xuechu seemed too impatient to speak with him, extending her delicate hand, which instantly transformed into a giant hand of spirit force, reaching out to grab the sect master.

This grab appeared to envelop the entire world within her palm.

The sect master's spirit force and blood Qi burst forth at the same time, creating an invisible tidal wave of force that shattered the incoming spirit force hand.

The sect master froze for a moment, his expression awkward, "I didn't do it on purpose... "

After all, faced with such a situation, anyone would instinctively want to resist, let alone the fact that he hadn't actually fought back.

"Enough talk!" Yun Xuechu's expression was completely different from the warmth she showed to Lu Ye, instead showing a cold severity, as she once again reached out to grab the sect master.

A long sigh came forth, and this time the sect master did not resist. He realized this woman was looking for him for a reason and wasn't there to fight.

But...

After all, he was the formidable sect master. Being taken away like a chicken in the presence of the few sect members and disciples...

How undignified was that?

And... what on earth did this woman want?

With a full face of worry and not daring to say more or resist, he was quickly taken away by the spirit force hand and brought into Bright Heart Peak.

Lu Ye arrived at Righteous Peak leisurely, only to hear Yiyi exclaim in panic before Shui Yuan, "Second Senior Sister, something terrible has happened, the sect master has been taken away!"

Shui Yuan sighed deeply, "No need to bother with it; go about your business."

What a misfortune for the sect!

Good thing there aren't many people in the sect right now, or else the old man would lose all face.

Yiyi looked at Lu Ye somewhat worriedly, to which Lu Ye reassured, "It's nothing."

His master had taken away Yiyi's master, and it was indeed not a good situation to get involved in, so he might as well act as if he hadn't seen anything.

After sending Yiyi back into Amber, Lu Ye stuffed Amber into the spirit beast sack and then made his way to the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

There had been no news from Feathered Master, and the upgrading of the Boulder Mountain Saber was evidently not finished.

But this was within Lu Ye's expectations.

It made no big difference to him.

He checked the battlefield marking on himself, and under the count of victories in the Cloud River competition, a new piece of information appeared.

Ranking: Top 3000.

The initial seven days of the Cloud River competition had ended, and the strongest 3000 cultivators had been selected from numerous Cloud River Realm cultivators to continue the next round of the struggle.

This new piece of information undoubtedly meant that Lu Ye had qualified for the next round.

He believed his Fourth Junior Brother and the others must also have qualified by now.

Even for Hua Ci, Lu Ye was actually not worried. This woman might look like a healing cultivator, but her use of poison was undetectable, and her cultivation was not low. Even those Level 9 cultivators, if they met her, would have to end the fight quickly, or else if she found an opportunity, they might not even understand how they lost.

With the 3000 chosen, the second round of struggle was about to begin.

After some thought, Lu Ye took out a mask from his storage space and put it on his face.

On many occasions, people had recognized his identity and, intimidated by his reputation, conceded defeat voluntarily.

Now that the three thousand had been selected, all of them would undoubtedly be powerful, far from as mixed as before.

It can be said that these individuals would surely give their all in battle, seeking to secure a higher ranking.

They are the best among this generation in the Cloud River Realm.

Lu Ye also wanted to test their techniques, and hiding his face might reduce the psychological pressure on some of them.

Chapter 768 Powerful Magic Cultivator

This time, Heaven's Augury played no tricks; Lu Ye calmly waited for a moment until he felt a sensation from the mark on the back of his hand, then he pressed his hand onto the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

With a blur before his eyes, he appeared in the combat field.

Looking around, he immediately spotted a figure swiftly moving away towards the edge of the combat arena.

Such quick reflexes!

Moreover, by distancing himself from the enemy right from the start, it was clear that his opponent this time must be a magic cultivator.

Lu Ye did not even have time to take in his surroundings when a glaring spell was already hurtling towards him.

This was the Cloud River clash, not a friendly sparring or teaching session between cultivators. Regardless of whether they were from the same camp or not, everyone here was an enemy. It wasn't necessarily about fighting to the death, but since they were all ranked within the top three thousand, every battle would undoubtedly be fought with all-out effort to vie for the top hundred slots.

The strength of cultivators ranked in the top three thousand was indeed remarkable. The ripples of spirit force emanating from the opponent clearly indicated a cultivator at the Cloud River Level 9!

You should know that in the previous hundred battles Lu Ye fought, he had only encountered a few at Level 8, and not a single one at Level 9.

But in this second round of combat, his first battle was against a Level 9.

The opponent's strikes were fast and firm, clearly indicating a profound foundation. It was also obvious from his approach that he was not one to underestimate his opponents.

While the spell was still mid-flight, the opponent launched another spell, followed quickly by a third spell, all different, intent on taking down Lu Ye in one fell swoop.

The fierce aura surged towards him, but Lu Ye raised his hand, with spirit force swirling in his palm. The Yin-Yang Dual Origins rapidly outlined and interlocked, creating a triangular spirit force barrier swiftly in front of him, looking as though he was holding a spirit force shield in his hand.

It was the Defense Spirit Runes.

The various spells struck against the shield of defense, causing successive ripples across it, but the shield only dimmed slightly without sustaining any significant damage.

Immediately after, Lu Ye began his counterattack.

As spirit force surged around him, a lifelike fire dragon appeared, weaving and roaring towards the enemy's position.

Behind the fire dragon came a soaring Fire Phoenix, followed by a burning Fireball as massive as a small sun, along with many other forms of fierce spells.

The magic cultivator was startled, facing the onslaught of numerous spells bearing down on him, a clear sign he had met a formidable opponent.

The speed at which his opponent cast spells was obviously faster than his own, and the power of those spells seemed stronger than the ones he cast himself.

With bitterness in his mouth, he hadn't expected to face such a tough opponent in the first battle of the second round, a truly unfavorable start!

What made it even harder for him to accept was that he could clearly sense his opponent's cultivation was a level lower than his own.

A Level 8 magic cultivator... could be this strong?

He did not give up but instead mobilized his magic and spells to intercept Lu Ye's attack.

For a time, the combat arena was a hive of activity with their spells crisscrossing in mid-air, colliding with each other, and the chaotic surges of spirit force resembling tsunamis and landslides.

The confrontations of all clashing factions were a sight to behold, with battles between magic cultivators being the most splendid and entertaining.

In just a short span of ten breaths, the magic cultivator's defense constructed through spells completely collapsed...

Unable to match Lu Ye's speed and effectiveness of spellcasting, even being a level higher in cultivation was of no help.

Having witnessed the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World, accompanying Qin Zhao through his eventful life, the essence of Qin Zhao's cultivation became Lu Ye's boon.

Putting down his Boulder Mountain Saber, when Lu Ye began to cast spells, he was a bona fide magic cultivator, and his mastery in the way of magic and spells even far surpassed his skill in saber techniques.

It was only because his current level of cultivation limited him from casting many of the more powerful spells.

The reason he persevered with saber skills instead of switching to magic cultivation or other faction's paths was largely due to the exceptionally high compatibility between combat cultivation, and in particular saber techniques, and his own nature.

For a cultivator, this was very important.

Of course, if he were to switch to magic cultivation or use other Spiritual Artifacts now, he would surely be able to demonstrate combat power not inferior to when wielding a saber. However, he would never surpass the likes of Qin Zhao in their lifetimes.

The proficiency he had in magic cultivation or other paths was acquired through an extremely special method, siphoning from others, and his potential was already fixed.

Yet, if he continued to cultivate saber techniques, the future was uncertain. Perhaps he might not reach the heights of Qin Zhao and others, or maybe... he could surpass them.

Given the choice between a predestined future and an unknown one, Lu Ye chose the latter.

But regardless, at the Cloud River Realm level, no one could surpass Lu Ye's prowess in the way of magic and spells, not even those cultivators who had followed the path of magic cultivation from the very beginning of their training.

The Level 9 magic cultivator surely hailed from a big sect, with strength that did not concede to Xia Liang in the slightest. Had he not encountered Lu Ye, he would have had a considerable chance of victory in this battle.

However, facing Lu Ye's counterattack, he only held on for ten breaths.

Seeing his defense broken, with great danger looming over him, the magic cultivator no longer dared to dawdle and promptly shouted, "I concede!"

As his words fell, he vanished from the combat arena, inwardly shaken. Since when did another formidable figure like Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect emerge on the Cloud River battlefield?

He had been confident about competing for a place in the top ten, but this battle had inevitably dented his morale.

The vast Nine Provinces indeed teem with talented individuals; while he was certainly powerful, he must not underestimate the heroes of the world!

After the battle ended, Lu Ye also left the combat arena. Without delay, he once again lifted his hand to press it against the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

However, after waiting for quite a while, there was no response.

He suddenly realized that the second round of battles was different from the first round.

During the first round, nearly all cultivators of the Cloud River Realm across the Nine Provinces had participated, and with such a large base number, it was very easy for him to be matched with other opponents.

But only three thousand people participated in the second round, and each of them was either at Level 8 or Level 9, with considerable strength. The fights were bound to be fiercely contested, and it was unlikely that victory would be decided in a short time.

Since he had finished his battle too quickly, naturally there was no one who could be matched up with him.

Without feeling anxious, he sat cross-legged in front of the Heaven's Augury Pillar, taking out a book he had brought from his master and started reading while he waited.

About two hours later, the battlefield marking suddenly transmitted a strange sensation.

Lu Ye understood in his heart, raised his hand to press it against the Heaven's Augury Pillar, and in the next instant, he was on the combat arena.

...

Battle after battle, he swept through the ranks unbeaten.

No matter whether they were Level 8 or Level 9, hardly anyone could withstand ten breaths under Lu Ye's hands.

Standing at the center of the combat arena, he was like an unceasing fountain of magic and spells, casually casting various exquisite techniques. Often his opponents would concede and leave the field without even understanding what had happened.

Gradually, a shocking piece of news began to circulate among the circles of Cloud River Realm cultivators.

No one knew where this Level 8 magic cultivator had sprung from, but his formidable strength was alarming. Even those powerful individuals from 1st grade sects, who had painstakingly prepared for one or two years without advancing to the True Lake just to vie for supremacy in the Cloud River, were beaten to the ground, unable to fight back.

Nobody knew what he looked like, for according to some cultivators who had fought against him, the man wore a mask that concealed his true face.

Many had not even seen his figure before they were engulfed in the brilliance of his boundless techniques.

A Level 8 cultivator of the Cloud River Realm with unreasonably strong abilities, and wearing a mask...

One couldn't help but think of a certain individual...

Someone who had caused the side of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to suffer setbacks time and again.

But a magic cultivator's identity didn't seem to match that person, who was known to all as a combat cultivator that wielded a saber. How could that person possibly be so proficient in such a wide range of profound techniques?

Soon, new speculations arose.

If this masked magic cultivator were to encounter Lu Yiye, who would be stronger?

It would certainly be a titanic battle!

After all, the strength that these two had displayed so far was beyond what an ordinary Cloud River Realm cultivator could contend with. It was difficult to imagine just how formidable they would be if they advanced to Cloud River Level 9.

As numerous rumors were afloat in the Cloud River battlefield, Lu Ye stood unyielding as a mountain in the combat arena, bombarding with one spell after another.

In that space crisscrossed and interwoven with countless spells, a figure moved like lightning, seemingly in a tight spot but still managing to avoid most of the magical assaults. When unavoidably cornered, he shattered them with the long spear in his hand.

The scene was incredibly intense!

The initial purpose of Lu Ye wearing a mask was not to reveal his identity, so he could clash with the many elite Cloud River cultivators of the Nine Provinces to expand his horizons and validate his own strength.

But by some twist of fate, the "masked Level 8 magic cultivator" had become famous.

As the continuous battles wore on, and faced with such a formidable opponent, naturally, no one dared to take him lightly. Many would state their own affiliations upon entering the field to seek guidance.

This Fong Rulie was one such combat cultivator.

It must be said that the Cloud River Realm of the Nine Provinces really did abound with talent; though most of the battles Lu Ye fought in recent days were won with ease, there were a few individuals who commanded his respect.

This Fong Rulie was the strongest Lu Ye had encountered so far, even stronger than Xia Liang.

Lu Ye knew that he must be one of those Sect Disciples who had purposely refrained from advancing to True Lake in order to wait for the Cloud River competition, to gain fame for themselves and their sect while also seeking the favor of Heaven's Augury, waiting for one or two years, with some even longer.

Although they couldn't advance their cultivation, their means of confronting an enemy were far richer than an ordinary Cloud River Realm cultivator.

With a single spell, Lu Ye's usual opponents couldn't last ten breaths.

Yet Fong Rulie held on for thirty breaths. Though in a somewhat sorry state, he continued to narrow the distance between them, seizing every possible chance to attack. Even in an absolutely unfavorable position, he never showed any intention of giving up.

This showed the man's tenacity, and only such individuals could go further in the future.

After another ten breaths amidst the fierce battle, Fong Rulie found a great opportunity. Braving the strike of one of Lu Ye's spells, he broke through multiple obstacles. His long spear thrust forward like a dragon, boldly attacking Lu Ye at close range.

He had struck!

Chapter 769 How Could It Be Her?

Fong Rulie felt immensely pleased.

No matter how skilled his magic cultivator opponent was in the art of magic and spells, or how exquisite the techniques they could deploy, once a combat cultivator like him got close, the opponent was doomed to a dire fate.

He braced himself to take a hit from the enemy, all for this very opportunity.

He could win, he was sure he would!

Infinite confidence surged in his heart. The spear thrust he made in that instant was more powerful than at any other time, the pinnacle spear thrust of his life!

Like a dragon, the movement of his spear, and like a prison, its force; no one in the Cloud River Realm could block his spear!

A short while later.

Inside the Heaven's Augury Hall of a 1st grade sect in Dingzhou, Fong Rulie suddenly appeared, his spirit force swirling violently around him, his face pale, his eyes filled with fear, as if he had narrowly escaped death!

The boundless confidence from a moment ago had now shattered and fell to dust.

Thinking back to the moment before he gave up, Fong Rulie found it hard to believe.

Having struggled to close in on his opponent, ready to defeat him thoroughly, his opponent had calmly produced a long spear Spiritual Artifact.

With a casual thrust, that spear not only broke through all his attacks but also plunged him into a deep crisis.

If he hadn't yelled "I give up" quickly, he wouldn't just have been severely injured; he might have died!

The seemingly relaxed, yet astounding spear thrust had left him profoundly shocked. When his opponent thrust that spear, it felt as if an adult was nonchalantly disciplining a child...

"Master Nephew Fong," came a gentle woman's voice from beside him.

Unlike small sects like the Righteous Blood Sect, in big sects, disciples participating in the Cloud River supremacy had their elders watching over them next to the Heaven's Augury Pillar, and they were

always accompanied by a healing cultivator since no one could guarantee whether their disciples would return injured.

With a healing cultivator present, wounds could be quickly treated.

This woman was the sect's most skilled healing cultivator, also a strong cultivator from the Divine Sea Realm.

"Are you hurt?" the woman asked.

Fong Rulie was jolted from his shock and defeat. He looked at the woman who showed concern for him and shook his head, "Master Uncle Nan, I'm fine."

The woman's eyes flickered, "Did you encounter Lu Yiye?"

Fong Rulie didn't appear injured, but he clearly was distressed and seemed to have been humbled, a scenario that likely only had one explanation.

He had been defeated in the previous combat, in a way that he found hard to accept, which undoubtedly was a great blow to him.

And in today's Nine Provinces, only the legendary Lu Yiye would have that capability.

Fong Rulie shook his head, his mind still immersed in that spear thrust from his opponent. Even though he was back at the sect headquarters, the sharpness of that spear seemed to pierce through the Void, following him and causing a chill in his heart.

The woman reassured him, "A moment of strength means little. Above the Cloud River, there is the True Lake, and above that, the Divine Sea. Many of my contemporaries had greater talents than me, but how many of them have ascended to the Divine Sea? Nephew, you mustn't be disheartened."

Fong Rulie gathered himself and replied earnestly, "Thank you for your concern, Master Uncle. It's just a small setback. I can withstand it."

The woman smiled, pleased, "That's good to hear."

"Master Uncle, do you think someone could walk the path of both a magic cultivator and a combat cultivator, and succeed in both?"

"The divisions between factions aren't as strict as imagined. Since ancient times, the cultivation of Nine Provinces cultivators isn't confined to one faction. Take me for instance; I am both a healing and a magic cultivator. Often these can complement each other, and it applies similarly between magic cultivators and array cultivators too. However, combat cultivators and magic cultivators don't naturally complement each other. If someone really does that, they're only sabotaging their path. Even if they achieve minor success now, it will scatter their energies, and they won't get far in the future, unless they come to realize this soon."

Fong Rulie nodded, "I understand, Master Uncle. My path will surely extend beyond the Cloud River and the True Lake."

He walked to the side and sat down to rest. He naturally took his Master Uncle's advice seriously but then he thought, Lu Yiye seemed to be both a combat cultivator and an array cultivator...

If what his Master Uncle said was true, his future was indeed worrisome.

As a core disciple of such a top big sect, not only were his talents and mental resilience superior to ordinary people, so even though he had been defeated, it didn't affect him much.

It was merely the abrupt spear thrust from his opponent that had somewhat shaken him.

...

The first round of the Cloud River supremacy involved completing a hundred matches wherein cultivators' performance in combat was observed, selecting the top three thousand. This lasted seven days.

The second round also spanned seven days, but it didn't require completing as many as a hundred matches.

Only fourteen were necessary.

The frequency of the battles wasn't as high as in the first round since most cultivators needed time to recover after a fight; every cultivator tried to maintain their peak condition.

This led Lu Ye to spend almost two days to complete thirteen matches, mostly waiting by the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

Now only one match left to finish this round.

Whether or not he could advance into the top hundred was unquestionable. If even a flawless record couldn't secure a spot in the top hundred, then the so-called fairness and justice of the Heaven's Augury were nothing but a sham.

After a long wait next to the Heaven's Augury Pillar, the battlefield marking finally began to stir.

Lu Ye closed the book in his hands, skillfully put on his mask, raised his hand to touch the Heaven's Augury Pillar, and relaxed his mind.

He reappeared on the familiar combat arena.

Through the mask, Lu Ye lifted his eyes and looked forward.

What he saw made him slightly startle.

Since his participation in the Cloud River competition, he had encountered over a hundred opponents. However, given the vast base of cultivators from the Nine Provinces, he didn't recognize any of them, irrespective of their origins.

Yet unexpectedly, he encountered one here!

Moreover, what puzzled Lu Ye even more was, how could he have encountered her here?

It made no sense at all!

The woman opposite him, dressed in a robe of purple that accentuated her distinguished aura, had a tall and slender figure. Yet, the expression in her eyes was indifferent and calm, as if she was detached from all worldly matters.

Endless Island, Lan Ziyi!

He had only met this woman twice.

Once was during a challenge in the Spirit Stream Ranking, where she challenged him and was defeated.

The other time was in the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain, where under the arrangement of Heaven's Augury, she, along with Xia Qianqian and Shen Xiaomao, became his maids and followed him to seek refuge in Two Worlds City.

The most profound impression Lu Ye had of her was her strong vigilance.

At the end of the last battle in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's secret realm, everyone was injured, and Lu Ye had planned to seize the opportunity to kill her, but she had disappeared without a trace early on.

Instead, after leaving the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain's secret realm, she was waiting for him at the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union to share the profits from selling the Beast Seal Method.

She would appear when there were benefits and escape early when there were dangers. There was no denying her high vigilance.

Meeting her in the second round of the Cloud River competition truly surprised Lu Ye.

Because those who had made it to the second round were either of the Cloud River Level 8 Realm or the Cloud River Level 9 Realm, either having profound foundations like Li Baxian and Feng Yuechan or exceptional talents like Giant Armor.

What about Lan Ziyi?

And seeing her composed and tranquil demeanor, it seemed she had not suffered any injuries throughout the combats she had been through.

While Lu Ye was scrutinizing Lan Ziyi, she was also sizing him up.

He only glanced at her casually and didn't take it too seriously, but then a familiar throbbing sensation came from his heart, a premonition from his conscience.

His indifferent expression grew solemn, and his delicate brows furrowed.

Upon another look at Lu Ye's attire, she immediately realized whom she had encountered.

It was none other than the recently famous magic cultivator!

However... she had heard of this magic cultivator's reputation before and had not paid much attention to it. In all of the Nine Provinces, the only one she held in esteem was Lu Ye from the Cloud River Realm.

That was, assuming Lu Ye's strength was as formidable as the rumors suggested.

But unexpectedly, she had encountered another one here!

Instinctively, she raised her hand and grabbed in front of her, seizing two long knives that were even longer than ordinary ones. If wielded by an ordinary woman, it would have looked unfitting, but for someone tall like her, they complemented her perfectly.

A powerful aura, like that of a slumbering beast, began to awaken from within her.

Lu Ye could hardly believe his eyes and to verify the reality, raised his hand and launched a spell at her.

Lan Ziyi brandished her long knives, splitting his spell in two.

In that instant, the fluctuations of spirit force were undoubtedly prominent.

"Cloud River Level 9 Realm!" Lu Ye was shocked in his heart.

How long had it been?

How could this woman have reached the Cloud River Level 9 Realm already?

Compared to other cultivators, his cultivation had progressed quickly as well; since entering the Cloud River battlefield, he had reached the Level 8 Realm in just over a year.

Yet, unexpectedly, Lan Ziyi had advanced faster, having reached Level 9!

No wonder she appeared here.

Originally, Lan Ziyi was also a strong contender on the Spirit Stream Ranking, frequently receiving rewards bestowed by Heaven's Augury. With a solid foundation and profound strength, it was only natural for her to make it into the top three thousand.

In a daze, Lu Ye recalled a rumor.

Those top big sects actually possess the capability to rapidly enhance their disciples' growth.

Golden-hued spirit fortune sticks, although difficult for ordinary cultivators to obtain, meant little to those big sects; as long as the elders were willing to bestow them, the younger generation could easily acquire them.

However, cultivation is not merely about higher levels being better, as the growth process is also crucial. Otherwise, having cultivation without a solid foundation is like building a castle in the air, destined not to last long.

Thus, even though those big sects have the capability to swiftly enhance their disciples' cultivation levels, they normally wouldn't do so as it would only be fostering growth with undue haste.

But judging from the knife strike Lan Ziyi had just made, Lu Ye could tell that there was no sign of an unstable foundation.

In other words, although Endless Island had elevated her cultivation to the Cloud River Level 9 Realm, she could perfectly control her own power.

This seemed utterly incredible.

Chapter 770 Do Not Bully Too Much

On the combat arena, after slicing through Lu Ye's spell, Lan Ziyi's figure slightly leaned forward like a cheetah ready to pounce!

A powerful aura rapidly surged within her, even more fierce than Fong Rulie whom Lu Ye had encountered earlier.

It caught Lu Ye's eye.

Until now, he had encountered quite a few from the Cloud River Level 9, and several had fallen by his hand.

He had always thought that strength like Xia Liang's could basically represent the pinnacle of power in the Nine Provinces Cloud River Realm.

But it took this round of Cloud River supremacy battles for him to realize that he had been ignorant.

Xia Liang was certainly not mediocre, but there were indeed those stronger than him in this world.

Like the previous Fong Rulie, like the current Lan Ziyi...

And as a combat cultivator, he was all too familiar with the current state of Lan Ziyi.

So almost instinctively, he raised his hand and a fist-sized small fireball hurled towards Lan Ziyi.

The Small Fireball Technique, arguably the simplest fire-type technique among all magic and spells, is the first technique fire-type magic cultivators learn.

The fist-sized fireball flew with astonishing speed, almost appearing in front of Lan Ziyi immediately.

It undoubtedly surprised Lan Ziyi, whose aura was just about to peak. She could either dodge or intercept it with her saber.

But either option would disrupt the build-up of her own aura.

She dared not ignore it for within this simple and unadorned small fireball lay a power that even startled her!

The saber light flickered, and the fireball burst, scattering sparks in all directions.

Although her aura had not peaked yet, Lan Ziyi had no choice but to launch her attack in that moment, wrapping it with a cold, deadly intent.

However, upon looking up, she got a shock, seeing a dense mass of small fireballs enveloping the space and assaulting her like a fiery rain...

Behind the barrage of fireballs, the magic cultivator with the mask remained calm and composed, leisurely raising his hand and spawning more fireballs that attacked.

On the combat arena, as the fireballs soared, Lan Ziyi danced around, moving left and right but utterly unable to break through the defensive line created by the spells, secretly alarmed at how extraordinary this magic cultivator was.

Although she had heard of this magic cultivator's reputation before, she really hadn't taken it to heart, thinking she was here to redeem her past humiliation from Lu Ye.

Women always hold grudges.

On the Spirit Stream Ranking, she was no match for Lu Ye.

And in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain secret realm, Lu Ye even had the intent to kill her.

When weaker, she had no choice but to avoid his sharpness and bide her time; now that she possessed sufficient strength, she naturally wouldn't stay quiet.

But she never expected to meet such an outrageous magic cultivator instead of Lu Ye.

Furthermore... this magic cultivator felt very strange to her.

His mastery in techniques was clearly profound, yet he only used such small fireball techniques to fight her, almost as if he was deliberately tormenting her.

What was even more frustrating was that she found herself utterly unable to counter him.

After struggling for a long time, she hadn't advanced an inch, constantly hopping around her own small space.

It must be said, a female cultivator's grace truly surpasses that of a male cultivator.

When Fong Rulie was dodging through various spells, he wasn't as elegant; compared to him, Lan Ziyi's movements were more akin to a dancing sprite.

"Is small fireball all you can do?"

After a full thirty seconds, Lan Ziyi could no longer hold back. Even if her temperament and cultivation were usually impeccable and she remained unattached to worldly matters, in this moment, her mental state was somewhat explosive.

She felt like a puppet held in someone's hand, moved east or west at the enemy's whim.

Having realized she was likely no match for him, she simply couldn't accept defeat just like that.

What responded to her was a group of fireballs even larger than washbasins.

The opponent seemed to be telling her that he knew not only small fireballs but also large ones!

"Lu Yiye, don't push people too far!"

Lan Ziyi's chest ached with anger.

Lu Ye was startled.

"Even like this, you can recognize me?"

It made no sense.

None of his previous enemies had recognized him.

Everyone knew that Righteous Blood Sect's Lu Yiye was a saber-wielding combat cultivator, so how could he possibly execute such intricate magic and spells?

Yet here, Lan Ziyi had identified him outright.

No matter what, he wasn't familiar with Lan Ziyi; they had clashed once on the Spirit Stream Ranking and spent some time together in the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain secret realm, but that was long ago.

It was certain that Lan Ziyi hadn't recognized him at the start; perhaps she had discovered something during the fight.

Indeed, that was the case.

Initially, Lan Ziyi hadn't recognized him, but even though Lu Ye concealed his face with a mask, his physique remained unchanged.

Level 8 cultivation, fire-type spiritual power, frighteningly powerful.

These traces forced Lan Ziyi to make a judgment that even she couldn't believe.

This masked magic cultivator was Lu Yiye!

She couldn't believe that a Cloud River Realm cultivator with the same cultivation and element sign as Lu Ye, and even more powerful than herself, could suddenly appear without reason.

Not to mention, Lan Ziyi had been thinking constantly about defeating Lu Ye these past days and had deeply memorized his aura.

Although they had not seen each other for a long time, and Lan Ziyi initially didn't recognize Lu Ye's aura, how could she not have noticed after being tormented to this extent?

"It really is you!"

Lan Ziyi secretly gritted her teeth, inexplicably feeling a sense of relief in her heart.

Indeed, in this world, only he could be stronger than her. The so-called magic cultivator wearing a mask was entirely fictitious.

She wasn't that weak!

"You're trying to trick me?" Lu Ye's eyes narrowed, his intent to kill rose in the dark.

He had long wanted to kill this woman, but unfortunately, he missed the opportunity in the secret realm of the Ten Thousand Beasts Domain. Afterward, there was no news of her. Today's encounter here was an opportunity.

The way he messed with her mind just now wasn't because he found it amusing, but because he was preparing to kill her.

"You... want to kill me?" Lan Ziyi stood still, looking at Lu Ye with a tilted head. With a long saber held in front of her and another behind her back, she remained vigilant even while talking to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye just marveled at how extremely wary this woman was.

"We don't have any deep-seated grudges, do we?" The confusion on Lan Ziyi's delicate face was genuine.

"What a joke, so many cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge chased to kill me, and we didn't have deep grudges either. Opposing camps, fighting to the death, it's all justified!"

"Who told you that?"

Did anyone even need to say it?

In the Nine Provinces cultivation world, once a cultivator began their cultivation, they would inevitably be swept into the tide of confrontation between two major camps, even independent cultivators couldn't remain aloof.

"What do you mean?" Lu Ye frowned.

Lan Ziyi shook her head: "Many people in the world are foolish, in our generation, you are the only one I regard as worthy. I hope you can see the truth."

"What do you want me to see?"

"It's not time yet, you will naturally see it later... Don't come any closer, if you dare come closer, I dare to admit defeat and then expose your real identity."

Lu Ye took a slight step forward, which made her become more alert.

As a combat cultivator who used a saber, Lu Ye could bring his magic and spells cultivation to such a level; if he actually got close with a saber, Lan Ziyi wasn't confident she could block him.

Through this battle, she once again recognized Lu Ye's strength.

Although she didn't know why Lu Ye chose to conceal himself and pretend to be a magic cultivator, Lan Ziyi felt he must be plotting something.

She felt that Lu Ye wouldn't want this secret exposed!

Pleased with herself, she thought, I can't defeat you, but catching your weak point is not without gains!

Just as she thought this, she saw Lu Ye charging at her ferociously, quickly closing the distance between them.

An extremely terrifying oppressive aura descended like a mountain tipping over.

"How could this be!" Lan Ziyi's expression changed slightly, without hesitation she called out, "I concede!"

In her last glimpse, she saw Lu Ye grab a long spear, thrusting it toward the place she had vanished from. The might of that spear left her tremendously shaken.

She thought by catching Lu Ye's weakness, she held some advantage, but in fact, Lu Ye didn't care about it at all.

He didn't use the saber because the Boulder Mountain Saber was undergoing an upgrade. Wearing a mask and mingling with many elite cultivators from the Nine Provinces was to expand his vision and experience.

Lan Ziyi's attempt at blackmail was naturally useless.

With no enemies before him, Lu Ye also exited that space.

Fourteen matches had finished, and there were still five days until the end of the second round, so results wouldn't come out just yet.

As for the battle merits earned in the combat arena, they weren't many.

Lu Ye left Righteous Peak and returned to Emerald Bamboo Peak, continuing his cultivation while quietly waiting.

The thing he was most passionate about now was to witness the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World within his mind, accompanying those powerful figures who had left significant marks in various eras of the Soaring Dragon World throughout their lives.

His gains were tremendous.

Each of these powerful figures had their unique traits and had stood at the peak of the Soaring Dragon World, but the more he gained, the more Lu Ye could sense one thing.

His path remained the path of a combat cultivator.

It had to involve the saber.

Only in this way could he have a chance to surpass his predecessors.

It depressed him that despite numerous insights into the Origin, he hadn't encountered a single saber-using combat cultivator, though he had met sword cultivators.

This resulted in his saber skills not progressing much.

Three days hurried by, and when Lu Ye returned from the Origin of the Soaring Dragon World to his consciousness, he suddenly felt a disturbance in his battlefield marking.

The third round of the Cloud River contest hadn't started yet, and this disturbance seemed to be someone trying to communicate with him.

While restoring the consumed spirit, Lu Ye checked.

Indeed, someone was communicating with him.

The upgrade of the Boulder Mountain Saber was complete!

Feathered Master had said it would take within half a month, and it's only been ten days, truly keeping to the agreement.

But having signed the Heaven's Augury Pact, even though she had high cultivation, she too wouldn't dare to break the agreement, as Heaven's Augury would enforce its punishment otherwise.