

## Humanity 881

### Chapter 881 Be a human!

In the next moment, amid the fierce sword light, Lu Ye broke through the giant palm and charged out.

The scorching power was resisted by the Talent Tree's might, but the immense force of the slap caused his tiger's mouth to crack open, blood gushing out, even blood seeping from the corner of his mouth, and his chest and abdomen churned with turbulent blood Qi.

Following closely behind him, Ying Wuji also groaned, his complexion pale.

He was secretly horrified; if it weren't for Lu Ye blocking the front, he himself would likely have been killed by the power of that palm.

Passing through this final barrier, they rushed into the stone staircase corridor they had come from, one after the other.

Once inside, the pressure significantly reduced, as there was no longer any need to worry about being surrounded from all sides.

However, many Fire Spirit Race members had already entered this corridor, climbing upward, desperately blocking and obstructing once they sensed Lu Ye and Ying Wuji's presence.

Lu Ye, with a long saber in hand, flickered the blade light, moving nonstop. Along the way, Fire Spirit Race members kept falling.

In those rare cases where some slipped through, Ying Wuji, who followed behind, dealt with them.

"Roar!" A deafening roar suddenly echoed from behind, filled with endless anger and resentment. The very power of this roar caused both Lu Ye and Ying Wuji's minds to shake, their bodies unstable.

Simultaneously, a stinging sensation emitted from their brains.

"Divine Sea Realm!" Ying Wuji exclaimed in shock.

His senses were not as keen as Lu Ye's, and the previous chaos meant he hadn't detected much.

How could he have known that the Fire Spirit Race members they had previously encountered were not all of them? More powerful ones were sealed within, now breaking free.

Only now did he realize.

The pain in their minds was undoubtedly due to the psyche being impacted, and the sheer power from a mere roar could only belong to a Divine Sea Realm cultivator.

Along with that roar, a massive force surged from behind.

In the midst of their rush, Ying Wuji turned his head to see an utterly horrifying sight.

Behind them, magma rolled and surged, along with a powerful shockwave rapidly sweeping towards them. Figures of numerous Fire Spirit Race members floated and sank within the molten lava.

"Lu... Brother Niu, run!" Ying Wuji shouted hurriedly.

If they were caught in this massive magma surge, Ying Wuji was certain he would be dead for sure, though he wasn't sure whether Lu Ye would survive.

Although he had recognized Lu Ye's identity, he did not dare call his full name, fearing Lu Ye might turn around and cut him down.

He repeatedly warned himself in his mind that this person was Niu Meng, not Lu Yiye!

Although Lu Ye didn't look back, he was aware of the tremendous danger approaching from behind. Without hesitation, he quickened his pace, carving a bloody path through the Fire Spirit Race's blockade.

They sprinted for a while when suddenly light shone from above, marking the entrance to the stone platform they had seen before.

In the next instant, Lu Ye's figure shot out, and Ying Wuji followed awkwardly.

They turned their heads to look around and saw that inside the volcano crater were numerous figures of Fire Spirit Race members, clearly those who had earlier escaped from below.

The few men Ying Wuji had left behind were nowhere to be seen, their fate unknown.

Without any delay, the two shot skyward, bursting out of the crater. Turning back, an unforgettable scene presented itself.

Magma erupted skyward, forming pillars, heat waves swept through, distorting the Void.

The ground trembled, the mountain pass cracked.

From the erupting magma, figures of Fire Spirit Race members shot forth, roaring at the sky, venting their resentment for being sealed away for years.

Their cries were sorrowful, their shouts enraged, causing the heavens and the earth to change color.

Finally seeing daylight again, numerous Fire Spirit Race members vented their rage, then suddenly turned, with eyes burning, staring at Lu Ye and Ying Wuji.

Despite the passage of time, they still remembered clearly that it was the human race who had sealed them with their methods. Such a deep-seated hatred naturally meant...

No rest until death!

Ying Wuji felt his scalp tingle, hastily flying toward the Gushan City Pass.

Earlier, when they were attacked in the underground cave, he had already sent a request for help to the pass. By now, someone from the pass should have been dispatched to aid.

But at that time, he didn't know the severity of the situation. With the change now, the reinforcements sent from the pass might not be enough. To fend off this disaster, they would need the full strength of the Gushan City Pass.

This was not just a crisis but a calamity. If not handled properly, the entire Gushan City Pass could be plunged into grave danger.

As these thoughts raced through his mind, he glimpsed a figure beside him out of the corner of his eye.

Turning his head, he saw Lu Ye, wearing a mask, keeping pace with him.

"You..." Ying Wuji was utterly baffled.

A Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator encountering danger would naturally flee towards the Gushan City Pass. Why was this Haotian Alliance member stirring up trouble?

Was he really unafraid of death?

Soon, he understood Lu Ye's intention.

If Lu Ye fled towards the Cangyan Mountain Pass, he would only bring trouble to the Cangyan Mountain Pass.

These Fire Spirit Race members, filled with venomous anger, were unlike the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators intimidated by the legendary woman's name, who wouldn't act rashly.

Bringing the Fire Spirit Race to the Cangyan Mountain Pass would be problematic. Even if that woman were strong, she might not be able to handle such a crisis. If the defense was breached, the Bingzhou guard's leadership would certainly hold her accountable.

Therefore, Lu Ye couldn't flee towards the Cangyan Mountain Pass under any circumstances.

Since he couldn't flee to the Cangyan Mountain Pass, the only destination left was the Gushan City Pass.

But... you're from the Haotian Alliance! Ying Wuji's thoughts were chaotic. Though he didn't know how Lu Ye had shown him the battlefield marking of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge earlier, he was sure Lu Ye couldn't show it a second time. At the Gushan City Pass, his identity would probably be exposed.

Given his reputation as Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect, once his identity was revealed, he wouldn't live to see tomorrow's sunlight or tonight's moon.

And there's also me, knowing this secret, as a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator, how could I not report what I know?

Despite thinking about the relationship between the two major factions recently, he hadn't reached a definitive conclusion. As a Bingzhou guard from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, Ying Wuji naturally wouldn't make a choice detrimental to his faction.

Could it be...

A surge of alarm gripped Ying Wuji's heart. Suddenly panicked, he felt a strong sense that this person might want to kill him.

Turning his head, he met Lu Ye's gaze.

Ying Wuji gasped, this guy... probably intends to kill me and keep the secret!

Knowing his identity and secret, it would make sense to silence the only witness. Killing him would ensure nobody else knew.

Escaped one lair only to fall into another; Ying Wuji lamented his fate. In this life-and-death crisis, a flash of inspiration struck his mind, urgently declaring, "Heaven's Augury as witness, everything I know about your secret, I, Ying Wuji, will never reveal in any form or to anyone. If I violate this, I shall die immediately!"

Under the mask, Lu Ye's fierce gaze softened.

He had intended to make Ying Wuji swear by Heaven's Augury but hadn't expected him to take the initiative.

"Smart!" Lu Ye released his grip on the Boulder Mountain Saber.

Ying Wuji felt nearly exhausted.

"Give me the items!" Lu Ye spoke again.

"What items?" Ying Wuji's emotions swung wildly, completely unaware of Lu Ye's intent.

"The items you mined in the underground cave."

"..."

Ying Wuji finally understood why Lu Ye had earlier asked him to gather all the mined fire spirit stones in one place. At the time, he said it was for convenient distribution, but now it was clear... it was for him to rob.

So, even back then, he had already decided this.

"Have some decency!" Ying Wuji was enraged.

Lu Ye persistently stared at him. Despite some gains in the cave below, fire spirit stones were always beneficial to him.

Ying Wuji's group had likely collected a significant amount.

"Take it, take it, all of it!" Ying Wuji furiously threw out a storage sack containing the fire spirit stones they arduously mined, fuming, "Choke on it!"

However, he realized it was fortunate he had gathered all the fire spirit stones. Those Cloud River Realm members accompanying him had all died in the chaos, with their storage sacks lost. If he hadn't collected them, their efforts would have been wasted.

Curiously, he asked, "That battlefield marking of yours..."

Lu Ye replied indifferently, "Do you know how you can live longer?"

Ying Wuji immediately fell silent.

Looking back, he turned pale, seeing a dense stream formed into a firelight torrent, originating from the volcano crater, sweeping skyward with vast momentum.

The number of Fire Spirit Race members was even greater than he had thought earlier, and those seen now were only the ones who had emerged from underground. There were likely more hidden deep below.

Fortunately, he and Lu Ye had already reached the True Lake Realm, their flying speed much faster than when they were in the Cloud River Realm. Otherwise, they might not have escaped the Fire Spirit Race's pursuit.

Flying forward, their pursuers relentlessly chased them like parasites.

"Notify your Gushan City Pass to prepare for battle!" Lu Ye called.

"Already notified!" How could he need Lu Ye to remind him? He had sent messages to the pass while they were fleeing, hoping the Divine Sea Realm there would take it seriously. Otherwise, Gushan City Pass would face grave danger!

A squad had originally departed from Gushan City Pass to aid them but had since returned, as a small reinforcement would not help the current situation.

After a full four shichen, a magnificent pass finally came into view.

Gushan City Pass, they're here!

The city wasn't large, smaller than the Fire Spirit Race's underground city. Not that Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was stingy, but such a scale was more suitable for defense.

This was consistent across all passes; only by concentrating effective forces could the defense be impregnable.

The city was small, but its walls soared a hundred feet. At this moment, numerous figures stood firm on the walls, staring in their direction, turning pale upon seeing the firelight torrent behind Lu Ye and Ying Wuji.

Chapter 882 - 880: The Battle for Gushan City

Standing on the city wall of Gushan City were numerous figures, led by two people.

One was a burly man, thickset and towering like an iron tower, and the other a graceful woman with exquisite features, wearing her hair in a matron's bun.

These two were none other than the two Divine Sea realm cultivators stationed at Gushan City Pass, Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang.

It was customary for both the Haotian Alliance and the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to have two Divine Sea realm cultivators stationed at a pass. Some critical passes might be equipped with more, but never exceeding five.

Although the Nine Provinces had a considerable number of Divine Sea realm cultivators, there were many passes to guard in both camps. Therefore, each pass couldn't have too many Divine Sea realm cultivators.

Situations like Cangyan Mountain Pass, where one person guards a pass, are rare between the two camps throughout history.

Nian Yuexian's formidable strength is one reason, but another more critical reason is because she is a ghost cultivator, and not just any ghost cultivator.

She indeed has no soldiers under her command, but Gushan City Pass has dared not to infringe even an inch for many years, fearing that without the protection of Gushan City Pass, few in the world would withstand Nian Yuexian's attacks, and definitely not the two at Gushan City Pass.

At this moment, on the city wall of Gushan City, Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang were gazing into the distance, their eyes filled with amazement at the massive flow of fire seen before them.

"Relay the order to prepare for battle!" Wan Zhanggang's voice was like thunder, loud even during normal conversations, and he growled with fierce eyes, "Damn it, where did Ying Wuji drag out this bunch from?"

"The reports indicate that they revived from the underground magma pool. They went to extract Earth Fire and triggered something, maybe remnants from the last era."

"Heh... Fire Spirit Race, it has indeed been a while since we've encountered them."

"You should be cautious, prevent anyone from exploiting the chaos." Tan Yaoniang warned seriously.

Wan Zhanggang naturally knew what she was concerned about. He nodded, "Don't worry, I know what to do!"

While they conversed, Lu Ye and Ying Wuji had already flown in front of Gushan City Pass.

The next moment, they entered and landed on the city wall.

Ying Wuji let out a long breath, the immense sense of crisis gradually dissipating. Being chased by such a group of Fire Spirit Pearls was indeed horrifying.

He turned to look at Lu Ye, only to see his calm demeanor, cold eyes, with no trace of fear or unease.

Ying Wuji was convinced.

A Haotian Alliance cultivator, with a True Lake realm cultivation, so openly breaking into a Ten Thousand Demons Ridge pass without a shred of panic, was likely unique throughout history.

Not to mention seeing this, not even hearing about such a daring act, no one would believe it even if told.

Moreover, he knew, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge was somewhat in the dark here.

Lu Ye came with him, even disguised, yet Gushan City Pass would not treat him as an enemy, unconsciously assuming he was a familiar ally.

Yet he had previously sworn by Heaven's Augury, not to reveal any information about Lu Ye to anyone.

He felt immensely conflicted.

On the city wall of Gushan City Pass, shadows flickered, the atmosphere was tense, and war was imminent.

Though Gushan City Pass often had numerous cultivators stationed, never as many as now. Due to the changes in the Cloud River battlefield, a large number of Cloud River realm cultivators had nowhere to go and came to the frontlines where the two camps clashed, making available manpower plentiful.

On the city wall, magical formations were placed at intervals, each powered by a potent, valuable large Spiritual Artifact.

These formations and Spiritual Artifacts formed the strong defense of Gushan City Pass.

Cangyan Mountain Pass used to have this too, but due to long neglect, most were damaged.

Although this was not Lu Ye's first large-scale battle, none of his past experiences in secret realms compared to the imposing formations of Nine Provinces.

Even though the battle hadn't begun, Gushan City Pass already felt impregnable.

The closest comparable situation was the Soaring Dragon World's Two Worlds City repelling beast tides, but that battlefield was limited to Cloud River realm tier, unable to match today.

From another perspective, if the Haotian Alliance intended to conquer such a pass, it would certainly come at a great cost.

"Roar!" A thunderous roar came from the front, the fire flow drawing closer to within ten miles of Gushan City Pass, with countless Fire Spirit Race members ablaze, warping the void and exuding an overwhelming force seemingly capable of incinerating everything ahead.

"Kill!" A furious shout suddenly came from the city wall.

In the next instant, a cacophony of buzzing arose.

On the city wall, numerous cultivators controlling the magical formations channeled spirit force, lighting up the formation lines. Spirit Stones embedded in the formations were quickly depleted and turned to dust.

Boom...

Boom...

Boom...

Towering beams of light were unleashed from various formations, bridging heaven and earth with astonishment.

The formations activated, triggering the core large Spiritual Artifacts and Magic Artifacts, unleashing devastating attacks upon the approaching Fire Spirit Race.

Lu Ye raised his eyes, observing the countless diverse attacks manifesting their immense power from the city wall.

The net-like attacks engulfed vast areas, slicing all Fire Spirit Race within into pieces.

The beams of light simply pierced through the Fire Spirit Race army, leaving a vacuum wherever they passed, vaporizing those touched by the beams.

Sword Qi and Saber Radiance, like translucent ribbons, cut through even the void.

Lu Ye watched calmly, though his mind was not as composed as his appearance.

Such power, even if a Divine Sea realm came, wouldn't fare well. The varied strengths of the Fire Spirit Race were vastly culled.

Formations often allowed cultivators to exert power beyond their levels, perfect for large-scale wars.

The devastating attacks emerged from the combination of formations and Spiritual Artifacts as cores, which no single cultivator could wield alone. Only through formations could they be activated.

Moreover, each activation consumed tremendous resources, requiring swift replacement of Spirit Stones, or no further power could be unleashed.

Not just that, the formations and core artifacts themselves were prone to damage in the intense vibrations, needing dedicated cultivators to monitor, repair, and replace constantly.

Such formations designed to fend off formidable enemies typically needed a squad to operate seamlessly, with at least one True Lake realm member.

Gushan City's attacks were methodical, ensuring continuous assaults with no gaps, reflecting the coordination among Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators here.

The battle seemed smooth; despite the dense, powerful strikes, the Fire Spirit Race couldn't advance within three miles, facing annihilation.

Soon, the situation changed.

After numerous casualties among the Fire Spirit Race, a powerful aura erupted from within their ranks.

All cultivators felt the terrifying aura changing their expressions.

Because this aura reached Divine Sea realm intensity!

Previously, Ten Thousand Demons Ridge ignored True Lake realm presence among the Fire Spirit Race, but Divine Sea realm was different, not to be dismissed.

Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang too turned serious, sharpening their ocular power to find a distinct figure within the Fire Spirit Race army.

Flames engulfed the Fire Spirit Race's body, rendering it a striking bright orange-yellow, with eyes like twin suns.

After revealing his aura, all Fire Spirit Race members converged towards him, and an incredible scene unfolded.

The various Fire Spirit Race auras swiftly amalgamated, bolstering the Divine Sea realm Fire Spirit's aura.

Though this itself wasn't noteworthy.

What was astonishing was the simultaneous enhancement of other Fire Spirit Race members' auras.

It was as if they suddenly gained strength far beyond their original levels!

Strength itself couldn't increase abruptly, but united, their aura intensified.

"This is..." Wan Zhanggang's face shifted, recalling a brief ancient text, "Harmony and Unity!"

Not a compliment or a description, but a secret technique.

A unique Five Elements Spirit Race secret technique.

Inherent in the Five Elements Spirit Race, adept at numerous mysterious secret skills. Many current human spirit runes originated from studying their techniques.

Harmony and Unity, the most powerful of their techniques, had no direct power but allowed them to merge their auras seamlessly.

Thus, forming one united force, exerting power far beyond individual levels!

The Five Elements Spirit Race's nature made this technique easy, whereas humans struggled.

Humans are individuals, with distinct auras; merging auras is extremely difficult.

Human cultivators could form formations, but required long, frequent practice to coordinate seamlessly.

Compared to the Five Elements Spirit Race, humans were far behind.

"What grudge, what resentment!" Wan Zhanggang sighed, "These guys must be mad!"

Chapter 883 The Might of the Divine Sea

The secret techniques of the Fire Spirit Race are formidable, but the greater the power of the secret technique, the higher the price to be paid.

Interconnectedness indeed allows the Fire Spirit Race to unite their auras and merge from many into one, but in doing so, every Fire Spirit must endure pressure beyond their limits.

At this moment, as they perform this secret technique, many Fire Spirits suddenly burst apart due to their insufficient strength.

Even those Fire Spirits who successfully perform the secret technique suffer severe damage to their vital energy afterward.

Unless it is a desperate situation, the Fire Spirit Race would not use this last-resort technique.

That's why Wan Zhanggang felt so helpless, not understanding why these Fire Spirits were so crazed.

What he didn't know was that, after being sealed for thousands or even longer years, this group of Fire Spirits had already lost their sanity. Any humans they encountered would ignite their intense killing intent.

Otherwise, they wouldn't have relentlessly chased Lu Ye and Ying Wuji all the way here.

The Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit, surrounded by thousands of clansmen, emitted an incredibly intense aura, with the flames on its body blazing brighter and brighter.

Moreover, many True Lake Realm Fire Spirits also formed formations with their clansmen, each one's aura soaring.

Looking out, what was once a disorganized army of Fire Spirits now appeared entirely refreshed; formations made up of varying numbers of Fire Spirits surged continuously towards Gushan City Pass.

From a distance, it looked as if clusters of fireballs, large and small, were approaching the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge line.

On the city walls, the array buzzed continuously, but the effect was no longer as significant as before.

After forming formations, each fireball had at least one, often several, True Lake Realm Fire Spirits at the core, with other clansmen as auxiliaries, substantially increasing their ability to withstand human attacks.

In the fierce offensive, Fire Spirits constantly suffered impacts, getting separated from their clusters and dying on the spot instantly.

Clusters of fireballs were also burst in mid-air, with no Fire Spirit in those formations spared.

However, the Fire Spirit Race's advance suddenly quickened.

Ten miles, five miles, three miles...

No matter the heavy casualties, regardless of the threat of extinction, nothing could hinder the Fire Spirits' resolve and pace for vengeance against humans.

As the Fire Spirits were about to storm Gushan City Pass, a furious shout suddenly rang out: "Activate the array!"

With a buzz, Gushan City Pass shook as array bases placed throughout the city were triggered, consuming a massive amount of Spirit Stones rapidly. A visible light screen swiftly rose, enveloping the entire Gushan City Pass.

The foremost Fire Spirit formations approached within a mile of the city, about to break into the city, but were blocked by the array. The massive fireball formations outside the array crashed into the light screen, causing it to dent in momentarily, but it quickly recovered, ripples spreading from the impact point.

The array here was incomparable to those at the Spirit Stream battlefield and Cloud River battlefield.

The protective arrays at each pass of the two great factions were almost all created by Divine Sea Realm array cultivators, with protection far beyond imagination.

Clusters of fireballs formed by formations were blocked outside the array; no matter how the Fire Spirits attacked, they couldn't break through.

However, Gushan City's offensive did not cease because of this.

The protective array shielded against external attacks, not internal ones; the Fire Spirits were blocked outside, unable to break in, but Gushan City's attacks faced no such hindrance.

In an instant, the Fire Spirits were left to withstand the attacks passively.

This is the cruelty of a siege battle. The defending side occupies the advantageous terrain, undoubtedly holding a massive advantage. For the attackers to gain, they must break the opponent's protective array quickly.

But an array created by a Divine Sea Realm array cultivator is not so easily broken.

Clusters of fireballs continuously slammed into the protective light screen, undaunted by death, but with little success. Instead, in the process, formations were repeatedly broken, leading to severe casualties among the Fire Spirits.

On a part of the city wall, Lu Ye quietly watched.

A sudden idea struck; if he disrupted one of the array bases of Gushan City's protective array at this moment, it would certainly cause immense losses to Gushan City.

Just as the thought crossed his mind, he glimpsed Ying Wuji turning to look his way.

As if their thoughts aligned, Ying Wuji whispered, "Don't even think about it. If you dare make a move, I'll risk the Heaven's Augury's punishment to expose you."

Allowing Lu Ye to infiltrate Gushan City Pass was out of necessity, but if this guy truly harbored any wrongful thoughts, Ying Wuji wouldn't stand by idly.

Now, he only prayed for this battle to end soon, and for Lu Yiye to get lost afterward!

He couldn't stay in Gushan City Pass anymore. Once this was over, if he survived, he'd request an immediate transfer.

"What could I possibly do?" Lu Ye responded blandly.

"You know exactly what," Ying Wuji lowered his voice.

"Relax, I don't want to die yet!"

If he acted here, his identity would be exposed. Certainly, he could inflict losses on Gushan City Pass, but he would also meet a grim fate.

Besides, Lu Ye never intended to act on it; it was just a passing thought.

Ying Wuji relaxed upon seeing that Lu Ye seemingly had no such plans.

Just then, the battlefield shifted again.

The Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit, seeing his clansmen suffering enormous casualties and still unable to break the human formations, prepared to take the field personally.

The formation centered around him was the largest on the entire battlefield. From a distance, it no longer looked like a fireball but more like a blazing sun falling from Nine Heavens!

An overwhelming pressure enough to make everyone's heart race spread out. This blazing sun plummeted from the sky, crashing heavily into the array light screen.

The light screen of the array buckled, unable to bear the weight, causing everyone's hearts to leap into their throats, fearing the moment when the array would shatter.

Fortunately, the array was sturdy enough to withstand the hit.

At the same time, the powers of several arrays atop the city walls activated, bombarding the blazing sun and continuously killing the Fire Spirits forming the formation.

Despite the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit having intentions to avoid, such a massive formation left him helpless.

The relentless bombardment from Gushan City Pass constantly took its toll on the Fire Spirits forming the array. The blazing sun rapidly shrank in size.

Boom, boom, boom...

One side charged ceaselessly, while the other launched relentless bombardments.

"We can't hold it!" Wan Zhanggang had been monitoring the strength of the protective array. Seeing the light screen visibly thin, he realized the array was at its limit.

In a split second, he made a startling decision.

Rather than waiting for the Fire Spirits to break the array, he chose to open it proactively, hoping this would preserve the array's integrity.

With his decision made, orders were immediately dispatched.

The command, issued by the guard token, was instantly relayed to all Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators. All who received the order prepared themselves.

The blazing sun's size had dwindled to less than half, meaning half of the Fire Spirits forming the formation had perished. The remaining half, too, looked utterly drained, unable to hold out much longer.

As the blazing sun descended again, several arrays on the city walls unleashed their powers, striking the blazing sun in unison.

The mighty bombardments further reduced the size of the blazing sun.

At the moment when it was about to crash into the protective array, the light screen suddenly dissipated.

Simultaneously, a streak of light shot up into the sky, Qi and blood boiling around it, charging head-on towards the blazing sun. The robust figure within the streak of light was Wan Zhanggang.

As his name suggested, he chose the path of a physique cultivator. At his level of cultivation, his body was as powerful as a spirit treasure.

This gave him the confidence to confront the blazing sun formation of the Fire Spirits head-on.

In an instant, the blazing sun and the streak of light collided.

In a silent moment, an immense force erupted. A massive shockwave expanded outward, destabilizing the cultivators on the city walls.

Wan Zhanggang roared, his flesh quivering, standing tall in mid-air, both arms raised high. Spirit force surged from his palms, lifting the descending blazing sun.

In that moment, his imposing figure caused every cultivator witnessing the scene to be moved.

Crack...

A faint sound was heard. Wan Zhanggang's body dropped several meters. His eyes widened in rage, Qi and blood churning around him. His skin turned red like cooked shrimp.

"Get lost!" With a roar, Wan Zhanggang thrust upward, followed by continuous punches. Qi and blood, and spirit force condensed into punch shadows, relentlessly striking the blazing sun.

At the same time, the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit within the blazing sun activated a secret technique, aiming at Wan Zhanggang.

The violent clash of powers and the explosion of light made it impossible for the witnessing cultivators to keep their eyes on the fight.

Boom... The sound of something shattering and the noise of something falling were heard.

When the dust settled, and everyone looked again, they were stunned.

The blazing sun had been shattered. The Fire Spirits forming the formation around the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit were all but dead. Only the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit survived, but now he was entangled by a graceful figure, unable to escape.

Tan Yaoniang had joined the fray.

Though her cultivation was not as high as Wan Zhanggang's, she was still a Divine Sea Realm cultivator. Wielding a longsword that shimmered like water, she unleashed Sword Qi, continuously clashing with the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit, locked in a stalemate.

Elsewhere in Gushan City, Wan Zhanggang knelt on one knee, spewing blood, looking utterly exhausted. His arms were charred black, clearly suffering considerable damage in the previous encounter.

His aura was chaotic, and his Qi and blood were thin – a truly miserable state.

His body swayed as if anyone could take his life.

Dozens of meters away, in a patch of shadow, a figure unnoticed by anyone stood silently, eyes fixed on Wan Zhanggang, with a gaze calm as still water.

If not for years of encounters revealing Wan Zhanggang's true nature, she might have been fooled by him.

But through years of battles, they knew each other well. While others saw Wan Zhanggang in a wretched state, she knew much of it was an act.

Wan Zhanggang was indeed injured, but not to such a severe extent!

He was luring her into making a move.

#### Chapter 884 Being Targeted

The volcano erupted, and the Fire Spirit Tribe came out in full force. With such a grand momentum, how could Nian Yuexian, as a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, possibly not notice?

Chasing all the way to this place, she hid within Gushan City, quietly watching the situation change.

She knew well enough that Wan Zhanggang was aware of her presence here, so he intentionally put on such a pitiful facade to provoke her killing intent.

Over the years, she had infiltrated here many times trying to assassinate Wan Zhanggang, but never succeeded. The closest she had come was just severely injuring him.

Their hatred had spanned decades, and she had previously acted decisively at any slight opportunity. But today, though heaven seemed to bestow her a fortunate chance, she dared not act rashly.

Because she could sense that hidden danger.

An adept ghost cultivator not only needs to master the Path of Concealment and the Array Path but also have keen senses for crisis.

The first two allow a ghost cultivator to more easily ambush their target, but without the latter, no matter how strong, a ghost cultivator wouldn't live long.

Her senses for danger were extremely sharp.

Although she couldn't pinpoint the source of that faint sense of crisis, she understood one thing: if she acted now, there would be no good outcome.

Wan Zhanggang ordered the protective array at the mountain pass to be dismantled, firstly to preserve the array's integrity and minimize losses, and secondly to lure the enemy.

Compared to the obvious threat of the Fire Spirit Tribe, it was those hiding in the shadows waiting to strike, like her, that Wan Zhanggang was most wary of.

Wan Zhanggang could skillfully adapt to circumstances, truly cunning, but she was no fool either.

After waiting a while and sensing no killing intent, Wan Zhanggang sighed, realizing his plan had failed.

That woman's vigilance was beyond imagination. Though he saw no flaw in his actions, she still remained hidden, waiting for an opportunity, and he had no good solution for this.

Slowly standing up, he looked up at the battlefield in the sky, seeing Tan Yaoniang fiercely battling the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit Tribe cultivator. With a slight crouch, he shot into the sky, the ground shattering below him, and he joined the battle instantly.

With two Divine Sea Realm cultivators joining forces, the strongest of the Fire Spirit Tribe quickly fell to a disadvantage. Yet, even so, killing him wasn't easy for Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang.

Spirit force surged, soul power overflowed, and the three figures clashed and intertwined in the air. Even the aftermath was terrifyingly powerful.

Divine Sea Realm cultivators had their battlefield, and others had theirs.

When the protective array at Gushan City Pass was dismantled, a large number of Fire Spirit Tribe members rushed into the pass. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators didn't defend the walls against the invaders since that would cause greater casualties. They chose to open gaps to let the Fire Spirit Tribe into the city, reducing defensive pressure while also allowing the city's cultivators to utilize tactical advantages.

Gushan City Pass instantly plunged into chaos.

Lu Ye was also fighting, cooperating with Ying Wuji and a group of nearby Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, their blades flashing continuously.

But as they fought, both of them realized something was wrong.

The number of Fire Spirit Tribe members gathering around them showed no sign of decreasing; instead, more and more kept coming.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators cooperating with them were under immense pressure and fell one by one. In less than the time it takes to drink half a cup of tea, there was no one left around them but each other.

"Lu... Brother Niu, what's going on?" Ying Wuji was puzzled, taking a brief moment to glance around. No other position was facing such fierce attacks.

It was as if the Fire Spirit Tribe was fixated on the two of them.

Lu Ye also had no idea what had gone wrong, but it definitely had to do with their entering that underground cave. Otherwise, such a situation wouldn't make sense.

But all they did in the underground cave was collect some fire spirit stones and items carved from fire spirit stones, nothing particularly notable.

Or perhaps... it was related to that stone platform under the volcano?

That platform had the ability to test talents, but its primary purpose should've been to open the gateway to the underground cave. Everyone had tried using the platform to test their talents; if not for that, Lu Ye wouldn't have accidentally opened the gateway.

It was a puzzling situation, but being targeted by the Fire Spirit Tribe was an undeniable fact.

"Spread out!" Lu Ye wasn't sure if the problem was with himself, Ying Wuji, or both.

If the problem was with Ying Wuji, there was no reason for him to stay and suffer alongside him.

As soon as he finished speaking, he ruthlessly charged forward, slashing a path through the Fire Spirit Tribe.

"You bastard!" Ying Wuji cursed angrily, not expecting Lu Ye to act in such a manner, seemingly using him as bait.

Fortunately, Ying Wuji had strong foundations and reacted quickly. Seeing Lu Ye charge out, he also rushed in another direction. He faced numerous attacks along the way, his spirit force disrupted and blood Qi shaken.

The problem wasn't solely with Ying Wuji, or not entirely with him.

Even after separating, a large number of Fire Spirit Tribe members continued to chase Lu Ye. It confirmed that anyone who entered that cave was targeted, impacting both him and Ying Wuji.

But extracting some fire spirit stones shouldn't have provoked such a vengeful response from the Fire Spirit Tribe.

Then again, these Fire Spirit Tribe members appeared irrational. Their behavior couldn't be assessed by normal logic.

Like this battle: if the Divine Sea Realm Fire Spirit Tribe cultivator had any sense left, they would've ordered a retreat long ago.

Lu Ye didn't know what normal Fire Spirit Tribe members were like, but this group was clearly abnormal.

The city was in chaos, with many cultivators engaging the Fire Spirit Tribe. Lu Ye moved swiftly, never lingering too long in one place to avoid being surrounded.

This wandering approach allowed him to persevere despite the danger.

In such a battlefield, True Lake Realm cultivators had a higher survival rate. The highest casualties were among the Cloud River Realm cultivators, while the Spirit Stream Realm cultivators, just there to gain battle merits and experience, were only useful in small groups, avoiding becoming a burden.

The Boulder Mountain Saber's blade was wreathed in fire, enhanced by Double-Sharpness spirit runes. The heavy, pitch-black saber became incredibly sharp, slicing through Fire Spirit Tribe members one after another.

Suddenly, his heart was struck with a sense of alarm, a massive threat approaching.

When Lu Ye looked ahead, he saw a fierce Fire Spirit Tribe member charging at him, eyes like torches and expression manic. The aura emanating from him was violent, unmistakably a True Lake Realm Fire Spirit Tribe member.

From the strength of his aura, he seemed to be at least True Lake Level 7.

Against such a formidable foe, Lu Ye had no intention of fighting head-on.

Having not long ascended to True Lake Realm, he hadn't yet fought other True Lake Realm cultivators and didn't know his limits. But he knew a True Lake Level 7 Fire Spirit member was beyond his capacity.

Previously, when encountering strong Fire Spirit Tribe members, he had led them to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge True Lake cultivators.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge True Lake cultivators were considerate. Upon realizing he was only True Lake Level 1, they intercepted his pursuers without him having to call for help.

It saved him a lot of trouble.

As soon as Lu Ye noticed this strong Fire Spirit Tribe cultivator, the enemy was already close, punching fiercely at him.

Flames burned on the enemy's fist, scorching the void.

Lu Ye raised his saber to block the attack, but as the strike neared him, its force abruptly doubled.

The initially fierce aura of the opponent surged even more.

Lu Ye's pupils contracted.

This wasn't a Level 7; he was a Level 9 Fire Spirit member!

These Fire Spirit members might have lost their sanity, but their deep-rooted battle instincts remained. Feigning weakness to catch the enemy off guard was a common tactic in a fight.

By the time Lu Ye realized this, it was too late.

The Boulder Mountain Saber, held horizontally in front, buzzed with a harsh sound, the heavy blade bending under the tremendous force of the punch.

A newly formed Defense Spirit Rune on Lu Ye's chest shattered instantly.

The violent energy broke through the curved saber, slamming into his chest.

His blood Qi surged wildly, his heartbeat seemed to pause momentarily, and his body flew into the air like a broken kite.

In mid-air, several Fire Spirit members charged at him with ferocious grins.

Regaining stability, Lu Ye swung the Boulder Mountain Saber, cutting down the opportunistic Fire Spirit members.

Landing heavily, blood surged up his throat, and he couldn't hold back, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

Just one punch almost severely injured him. If not for the Defense Spirit Rune absorbing part of the attack's power, he might not have survived.

But the danger was far from over.

As he landed, Lu Ye saw the powerful Fire Spirit member closing in again.

Facing such an adversary, fleeing with his back would mean certain death.

But confronting such a foe head-on, what were his chances of survival?

Though unorthodox, Lu Ye's only hope now was for the True Lake Realm cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to quickly notice his predicament and come to his aid.

However, from what he sensed, he was already surrounded by Fire Spirit members, with no sign of any Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

This time... he was in real trouble!

He might have to use that precious item to save his life.

The pain of his injuries was less daunting compared to the heartache. That treasure was a special reward from Heaven's Augury when he returned from the Unparalleled Continent, worth a full two hundred thousand battle merits!

Using it here felt like such a waste.

Moreover, once he used it, it would draw everyone's attention, possibly exposing his identity.

Thus, unless it was a life-and-death crisis, he couldn't use it lightly.

Chapter 885 Exposure

Gushan City Pass, the battle was in full swing.

Members of the Fire Spirit Race were being slaughtered continuously. Although this race, which had been sealed for countless years, had a vast number of members, they were scattered and disorganized due to their lost sanity. Regardless of their numbers, they were still just a mob.

On the other side, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, though caught off guard and unaccustomed to battle in Gushan City Pass for many years, displayed superior combat skills, making the comparison stark.

The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge side also suffered casualties, but what war is without death? Their defensive line remained stable, ensuring the safety of Gushan City, and the number of casualties was within an acceptable range.

This kind of war might not be a bad thing for Gushan City Pass.

At the very least, it served as a training ground, allowing many cultivators who had romanticized views of the battlefield to witness the harsh realities of war. If the Haotian Alliance army attacked next time, they would undoubtedly perform better.

After the initial chaos, many Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators steadied their minds. The strong protected the weak, and the weak grouped together to fend off enemies. In the sky, Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang teamed up to fight the Divine Sea Realm of the Fire Spirit Race, locked in a fierce battle.

In the shadow under a section of the city wall, a figure lay quietly in wait. Though aware of the traps set by the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, a skilled person with a daring heart would not leave easily.

She continued waiting for the right moment...

But as she waited, she noticed something strange. About thirty zhang away in a battle group, a True Lake Level 1 cultivator wearing a mask was surrounded by the Fire Spirit Race, led by one emanating the aura of a True Lake Level 9.

That person was desperately fighting back, but the situation was perilous. It wouldn't be long before they fell.

Why is this kid here?

Despite being a strong Divine Sea cultivator, Nian Yuexian was as shocked as if she had seen a ghost, her thoughts momentarily scattered.

Upon seeing Lu Ye, Ying Wuji immediately recognized his identity. If not for Lu Ye showing him the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge battlefield marking, Ying Wuji would have been convinced otherwise.

A mask only served to hide the truth in plain sight!

If Ying Wuji could recognize Lu Ye, how could she, a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, have mistaken him?

Moreover, through her Mental Consciousness, Nian Yuexian clearly sensed that familiar aura and spirit force, and with that long black blade... who else could it be but Lu Ye?

But no matter how she thought about it, she couldn't understand why Lu Ye was in Gushan City Pass.

Did he sneak in during the chaos? Impossible. Such a chaotic situation wouldn't allow someone like Lu Ye to break in, even if he had the capability. The Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators weren't blind and would have verified his identity.

As for sneaking in, that was even more impossible. If a pass could be infiltrated so easily, the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge defense would have been in shambles long ago.

Especially with recent enhanced security measures in Gushan City Pass, thanks to her efforts. She could sneak in and hide safely due to her high skill, but it didn't mean other ghost cultivators could do the same.

Besides, Lu Ye was a combat cultivator.

So, she never expected to see Lu Ye in Gushan City Pass, fighting the Fire Spirit Race so openly, struggling to cope.

A True Lake Level 9 Fire Spirit was beyond his handling capabilities, let alone the others surrounding him.

This kid is doomed!

In an instant, Nian Yuexian judged the situation.

Guarding Cangyan Mountain Pass alone for decades, she had severed all ties with the outside world. Only one person could reach her.

For anyone else, Nian Yuexian wouldn't care about their fate.

But watching Lu Ye die in front of her...

In the Fire Spirit Race encirclement, Lu Ye bled again. His sword-wielding right hand was cut open.

The cultivation gap was too wide. He was indeed no match. Any normal True Lake Level 1 would have died countless times already. He endured only through his strong foundation but was nearing his limit.

With a sigh, he knew he couldn't protect that treasure.

As for hiding his identity after using it, there was no point. Once used, it would draw all attention, and he would have to flee immediately.

Just as he was about to use the treasure, a sharp blade glow suddenly attacked from the shadows. The blade flash circled around Lu Ye's position then disappeared, showing the attacker's precise control of their power.

As the blade flash vanished, the surrounding Fire Spirit Race members, including the True Lake Level 9 leader, were all frozen in place.

In a daze, Lu Ye saw the Fire Spirit Race cut in half, with molten blood burning around.

Who is it!

Lu Ye was slightly shocked.

He hadn't detected any sign of an attacker. The nearest Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivator was dozens of zhang away, but someone had clearly helped him secretly.

That blade glow... it looked like a flying sword?

To kill so many Fire Spirit Race members with one strike, along with a True Lake Level 9, the attacker had to be a Divine Sea Realm cultivator!

Wan Zhanggang and Tan Yaoniang were fighting the Fire Spirit Race Divine Sea in midair; they couldn't possibly have helped him.

Could there be a hidden Divine Sea sword cultivator in the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge?

Why hide?

What does he want?

Almost as soon as this thought crossed Lu Ye's mind, two powerful auras suddenly rose within Gushan City Pass.

Like waking dragons, the intense pressure spread everywhere.

Soon after, a fierce battle erupted hundreds of zhang away. Spirit force exploded, collapsing buildings instantly, accompanied by the sound of swords clashing.

In the sky, Wan Zhanggang sensed something and looked down. Below, three figures were intertwined in battle. One of them, with captivating charm, had a tear mole under her icy eyes, adding to her allure.

That figure, he would recognize even in ashes!

"Nian Yuexian!" Wan Zhanggang roared, "Since you're here, don't think of leaving!"

As expected, this woman had been hiding, waiting for her chance to strike.

Knowing that a large number of Fire Spirit Race were erupting from Cangyan Mountain, he had sent messages to nearby passes, requesting help both to guard against Nian Yuexian and to set a trap.

Feigning weakness and failing to lure her out, he continued his defense with Tan Yaoniang.

But Nian Yuexian remained hidden, frustrating him.

Patiently, he let his allies search for her.

Now, they had found her.

He didn't realize, if not for aiding Lu Ye during his life-threatening moment, Nian Yuexian wouldn't have exposed herself. After helping, she quickly moved but was still discovered.

Because Wan Zhanggang's two allies were ghost cultivators!

Only ghost cultivators best understood ghost cultivators. Using them against Nian Yuexian was an ideal choice.

"Leave it to you!" Wan Zhanggang told Tan Yaoniang before diving down.

The Fire Spirit Divine Sea, heavily injured by their combined attacks, could be handled by Tan Yaoniang alone, just needing time.

On the battlefield below, Nian Yuexian's position was revealed. Graceful as a butterfly, she fought one against two, without losing ground, pushing her adversaries to the limit.

Ghost cultivators excelled at stealth and ambush, not direct combat. Such direct confrontation weakened their full potential by one or two levels.

But Nian Yuexian wasn't just a ghost cultivator.

She was also a sword cultivator!

This dual mastery gave her the confidence to guard a pass alone for decades.

She could stealthily ambush or fight head-on. Across the Nine Provinces, she was the only one mastering both paths to such an extent.

With sword light sharp and Sword Qi dense, she tore the Void.

Under normal circumstances, she would teach these Ten Thousand Demons Ridge ghost cultivators a lesson. But now was not the time to stay.

As Wan Zhanggang charged, she controlled her sword, transforming into a streak of sword light, fleeing.

"Wishful thinking!"

Wan Zhanggang roared.

Such an opportunity might not come again in decades. More terrifying than a thief was the constant worry of being targeted.

Being watched by such a powerful ghost-sword cultivator for decades, the pressure on Wan Zhanggang was immense.

So, today, he had to eliminate her!

Blood Qi burning, like a meteorite, he smashed into her escape path.

The fierce sword light shattered, revealing Nian Yuexian's figure. As she groaned, another blade flash slashed out.

The falling figure was cut away, blood spraying in midair.

In that moment of exchange, both had brushed with death at Ghost Gate, showing the intense danger.

Undeterred, Wan Zhanggang followed, surrounded by a blood glow, shouting, "Nian Yuexian, you will die today, I promise!"

Behind him, two ghostly figures followed closely.

The three Ten Thousand Demons Ridge Divine Sea cultivators chased together!

This twist stunned the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators, who watched wide-eyed. At the edge of the battlefield, Ying Wuji leaned white-faced against a wall, shivering like a quail in winter without a nest.

He was lucky to survive. If the Divine Sea battle had been closer, he would have been killed by the aftermath!

Chapter 886 Hidden Move

Ying Wuji narrowly escaped death, and so did Lu Ye!

At this moment, he stood on the spot, looking at the three figures quickly disappearing into the distance, his expression solemn.

Just now, he was helped by a strong person in secret, escaping a life-and-death crisis. He instinctively thought it was a strong warrior from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge.

But at this moment, how could he not know that the one who helped was not someone from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, but Nian Yuexian, who was hiding in the dark.

There's no need to delve into why the Mountain Pass Chief is here; it must be because the commotion here was too big and attracted her.

He learned some things about Nian Yuexian from Second Senior Sister, and Lu Ye knew she was an extremely powerful Ghost Cultivator.

For a Ghost Cultivator like her, if she really wanted to conceal herself, it would be difficult for Ten Thousand Demons Ridge to find her traces.

But at this moment, she was already exposed.

Reflecting on the recent events, Lu Ye immediately understood that he had implicated her!

Nian Yuexian must have recognized him, saw him trapped and assisted in secret, resulting in the Divine Sea Realm cultivators of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge discovering the flaw.

He turned to look around, and the battle situation here had basically stabilized. The strongest Divine Sea Realm of the Fire Spirit Race was heavily injured, entangled by Tan Yaoniang, unable to escape easily.

Other members of the Fire Spirit Race also suffered great casualties, and it was only a matter of time before Ten Thousand Demons Ridge achieved the final victory.

With chaos and noise all around, almost everyone's attention was attracted by the commotion caused by the Divine Sea Realm cultivators. Seeing that no one was paying attention to him, Lu Ye hastily activated the Concealment Spirit Runes to enhance himself and swiftly fled towards the city outskirts.

Nian Yuexian is indeed powerful, but fighting three at once, she might not end up well.

He must catch up to see the situation. Although the battle of the Divine Sea Realm is too far beyond him, Nian Yuexian was ultimately implicated by him; he couldn't just leave her alone.

Usually, entering and exiting Gushan City Pass wouldn't be easy, but now that the protective array was closed and the city was in chaos, who would think a Haotian Alliance cultivator would secretly leave?

Everything went smoothly. Until he was far from the noisy battlefield, Lu Ye then deactivated the Concealment Spirit Runes, and wings spread out from his back, turning into a flame of light, chasing in the direction of the battle's traces.

From the direction Nian Yuexian was fleeing, it seemed she was heading towards Cangyan Mountain Pass. However, the two passes were a thousand miles apart, and even for a strong Divine Sea Realm cultivator flying, it would take some time.

Moreover, Cangyan Mountain Pass was empty; even if Nian Yuexian returned there, she would still have no allies.

In such a situation, her best choice would actually be to flee towards the Haotian Alliance pass near Cangyan Mountain Pass; only by doing so might she be met by the Divine Sea Realm of Haotian Alliance.

Yet, Lu Ye didn't know why she didn't do this.

The most likely reason is that she had no ties with the nearby allies, or the enemy sealed her escape routes, forcing her to flee towards Cangyan Mountain Pass.

As he advanced several miles further, intense spirit force fluctuations came from that direction, with powerful ripples sweeping all around like waves.

Lu Ye's heart sank.

The dreaded situation had happened.

Nian Yuexian couldn't escape; logically speaking, as a sword cultivator, her speed should be unparalleled, and it shouldn't be impossible for her to escape.

Since she was caught up now, it indicates the enemy must have used some secret technique.

Recalling the scene of Wan Zhanggang wrapped in a blood light chasing out earlier, Lu Ye found he still underestimated this guy's determination to kill Nian Yuexian. That blood light wrapped around Wan Zhanggang must be some sort of speed-enhancing secret technique undoubtedly.

He had seen Ying Wuji use a similar secret technique in Great Wilderness Mountain before, except Ying Wuji used it to escape!

Feeling heavy-hearted, he approached the battlefield carefully, restrained his breath, concealed his tracks, and looked up to see four figures fighting fiercely in the sky. A sea of swords stood like clouds and mist, forming a towering sword array, with flying swords shuttling back and forth. In that sword sea, Nian Yuexian's figure stood proudly.

Wan Zhanggang, strong and vigorous, and two other Ghost Cultivators continuously attacked, yet were forced back by the fierce flying swords. Each Divine Sea Realm cultivator was blood-stained, evidently injured by the flying swords.

Lu Ye couldn't tell what kind of sword array Nian Yuexian had deployed, but such a powerful sword array undoubtedly consumes considerable resources, especially as there were traces of blood at the corner of Nian Yuexian's mouth; she must be injured too.

The situation seemed dire!

Nian Yuexian's current state clearly was defending rather than attacking. The opponents trying to break through the sword array's defense weren't easy, but without the sword array's shelter, she would likely face dire consequences.

In such a scene, the opponent only needs to slowly wear her down. Sooner or later, the sword array will collapse, and then will be her death!

Must think of a way.

Not to mention Nian Yuexian is currently his superior, but she exposed herself because she saved him before, and Lu Ye couldn't just watch her meet her end.

Before saving himself, Nian Yuexian must have known what consequences it would trigger, yet she still helped...

The battle in the sky was fierce; Lu Ye no longer hesitated and took Amber out of the spirit beast sack, then summoned Yiyi. Simultaneously, he raised both hands and pressed them onto their bodies.

With spirit force activation, a spirit rune simultaneously formed on the spirit and the tiger.

In the crater of Cangyan Mountain, Lu Ye finally illuminated the spirit rune he had been yearning for months, only to find it wasn't what he had expected—a Void Spirit Rune—but rather a somewhat useless spirit rune.

Pseudo-Might!

This spirit rune had no substantial effect, just that it could simulate strong pressure using its power; the stronger the pressure depended on the amount of spirit force injected.

This spirit rune couldn't grant Lu Ye any improvement in strength. Coupled with his unmet expectations, he thought it was utterly useless at the time.

But in the current situation, fighting head-on with the enemy isn't realistic; the gap in strength is evident. A True Lake Level 1 cultivator intervening in a Divine Sea Realm battle could very well end up dead.

Whether he could repel the enemy depended on whether this spirit rune was effective.

Lu Ye had never used this spirit rune before; its potential effect was unknown. At this moment, he could only hope it worked.

Lu Ye briefly explained the spirit rune's purpose to Yiyi and Amber, and they immediately understood his intention.

Having spent so much time together, they already had perfect telepathy.

Amber immediately turned and ran in one direction, Yiyi also dove underground, following close to Amber's side.

This position is too close to activate Pseudo-Might's power, making it easy to be seen through. Only by running further, where the enemy can't discern the truth, could this spirit rune have a miraculous effect.

After Amber and Yiyi left, Lu Ye continued to sneak forward.

Under normal circumstances, a True Lake Realm cultivator trying to approach a Divine Sea Realm would have exposed their tracks long ago, but with the fierce battle of four in the sky, who would have spare Heart Power to care about the surroundings?

Hence, it gave him an opportunity.

At this moment, a shout came from the sky: "I'll break the array, you two find the opportunity!"

It was Wan Zhanggang becoming impatient.

He couldn't help but be impatient. Despite knowing that slowly wearing down Nian Yuexian would bring dire consequences to her, too much delay could result in Nian Yuexian signaling for help, and warriors from Haotian Alliance arriving quickly.

After paying a huge price to trap this woman here, failing to kill her now wouldn't present such an opportunity again.

So someone had to break Nian Yuexian's sword array.

He, being a physique cultivator and the one leading this battle, was the obvious choice.

"Be careful!" a Ghost Cultivator from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge warned.

Wan Zhanggang roared as his blood Qi seemed to burn, violently charging into the sword array.

The sounds of swords breaking through the air were incessant, sword flashes crisscrossed brutally, and even a physique cultivator like Wan Zhanggang in the Divine Sea Realm found it hard to resist the sword cultivator's fierce killing power.

During the charge, blood splattered around him, wounds accumulated.

He clenched his teeth, refusing to retreat, his whole being like a big sun, crashing into the sword array.

The sword array's power exploded, slicing his flesh, yet as he approached, the supposed orderly sword flashes grew chaotic.

The two Ghost Cultivators wouldn't miss such an opportunity, attacking from the sides.

In the sword array, Nian Yuexian's eyes flashed coldly. She ignored the two attacking Ghost Cultivators, gathering all her strength, the endless sword light suddenly focused into one, slashing horizontally at Wan Zhanggang.

Determined to perish together with Wan Zhanggang!

Seeing her so resolute, Wan Zhanggang's eyelids couldn't help but twitch.

The two Ghost Cultivators attacking Nian Yuexian couldn't help but split, one drawing closer to Wan Zhanggang to help him resist the sword's power.

At this moment, the Heaven-shocking Sword Aura split into two.

"Not good!" Wan Zhanggang uttered lowly, realizing Nian Yuexian's intention.

Perishing together was merely a guise; her real target was one of the Ghost Cultivators.

The sword light fell, and the four figures became panic-stricken.

Wan Zhanggang and the Ghost Cultivator beside him barely resisted the sword aura's power, their wounded bodies growing even more miserable, with the Ghost Cultivator beside him groaning.

As for the other Ghost Cultivator, he narrowly escaped but was gravely injured, sweating in fear.

With one strike, Nian Yuexian injured three teamed-up Divine Sea Realm cultivators from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge; her strength was evident.

However...

This was all she could do!

After that strike, Nian Yuexian's clothes were drenched in blood, her figure like a broken kite, plummeting from the sky, her face pale as paper.

"Die!" Wan Zhanggang roared, ignoring his severe injuries, violently charging at Nian Yuexian, throwing a punch mixed with spirit force and blood Qi.

Facing such a punch, Nian Yuexian sensed the danger but had no strength left to block it.

Seeing the imminent resolution of this decades-long enemy, Wan Zhanggang's peripheral vision caught a burning figure suddenly darting in.

Snatching Nian Yuexian's body, a pair of flaming wings spread out, attempting to flee.

The fist shadow hit empty space, but its resulting ripples, like a fierce storm, impacted the suddenly appearing figure, making him wobble.

Wan Zhanggang laughed angrily, because the figure that suddenly came out was merely a True Lake Level 1 cultivator!

## Chapter 887 Twin Flying Phoenixes

Consciousness drifted. In Nian Yuexian's blurred vision, an indistinct face came into focus. Despite her effort, she couldn't see clearly, but the resolute expression perfectly matched a scene from her memory.

In a daze, it seemed like she had returned to decades ago.

At that time, someone had also rescued her from danger like this, holding her in their arms. The warmth of that moment had lingered in her heart for decades, never forgotten.

She gently reached out a hand, trying to touch that blurry face, as if she had truly returned to those years.

"Wow..." Suddenly, a mouthful of blood sprayed out, drenching Nian Yuexian's beautiful face. Her pupils contracted abruptly.

The dream was interrupted...

Decades ago, after that person saved her, they killed all around. Her enemies, whom she could not contend with, were as fragile as paper in his hands, capable of suppressing an era.

Decades later, the person who rescued her in a similar crisis was merely at True Lake Level 1...

Her other hand, which had loosened its grip on the sword hilt, suddenly clenched tight. She attempted to activate her spirit force, but the excruciating pain from all over her body made her groan softly, and the strength she had just gathered dissipated mostly.

"Courting death!" Wan Zhanggang roared, throwing another punch. But this punch was much weaker than the previous one.

The prior punch was a premeditated strike, while this one was hastily delivered.

Moreover, although Nian Yuexian was severely injured, Wan Zhanggang himself was also heavily wounded. The sword array was not something easy to break.

But it was enough. In his perception, Nian Yuexian had almost lost the ability to resist, and the True Lake Level 1 who had appeared out of nowhere could not possibly withstand this blow.

Even a hasty strike from a Divine Sea Realm cultivator wasn't something a True Lake cultivator could block.

However, in the next moment, Wan Zhanggang witnessed a scene he would never forget.

Lu Ye, who was fleeing hastily, seemed to sense the crisis behind him. He turned around in a rush, holding his long saber in front of him, pouring his entire spirit force into the blade.

The dark Boulder Mountain Saber ignited. In the next instant, the fiery spirit force enveloping the Boulder Mountain Saber spread out like a living entity, twisting and transforming into countless Yin-Yang Dual Origins, quickly fitting together and outlining a formation.

In the blink of an eye, a circular spirit rune formed with the Boulder Mountain Saber at its center. The complexity of this spirit rune surpassed even that of the Void.

Lu Ye had spent considerable time at the volcano crater of Cangyan Mountain, and aside from the Pseudo-Might rune, he had unlocked another six runes, each requiring dozens of Talent Tree leaves to bear.

You could say he had hit the jackpot after three years of inactivity.

He had meticulously studied the specific effects of these seven new runes, but had not tested them himself due to being with Ying Wuji and others during this time.

But at this moment, the only means he could employ were one of these runes.

Moon Return!

This was the core rune of the anti-array, capable of reflecting the enemy's attack to a certain extent, especially effective against magic and spells that attack from a distance.

Though not as effective when used alone compared to within an array, it was still a means to turn the tide.

Moreover, to increase the rune's stability, Lu Ye specifically used the Boulder Mountain Saber as the carrier for Moon Return, ensuring it wouldn't shatter upon contact.

The fist shadow formed of blood Qi and spirit force struck the rune. The fierce and unstoppable force swept over.

Lu Ye's heart was in his throat, his spirit force surging wildly into the Moon Return rune to maintain its stability.

The Boulder Mountain Saber emitted a strained sound. Fortunately, he had upgraded it to a Magic Artifact level with help from Feathered Master. Otherwise, the saber might have shattered under this strike.

Lu Ye felt as though he was standing before a tsunami capable of destroying everything. Under intense focus, the Moon Return rune did not shatter immediately.

This calmed him.

The rune, which required dozens of leaves to bear, truly was extraordinary. As Wan Zhanggang's attack landed, he could clearly sense the rune's function activating swiftly, reflecting part of the attack back to nullify some of the fist shadow's power.

In that brief moment, which felt like an eternity, the Moon Return rune shattered!

The gap in their strengths was too vast. Even though the Moon Return rune had performed a miracle, it couldn't truly save Lu Ye from danger.

Fortunately, Lu Ye had foreseen this. He quickly constructed Defense Spirit Runes before him. In the blink of an eye, three layers of runes appeared in succession.

Yet, the Defense runes couldn't withstand Wan Zhanggang's attack. As they shattered, just when Lu Ye was about to use his last resort, a longsword suddenly gleamed, slicing through the fearsome fist shadow.

Lu Ye quickly looked down, seeing Nian Yuexian in his arms with unfocused eyes, on the verge of passing out from her severe injuries.

The earlier strike had been a reflexive counterattack.

This wouldn't do. Although he had other life-saving methods, they could only protect himself. His speed was far inferior to a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, meaning Nian Yuexian would undoubtedly die.

Yiyi and Amber hadn't made a move yet. The time was too short; they likely hadn't reached their designated positions, so relying on them for rescue was unrealistic.

At this critical juncture, he had to take a gamble.

"Master, don't resist!" Seeing Wan Zhanggang about to launch another strike, Lu Ye steeled himself, grabbed Nian Yuexian's hand, and in the next instant, their fingers interlocked. Raising his Boulder Mountain Saber, he stabbed forward.

The dazed Nian Yuexian didn't know what Lu Ye was doing, but she could sense his anxiety and sincerity. Despite her instinctive resistance, she didn't pull away.

A sharp pain in the back of her hand, as the Boulder Mountain Saber pierced through their clasped hands.

Blood flowed, mixing together. At Lu Ye's mental command, the blood transformed into a crimson glow, climbing up their hands like it had a life of its own, swiftly forming a small spirit rune.

The rune design, though miniature, resembled the shining rune tattoo from his master, looking like a pair of wings.

At this moment, the wings appeared on the backs of their hands.

The wing on Lu Ye's hand was the left, while the wing on Nian Yuexian's hand was the right.

Twin Flying Phoenixes!

Spirit runes came in many forms: standard runes like Defense and Sharpness, divine runes like Bewitchment driven by mental consciousness.

If strictly classified, Twin Flying Phoenixes would be a blood rune, as it required blood to activate.

Previous Bloodstain Spirit Runes utilized by Lu Ye could also be considered a type of blood rune.

A corresponding rune to Twin Flying Phoenixes was also unlocked.

Telepathy.

Twin Flying Phoenixes was a blood rune, and Telepathy was a divine rune. Both were extraordinary and were two of the seven new runes Lu Ye had recently unlocked.

They could be used separately or together, making them the most unique runes derived from his Talent Tree, seemingly able to combine perfectly.

Telepathy allowed two people to connect mentally, requiring absolute trust as once established, no secrets remained between them.

If Telepathy connected minds, then Twin Flying Phoenixes connected bodies.

The two people marked with the rune shared everything physically!

The moment this rune was formed, Lu Ye clearly sensed the terrifying depth of the woman in his arms, and more acutely, her severe injuries.

It was worse than it appeared.

Instantly, Lu Ye felt chest tightness and shortness of breath. His already injured body felt much more gravely harmed.

A sudden gust of wind signaled Wan Zhanggang's relentless advance, hurling another fist from close range.

Lu Ye raised his saber to strike. In that instant, Wan Zhanggang looked as if he had seen a ghost, for the power in Lu Ye's strike was beyond what a True Lake Level 1 cultivator could muster.

As the saber and fist collided, Wan Zhanggang was pushed back. The Boulder Mountain Saber emitted a clear sound, showing several visible cracks along its blade that had fought alongside Lu Ye since Spirit Stream Level 3.

The trembling blade seemed likely to shatter with one more strike.

Moreover, the flesh on Lu Ye's right arm burst open, blood gushing out.

By leveraging Twin Flying Phoenixes, he had delivered a strike beyond his own cultivation, causing his body to suffer as a consequence.

While forced back, another ghost cultivator attacked from the flank.

Among the two ghost cultivators, one was heavily injured by Nian Yuexian and almost out of the fight. But the other was still combat-ready!

Lu Ye, gripping his saber, fixed his cold gaze on the elusive ghost cultivator, suppressing his ailments, and pouring his spirit force into the Boulder Mountain Saber.

The dark long saber sang, as if bidding a final farewell to its master.

"Let me!" A cool voice unexpectedly sounded in Lu Ye's ear.

Looking down, he found Nian Yuexian's clear eyes meeting his, their complex expression filled with myriad emotions.

In just a brief span, she had undergone an experience beyond even the understanding of a Divine Sea Realm cultivator like herself.

Though aware of Lu Ye's proficiency in the Path of Spirit Runes, she had only considered him a prodigious True Lake cultivator, questioning how advanced his rune crafting could be.

Until Twin Flying Phoenixes emerged.

The moment the rune formation completed, Lu Ye could feel her injuries clearly, and she perceived the immense vitality within Lu Ye, beyond imagination.

Unbelievable that a True Lake Level 1 cultivator could harbor such vast vitality. In her perception, it resembled a sun radiating relentless light and heat—vitality flowing consistently.

At this moment, under the influence of Twin Flying Phoenixes, the incredible vitality flowed into her, allowing her to regain some strength despite her blurred consciousness.

Chapter 888 Psyche Attack

The journey to the Soaring Dragon World allowed Lu Ye to obtain the fragment of its world's Origin, bringing him back to life, and what he gained was not just the capability to reflect the Origin.

He also gained an immense vitality beyond imagination.

Hua Ci had once felt the vast and magnificent life force.

As a healing cultivator with the wood attribute of the Five Elements, Hua Ci was extremely sensitive to life force. She had immediately noticed the vibrant life force within Lu Ye, which was almost comparable to that of the Divine Sea Realm.

In fact, it was even more potent.

Even though it was fragmented, it was still the Origin of a world, far beyond what a mere cultivator could compare to.

Normally, most of this life force was hidden within the Origin, only a part of it was external and noticeable, which was trivial compared to the whole.

Even this trivial part was comparable to the Divine Sea Realm, illustrating how terrifying this life force was.

At this moment, under the reinforcement of the Twin Flying Phoenixes, the terrifying life force continuously flowed from Lu Ye into Nian Yuexian's body, making her regain consciousness from her heavily injured and almost comatose state. Not only that, but even the pain of her injuries became less pronounced.

She was shocked internally, unable to comprehend where Lu Ye, a Level 1 True Lake Realm cultivator, got such immense life force. Even the Demon Race should not have such vitality.

The current situation didn't allow her much time to think. After a light remark, her gaze turned cold again, and with a swing of her sword, deadly sword light immediately appeared.

The scene seemed a bit eerie.

Lu Ye held the nearly shattered Boulder Mountain Saber in one hand, while his other hand passed through Nian Yuexian's waist to clasp her jade hand, pulling her in front of himself.

Nian Yuexian repeatedly slashed with her sword, and the interwoven sword light fought intensely with the two enemies.

Feeling the fierce collision of the Divine Sea Realm cultivators at such close proximity, Lu Ye could barely breathe, partly due to him sharing half of Nian Yuexian's injuries.

At this moment, although he could demonstrate power not his own, his cultivation level was too low to intervene in such a battle, so he completely released his mind and body, letting Nian Yuexian act as she saw fit.

In an instant, he felt his body tossed around, completely uncontrollable.

"It's you!"

In the heat of the battle, Wan Zhanggang finally detected the problem and his gaze suddenly focused on Lu Ye.

Just now, Nian Yuexian seemed on the verge of death, no reason for her to suddenly become so vigorous, and the root of all changes was Lu Ye suddenly lifting the saber and piercing through their interlocked fingers.

The spirit rune pattern inscribed with blood on the back of their hands was so striking.

Wan Zhanggang didn't recognize Lu Ye, but he saw through the source of the problem.

As he spoke, Lu Ye suddenly let out a muffled groan, his head felt as if struck by a massive hammer, his vision filled with golden flashes, and even his consciousness became blurry.

Soul Attack!

For cultivators of the Four Realms, each major level's enhancement meant a leap in strength. The first three realms are merely changes in spirit force, but only upon reaching the Divine Sea Realm does one develop mental consciousness—an essential transformation for a cultivator.

A Level 9 Cloud River Realm cultivator might have the chance to kill a Level 1 True Lake Realm cultivator, but a Level 9 True Lake Realm cultivator could never kill a Divine Sea Realm cultivator.

Relatively speaking, a Divine Sea Realm cultivator could easily kill a True Lake Realm cultivator.

All they needed was to use a mental consciousness attack, which a True Lake Realm cultivator couldn't defend against.

The psyche is innate to everyone, but mental consciousness is unique to the Divine Sea Realm. A cultivator must reach this level to develop their own mental consciousness.

Even among Divine Sea Realm cultivators, Wan Zhanggang could be considered a strong cultivator. Using his mental consciousness to attack Lu Ye left him defenseless and unable to resist.

The moment Lu Ye's groan sounded, Wan Zhanggang also groaned.

Using mental consciousness to oppress the weak left Lu Ye defenseless, but Nian Yuexian seized the moment and severely injured him with her own mental consciousness.

However, Nian Yuexian's face immediately changed.

She clearly felt Lu Ye's consciousness behind her becoming fuzzy, and the big hand tightly clutching hers showed signs of loosening.

Nian Yuexian quickly tightened her grip, not letting him slip away.

As if triggered by a taboo, Nian Yuexian's charming face contorted fiercely. She gritted her teeth and shouted, "I'll have you die!"

Raising her longsword before her, she sprayed a mouthful of blood mist onto it, causing countless sword shadows to burst forth and layer out.

She was clearly going for broke!

"Then let's see who dies first!" Though Wan Zhanggang's mental consciousness was damaged, causing him almost berserk pain, he didn't retreat. He knew this was the closest he had come to killing Nian Yuexian. Missing this chance would make another difficult to obtain.

Both had gone full throttle, and Wan Zhanggang's ghost cultivator companion had no choice but to risk his life and stay, cursing these two lunatics internally.

However, suddenly, a fearsome aura approached swiftly from the distance, and there were not just one but two!

Wan Zhanggang's face changed as he looked up in that direction.

"Let's go!" The ghost cultivator hastily urged. This aura was undoubtedly exuded by strong cultivators of the Divine Sea Realm. From its intensity, the arrivals seemed to be around the Level 2 or 3 Divine Sea Realm.

Moreover, judging by their direction, they were clearly reinforcements from the Haotian Alliance.

The newcomers' cultivation wasn't particularly high, but they certainly held the potential to change the battlefield.

By now, the four combatants were heavily injured, with one almost incapacitated and the other three significantly hurt. If they didn't leave now, their chances of escape would be lost once the two Divine Sea Realm cultivators from the Haotian Alliance arrived.

With a ferocious expression, Wan Zhanggang gritted his teeth, "Retreat!"

As his words fell, the ghost cultivator immediately turned and fled, not forgetting to take his heavily injured companion along.

Wan Zhanggang covered the retreat, blocking Nian Yuexian's boundless sword shadows, before dragging his battered body away.

Nian Yuexian didn't pursue, as the approaching reinforcements were somewhat suspicious.

Wan Zhanggang thought they were Haotian Alliance reinforcements requested by her, explaining his hurried retreat. In reality, she hadn't contacted anyone.

It was uncertain whether the approaching figures were friends or foes.

Nian Yuexian watched Wan Zhanggang's departure before turning to look back. Moments later, her eyes showed surprise, as the approaching figures were Yiyi and Amber, not any Divine Sea Realm cultivators.

Both Yiyi and Amber had spirit force surging around them, radiating the aura of the Divine Sea Realm. The spirit and the tiger had pushed their strength to the limit, their expressions tense, indicating they couldn't maintain it for long.

What kind of ability is this? Nian Yuexian wondered.

It was clear to her that Yiyi and Amber couldn't be Divine Sea Realm cultivators, especially having spent days in each other's company. She knew them well enough.

How could their strength skyrocket so suddenly?

But how to explain their Divine Sea Realm aura?

Lost in confusion, Nian Yuexian watched as Yiyi and Amber spotted them and, realizing the enemies had retreated, they rejoiced.

Yet as they breathed a sigh of relief, they grew tense again, concerned about Lu Ye's condition.

"Sister Yuexian, what's wrong with Lu Ye?" Yiyi, releasing her spirit force from the Pseudo-Might, regained her natural aura and rushed over to ask anxiously.

Amber also widened his tiger eyes in suspicion.

What happened here?

Why does Master seem so intimate with this cold woman?

Why embrace and hold hands while fighting?

What's more baffling was the lack of clear rejection from the cold woman.

Amber's strange gaze brought Nian Yuexian back to her senses, but she didn't immediately release Lu Ye's hand, as she was unsure if Wan Zhanggang and the others might return. She still needed Lu Ye's boundless vitality.

"Let's go back first!" Nian Yuexian said, wrapped Yiyi and Amber in spirit force, and flew towards the Cangyan Mountain Pass with Lu Ye.

From afar, it looked as if she was carrying Lu Ye on her back.

The speed of a Divine Sea Realm cultivator was undoubtedly swift. Within one incense stick's time, they reached the Cangyan Mountain Pass. In a bamboo building, Nian Yuexian settled Lu Ye down and finally released his hand, placing her hand on his chest to inspect him.

Yiyi and Amber stood by the bed, nervously waiting.

Each change in Nian Yuexian's expression made the spirit and the tiger anxious.

After a while, Nian Yuexian retracted her hand.

"Sister Yuexian, is Lu Ye alright?" Yiyi hurriedly asked.

Nian Yuexian hesitated before saying, "His physical injuries are severe, but his immense vitality will allow him to recover with some rest. The worry is his soul injury..."

Even for a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, soul injuries are challenging, let alone below that level.

Wan Zhanggang, a shameless man, resorted to mental consciousness attacks after realizing Lu Ye's role in the battle's turn, leaving him defenseless—resulting in his coma.

"Stay here and watch over him. Inform me of any change using the guard token. I will find some remedies for him."

"Oh, okay." Yiyi nodded anxiously, then realized something, "Are you looking for treasures to heal the soul?"

Nian Yuexian nodded, "Such items are rare and I may not find them. I've already contacted Shui Yuan; she should be on her way."

Yiyi then stepped forward, taking Lu Ye's storage sack, and rummaged through it. Soon, she held up a bottle, "Will this help?"

Nian Yuexian gestured, and the bottle floated into her hand. She opened it and sniffed lightly, her face showing astonishment, "Soul Cleansing Water?"

Yiyi nodded.

"Where did he get so much Soul Cleansing Water?" Nian Yuexian was bewildered.

Such a treasure is envied even by high-ranking Divine Sea Realm cultivators, unavailable in Heaven's Augury treasure vault. Any cultivator lucky enough to obtain it would covet it dearly.

Never had she heard of someone acquiring so much at once.

Chapter 889 Psyche Entering the Body

This bottle of Soul Cleansing Water had at least twenty or thirty drops. Such a divine object was truly priceless.

And this was only half a bottle.

Suddenly, Nian Yuexian realized something and looked up to ask, "Has he taken this before?"

Yiyi nodded. Not only had he taken it before, but he used it frequently. To others, this thing was extremely precious, but to Lu Ye, it was nothing special.

"No wonder," Nian Yuexian sighed.

On the way back, there was something she couldn't understand.

When Wan Zhanggang launched a psyche attack on Lu Ye in his fury, considering the vast difference in their cultivation, Lu Ye shouldn't have been able to withstand it. The outcome wouldn't have been just a coma; most likely, his psyche would have shattered, leading to his immediate death.

But in reality, Lu Ye didn't die; he only fell unconscious.

This made it evident that Lu Ye's psyche was stronger than that of an average True Lake Realm cultivator.

At this moment, Nian Yuexian understood the reason behind it.

Having taken Soul Cleansing Water before was the reason Lu Ye's psyche was strong, and it seemed he had taken it more than once!

Her tense mood relaxed immediately. In Lu Ye's current condition, the most troublesome issue was his psyche injury. Now, with the Soul Cleansing Water, the problem could be easily solved.

Moreover, since his psyche was originally strong, the injury wouldn't be as severe as imagined.

Raising her hand, a drop of Soul Cleansing Water, wrapped in spirit force, was taken out. Nian Yuexian then reached out and opened Lu Ye's mouth, placing the drop into it.

Her figure suddenly staggered a bit.

She had been so tense that she had forgotten her own injuries. Now that her mind was relaxed, an overwhelming fatigue and pain surged over her.

Yiyi quickly stepped forward to support her.

"Sister Yuexian, you should rest, I'll take care of Lu Ye."

Nian Yuexian nodded slightly. "I'll leave it to you then."

After saying this, she walked to the side, sat down cross-legged, and took out an elixir pill from her storage space to heal her injuries.

She didn't leave because she needed to guard against the possible counterattack from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, though the chance was slim.

At night, the sound of something breaking through the air suddenly rang out, startling Yiyi and making Amber growl lowly.

Nian Yuexian opened her eyes. "Don't worry, it's your Second Senior Sister."

As soon as she spoke, a familiar figure leapt in through the window—who else could it be but Shui Yuan?

"Second Senior Sister." Yiyi quickly went to greet her.

"How is it?" Shui Yuan didn't even acknowledge Nian Yuexian, moving quickly to the bedside to check on Lu Ye's condition.

Standing by, Yiyi softly explained Lu Ye's situation to Shui Yuan. After a careful inspection, Shui Yuan's stern expression finally relaxed.

"It's nothing serious; he should wake up soon."

Upon hearing this, Yiyi was finally relieved.

Yiyi didn't know how skilled Shui Yuan was in medicine, but in her heart, no one in the world could surpass her Second Senior Sister. If she said there was no issue, then there truly was no issue.

Shui Yuan stood up, turned her head, and glared coldly at Nian Yuexian, who was sitting cross-legged in the corner. "Give me an explanation!"

Because there wasn't much fighting here, Shui Yuan had specifically sent word to Nian Yuexian to go to Haotian City to fetch someone. Who would have thought that after just a few days, their little junior brother would be critically injured and in a coma?

If she had known, she wouldn't have sent him here!

Nian Yuexian lowered her head, her hair falling over her chest, and said nothing.

Yiyi, seeing the situation go awry, quickly stepped forward. "Second Senior Sister, it's not Sister Yuexian's fault..."

She briefly recounted the events that had transpired.

Listening to her, Shui Yuan felt a mixture of anger and amusement. She turned to look at the unconscious Lu Ye, gritting her teeth.

So young, yet already trying to play the hero and save the beauty! And nearly lost his life doing it.

In truth, this couldn't be blamed on Nian Yuexian. In a Divine Sea Realm battle, an ordinary True Lake Realm cultivator should stay as far away as possible, yet Lu Ye had brazenly intervened.

Strangely enough, he actually managed to save someone.

Yiyi didn't explain everything clearly; some things she deliberately kept back, like Lu Ye's Talent Tree, his biggest secret, known only to her.

There were also things she didn't fully understand, like the Twin Flying Phoenixes spirit rune.

"Second Senior Sister, Lu Ye has life-saving methods." Seeing Shui Yuan still angry, Yiyi quickly explained, "He has a Golden Body Token."

After returning from Unparalleled Continent, the special reward bestowed upon him allowed Lu Ye to choose any treasure from the Hall of Battle Merits.

Lu Ye chose the Golden Body Token.

This item was worth two hundred thousand battle merits in the Hall of Battle Merits. Lu Ye had used it before and knew its life-saving power.

In this perilous encounter, it almost activated several times, only to be interrupted at the critical moment.

"Golden Body Token..." Shui Yuan couldn't help being moved. "No wonder he was so fearless! But the Golden Body Token isn't foolproof. While it protects the body, the Divine Sea Realm cultivators can still trap him, waiting for the Golden Body to fade, and he'd still die!"

Yiyi nodded like a pecking chicken. "I know, next time I will keep an eye on him!"

Shui Yuan's face eased, realizing her reaction was a bit excessive.

Cultivating is never a smooth journey; to reach great achievements, one must face hardships.

She was just annoyed that their little junior brother faced such a crisis soon after arriving here. She thought about transferring him to another mountain pass, but that might expose him to enemies of the Righteous Blood Sect, so it might be safer to keep him with Nian Yuexian.

She stopped talking and began treating Lu Ye's wounds.

Then she walked over to Nian Yuexian, looking at her angrily. "You're always like this; don't you know how to defend yourself when others scold you?"

"I didn't take good care of him," Nian Yuexian softly responded.

Shui Yuan sighed and sat in front of her to examine her injuries.

Soon, she was surprised because she detected Lu Ye's aura and vitality within Nian Yuexian's body...

She looked at her old friend suspiciously, puzzled by this.

These two couldn't have done something improper...

Seeing Shui Yuan's doubt, a hint of redness appeared on Nian Yuexian's pale face. "Don't overthink it. Your little junior brother is extraordinary. He seems to be able to use some very special spirit runes."

"What?"

Nian Yuexian explained how Lu Ye had used the Twin Flying Phoenixes spirit rune.

Shui Yuan was astonished. This kind of spirit rune, allowing two unrelated individuals to share their physical essence, was unheard of, even in legends.

Thinking back, Shui Yuan said, "Little junior brother once received a spirit runes master's legacy on the Spirit Stream battlefield. It must be that legacy's gift."

Nian Yuexian suddenly understood.

Comparatively, both Nian Yuexian and Lu Ye's injuries were serious. But with one being in the Divine Sea realm and the other having strong vitality, the injuries wouldn't affect their foundations. With some recuperation, they would recover completely.

Time passed. Under Shui Yuan's careful care, both Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian recovered completely in just three days.

However, they were all worried about Lu Ye remaining in a coma.

After another inspection, Yiyi anxiously asked, "Second Senior Sister, why hasn't Lu Ye woken up yet?"

Generally, even if Lu Ye's psyche was damaged, after several days of recuperation and taking Soul Cleansing Water, he should have recovered and awakened.

But for some reason, he remained in a coma.

Even Shui Yuan was puzzled by this, as she had never encountered such a situation before.

"Psyche injuries are very complicated. Without understanding his condition specifically, I can't say for sure. To find out, I would have to..." Shui Yuan trailed off.

Yiyi didn't know what she wanted to do, but Nian Yuexian understood. "You want to enter his psyche?"

Shui Yuan nodded. "Only then can I investigate clearly!"

"It's very dangerous." Nian Yuexian's expression was serious.

Shui Yuan glanced at her and said calmly, "He's my junior brother. I know the danger."

Why are you so nervous?

The danger was mainly to Lu Ye. He wasn't in the Divine Sea realm yet and didn't have his own Mental Consciousness, so his psyche's protection was weak. External forces could easily cause damage.

Nian Yuexian cast her gaze aside...

"Set up the array, protect!" decisive as always, Shui Yuan gave the command once she made her decision.

Nian Yuexian moved swiftly.

Soon, the sounds of something cutting through the air indicated the arrangement of a large array.

An entire Shichen later, she returned and nodded slightly at Shui Yuan.

With Nian Yuexian, a Divine Sea Realm sitting guard, and several large arrays, even if powerful enemies from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge came, they could hold out.

Only then did Shui Yuan take a deep breath, raised a finger, and pointed it at Lu Ye's forehead.

In the next instant, she closed her eyes and focused her Mental Consciousness.

For a Divine Sea Realm's Mental Consciousness, entering a True Lake Realm cultivator's mind should be easy. But Shui Yuan met unexpected resistance, as if an invisible force blocked her, preventing her from entering normally.

This unexpected situation puzzled her.

To clear Lu Ye's condition, figure out his prolonged coma's cause, she had to enter his psyche and examine it in detail. If she couldn't even enter, there was nothing to investigate.

Forced entry would cause significant damage, similar to Wan Zhanggang's earlier Mental Consciousness attack on Lu Ye.

How could a newly advanced True Lake Realm cultivator's psyche have such strong protection? And it was autonomous, not actively controlled.

The plan's first step hit a snag, making things awkward.

If not forceful, they had to retreat and rethink.

Just as Shui Yuan planned to retreat, the obstruction suddenly vanished as if opening a door for her.

## Chapter 890 Blessing In Disguise

Shui Yuan was overjoyed. She knew that even though her junior brother was still unconscious, his instincts remained. After sensing her presence, he let down his guard.

Without hesitation, she activated her Mental Consciousness and submerged herself into it.

In the next instant, she arrived in a strange world.

This must be the deepest part of Lu Ye's psyche. In the center of the gray, mist-shrouded world, a blurred silhouette curled up as if in a deep sleep within a mother's womb.

A mass of something neither mist nor liquid encased the figure.

On closer inspection, the silhouette bore a few of Lu Ye's features.

Seeing this bizarre scene, Shui Yuan was momentarily stunned.

Her cultivation had been achieved step by step. She had naturally undergone the transition from the True Lake Realm to the Divine Sea Realm, and due to the lack of cultivation resources in the sparsely populated Righteous Blood Sect, this process had taken an exceptionally long time.

She remembered it vividly.

The blurred silhouette before her, could it be her junior brother's soul body?

The strange substance encasing the soul body, neither mist nor liquid, could it be the manifestation of his Mental Consciousness?

How could this be?

Even though Shui Yuan was a strong cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm, she found her emotions destabilized at this moment.

The most critical step for a cultivator ascending from the True Lake to the Divine Sea was to strengthen their psyche enough to nurture their soul body's formation!

By convention, only a True Lake Level 9 cultivator could slowly build such a foundation.

And not every True Lake Realm cultivator could manage this.

There were numerous cultivators in the Divine Sea Realm in the Nine Provinces, but many more in the True Lake Realm. Even outstandingly talented cultivators often stalled at this stage, unable to progress a step, because their psyche wasn't strong enough.

A weak psyche couldn't nurture a soul body, and without which, Mental Consciousness couldn't be generated to reach the threshold of the Divine Sea Realm.

Typically, fewer than one in a hundred True Lake cultivators ascended to the Divine Sea.

This was under the uniquely favorable cultivation environment of the Nine Provinces.

Without the resources of the Nine Provinces, like the Soaring Dragon World or the ancient Unparalleled Continent, the difficulty increased significantly.

The abundant operations within Nine Provinces and the vast variety of treasures stored in the Heaven's Augury treasure vault allowed cultivators to work on accumulating merit or battle merit to purchase whatever resources they needed.

Worlds like Soaring Dragon and Unparalleled didn't have such luxuries.

Strikingly, the soul body that not all True Lake Level 9 cultivators could nurture had appeared within a True Lake Level 1 cultivator.

Shui Yuan couldn't understand why this was happening.

Could it be that her junior brother's psyche had already grown strong enough to nurture a soul body?

But he had only just recently ascended to the True Lake Realm...

A True Lake Level 1 cultivator already starting to nurture a soul body, who would believe such a thing?

But, upon reflection, if his psyche was indeed strong enough for this, then his unconscious state had an explanation!

After careful observation, Shui Yuan confirmed she hadn't made a mistake and then withdrew her Mental Consciousness.

When she raised her eyes, Yiyi's anxious face came into view, with Nian Yuexian quietly waiting nearby.

"Yiyi, I need to ask you something, and I need you to be truthful," Shui Yuan said.

"Mm-hmm." Yiyi nodded eagerly like a pecking chick.

"Lu Ye, the Soul Cleansing Water he obtained before, besides giving some to me and our fourth junior brother, did he use all the rest himself?"

"Before?" Yiyi was puzzled. "Which time are you talking about?"

Shui Yuan was taken aback. "There was another time?"

She knew that Lu Ye had Soul Cleansing Water. His swift ascension to the Divine Sea was due to the substantial resources he brought to the Righteous Blood Sect and the Soul Cleansing Water he gifted.

To the best of her knowledge, Lu Ye had given some to Li Baxian and kept a portion for himself.

However, Yiyi's question, "Which time?", made Shui Yuan realize there was more to this story.

From Yiyi's words, it seemed Lu Ye had obtained Soul Cleansing Water more than once.

Yiyi nodded, "A few months ago, he went to Xianyuan City again and got quite a bit of Soul Cleansing Water. The ones he got initially have long been used up."

Shui Yuan was a bit dumbfounded...

That was Soul Cleansing Water, not some mundane item. When Lu Ye gave her some, she used a small portion to ascend to the Divine Sea, but kept most of it in reserve for emergencies.

Since it couldn't be purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, each use depleted a limited supply.

Yiyi added, "I often see him using Soul Cleansing Water..."

He used it while breaking through the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, while investigating new spirit runes, while activating the Talent Tree's power, and occasionally when feeling fatigued.

Nian Yuexian's expression became strange. She was tempted to ask if the Soul Cleansing Water they spoke of was the same as what she knew.

Suddenly, Shui Yuan felt a headache coming on. She nodded briefly, "So that's it, I understand now."

"What do you mean?" Nian Yuexian asked, confused by Shui Yuan's sudden questioning of the Soul Cleansing Water after investigating Lu Ye.

Shui Yuan decided not to hide it. Their years of friendship made them both friends and family, worthy of trust.

"Lu Ye is currently nurturing his soul body."

Nian Yuexian was stunned for a while before frowning, "That's impossible!"

"I thought so too, but I saw it with my own eyes, and there's no mistake," Shui Yuan said, taking a deep breath to calm herself. "His long-term consumption of Soul Cleansing Water has made his psyche far stronger than his actual cultivation level, granting him just enough strength to begin nurturing a soul body. Without external stimuli, he might have reached this stage soon, but the recent external stimuli jolted his psyche, driving him to instinctively protect himself through nurturing a soul body."

Nian Yuexian nodded, "Yes, Wan Zhanggang attacked him with his Mental Consciousness."

"Wan Zhanggang!" Shui Yuan's eyes flashed coldly. "For a Divine Sea cultivator to act so shamefully and bully the weak!"

Nian Yuexian said, "So according to you, Lu Ye's psyche was shaken by Wan Zhanggang's attack, causing him to adopt this shielding method instinctively."

Shui Yuan nodded, "A blessing in disguise, but there's a problem..."

She turned to Yiyi, "I mentioned this earlier; his psyche, though undeniably strong, is only barely enough to nurture a soul body. Successfully nurturing a soul body is an unlikely prospect. Many True Lake cultivators have fallen at this stage, stalling out like Lu Ye, failing to nurture a soul body and being halted permanently."

"What should we do?" Yiyi grew nervous.

Shui Yuan tapped her head lightly, "Silly, he needs a lot of psyche power to nurture the soul body. We just need to replenish the psyche power he expends until he's successful, at which point he'll awaken naturally."

"Soul Cleansing Water!" Yiyi's eyes brightened.

Shui Yuan nodded, "Precisely!"

"They're all here." Yiyi quickly handed over a bottle of Soul Cleansing Water to Shui Yuan. "The rest are in the rune tattoo space with Lu Ye."

"This should be enough." Shui Yuan smiled slightly, relieved now that she understood Lu Ye's situation and had devised a solution.

Moreover, she had some Soul Cleansing Water in reserve. If it wasn't enough, she could fetch more from Li Baxian, who likely had some, given that not many used it as freely as Lu Ye did.

This solution was straightforward here, but would have been challenging for others facing the same situation.

One would need to find precious, rare spirit fruits or elixir pills to replenish psyche energy, but such items were invaluable and zealously guarded by major sects, rarely given up easily.

However, in hindsight, this incident might indeed be a blessing in disguise. Wan Zhanggang probably hadn't anticipated that, in his anger, a mental assault would push Lu Ye's psyche toward instinctively nurturing a soul body.

If Lu Ye succeeded, he, a mere True Lake Level 1 cultivator, would possess his soul body and Mental Consciousness, an unprecedented feat.

At that point, as a True Lake Level 1 cultivator, he could use abilities true of Divine Sea cultivators. Already capable of slaying higher-level foes, who could predict how much his combat power would transform?

In the bamboo building, everyone stayed close, never leaving Lu Ye's side. Shui Yuan continually checked Lu Ye's condition with her Mental Consciousness and adjusted her strategy accordingly.

Initially, she deemed one drop of Soul Cleansing Water per day sufficient, but finding that inadequate, she increased it to two drops, then three...

Beyond the rarity of Soul Cleansing Water, most cultivators couldn't even tolerate this much in a day, given the concept of the body rejecting over-supplementation.

However, Lu Ye had long since built tolerance to Soul Cleansing Water, exhibiting no adverse reactions. Moreover, the water's properties accelerated the soul body's nurturing progress.

Under Shui Yuan's observation, the blurred silhouette gradually became more distinct, with the encompassing mist appearing to liquefy.

After three more days, Shui Yuan finished her latest check and rose from Lu Ye's bedside. "At the earliest, he'll awaken tonight; at the latest, by tomorrow," she stated.

Yiyi breathed a sigh of relief, finally smiling, relieved by Shui Yuan's words.

"Won't you stay until he wakes?" Nian Yuexian asked, sensing something in Shui Yuan's words.

Shui Yuan shook her head, "No, with him in your care, I'm reassured."

Nian Yuexian snorted softly. Who had arrived days ago, brimming with a threatening aura, eager for battle?

Ignoring this, Shui Yuan replied, "I need to return. There's much to handle in the sect, and the old master is occupied."

Nian Yuexian nodded slightly.

Shui Yuan stepped forward, then turned back to Nian Yuexian. "Visit the old master if you can. He thinks of you often."

"I will."

With a wave of spirit force, Shui Yuan soared skyward, swiftly departing. Looking back, she saw Yiyi at the doorway, waving her farewell.