

Humanity 91

Chapter 91 | Hate Magic Cultivators

Outside the Sky-Splitting Gorge lay a vast plain with flat terrain, which was particularly hostile towards Lu Ye's current predicament, as there was absolutely nowhere to hide.

He took out the ten-part map to scout ahead; beyond the plain was a mountain, and on the other side of that mountain a large river. Crossing the river and traveling several dozen li, there was a marketplace.

Into the mountain! Lu Ye made a snap decision. He didn't know what kind of methods a cultivator from the Spirit Stream Level 7 might possess, but in his current situation, the only chance of survival was to head into the mountains.

However, the mountain was not close, and even with Amber's pace, it would take about two hours to reach.

Lu Ye desperately prayed that Dong Shuye wouldn't run too fast.

No sooner had this thought occurred to him than he suddenly felt a prickling sensation on his back. Turning his head to look back, Lu Ye was startled. From the direction of the Sky-Splitting Gorge, a streak of spirit light was rapidly approaching. Without needing to think, Lu Ye knew it was Dong Shuye coming after him.

Although there was a considerable distance between them, Dong Shuye's piercing gaze was fixed on Lu Ye, who was riding Amber.

The prickling sensation Lu Ye felt was the kill intent from his pursuer.

Can he fly? A chill ran through Lu Ye's heart.

He had thought that relying on Amber, he stood a good chance of escaping his pursuer – after all, Amber was very fast, particularly in this dire situation, as it was running with all its might.

But he had never imagined that Dong Shuye could fly!

The situation was dire. One was running on the ground, and the other flying in the sky. It was clear Amber couldn't get away.

However, just then, Dong Shuye's figure suddenly descended toward the ground. Before Lu Ye could figure out what was happening, the man shot back into the sky, swooping toward him.

A moment later, Lu Ye understood; the man wasn't flying but gliding. Yet each glide spanned hundreds of zhang, much faster than Amber's speed.

The situation wasn't as bad as he had feared, but it was certainly nothing to be optimistic about.

The distance between them was closing rapidly. At this rate, it wouldn't take more than the time it takes an incense stick to burn for Dong Shuye to catch up.

Indeed, a cultivator from the Spirit Stream Level 7 was extraordinary. There was a reason he was confident enough to pursue and attempt to kill Lu Ye.

He had to think of something. After a brief moment of thought, Lu Ye took out a Spirit Talisman from his storage sack.

He now had only nine Spirit Talismans left in his hand. He had used too many during the three-day-long battle with Luo Ji. The remaining nine were all defensive and supplementary.

The Spirit Talisman that Lu Ye took out was called Move-Like-The-Wind, a supplementary talisman meant to increase speed. Lu Ye hadn't had a chance to use it before, but now was the perfect time.

He activated his spirit force, slapped the talisman onto Amber, and in an instant, a layer of spirit light enveloped Amber, quickly gathering at its four legs, where a light, binding force entwined.

With the aid of the spirit light, Amber's speed surged.

Though they still couldn't shake off Dong Shuye, they could possibly delay a little longer.

In a chase and flight, they rapidly approached the great mountain. Dong Shuye's eyes flashed dangerously with killing intent that nearly solidified, erupting like flames.

He had thought that killing this mountain tiger would be as easy as flipping his hand, but he had underestimated the snow-white tiger's speed, and now that Lu Ye had used a Spirit Talisman, the pursuit was even more challenging.

But this did not deter Dong Shuye's resolve to kill Lu Ye. The Young Sect Master was under his watch when he was killed; reporting this up, the old fellows in the sect would be thunderously furious, especially the Sect Master, who explicitly stated that his inept son's death must not go unavenged—the killer had to pay with his life!

If it weren't for the fact that cultivators from the Cloud River Realm were not allowed to enter the Spirit Stream battlefield, Dong Shuye even suspected that his Sect Master would have personally come to do the deed.

Because that fool was killed, Dong Shuye had taken a scolding. Having previously declared war and suffered a defeat by Xuanmen, his position within the Nine Stars Sect had become increasingly precarious. If he could avenge the Young Sect Master, he might have been able to maintain his current status, but if not, he would definitely have a hard time moving forward within the sect.

Therefore, no matter what, the killer must die!

So what if the opponent used a Spirit Talisman? He still couldn't shake him off. The distance between them was closing rapidly, and once he reached the right position, he only needed to cast one spell to claim the mountain tiger's life!

One incense stick's time later, their distance had closed to just over a thousand zhang. The power of the Move-Like-The-Wind Talisman had been exhausted, and Lu Ye quickly took out another one and slapped it onto Amber.

This was the last Move-Like-The-Wind Talisman. The sect master had only prepared two for him—after this one, there would be no more.

Another incense stick's time later, the mountain ahead was clearly visible. With just a little more time, the time it takes to drink a cup of tea, Amber could take Lu Ye into the mountain, where hiding and evading would become much simpler.

However, Dong Shuye had pursued them to within three hundred zhang, a dangerously close distance. Lu Ye felt his heart pounding wildly, a suffocating pressure making it difficult for him to breathe.

Two hundred zhang, one hundred zhang...

Lu Ye felt a strong pulse of spirit force from behind and turned to look, only to see Dong Shuye gliding through the air, one hand directed towards him, with a fiery red spirit force disc slowly rotating in front of him.

"Xuanmen has already mobilized all its forces to attack the Nine Stars Sect's location, and you still have the mind to chase after me?" Lu Ye shouted in a hurry.

Since Xuanmen was using him, he naturally had no need to keep their movements secret. At a critical moment of life and death, naturally, he would delay as much as possible.

Upon hearing this, Dong Shuye visibly paused, his instincts telling him Lu Ye wasn't lying. His mind briefly faltered, and the spirit force disc in his hands wavered slightly. Immediately after, he shouted, "Spreading lies to confuse me, return to the earth!"

Spirit light burst forth, and dozens of fist-sized fireballs, like a shower of meteors, covered the area where Lu Ye was. The fireballs were continuous and unending.

Lu Ye watched, his eyelids twitching. He knew Level 7 of the Spirit Stream was formidable, but he hadn't expected someone to be this powerful!

And by looking at how Dong Shuye was casting spells, it was clear he was a magic cultivator!

Luo Ji was also a magic cultivator.

I hate magic cultivators! Lu Ye silently gritted his teeth, moved off the tiger's back, and sat behind Amber, hand on the hilt of his sword, concentrating and waiting.

As the fireballs fell, Amber dodged left and right, avoiding the attacks. The impact of the fireballs was tremendous; each one hit the ground, creating a crater, with flames splashing and burning fiercely.

Getting hit by such a spell even once would peel off more than just skin.

On the tiger's back, Lu Ye swung his sword repeatedly while the Defense Spirit Runes also flickered continuously.

Amber, unable to dodge some of the fireballs, was slashed open or blocked by him, the scattering flames causing him intense pain, while Amber kept whimpering, emitting the smell of roasted meat.

When the barrage of fireballs ended, aside from some burns, Lu Ye and Amber were mostly unharmed, but the hand holding the sword was shaking violently.

The spells of Level 7 of the Spirit Stream Realm were not so easy to counter.

This spell from the opponent was a wide-ranging attack intended to kill Lu Ye in one go, which clearly dispersed its lethality, but he still needed to exert his full strength to block each fireball.

Moreover, this was a hasty spell cast by Dong Shuye. If he had put his full effort into it, what would the scenario have been?

This time, it really seemed more likely that misfortune would outweigh fortune!

Chapter 92 Escape

Let's not talk about Lu Ye's ordeal. Dong Shuye found it truly unexpected that his own Dao technique failed to kill Lu Ye.

He then realized that Luo Ji's words were true. This disciple, of unknown origins but likely from a prominent big sect, was actually able to fight using spirit runes. With his own eyes, he saw spirit runes shaped like shields flickering on Lu Ye's body, blocking several fireballs.

No wonder Luo Ji, such a person, returned with his tail between his legs. When Luo Ji returned yesterday, he inquired about the battle report and learned that the guy had lost. He had thought Luo Ji hadn't tried his best, but now it seemed he had wronged him.

However, he was ultimately not Luo Ji. Although Luo Ji came from a better background and practiced a Heaven Rank technique, his cultivation was a weak point.

As a Level 7 cultivator, the methods at his disposal were naturally far from limited.

Spirit force surged, and in front of him, appeared a fireball as big as a washbasin, which almost instantly shot towards Lu Ye with incredible speed!

"Let's see how you block this one!"

Seeing the fireball approaching, Lu Ye's scalp numbed. Although there were many fireballs before, they were only the size of fists, and he could barely block them; but how was he going to block this washbasin-sized fireball?

"Amber!" Lu Ye roared lowly.

Amber's speed increased further, suddenly surging forward a stretch.

The giant fireball fell from the sky, nearly blasting past Amber's hindquarters. The scorching breath made Lu Ye's cheeks ache with heat. Even with spirit force protecting his body, it did nothing. He even smelled the odor of his hair being scorched...

Inwardly, he felt a stroke of luck that, though this object seemed big, its speed was somewhat slower than the small fireballs from before, otherwise Amber would really not have been able to dodge it.

However, in the next moment, his complexion changed, because the giant fireball didn't fall to the ground but suddenly changed direction, pursuing them directly.

This thing could turn corners!

In mid-air, Dong Shuye, who was gliding, held one hand behind his back, the other forming a magic spell, riding the wind as if floating toward immortality. Yet, the spirit force around his body surged wildly, like a war god possessed, brimming with murderous intent.

The giant fireball sped up more and more, and it looked set to hit them any moment. Lu Ye knew that if he didn't have a strategy soon, in the next second, he and Amber would meet their demise here.

Taking a deep breath, he sheathed his long knife, raised his hands in front of him, and with a surge of spirit force, a Defense Spirit Rune immediately appeared before him.

Clearly, this was not enough. The Defense Spirit Rune had barely managed to stop the previous small fireballs, let alone block such a large fireball.

As Lu Ye poured his spirit force into the rune madly, the palm-sized Defense Spirit Rune suddenly expanded, growing to the size of a tabletop in an extremely short time.

Above the spirit rune, complicated and intricate lines flowed and writhed, the light shining brightly.

In that moment, Lu Ye felt as though he had been drained, and although there wasn't time to look closely, that one spirit rune had definitely consumed at least thirty percent of his spirit force.

In other words, he could, at most, use this kind of spirit rune three more times before depleting all his spirit force.

He had never driven the spirit runes this much before. Whether it was activating Sharpness or Defense, it had always been a matter of an instant. However, there was a commonality with spirit runes: as long as there was enough spirit force to maintain them, they would continue to exist.

The principle behind the continuous preservation of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes is that they naturally have the effect of gathering nature's spiritual energy, and the gathered energy can maintain their existence.

The giant fireball struck, smashing into the Defense Spirit Rune. At the moment of collision, an irresistible force was transmitted, pressing down so hard on Amber's body that it almost collapsed to the ground, and Lu Ye's arms bulged with muscles, as if he were holding up some heavy object.

A scorching breath rushed towards his face, and with tongues of flame licking out from the fireball, the glow of the Defense Spirit Rune dimmed rapidly, and even with Lu Ye continuously pouring in spirit force, it couldn't last a few breaths.

But what brought Lu Ye a bit of relief was that he blocked this strike...

Without delay, he intended to tilt the Defense Spirit Rune and shove the fireball away.

However, before he could make a move, Dong Shuye, who was not far away, snorted coldly, "Foolish!" and changed the magic spell in his hand.

With a booming explosion, flames swept across all directions, and a vast expanse of Void twisted, the trees around fiercely burning.

Is he dead? Dong Shuye landed, eyes coldly searching.

Under normal circumstances, a Spirit Stream Level 3 cultivator could not withstand his magic and spells by any means; however, the target he was trying to kill this time was clearly not an ordinary Level 3. This fellow was a disciple from a top-tier big sect, and even the mastery of spirit runes alone was breathtaking.

Rustling noises came from the jungle, quickly fading away.

He's not dead? Dong Shuye's eyes twitched with an even fiercer killing intent.

Just as he was about to continue the pursuit, a message suddenly came from the battlefield imprint. He intended to ignore it, but recalling what Lu Ye said earlier, his heart skipped a beat, and he checked the message in haste.

It was a message from Cao Ye, simple and clear, yet it made his heart sink to the bottom!

"Wang Yeang leads 600 cultivators of Xuanmen to attack our position, Senior Brother, come back immediately!"

Dong Shuye would have rushed back immediately upon receiving this message if he had not been pursuing Lu Ye, but with Lu Ye right under his eyes, how could he give up willingly at this moment?

Therefore, after only a slight hesitation, he sent back a message.

The Nine Stars Sect's position had the Sect Protection Array fully activated, with cultivators stationed at key locations, ready for battle.

Xuanmen's sudden full-scale attack was unexpected by all disciples of the Nine Stars Sect, especially since there had just been a battle, which had ended with the Nine Stars Sect's defeat. Cao Ye couldn't understand what Wang Yeang was up to.

But with the attack underway, as the highest cultivation cultivator residing in the position, Cao Ye inevitably began commanding the cultivators for defense.

But he alone was not enough, so he immediately sent a message to inform Dong Shuye, yet the reply he received filled him with helplessness, just three simple words: "Hold on!"

What else could be done at this moment but to hold on?

The protective array was fully operational, consuming a vast amount of Spirit Stones, transforming them into defensive power, and keeping the Xuanmen cultivators outside the position. A conservative estimate was that it could withstand Xuanmen's attack for a day or two without issues.

Therefore, despite the Nine Stars Sect being under siege, the cultivators inside the position were tense but not overly panicked.

"Damn Wang Yeang!" Cao Ye cursed silently, really unable to fathom what madness had taken him.

Just then, a disciple suddenly ran over in a fluster, reporting something that greatly alarmed Cao Ye, who hurriedly stepped out of the grand hall.

At a glance, he saw a figure leading a Ziyi woman by the hand, rushing hurriedly towards him.

"Luo Ji!" Cao Ye bellowed, leaping up on the spot, and landed thunderously before the figure, looking at him, then at the Ziyi woman he was leading: "What are you doing?"

Luo Ji frowned and said, "I'm leaving."

"Leaving?" Cao Ye didn't understand, "Where are you going at this time?"

"Of course, leaving this place. Or should I wait for death?" Luo Ji said with a look that regarded Cao Ye as an idiot.

Cao Ye frowned, unclear on what Luo Ji meant, blocking his path: "You can leave if you want, but why take Ziyi with you?"

Luo Ji said, "From now on, Ziyi is no longer a disciple of the Nine Stars Sect."

Chapter 93 The Angry Cao Ye

Cao Ye was indeed infuriated, "If Ziyi is not a disciple of the Nine Stars Sect, could she possibly be from your Endless Island?"

The sect's headquarters had been attacked by Xuanmen, and he was already troubled; at this time, Luo Ji suddenly created such a scene, which really made him furious. If it weren't for Luo Ji's extraordinary background, he would have taught him a lesson long ago, and would not have tolerated his noise.

Luo Ji said indifferently, "Exactly, Ziyi has already agreed to come with me, and from now on, she will have no further ties with the Nine Stars Sect."

"What a joke!" Cao Ye laughed in anger, his cold gaze turned towards the woman behind Luo Ji, Ziyi. She was expressionless, looking up at the sky in a trance, as if this matter had nothing to do with her.

She was not ignoring Cao Ye, nor was she trying to extricate herself from the situation, but rather, she was naturally like this. Although Cao Ye and this woman named Ziyi were from the same sect and had known each other for several years, they had hardly exchanged more than three sentences from start to finish. No matter what was asked of her, she did not respond.

Cao Ye had always thought his junior sister was a very strange person. She was not aloof; rather, she was indifferent to everything in the world, as if nothing could arouse her interest.

Therefore, when Luo Ji said that she had agreed to something, Cao Ye would never believe it, how could such a woman casually agree to someone else?

Withdrawing his gaze, Cao Ye said coldly, "Luo Ji, I have been forbearing with you because you are a disciple of Endless Island, but don't continue your nonsense."

Luo Ji sighed and said, "Why can't we talk this out properly..." He suddenly stepped forward, almost face to face with Cao Ye, his gaze fixed on Cao Ye's eyes, "I am now taking Ziyi away, do you dare to disagree?"

Cao Ye's anger was boiling, thinking to himself, is this guy trying to bully me with his power? Though Luo Ji was only a Level 2 magic cultivator, his backing was Endless Island. If he really wanted to take Ziyi

away by force, Cao Ye couldn't stop him. He couldn't just beat Luo Ji up, right? If he did so, Endless Island definitely wouldn't let it go.

He could try to capture Ziyi, but Luo Ji definitely would not stand by and watch; that would make both sides lose face.

With that thought, Cao Ye said, "You can leave if you want, but Ziyi cannot! If you insist on this, then you can only take a cripple with you!"

As he spoke, Cao Ye raised his right hand, and a red-glowing battlefield marking emerged, he looked at Luo Ji lightly and said, "Don't forget, I am the Deputy Governor of this sect's headquarters. If Ziyi dares to betray the sect, I can request Heaven's Augury to cripple her cultivation!"

Luo Ji remained unmoved, "Try it and see!"

"Don't force me!" Cao Ye clenched his teeth.

"Get out of the way!" Luo Ji pushed Cao Ye's shoulder, trying to push him aside, but how could he, a Level 2 magic cultivator, shake Cao Ye, a Level 6 physique cultivator? The push was solid, but the other person's figure did not budge an inch.

Luo Ji did not entangle further and led Ziyi around Cao Ye towards the grand hall.

"Ziyi, it's not too late to turn back now." Cao Ye turned around, looking at his junior sister who was closely following behind Luo Ji, giving her one last opportunity. She still looked up at the sky, ignoring his words, but Cao Ye knew she heard him...

Cao Ye sighed, shouted loudly, "Nine Stars Sect's Lan Ziyi disregards the sect rules, covets vanity, and intends to betray the sect, disciple Cao Ye respectfully requests Heaven's Augury to cripple her cultivation!"

After speaking, he looked somewhat painfully at his junior sister who was proceeding ahead...

Although this junior sister was somewhat indifferent, she was still from the same sect. If the situation had not been so dire, he would not have taken such drastic measures. However, at the moment, Xuanmen was attacking the headquarters and he had no time to deal with these issues, and more importantly, he wanted to let others know the consequences of daring to betray the sect at this time.

Luo Ji, holding Lan Ziyi's hand, quickly entered the grand hall.

Cao Ye's face changed, and he suddenly realized something, "The marking has changed?"

Logically, it was a fact that Lan Ziyi had betrayed the sect. As the Deputy Governor requesting the Heaven's Augury, he should have been able to nullify her cultivation, but she had not reacted at all, an impossible occurrence.

Unless Lan Ziyi was no longer a disciple of the Nine Stars Sect, no longer bound by its rules.

Only by changing the battlefield marking could she sever her identity as a disciple of the Nine Stars Sect.

However, changing the battlefield marking required a massive amount of merit, something a typical Spirit Stream Realm cultivator could not afford...

In a flash of realization, Cao Ye understood many things.

That explained why Luo Ji had suddenly come to train on the Nine Stars Sect's territory; hailing from a top-tier force like Endless Island, he would be welcomed anywhere. It turned out he had come prepared, with Lan Ziyi as his target from start to finish!

But what about Lan Ziyi made him pay such a high price? Before, Cao Ye thought Luo Ji was coveting Lan Ziyi's beauty, but now it seemed clearly not the case. A man like Luo Ji wouldn't be seduced by mere beauty.

"Wait!" Cao Ye shouted angrily, darting into the main hall, where he immediately saw Luo Ji and Ziyi each placing their hands on the Heaven's Augury Pillar, which was already emitting light, gradually enveloping their figures.

"You can't just leave like this!" Cao Ye raised his hand to stop them.

Luo Ji tilted his chin at him, "I advise you to evacuate this place quickly, or catastrophe will ensue."

"What?" Cao Ye was astonished.

Boom...

The ground shook, and Cao Ye, losing his balance, turned his head to see outside the Sect Protection Array a slender figure floating in the air—it was that wretched maid from Xuanmen.

At that moment, in front of the wretched maid, nine colorful spirit force giant dragons intertwined, spinning around and forming a fierce attack, like a drill striking at the Nine Stars Sect's protective array.

"What is this...?" Even with Cao Ye's experience, he couldn't recognize what magic and spells were capable of producing such an effect. It was clear that with that wretched maid's cultivation, she couldn't possibly perform such spells. The power of her attacks was already comparable to a Cloud River Realm cultivator.

This was the power of a Spirit Talisman! It was a Spirit Talisman from the Core Circle!

To obtain such a spirit rune, the required merit must have been substantial.

Where did it come from? Wang Yeang? But Wang Yeang had never been to the Core Circle; how could he have obtained such a Spirit Talisman?

There was no time for Cao Ye to ponder further because, under the constant onslaught of the nine dragons' power, the Nine Stars Sect's protective array was already tottering, likely to break soon, and then the entire sect's station would be in jeopardy.

Cao Ye managed a bitter smile, staggering a bit, "So that's why Luo Ji ran off so quickly; he obviously saw the signs of that Spirit Talisman being deployed. A Spirit Talisman of this caliber required a long time to prepare when activated by a Level 6 magic cultivator. Luo Ji, having come from Endless Island, had seen more and naturally recognized the significance of that Spirit Talisman."

Chapter 94 No Escape

The Nine Stars Sect had been utterly defeated, with only Dong Shuye, the sole match for Wang Yeang, having gone off to pursue the mountain tiger. Once their base's protective array was breached, there was no one who could stop Wang Yeang's slaughter.

Cao Ye faintly sensed a conspiratorial aura about the situation, but he no longer had the Cultivation Technique to give it much thought. Activating his spirit force, he yelled, "Everyone, prepare to evacuate!"

The disciples, already panicky and scattered across various key locations assisting in defense, heard Cao Ye's shout and immediately rushed towards the great hall. There, the Nine Stars Sect's Heaven's Augury Pillar was located. By using the pillar, they could return to the Nine Provinces, and only then might they escape this disaster.

"Crack..." The sound of the protective array shattering spread, and a swath of phosphorescence seeped from the outskirts of the Nine Stars Sect's location, spreading like fireflies in the night. Xiaozhu's body, suspended in the air, went limp and plummeted towards the ground, but Wang Yeang, having been prepared, caught her in his arms.

His other hand drew the longsword from his waist, pointing it forward, "Kill!"

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In the woods, Lu Ye fled in distress, his arms badly mutilated and his chest scorched.

The Level 7 cultivation of Dong Shuye was not something he could contend with. Had it not been for the Defense Spirit Runes, he would have died at the first spell Dong Shuye cast.

Lu Ye had thought that fleeing into the dense mountains would increase his chances of survival, but the thick jungle did not conceal his figure at all. Dong Shuye pursued him relentlessly, casting spell after spell, toppling trees as thick as several men embraced.

He had been separated from Amber. During Dong Shuye's second attack, the powerful impact had thrown him off the tiger's back, and that was where his scorched chest had come from. Lu Ye did not know the extent of Amber's injuries but was certain they were severe, as the ground quickly reddened with blood under her as she fell.

Lu Ye didn't even have time to check Amber's injuries; he felt that he might not escape this time, so he made a split decision and fled in different directions from Amber. Staying together would mean death for both of them.

If his fate was sealed, at least Amber might have a chance to live.

That feeling of imminent danger became clearer and clearer. Fortunately, Dong Shuye did not continue to glide through the sky, as the trees here were tall and the canopy thick. Flying would make it easy to lose sight of Lu Ye.

Even so, the speed granted by Dong Shuye's Level 7 cultivation was not something Lu Ye could shake.

Only 30% of his spirit force remained inside him. The Defense Spirit Runes, which could barely block one of Dong Shuye's spells, could only be activated one more time.

There was no chance left.

Lu Ye raised his blood-soaked right hand and gripped the long knife at his waist.

Although his life had been brief and less than spectacular, even in death, he would face his enemy!

Suddenly, the sound of rushing water hit his ears, booming loudly. Lu Ye initially didn't pay it much attention until he realized where it was coming from. He immediately changed direction and dashed towards it.

From behind, Dong Shuye, who was in hot pursuit, saw Lu Ye's figure from afar, his eyes blazing with anger.

It truly frustrated him that personally pursuing a Level 3 cultivator had taken this long without success, making it hard for him to accept and only strengthening his resolve to slay Lu Ye.

Seeing Lu Ye change direction and hearing that thunderous noise, Dong Shuye couldn't be more aware of the cunning trick Lu Ye was planning.

"Kid, you can't escape. Just give up and die to spare yourself the agony!" Dong Shuye roared angrily. As spirit force surged around him, he shot up into the sky.

In midair, he spotted a huge waterfall cascading downward. Under the blazing sun, the spray formed a rainbow of colors. Within that rainbow, Lu Ye soared upward, already leaping toward the bottom of the waterfall.

"Where do you think you're going!" Dong Shuye bellowed. In haste, he launched a Golden Arc Slash at Lu Ye. Coming from him, a Level 7 magic cultivator, the Golden Arc Slash was far more powerful than that performed by Luo Ji, a Level 2 cultivator, almost three feet in length.

The crescent-shaped slash whizzed through the air. However, because they were both moving quickly, the strike missed its mark slightly, slicing past Lu Ye's back.

Lu Ye's protective spirit force was as fragile as paper, and blood spurted out, causing his face to twitch in pain.

In that moment, he had almost no time to activate his Defense Spirit Runes. Had that Golden Arc Slash hit his trunk, he would have been sliced in half immediately.

His body rapidly plummeted downward and, moments later, crashed heavily into the pond below. Lu Ye instantly dived deeper, seeking to hide himself.

Simultaneously, Dong Shuye's figure drifted down from above the waterfall, hovering over the pond. Without a word, he began to unleash multiple Golden Arc Slashes at the spot where Lu Ye had fallen into the water.

Compared to other magic and spells, the Golden Arc Slash undoubtedly had stronger penetrative power. Although the water flow impeded the spell's might, there was no better plan at the moment, unless Dong Shuye was willing to dive into the water to search for Lu Ye's trail.

With each Golden Arc Slash, the water surface was cleaved apart, dense blood emerged from beneath, even some pieces of internal organs floated up.

Seeing this, Dong Shuye quickly checked his battlefield marking.

He had lost ten points of merit...

This made Dong Shuye wince in pain.

The Spirit Stream battlefield was a strange place—it seemed to be controlled by a mysterious force that managed the cultivators' merits. Killing an enemy above one's level would double the merit earned, but killing someone three or more minor levels below one's own would deduct a significant amount of merit.

This mysterious force seemed to encourage cultivators to fight opponents above their level and penalize those who bullied the weak.

This was also why not many very strong cultivators were seen in the outer circle of the battlefield; merit was crucial for any cultivator, and to gain merit, one had to kill enemies not much weaker than oneself.

For cultivators at the Level 6-7, there wasn't much benefit to be had in the outer circle. Although they wouldn't completely leave the outer circle, they would choose locations closer to the inner circle for their trials.

As a Level 7 cultivator, Dong Shuye would earn merit for killing someone at Level 4, but killing a Level 3 would deduct ten points, and killing a Level 2 would deduct twenty points.

Ten points of merit was not a lot, but it was not little either. For Dong Shuye, killing a cultivator of the same level earned him only seven points of merit. If it were not for a strict order from the elders in his sect, he wouldn't have personally come to chase after Lu Ye.

Fortunately, it was all over now...

He looked again at his battlefield marking. When he had checked his merit earlier, he had noticed that someone had sent him a message.

When he saw the content of the message, his face suddenly changed dramatically.

Chapter 95 Rescued

Dong Shuye had originally wanted to search for Lu Ye's body, but the message from the battlefield marking left him in a state of chaos. How could he still care about Lu Ye?

Cao Ye sent another message, containing only three simple words.

"Danger, return immediately!"

He had previously received a message from Cao Ye, informing him that the Xuanmen cultivators had come to attack the Nine Stars Sect camp. However, he was not panicked, as attacking a sect's camp was no simple matter. According to his estimate, even if Xuanmen deployed all its forces, their own camp's big array could hold for a day or two.

This time was sufficient for him to kill Lu Ye and then rush back.

But in such a short time, Cao Ye had unexpectedly sent such a message, which showed that the situation at the camp must indeed be dire.

He hurriedly made his way back, while attempting to contact Cao Ye to get a clearer picture of the situation. However, it was like a stone dropped into the sea, with absolutely no response at all.

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Beneath the water, Lu Ye was groggy, his spirit force nearly depleted, with a large amount of blood water churning around him, along with some broken limbs and flesh.

Only after entering the water did he discover that there was actually another person underwater, apparently collecting something.

Both were startled upon seeing each other.

Lu Ye had no time to explain anything to this person. After steadying himself underwater, he immediately activated the Defense Spirit Runes above his head. Then, several Golden Arc Slashes penetrated through the water layer and attacked.

The unfamiliar cultivator did not even make a sound before he was chopped to pieces, truly suffering an unwarranted disaster. The Defense Spirit Runes above Lu Ye's head also shattered explosively after blocking one strike, but fortunately, the remaining Golden Arcs did not hit him.

The attack soon stopped, but he dared not surface, unable to ascertain Dong Shuye's movements. Fighting back exhaustion and pain throughout his body, he moved stealthily underwater for several moments until he nearly ran out of breath, then he awkwardly surfaced.

Barely taking a deep breath, he swiftly dived down again, continuing to struggle forward underwater.

After several such occurrences, Lu Ye was utterly exhausted. However, what made him feel fortunate was that Dong Shuye seemed to have stopped attacking him.

A quarter of an hour later, just as Lu Ye was surfacing again, a strong force suddenly came from behind, and he was fiercely struck by something.

He already had injuries on his back, and given his extremely poor condition, this impact almost knocked him unconscious.

Instinctively thinking that Dong Shuye had come to attack again, Lu Ye pulled out the long knife from his waist and hacked back.

There was no person, only a piece of dead wood, which he split into two. It was this piece of dead wood that had hit him.

Looking around, he could no longer see Dong Shuye.

Lu Ye held the knife in his hand, bewildered. Where is this guy? A Level 7 cultivator came to hunt him down, pushed him to a dead end—there's no reason for him to just give up...

But after searching for a long time, he still didn't see Dong Shuye, and he could be certain that this guy really had left.

He quickly realized something. Earlier, under that pool, a cultivator was killed by Dong Shuye. Could it be that he thought he had succeeded?

The more he thought about it, the more likely it seemed. Moreover, with Xuanmen already attacking the Nine Stars Sect camp, Dong Shuye probably hadn't the mood to carefully investigate the underwater conditions and, confirming he had killed a person, left in a hurry.

Did that let him escape this calamity?

Gathering his thoughts, Lu Ye felt a weight lift off his chest. An overwhelming tide of fatigue and pain swept over him, and his body uncontrollably sank back into the water.

He quickly raised his hand and grabbed the piece of dead wood, laboriously floating up.

His consciousness was fading, at any moment he might fall unconscious. However, Lu Ye knew that if he passed out now, he might never wake up again, as he was severely injured this time.

Trembling, his right hand fumbled in his storage sack for a jade vial. Opening the mouth of the vial, not caring how many healing pills were inside, he dumped them all into his mouth, chewed them up, and swallowed.

He wanted to switch his cultivation technique to the Bestial Gluttony Feast to speed up the absorption and refinement of the pill energy, but his spirit force was nearly depleted, each spiritual orifice had dried up, and even the Golden Cicada Carefree Method had ceased to operate. How could he have any energy left to switch cultivation techniques?

All he could do was use all his strength to tie his clothing around a dead tree.

Hopefully, he wouldn't drown and become a joke.

As his last thought emerged, darkness enveloped Lu Ye's vision, and he completely lost consciousness.

...

When he opened his eyes again, Lu Ye found himself face down on a bed. After a brief moment of confusion, an indescribable pain swept over him.

Surprisingly, there was someone sitting beside him, a faint fragrance lingered at his nostrils, and from the corner of his eyes, he could tell by her voluptuous figure that it was a woman.

Not only did he feel pain on his back, but there was also a tingling sensation, along with faint ripples of spirit force and flashing green light...

Had someone saved him? He remembered binding himself to that dead tree with his clothing before he passed out; he should have drifted with the currents, yet here he was in this place, clearly saved by someone.

He made no sound because he didn't know who had saved him, quietly sensing the state of his own body.

The situation was dire. His spirit force hadn't recovered, and his injuries were severe; not only did his back have a deep gash, but his chest and hands were all burned.

Such injuries would have been fatal for an ordinary person, but as a cultivator, he could still hang on, especially since he had consumed several healing pills just before losing consciousness, and they had indeed taken effect.

But the situation was still not hopeful.

"Your breathing has changed," a pleasant voice suddenly entered his ears, very soft in its feel, "Being cautious of strangers is proper, but if I wanted to kill you, you would have died long ago."

Lu Ye was somewhat embarrassed, at a loss for words, unsure of what to say.

A fair hand suddenly stretched out in front of him as the woman said, "Even though I saved you, I still need to confirm which faction you belong to."

As she spoke, a pale blue light emanated from the back of her small hand, showing her allegiance proactively.

This made Lu Ye feel relieved, and he slightly stimulated the sparse remaining spirit force inside him, causing a pale blue light to appear on the back of his hand as well.

"Then I haven't saved the wrong person," the woman said in a gentle tone.

But Lu Ye was certain that if he hadn't shown the battlefield marking's luster just now, or if the light it emitted had been red, she would have definitely dealt him a lethal blow!

In the Spirit Stream battlefield, belonging to different factions was reason enough for conflict, and there was absolutely no room for sympathy or mercy.

The tingling sensation on his back became more apparent, and the green light flickered even more frequently.

It took a while for the fluctuations of spirit force behind him to cease, followed by the woman applying something to his wound that caused Lu Ye to sweat profusely from the pain.

After applying it, she attached something to the wound on Lu Ye's back; he couldn't see it, but it was probably something like a plaster.

Having done all this, the woman finally stood up and said, "You're severely injured; don't move around for now, it will affect the recovery of the wounds."

"Thank you!"

The woman said, "It was Spirit Jade who found you and brought you back." With that, she left.

Only then did Lu Ye get a glimpse of the woman's profile. Perhaps out of gratitude for being saved, she seemed as beautiful as a fairy, especially with her full, high bosom. Her hands poised in front of her lower abdomen, she moved with grace.

Chapter 96 Good Samaritan

Lu Ye had only been awake for a short while before he drifted off into a drowsy sleep again.

When he woke up again, he noticed an additional chair in front of him, and a young girl was sitting on it. She was nodding off, seemingly because she was too sleepy, her little head bobbing slightly.

The room was filled with a strong smell of blood and an indescribable scent of herbs.

Although he had been lying down for a long time, Lu Ye didn't feel stuffy, and even the burns on his chest weren't too painful. This struck him as strange, so he carefully checked and discovered that the bed board at his chest had been hollowed out intentionally. The person who had placed him there was clearly very thoughtful, taking his injuries into consideration.

He struggled to move his body, wanting to get up, but he didn't have much strength at the moment. After struggling a few times, not only could he not rise, but the effort made his forehead sweat from pain.

The slight noise startled the dozing girl, who opened her eyes and stood up with an "Ah! You're awake?"

She walked to the bed and helped Lu Ye sit up. Despite her petite build, as a cultivator, she had the strength for it.

However, since Lu Ye had injuries on both his front and back, he could only sit upright on the bed.

The girl then brought over a bowl of green medicinal solution, "Sister Hua Ci instructed that once you are awake, you should drink this medicine. It could help recover your injuries."

Lu Ye didn't know who Sister Hua Ci was; he secretly guessed she might be that plump woman he had seen before.

He took the medicinal solution and said, "Thank you."

As he lifted the bowl to his lips, a pungent smell assaulted his senses.

Lu Ye frowned; this stuff... was potent.

But, as good medicine often tastes bitter, he gulped down a big mouthful.

He wasn't worried that someone might harm him. If someone had wanted to harm him, they would have done it earlier without the need for such troublesome things.

The next moment, his facial expression became rich...

This stuff was not only potent but painfully so. Lu Ye considered himself quite tolerant, but this mouthful nearly made him pass out again, it was so bitter. He wondered if he was drinking some kind of bile...

As if expecting his reaction, the girl watched him intently and quickly said, "Sister Hua Ci said you must finish it, or she'll get angry. And Sister Hua Ci is scary when she's angry!"

Without needing any further persuasion, Lu Ye paused only briefly before he drank the entire bowl of medicinal solution.

The girl took the bowl and pulled a grayish-brown object from her storage sack, handing it to Lu Ye, "Chew on this."

Curious, Lu Ye took it and popped it into his mouth. He raised an eyebrow; it tasted like malt candy.

It was only then that he had time to look around at his environment. He was in a building that resembled a bamboo house, not very large, and simply furnished. He had no idea where he was.

While he observed his surroundings, the girl tidied things up and said, "My name is Linglong, how should I address you, senior brother?"

"Yiye," Lu Ye replied reflexively, then suddenly came to his senses, vaguely recalling the name. After a moment's recollection, he realized, "Was it you who saved me?"

The woman he met earlier had mentioned that Linglong was the one who had saved him. If he was not mistaken, it had to be the girl in front of him.

"I just brought you back; it was Sister Hua Ci who saved you," Linglong smiled, "You were floating in from the river. I initially thought you were dead and was about to search your body. But then I found out you were still alive, so I brought you back."

Her words amused Lu Ye, making him involuntarily smirk.

"Thank you anyway," he said.

"It's nothing. We were all saved by Sister Hua Ci," Spirit Jade said, smiling at Lu Ye. The young girl's cheeks were cherubic, and her skin was pale and tender. When she smiled, a dimple formed on her left cheek, making her look very cute. She had already packed up her things, "You should rest well. Sister Hua Ci had to leave for a bit, but she'll be back in the evening to check on your injuries.

If you need anything, just shout, I live right next door."

Lu Ye nodded slightly.

Spirit Jade pushed the door and left, closing it behind her as she went.

It seems I've encountered some kind-hearted people... Lu Ye felt fortunate about his luck. Still, it was largely because everyone was part of the Haotian Alliance. If he had run into a group from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, he'd probably be dead already.

He silently noted this debt of gratitude.

His long blade, a Spiritual Artifact, was still with him, brought back along with him and now lay beside the bed. There were also several storage sacks neatly arranged on the bedstand.

Though they were strangers, their actions spoke of good character.

Although he was lucky to be alive, his injuries needed some time to heal; Dong Shuye had beaten him quite severely.

The priority now was to restore some Spirit Force. After all, a cultivator could only defend himself with Spirit Force.

He laboriously raised his hand, took out a storage sack, and found a bottle of Spirit-Nurturing Pills. He took one and silently began to refine it.

After refining two Spirit-Nurturing Pills, he got the Bestial Gluttony Feast working again, which greatly increased the efficiency of his recovery.

He then took a healing pill and began constructing Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes in his spiritual orifice.

The effort had him sweating profusely.

As evening approached, Lu Ye, who was cultivating to recover, heard the sound of a door pushing open next door, followed by Spirit Jade's clear voice, "Sister Hua Ci, you're back?"

"Mmm." The soft voice he had heard before responded. The two women chattered about something indecipherably for a while.

Outside the bamboo house, the woman named Hua Ci talked with Spirit Jade for a moment, then looked up towards Lu Ye's room. She faintly sensed that from Lu Ye's room as the center, the surrounding spiritual energy of nature was gathering towards it. Although not very obvious, it was still discernible. She felt slightly surprised, the young man Spirit Jade had picked up...

seemed to have quite high potential.

But she didn't realize that Lu Ye could gather spiritual energy mainly because of the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes. As for his actual talent... that was another story full of bittersweet tears.

"Go and rest," Hua Ci patted Spirit Jade's little head.

Smiling, Spirit Jade said, "Do you need my help?"

"No need."

"Then I'll go rest."

After saying goodbye, Hua Ci walked towards Lu Ye's bamboo house, came to the door, knocked lightly, and then pushed it open.

Lu Ye had already stopped cultivating and even dispersed the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, because he had previously noticed an issue. Whenever he activated the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, the signs of spiritual energy gathering were quite obvious. It was not a problem during cultivation, but if others saw it while he wasn't cultivating, it would be hard to explain.

Seeing the woman who pushed the door open, Lu Ye's eyes lit up. Yesterday, he had only seen her profile briefly, but today he finally saw her face clearly.

She was a beauty! Dressed in a blue-patterned, white tight-fitting dress, her voluptuous figure was outlined with exquisite curves.

Chapter 97 Healing Cultivator

"How do you feel?" Hua Ci stepped to Lu Ye's bedside and stood still, bringing with her a body fragrance that was refreshing to the soul.

Lu Ye replied, "Much better."

"Let me take a look." Hua Ci shifted her plump hips and sat by Lu Ye's bed, lifting his sleeve to examine the injury on his arm, then raised her hand to open his shirt and check his chest, nodding as she said, "Not bad."

As she spoke, she took some items from her storage sack and placed them beside the bed, instructing Lu Ye, "Take off your upper garment."

Lu Ye's upper garment was already torn and stained with blood, and he had not had time to change due to focusing on recovery; hearing the instruction, he obediently removed his upper garment.

While fiddling with the items she had taken out, Hua Ci said, "The burns on your arms and chest are severe, making it inconvenient to bandage, so we'll use medicine for a few days first."

"Mmm," Lu Ye hummed in response.

"Stretch out your hands," said Hua Ci.

Lu Ye extended his hands, revealing arms that were coated with a green medicinal solution, which had probably been applied the day before while he was still unconscious.

Hua Ci used something to clean Lu Ye's arms, and only then did she continue to apply that green medicinal solution.

Once she finished with the arms, she moved on to his chest. The injury on his back was a cut and didn't require the same treatment. Lu Ye remembered that Hua Ci had applied some kind of plaster to his back the previous day, and it had been unbearably itchy all day.

When it was time to treat the wound on his back, Hua Ci asked Lu Ye to turn around, cautioning him, "Bear with it a little."

Before Lu Ye had time to react, he heard a ripping sound from his back where the plaster from the previous day was torn off, and a sharp pain emanated from the wound, making his body tremble and cold sweat break out.

This woman named Hua Ci truly had a way of using the gentlest words while taking the most ruthless actions...

A green light began to flicker, and the fluctuations of spirit force became perceptible. Lu Ye turned his head in surprise and caught a glimpse of something, realizing, "Sister, are you a healing cultivator?"

Pang Dahai of the Righteousness Sect had told him before that cultivators fell into six major categories: physique cultivators who primarily focused on the body, combat cultivators engaging in close combat,

magic cultivators who study magic and spells, healing cultivators who heal and save lives, ghost cultivators who communicate with the Netherworld, and extrinsic cultivators who master alchemy, talisman drawing, array setup, and artifact crafting.

Because cultivators have low cultivation in the early stages, most of them start as combat cultivators, and having a weapon in hand undoubtedly provides a stronger capability for self-protection and convenience in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

However, during this period, cultivators would prepare according to their element sign and preferences; when their cultivation is high enough, they could then determine their specialization.

In the Sky-Splitting Gorge, the cultivators he met were mostly combat cultivators, except for Luo Ji, who with a Level 2 cultivation had laid the foundation as a magic cultivator, which was possible because he came from a big sect, possessing the necessary background and resources.

Dong Shuye was also a magic cultivator, but at the Spirit Stream Level 7.

It was not until this moment that he encountered another cultivator who had determined their specialization, and it was a healing cultivator, no wonder she could treat him.

"Mm," Hua Ci casually responded, "Why, do you have a grudge against healing cultivators?"

Lu Ye quickly said, "No, I have a dispute with magic cultivators." He inwardly vowed, from now on, if he encountered any magic cultivator he disliked, he'd cut them down first and ask questions later.

Hua Ci pursed her lips and smiled, "I can tell." The wounds on Lu Ye's body were clearly caused by a powerful spell, and as a healing cultivator dedicated to treating others, Hua Ci certainly had the discernment to see that.

With the continuous application of Hua Ci's spirit force, Lu Ye could distinctly feel the pain in his back diminish until it eventually became an itching sensation.

After she stopped, she applied another plaster on Lu Ye's back.

Then she proceeded to treat the injuries on his chest and arms, and this time Lu Ye saw clearly, Hua Ci's hands hovered above his wounds, her palms enveloped in green light, and under the nourishment of her wood attribute spirit force, his injuries gradually healed.

This way of healing is truly miraculous.

The senior sister is not only beautiful but also has a nice figure and a pleasant voice, making such healing sessions far from tedious.

A moment later, Hua Ci finished her healing and stood up. "That's it for today's healing," she said, extending a hand to Lu Ye. "Ten Spirit Stones for your trouble."

Lu Ye looked up at her, puzzled. "Huh?"

Hua Ci said with a smile, "The healing fee is five Spirit Stones per session. You were too exhausted yesterday to discuss it, so with today's session included, it comes to a total of ten Spirit Stones."

"There's a fee?" Lu Ye was astonished.

Hua Ci said, "The herbal medicine I gave you costs money, and I need elixir pills and Spirit Stones to replenish the spirit force I've used, so... of course, there's a fee."

Lu Ye was somewhat speechless...

"As a disciple from a big sect, you surely won't try to duck the bill, right?" Hua Ci's hand was still in front of Lu Ye, firm and insistent.

"Of course not." Lu Ye didn't know how she could tell he was a disciple from a big sect, but what she said made sense. After all, she was neither a relative nor a friend, and it was reasonable to expect some token of gratitude for spending time and effort to heal him.

Meeting a healing cultivator here undoubtedly saved him a lot of recovery time. Calculating the benefits, he was still coming out ahead.

"I don't have Spirit Stones, but will elixir pills do?" Lu Ye asked.

"Naturally." Hua Ci nodded her approval.

Lu Ye then took out a bottle of ten elixir pills and handed them to Hua Ci.

"Thank you for your patronage!" Hua Ci received the elixir pills, her smile growing even wider.

Lu Ye hoped desperately that she wouldn't say "look forward to healing you again next time."

"You should rest well," Hua Ci advised. "I'll come back to heal you tomorrow."

Just before leaving, she turned back, "If you could also take some healing pills, your recovery should be even faster."

"Understood." Lu Ye nodded.

For the next several days, Lu Ye lay sick in bed. During the day, a girl named Lingyu would bring him the extremely bitter medicinal solution, and at night, Hua Ci would come to perform healing spells on him.

Lingyu's full name was Ruan Lingyu, a lively girl with an outgoing personality. After talking to her a few times, Lu Ye learned that this place was the ruins of a sect's former location.

No one knows what sect it used to be; it had been overrun decades ago, and the entire sect was annihilated. Though a Heaven's Augury Pillar still remained, it could no longer serve its original purpose.

This reminded Lu Ye of the scene when the sect master had sent him to the Spirit Stream battlefield in a desolate wilderness, which also seemed to be the ruins of a sect's location.

There were many such ruins, both in the Nine Provinces and inside the Spirit Stream battlefield. When new sects emerged, they could choose these ruins to establish their base, thanks to the remaining Heaven's Augury Pillars.

However, many ruins remained unchosen, and these became gathering places for independent cultivators.

The buildings within these ruins were often dilapidated but still provided many places to shelter from the wind and rain. Moreover, their locations were generally good, naturally attracting some homeless independent cultivators.

Chapter 98 Independent Wanderers Society

Independent cultivators, lacking a foundation and the protection of elders or sects, face constant dangers in the Spirit Stream battlefield; hence, many of them band together for safety, forming small groups.

On the Nine Provinces continent, many of the emerging sects started as such small groups.

In this area, centered around a healing cultivator named Hua Ci, more than a dozen independent cultivators have gathered to form a small group called the Independent Wanderers Society.

Ruan Lingyu was a naïve young girl. With some investigation, Lu Ye had figured out the general strength of the cultivators in the Independent Wanderers Society.

Hua Ci had the highest cultivation level, at the Level 5 realm, under her were two at Level 4, and the rest were mostly cultivators of Level 2-3, totaling eleven people. However, since Lu Ye had been healing in his room recently, aside from Hua Ci and Ruan Lingyu, he had only met another cultivator at Level 4.

Such small groups are countless throughout the Spirit Stream battlefield and naturally, cannot compare to real sects.

Lu Ye had participated in the declaration of war between Xuanmen and the Nine Stars Sect. Though both sects were only 8th and 9th grade, each had deployed thousands of members. The Independent Wanderers Society, if thrown into the mix, wouldn't even make a splash.

Over the past few days, Lu Ye's spirit force had fully recovered, and he had even begun his cultivation practices again. Currently at Spirit Stream Level 3, with thirty orifices filled, to open a new orifice, he would need at least fifteen Spirit-Nurturing Pills; however, with the assistance of Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, this consumption would be somewhat lessened.

When he came out of Sky-Splitting Gorge, he had nearly three hundred and fifty elixir pills in hand, which he thought would be more than enough to reach Spirit Stream Level 4 and have some to spare. But now, it seemed somewhat insufficient.

Mainly because he needed to pay Hua Ci five elixir pills a day as a medical fee, and his injuries would not heal within a month without her care.

This was already with Hua Ci's meticulous care; without her healing methods, the recovery would take even longer.

During this time, he used the ten-part map to find out his location and discovered he was about thirty miles away from the waterfall, which meant, he had drifted this far after being unconscious.

Yiyi and Amber had been separated from him earlier. He wanted to search for them, as Amber had been injured, and in the midst of the chaos, Lu Ye hadn't even had time to assess its injuries. Fortunately, Dong Shuye's target was only him and he didn't bother with Amber.

Provided Amber wasn't fatally wounded and had Yiyi by its side, there likely wasn't any serious problem.

Heal, then find Amber! That was Lu Ye's plan.

Under the cover of night, Lu Ye, bare-chested, was swinging his saber in the open space in front of the bamboo building. The injury had disrupted his saber practice for the past few days, but since he felt a bit better today, Lu Ye was becoming a bit impatient.

From a window of the bamboo building, Ruan Lingyu watched him silently, her hands propping up her chin, not understanding what was so fascinating about the flashes of saber light and shadow. Clearly injured, he should have been resting, yet he insisted on going out and exerting himself.

But she couldn't dissuade him and had to let him be.

Suddenly, her eyes lit up and she raised her hand to greet, "Sister Hua Ci!"

Not far away, the figure of Hua Ci appeared, followed by a robust man who was the Level 4 cultivator called Kong Niu that Lu Ye had seen before.

According to Ruan Lingyu, the reason Hua Ci was out early and returned late every day was that she went to the nearby marketplace to heal the wounds and illnesses of other independent cultivators, thereby earning materials for cultivation.

The struggles among independent cultivators were fierce, often resulting in injuries. While minor injuries could be treated with healing pills, severe ones required the attention of a healing cultivator. Without a sect to rely on, seeking the help of fellow independent healing cultivators was the only option.

Thus, Sister Hua Ci now had business to conduct, which perhaps was the greatest benefit of becoming a healing cultivator; they often did not need to engage in battle to obtain sufficient cultivation resources.

Under the moonlight, Hua Ci leisurely walked up not far in front of Lu Ye and turned back to tell Kong Niu to rest first, after which Kong Niu left.

Within the small group of the Independent Wanderers Society, Hua Ci was undoubtedly respected and loved by everyone, and her commands were followed by all.

What Ruan Lingyu had told Lu Ye earlier that everyone had been saved by Sister Hua Ci was no exaggeration but the truth. Essentially, everyone in this small group had been saved by Hua Ci's medical interventions, bringing these people back from the brink of death through her efforts alone.

These people had all owed their lives to Hua Ci, and after being saved, either impressed by her charisma or for other reasons, chose to stay here.

Lu Ye sheathed his saber, his body emanating waves of heat. Although blood was seeping from his wound, such movement of his muscles made him feel completely relieved.

Moreover, he wasn't sure if it was because he had felt death up close, but he felt that his saber skills seemed to have improved—though this needed a test to be certain.

"Tsk... I thought I'd make more elixir pills, but why is he recovering so fast?"

A soft muttering came from Hua Ci's side.

Lu Ye couldn't help but twitch the corner of his eye, "What did you say?"

After several days of interaction, the unfamiliarity had vanished, and Lu Ye was gradually discovering the true nature of this beauty—she was a complete miser. After each healing session, her first act was to ask Lu Ye for elixir pills, behaving as if she feared Lu Ye would renege on the agreement.

Just yesterday, she even sold Lu Ye a particularly bitter medicinal solution, after which Lu Ye felt his face turning green, and the bitterness was something he simply couldn't suppress. As a result, she prepared another type of medicinal solution that was supposed to ease it, costing him four elixir pills after consuming two large bowls of the concoction.

At that moment, Lu Ye somewhat doubted whether this woman was deceiving him...

However, judging from the recovery of his injuries today, she indeed hadn't lied; the medicine from yesterday was more effective than any before it.

Hua Ci revealed her uniquely intoxicating smile, her voice still as soft and refreshing as water, her eyes wide open as she blatantly lied, "I said you're recovering very quickly."

Lu Ye pointed at his ear with his hand, signaling to her that he wasn't yet deaf.

Hua Ci, as if she hadn't seen it, held her hands elegantly in front of her belly, "That being the case, we shall start the formal treatment tonight."

"Formal treatment?" Lu Ye was startled, "Then before..."

"Before was just the preparation stage. Did you think your injuries would heal so easily?" Hua Ci said seriously, "A doctor harbors the concern of a parent. Rest assured, I will take good care of you and make sure you have no complications!"

Lu Ye looked bewildered, the only thought emerging in his mind being, is this woman about to play me again?

"Go take a bath first, I'll get ready and come find you soon!"

Chapter 99 Official Healing

In the room, Lu Ye sat bare-chested on the bed.

Opposite him sat Hua Ci, her gentle hands like jade passing over his chest, "Your injuries have healed much faster than I expected. Are you considering the path of a physique cultivator?"

Lu Ye asked in confusion, "What makes you say that?"

"Your blood Qi is much more abundant than that of other cultivators at the same level, so your injuries have healed quickly. In the early stages, aren't cultivators supposed to temper their own blood Qi if they are pursuing the path of physique cultivation?"

"Not at all," Lu Ye shook his head.

He wasn't interested in becoming a physique cultivator. If nothing out of the ordinary happened, he would become a combat cultivator. He quite liked the sensation of wielding a blade. As for why Hua Ci

said his blood Qi was more abundant than that of his peers, Lu Ye guessed it was probably related to his substantial daily food intake.

Ever since he began his cultivation journey, he had an astonishing appetite, especially after mastering the Bestial Gluttony Feast, his consumption had increased even more.

Eating a lot naturally filled him with abundant blood Qi, but since he was always engaged in Essence Refinement-Qi Conversion, his physical form did not change much. If he were just to enrich his blood Qi, his physique would probably grow increasingly bulky.

"It's better not so, 'beefy savage brutes' are not really admirable. To use the words of the cultivation world, those people enjoy the best resources but endure the toughest beatings," Hua Ci said, laughing at her own words, "And besides, your build isn't really suitable for physique cultivation."

"Beefy savage brutes?"

"That's what they call physique cultivators."

"Interesting," Lu Ye smiled knowingly. "And how do others refer to healing cultivators?"

After a moment of reflection, Hua Ci replied, "Generally, they are called 'crybabies'?"

Lu Ye frowned, "What's the logic in that?"

"It's the heart of a parent, haha," Hua Ci laughed heartily.

Lu Ye's face darkened, the image of a tender, intelligent woman shattering in his mind...

He was coming to realize that Hua Ci's external facade was just a façade; only by getting to know her better could one discover her true nature.

"You have been touching my chest since earlier; is this part of the healing?" Lu Ye couldn't help asking, although he didn't mind the sensation. However, it couldn't continue indefinitely; after all, he was a young man full of vigor.

"No," Hua Ci withdrew her hand, "I forgot while talking to you."

She sat upright in front of Lu Ye, her expression serious as she looked at him, "We'll begin now. It might feel uncomfortable soon, bear with it, and try not to make any strange noises. The soundproofing here isn't great and could easily lead to misunderstandings."

Lu Ye hardly knew how to respond to her statement, and didn't get the chance to, as after she spoke, Hua Ci suddenly pointed her fingers towards the center of Lu Ye's chest, spirit force surging from her fingertips.

Lu Ye let out a muffled groan. The spot she touched not only hurt but also produced an indescribable sensation almost making him want to scream.

Smiling, Hua Ci continued to point one finger after another.

Lu Ye's face began to twitch; he kept groaning.

"Cultivators often get hurt in battles; although there are various means of healing, they often leave behind some hidden dangers. These injuries might not be apparent most of the time but are deeply hidden in the muscles and organs. They might not pose any fatal risks, but if accumulated too much, they can affect the physical body or the spiritual orifice, hindering future cultivation.

Common injuries from swords are relatively easier to deal with, but injuries caused by magic and spells cannot be cleared by elixir pills alone. You were injured by a fire-element technique, so there is fire poison lingering in your body. Once these toxins invade the spiritual orifice, it would be difficult to open orifices in the future.

Therefore, if conditions permit, I recommend you find a healing cultivator periodically to regulate your body, to ensure you are free of hidden risks."

By now, Lu Ye's jaws were clenched tight; whatever Hua Ci was saying, he couldn't respond as he feared any attempt to speak might lead him to make unusual sounds.

He strongly suspected that this woman did it on purpose... Otherwise, she could have told him these things earlier, why choose this moment?

After a short while, Hua Ci switched from tapping to patting, her small hands continuously lightly tapping and slowly caressing Lu Ye's chest, and with her strikes, streams of pure wood attribute spirit force infused into Lu Ye's chest.

The toughest moment passed, and Lu Ye gradually relaxed.

After one incense stick's time, Hua Ci stopped.

Lu Ye looked down and saw his chest a mess of flesh and blood. The wound on his chest was a burn, so it was not healing quickly. With Hua Ci's patting, the originally crusted area cracked open, fresh blood flowed out, making it look even more severe.

But Lu Ye knew it was not as it seemed, the severity was only superficial. Along with the flowing blood, there was something else, likely the fire poison that Hua Ci mentioned.

He took a deep breath, feeling much easier to breathe, and even sensed a feeling of clarity throughout his body.

Hua Ci then approached and applied the green medicinal solution on Lu Ye's chest, activating her own spirit force to help Lu Ye heal his external injuries. After finishing these tasks, she wrapped his chest.

Then she treated both his arms with the same method, the same process...

Finally, the chop wounds on his back...

By the time everything was done, Hua Ci was covered in sweat. She raised her hand to wipe the sweat from her forehead, stood beside Lu Ye's bed, and said melancholically, "What a pity, at this rate, you'll probably recover in less than ten days."

"Hey..." Lu Ye looked up at her.

Hua Ci covered her mouth and laughed, "Oops, I said what was on my mind." She then added, "But don't worry, you're my most important guest, I'll definitely treat you well."

She held out her hand, "For the honor of ten elixir pills."

Lu Ye didn't say anything and handed her ten elixir pills. Although today's medical expense was twice that of the previous ones, the saying 'you get what you pay for' holds true. He could feel that Hua Ci's methods indeed greatly helped his recovery. By his own estimation, his injuries would not have recovered in less than a month.

But now, it might take just around ten days.

Moreover, Hua Ci really put her heart into it today; her entire body was soaked with sweat, her face even a bit pale, clearly a sign of great exertion.

"Refreshing, really, with the wealth to follow your heart, truly enviable," Hua Ci teased.

Lu Ye was momentarily startled before he realized she was mocking his willingness to spend money.

"If you don't want it then give it back!" Lu Ye reached out towards her.

Hua Ci twisted her body, nimbly dodging, and laughed lightly, "You better rest well!" she said gracefully as she left.

"Close the door!" Lu Ye shouted at her retreating figure.

No response.

Lu Ye grudgingly got out of bed, closed the door himself, and then walked back.

He resolved secretly that once he recovered, he would quickly leave this dreaded place, or else one day he might truly die of frustration.

Chapter 100 Liusu Place

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Healing, cultivating, the days passed without disturbance.

With the consumption of one elixir pill after another and the assistance of the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, Lu Ye's speed of opening his orifices was much faster than he had anticipated. Now, if he dedicated all his efforts, it would take less than two days to open one orifice.

This efficiency was terrifying. The supplementary Cultivation Technique, Bestial Gluttony Feast, was of great help to Lu Ye.

Hua Ci came to visit every night as promised, and under her care, Lu Ye's injuries quickly improved.

They occasionally chatted, and through her, Lu Ye accidentally learned an interesting piece of news - Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's Nine Stars Sect's domain two hundred miles away had been taken over by the Xuanmen.

Message passing among cultivators was quite convenient due to the presence of battlefield markings. Simply by adding each other as friends, one could easily exchange messages as long as they were in the same space.

This news caused some stir primarily because, among the two sects' grades, it was Nine Stars Sect that held the higher rank.

To conquer a sect's domain was no simple matter since every sect's domain was guarded by a big array. Without breaking the array, one could not possibly conquer it. Even if the array was broken, success was not guaranteed since the cultivators stationed at the domain were not just for show.

In the outer circle of the battlefield, it was rare for a sect's domain to be taken over because the sects of the outer circle had lower grades, and their cultivators' cultivations were comparatively weaker. Stationing a group of low-level cultivators at the domain's big array was a bit too much to ask of them.

It was said that the reason Xuanmen could succeed this time was mainly because they used a very powerful Spirit Talisman, specifically designed for array destruction.

As a result, Nine Stars Sect suffered huge losses, many disciples were killed, and the goods stored in their domain were looted clean. After Xuanmen withdrew, they even set fire to the Nine Stars Sect domain, leaving nothing but ashes.

When Lu Ye heard this news, he was not surprised. If Xuanmen dared to make a move, they must have been confident of their chances.

To this, Lu Ye felt some schadenfreude. All his injuries were caused by Dong Shuye, and now that the Nine Stars Sect's domain had been conquered, he felt as though he had gotten his revenge, even though he had not participated in the action.

However, from what Hua Ci implied, the takeover of the domain seemed different from what he had thought.

He had assumed that once Xuanmen took over Nine Stars Sect's domain, that territory would become theirs, but in reality, that was not the case. Xuanmen had only killed many of the Nine Stars Sect disciples and looted some resources before setting the place on fire and withdrawing.

This seemed to mirror what Haotian Alliance did after they took over Evil Moon Valley. After conquering Evil Moon Valley, they didn't stay long before withdrawing since it was essentially Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's territory, and lingering would certainly lead to a counterattack from Ten Thousand Demons Ridge's forces.

The same logic applied to the battlefield. Nine Stars Sect surely had allies for support, and Xuanmen's people would've been attacked if they continued to stay in the Nine Stars Sect's domain. Rather than that, they chose to take advantage of the situation and then retreat.

Hua Ci mentioned that Xuanmen's successful conquest of the Nine Stars Sect's domain brought them great benefits, not just the looting of some materials. It seemed there were other even more important gains, because she said this meant that at the next sect grade assessment, Xuanmen's advancement to 8th grade was a certainty, while it was inevitable for Nine Stars Sect to fall to 9th grade.

Just by looting some cultivation resources, Xuanmen's grade wouldn't have risen by one. Lu Ye didn't press for details, so he just listened.

Hua Ci seemed to have always thought he was a disciple of some big sect... He didn't know how this misunderstanding came about. Maybe it was because he had spent money generously? As a 'big sect's disciple,' he couldn't possibly be unaware of these common knowledge items.

Liusu Place was a nearby marketplace, not much different from the other marketplaces Lu Ye had visited before, with disorderly buildings incorporating styles from all across the Nine Provinces.

The largest building belonged to the branch of Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

Lu Ye could be considered a regular customer of Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, and today, he followed Hua Ci and others to this marketplace and headed straight for it.

There was no other reason; his stock of elixir pills was running low.

In just half a month of healing, he had paid Hua Ci more than a hundred elixir pills, making this greedy woman very wealthy. Combined with his own daily cultivation needs, his original stock of over three hundred elixir pills was now greatly depleted. He had opened up to thirty-five orifices, and the remaining elixir pills were definitely not enough for him to cultivate to the Spirit Stream Level 4.

Of course, he could slowly improve himself with the effect of the Spirit Energy Gathering Spirit Runes, but for him the benefits they provided were just auxiliary. His cultivation mainly relied on consuming elixir pills.

Once used to exotic delicacies, who would have the heart to gnaw on corn?

The layout inside Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union branches was almost the same. Led by a maid, Lu Ye entered a private room to wait, as usual drinking several pots of Spiritual Tea...

This time, the man who came to trade with him looked to be about thirty, cultured and refined.

This time, Lu Ye sold four pieces of origin magnetic ore, leaving only six pieces remaining in his possession.

He also dealt with the storage sacks of the four individuals from Nine Stars Sect, including the Young Sect Master. He had carried these four storage sacks for some time now, and while he didn't need to pay much attention to three of them, as they likely contained nothing valuable, Lu Ye sold them to the mercantile union for a total of fifteen Spirit Stones...

He had sold storage sacks before; they weren't worth much, because opening them carried risks. Low-level cultivators didn't have much of value, so Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union typically offered five Spirit Stones for one.

Of course, one could also opt to pay the mercantile union to unlock the restriction lock, and whatever was found inside the storage sack was entirely dependent on luck and chance.

Good luck might bring a fortune, while bad luck could mean a total loss.

As for the storage sack of the Young Sect Master of Nine Stars Sect, Lu Ye would never sell it cheaply. That individual surely had some valuable items.

After stating his demands, the union side readily agreed. They couldn't care less where your storage sack came from; they only cared about making money by providing services.

In the entire Spirit Stream battlefield, Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union was a peculiar entity, belonging to no single faction.

The union's manager led Lu Ye to a secret room, where he met an elderly cultivator, then left.

This elderly cultivator specialized in unlocking restriction locks, having a remarkable talent for locksmith work, almost magical. Such people had a specific name in the cultivation world.

Locksmith!

Lu Ye brought out the storage sack of the Nine Stars Sect Young Sect Master, which the elderly cultivator examined for a moment before quoting a price.

Lu Ye paid without hesitation and then waited quietly.

In just half an hour, a light flashed in the hands of the elderly cultivator, who handed the storage sack back to Lu Ye, saying, "All done."

Lu Ye took it without checking the contents and took out the tiny bell-shaped Spiritual Artifact, requesting, "Please help me unlock the restrictions on this item as well!"