

A Record 291

Chapter 291: Enemy Reinforcements

High up in the sky, the battle between the most powerful forces for both sides had also reached white-hot intensity.

The swordsman by the name of Lu Ji was standing in mid-air, and his robes were flapping audibly in the wind. Sword qi was surging throughout the entire area over 10,000 feet in front of him, and countless streaks of swordlight of different colors had converged in one place, forming what appeared to have been a pond of sword qi in the air.

Directly across from Lu Ji was a vast expanse of pristine white light, within countless translucent snow lotus flower projections were in full bloom, releasing a floral aroma that reached far and wide.

In the area where the two places were connected, sword qi and floral projections were clashing incessantly, sending powerful energy fluctuations erupting in all directions.

It was as if there were countless pairs of flower scissors ravaging the sea of flowers, but it also looked as if there were countless crystalline flowers constantly blunting the edges of the flower scissors.

It was quite a splendid sight to behold, but it was just as perilous as it was beautiful, and any cultivators below the Golden Immortal Stage would've been torn to shreds if they were to get between the pair of combatants.

As for the two combatants themselves, it appeared as if they weren't doing much, but in reality, both of them were rapidly burning through their immortal spiritual power, and if either side were to run out of immortal spiritual power, they would immediately be overwhelmed by the sword array or the floral sea unleashed by the other.

"You're clearly not a member of the Holy Puppet Sect, so why are you willing to go so far for them? We can give you just as much compensation as the Holy Puppet Sect has. As long as you're willing to stay your hand, you'll be compensated accordingly," Lu Ji said as he continued to control his sword array.

Yun Ni had used her Transient Guild mask to adopt an extremely seductive female appearance, and she giggled, "There's no need for such a strong and handsome sword immortal like yourself to talk about compensating me. If you're willing to come into my snow lotus flower and have a good time with me, I'd even be willing to turn around and fight the Holy Puppet Sect by your side!"

Despite her carefree facade, she was actually quite concerned about the current situation. Her opponent's power level was on par with hers, and if things were to continue like this, it was very difficult to say what the outcome of this battle was going to be.

"If you're unwilling to accept my goodwill, then you can die!" Lu Ji harrumphed coldly.

As soon as his voice trailed off, he made a strange hand seal with one hand, then pointed it at the hilt of his sword, and the sword instantly released a draconic roar.

The pond of sword qi before instantly began to churn violently, and all of the sword qi came together to form a rainbow-colored wyrm that pounced directly at Yun Ni.

Yun Ni had also switched to a different hand seal, and countless white flower petals rose up from within the vast snow lotus flower field before her, forming a floral wave that surged toward the oncoming sword qi wyrm.

Meanwhile, the scar-faced man by the name of Xue Han was situated several thousand kilometers away, and yellow light was pouring incessantly out of his sleeves, forming a series of yellow halos that flew directly forward.

The yellow halos descended upon the gray-robed daoist priest puppet, which swept its horsetail whisk through the air to release countless translucent white threads that spread through the surrounding area like translucent steel needles to keep all of the yellow halos at bay.

At the same time, the puppet removed the silver gourd strapped to its waist with its other hand before tossing it up into the air.

The silver gourd immediately rose up into the sky, rapidly swelling to almost the size of a house during its ascent. The spirit patterns on its surface also began to glow brightly as bursts of dull thunderclaps rang out from within.

Immediately thereafter, the stopper of the gourd was abruptly removed, and it released a flurry of silver lightning directly at Xue Han, illuminating the entire sky with silver radiance.

At the same time, blue light flashed behind the daoist priest puppet, and Bai Fengyi rushed out of the blue light before sweeping her sleeves through the air to conjure up a pair of giant blue light barriers that hurtled toward Xue Han from two different directions, one from the left and one from the right.

Xue Han was completely unfazed as he raised a hand in an unhurried manner, and a yellow bead rose up into the air before exploding to release countless specks of yellow light that encompassed the entire area within a radius of over 1,000 feet around him.

The blue light barriers and the silver lightning arrived in unison, yet they were completely kept at bay by the yellow light as if it were an impregnable fortress.

Bai Fengyi's face was looking rather pale. Xue Han was far more powerful than her and the daoist priest puppet, and even the two of them combined were only just barely able to keep him occupied.

However, thankfully, the Holy Puppet Sect had gained a clear upper hand in the battle taking place on the main island, so as long as she and Yun Ni could keep the two enemy Golden Immortals occupied until the outcome of the battle on the main island was decided, then they would've been successful in their defense.

Inside the yellow light, Xue Han wasn't struggling in the slightest as he said with a mocking sneer, "If you're trying to stall us in order to buy time for the other cultivators of your sect, then I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you."

He flipped a hand over as he spoke to summon a palm-sized dark azure linen pouch, upon which was embroidered the character for "fortune" in an ancient script, and it didn't appear to have been remarkable in any way.

He laid a hand onto the pouch while chanting an incantation, and the empty pouch immediately swelled like a balloon, with countless little bulges appearing on its surface as if it had been crammed full with beans.

A hint of foreboding instantly welled up in Bai Fengyi's heart upon seeing this, and she hurriedly injected more power into the pair of blue light barriers to exert more pressure on Xue Han.

However, the mocking sneer on Xue Han's face only grew more pronounced, and in the next instant, the opening of the linen pouch abruptly sprang open at his behest as countless pea-like azure beans came flooding out of the pouch before raining down upon the main island of the Holy Puppet Sect.

Upon landing on the ground, all of the azure beans rapidly swelled in size before taking on the form of warriors clad in suits of azure armor.

Their height and appearance were no different from the average person, but all of them were identical in appearance. Furthermore, all of them wore the same wooden expression, and their bodies were riddled with patterns that were glowing with azure light. The only thing that set them apart was the weapons that they wielded, of which there was a great deal of variety.

Before long, thousands of these azure-armored warriors had appeared all over the main island to engage the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators and puppets in battle.

These warriors moved extremely quickly and were far more agile than the average puppet, and they were able to quickly adapt to their environment, regardless of whether they were fighting in the mountains or in the rivers.

The Holy Puppet Sect cultivators were greatly alarmed to see so many new opponents appearing on the battlefield at once, and the tide of the battle was quickly turning against their favor.

All of a sudden, it was the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators who were forced onto the back foot.

In contrast with the chaos unfolding on the main island, the surrounding array islands had been completely abandoned by the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators.

After all, all of the spirit stones and treasures were on the main island, and now that the main island had been exposed, no one was going to waste any more time and effort attacking the array islands.

"I didn't think the enemy would deploy Dao Warriors into the battle," Han Li mused as he observed the main island from afar with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

"It looks like the Holy Puppet Sect is truly in severe trouble," Qilin 9 sighed.

While the two of them were speaking with one another, Qi Heng emerged from the entrance of the round pagoda with a grim look on his face, then cupped his fist toward Han Li's duo in a salute as he said, "There's no need to defend this array island any longer, seniors. Please go to the main island to join the battle there, and I'll be with you shortly."

As he was speaking, he took a subtle glance at Han Li, and a peculiar look flashed through his eyes.

Han Li paid no heed to this as he exchanged a glance with Qilin 9 before nodding in response.

They were being hired by the Holy Puppet Sect, and according to the rules of the Transient Guild, they had to carry out the requests of those who had hired them.

Thus, the two of them heeded Qi Heng's call and flew toward the main island.

They had only just flown several hundred kilometers when they heard a burst of loud rumbling ring out from behind them, and they hurriedly turned to discover that the giant puppet on the array island had suddenly begun to move.

It had stepped into the sea and was wading through the water toward the main island, churning up massive waves as it did so.

All of the giant puppets on the other array island that hadn't been destroyed were currently also converging toward the main island.

At this moment, on the plaza on the main island, several hundred azure-armored Dao Warriors and several dozen Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators were locked in battle against several dozen Holy Puppet Sect cultivators and close to 100 silver-armored puppets. Many of the surrounding buildings had already been razed to the ground, and the area was littered with dismembered body parts, presenting a grisly sight to behold.

Meanwhile, Bai Suyuan had also been forced to one corner of the plaza alongside a Holy Puppet Sect elder and around a dozen disciples by over 100 Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators.

At this moment, she was holding a silver longsword in one hand, and there was a white jade bracelet around her other wrist. The life-saving talisman given to her by Yun Ni was already pressed against her wrist, and she could activate it any moment with an injection of magic power.

At this moment, she was looking up at the sky with a concerned expression, and the white jade bracelet around her wrist was releasing a white halo that encompassed her entire body. Furthermore, she had also put on a white veil garment that was releasing specks of silver light outside of her original clothes.

On her belt beneath the veil garment was a square azure peachwood talisman that was riddled with glowing spirit patterns.

The peachwood talisman was a gift from Bai Fengyi, and it was a defensive treasure of a very high caliber, one that could withstand an all-out attack from an early-True Immortal cultivator.

However, it would only be able to withstand that single attack, after which its usefulness would be severely diminished, or it could be disabled altogether, so she wasn't going to use it unless she absolutely had to.

A tall Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivator was staring intently at Bai Suyuan as he yelled, "That masked woman is carrying a bunch of really strong treasures! Let's take her down and split everything among us!"

Greedy looks appeared in the eyes of all of the surrounding Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators upon hearing this, and all of them began to converge toward that corner of the plaza.

As a result, the chaotic plaza was plunged into even more chaos and disarray.

Chapter 292: Saved

In the face of all of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators charging toward her, Bai Suyuan made a hand seal with one hand while slashing her sword upward, and countless silver threads instantly shot out of the tip of her sword before flying in all directions.

The space in the wake of the silver threads twisted and blurred, and three Body Integration cultivators instantly had their bodies completely dismembered, having been caught off guard by the attack.

A string of sharp clangs rang out as all of the surrounding Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators hurriedly adopted defensive measures to keep the silver threads at bay, not daring to get any closer.

Right at this moment, a streak of black light flew through the air overhead, following which a figure wielding an inky-black spear was revealed.

The figure was giving off the aura of a Grand Ascension cultivator, and he was swooping down toward Bai Suyuan like lightning.

Bai Suyuan's reactions were quite sharp, and she immediately pierced her sword directly upward to strike the tip of the oncoming spear.

However, to her surprise, the black spear abruptly melted into a liquid form, then flowed down the silver longsword toward her arm.

At the same time, her silver longsword was fizzling incessantly as if it were being severely corroded, and plumes of white smoke were rising up amid erratic flashes of spiritual light.

Bai Suyuan was quite startled by this, and she hurriedly tried to shake the black liquid off her sword, but the liquid was unexpectedly sticky and continued to flow toward the hilt of the sword, despite her best efforts to keep it at bay.

In this dire situation, she decisively tossed the longsword aside, then retreated back to over 1,000 feet away.

However, right at this moment, a burst of yellow light erupted out of the ground, then transformed into a thick vine that was enveloped in azure light before attempting to wind itself around her legs and her waist.

The white veil garment that she was wearing instantly began to glow with dazzling white light, conjuring up a light barrier to keep the vine at bay.

Meanwhile, Bai Suyuan summoned a white handkerchief with a flick of her wrist before waving it at the azure vine.

There was a crescent-shaped moon embroidered onto the white handkerchief, around which were a series of cloud-like spirit patterns that were rippling with moonlight.

As she swept the handkerchief through the air, the spirit patterns on the handkerchief began to glow brightly, releasing faint moonlight that surged along the azure vine to ensnare it tightly.

Immediately thereafter, the light on the handkerchief flashed at Bai Suyuan's behest, and the entire azure vine was instantly turned to stone before being reduced to dust by a gentle sweep of her hand.

The Grand Ascension cultivator that was charging toward her stopped in his tracks upon seeing this, seemingly a little wary of Bai Suyuan's treasures.

The greed in the eyes of the other Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators became even more pronounced at the sight of her formidable treasures, but many of them had moved back to open up some distance between her and themselves.

They could see that she still had many trump cards up her sleeve, so it definitely wasn't a good idea to rush in head-on. Hence, everyone was waiting for her to be worn down before they swooped in for the kill.

Bai Suyuan swept her gaze across her surroundings, and her heart immediately sank.

The situation was far from encouraging. Most of the Holy Puppet Sect's elders and disciples were either dead or severely wounded, and at this rate, they weren't going to be able to hold off the enemy for much longer.

A gim look appeared in her eyes upon seeing this, and she injected a wisp of magic power into the talisman that was adhered to her wrist.

The talisman immediately began to release golden light that enveloped her entire body, and she abruptly vanished from the spot.

However, almost at the exact same moment, the space nearby shuddered, and a golden light barrier appeared. A humanoid figure crashed into the light barrier before falling to the ground, revealing itself to be none other than Bai Suyuan.

After falling to the ground, she immediately scrambled to her feet, then swept a hand through the air to send the white handkerchief revolving around her.

There was an alarmed look in her eyes, and she hurriedly looked around to find that all of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators were also looking very surprised, as if no one had any idea when this light barrier had been set up.

Right at this moment, a one-eyed elderly man with gray scales all over his face emerged from the back of the crowd. He was wearing a black cloak, and he cackled in a raspy voice, "This girl is mine, so I suggest all of you get back if you know what's good for you!"

Everyone immediately turned to discover that the old man was a True Immortal cultivator, so all of them had no choice but to do as they were told.

The most powerful Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators present aside from the old man were only at the Grand Ascension Stage, so no one dared to oppose him.

"You certainly don't see someone with the Moonlight Immortal Physique every day! I have a dual cultivation method that suits your constitution very well," the old man chuckled as he stroked his own chin while sizing up Bai Suyuan with a lustful look in his eyes.

Bai Suyuan couldn't help but shudder as a hint of disgust welled up in her heart, and she unconsciously tightened her grasp on the white handkerchief in her hand.

The old man licked his lips at the sight of this subtle gesture of hers, and he chuckled, "Resist all you want! It won't be any fun if you give up right away."

As soon as his voice trailed off, a gray talisman flew out of his sleeve with a flick of his wrist before adhering itself to Bai Suyuan's forehead in the blink of an eye.

The talisman was moving far too quickly for her to react, and her entire body was completely immobilized, while her magic power circulation also stagnated.

The one-eyed old man reached out toward Bai Suyuan with a sinister smile.

Even if he didn't reap any other spoils from this trip, Bai Suyuan alone would've already been an extremely prized acquisition.

Right as his hand was about to come into contact with Bai Suyuan's clothes, a loud thunderclap suddenly rang out in the sky, following which a burst of golden light plummeted out of the heavens before transforming into a shimmering golden flying sword.

A loud thump rang out as the flying sword pierced through the golden light barrier with ease, and the light barrier wasn't even able to slow it down in the slightest.

The old man was very alarmed by this, and he hurriedly darted back several thousand feet before coming to a stop, sending around a dozen Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators and azure-armored Dao Warriors toppling to the side as he did so.

A sharp clang rang out as the golden longsword pierced into the ground, unleashing powerful shockwaves that sent Bai Suyuan and all of the cultivators and puppets around her flying back through the air.

Immediately thereafter, two streaks of light descended in front of her out of the sky, revealing themselves to have been none other than Han Li's duo.

The one-eyed old man could see that Han Li and Qilin 9 were both True Immortals who weren't any less powerful than him, and he immediately fled the scene, not daring to linger any longer.

"What a coward!" Qilin 9 harrumphed coldly as he picked up his nine star golden sword and cast his gaze toward the fleeing old man, but displayed no intention of going after him.

Yun Ni was still locked in battle against Lu Ji in the sky, and despite the intensity of her battle, she had made sure to keep an eye on the main island this entire time. As soon as she noticed that Bai Suyuan was being targeted, she immediately used a secret technique to transmit a message to Qilin 9, imploring him to protect Qilin 11.

Qilin 9 and Han Li had only just arrived on the main island at the time, and upon receiving this message from Yun Ni, he immediately realized who Qilin 11 was, and thus, he had hurried onto the plaza with Han Li to save her.

Han Li took a glance at the immobilized Bai Suyuan, and even though he had already guessed that Qilin 3 was most likely none other than Yun Ni, he was still left feeling a little perplexed about why Bai Suyuan had come on this mission when she was only at the Grand Ascension Stage.

He raised a hand and gently wiped it over Bai Suyuan's forehead, releasing a burst of azure light that removed the gray talisman with ease.

Bai Suyuan shuddered and stumbled slightly before steadying herself, having been freed from the talisman's restraints.

She immediately approached Han Li's duo, then cupped her fist toward them in a salute as she said, "Thank you, fellow daoists."

Han Li and Qilin 9 merely nodded in response without saying anything.

The surrounding Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators naturally didn't dare to attack them, but the azure-armored Dao Warriors had no such inhibitions, and after eradicating the nearby Holy Puppet Sect cultivators, they immediately converged toward Han Li's duo.

In the blink of an eye, Han Li was surrounded by over 100 azure-armored Dao Warriors, all of which lashed out at him with their weapons.

A layer of golden scales appeared over Han Li's fists as he spun rapidly on the spot like a spinning top while simultaneously throwing punches in all directions to unleash a vast array of golden fist projections.

None of the azure-armored Dao Warriors were able to withstand more than a single blow, exploding into pieces as soon as they came into contact with any of the golden fist projections.

The pieces of the destroyed azure-armored Dao Warriors erupted through the air like shrapnel, punching large holes into the bodies of the Dao Warriors that were still yet to be eradicated.

At a rough visual estimate, Han Li determined that the physical constitution of these azure-armored Dao Warriors was roughly on par with that of the Golden Dao Warriors that he had fought against in the past, but these ones were faster and more agile.

At the same time, these Dao Warriors also seemed to have possessed stronger vitality, able to continue attacking without slowing down in the slightest even if their bodies had already been severely ravaged.

While Han Li continued to destroy more of the oncoming Dao Warriors, he was looking around with a hint of disappointment in his eyes. These Dao Warriors were just ordinary specimens, and there weren't any primary beans among them. Otherwise, he would've had another primary bean to plant.

Around two hours later, not only had the number of people on the plaza not decreased, it was only increasing further and further, with streaks of light rapidly converging from all directions.

The Holy Puppet Sect was in a dire situation, and all of its remaining forces were converging toward the plaza on the main island.

Chapter 293: Mystery Solved

A burst of dull rumbling rang out as a giant puppet that was close to 10,000 feet tall stepped over a mountain situated in front of the plaza, then staggered through the masses of azure-armored Dao Warriors en route to the plaza.

It was clear that the journey had been quite rough, as evidenced by the fact that many parts of its enormous body had already been severely ravaged, and a huge hole had appeared on its chest, while a large chunk of the giant silver blade that it was wielding was also missing.

Before it had even set foot onto the plaza, it was swarmed by over 100 azure-armored Dao Warriors that attacked it from all directions.

These attacks wouldn't have been able to inflict much damage, but having already endured so much on the way to the main island, the giant puppet was already a spent force, and it didn't take long before one of its massive legs was snapped down the middle with an almighty crack.

As a result, the giant puppet fell heavily onto the ground, and its massive head rolled toward the plaza like a huge boulder.

All of the cultivators in its path hurriedly took evasive measures, but some weren't quick enough to get away in time, and they were dealt severe injuries as they were sent flying back through the air.

The puppet's head continued to roll forward without displaying any signs of stopping, and Han Li finally decided to step in, rising up into the sky before sweeping a sleeve through the air to release a burst of white light, which flew in a circle around the puppet's head.

A resounding boom rang out as the seemingly unstoppable head was drawn to an abrupt halt, having sunk deep into the ground.

The round pagoda on the head was also already in ruins, revealing a series of long-dead bodies that belonged to the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators that had been controlling the giant puppet.

Han Li swept his gaze over the wreckage, then suddenly raised an eyebrow as he swept a sleeve through the air to release a burst of azure light, which removed a chunk of the pagoda's wall before dragging Qi Heng out from under the rubble.

Qi Heng's face was deathly pale, and blood was flowing out of all of his orifices, but he was still alive.

It appeared that he had been reduced to such a sorry state as he had severely overexerted his magic power while controlling the giant puppet.

Han Li descended out of the sky, then fed Qi Heng a yellow pill before pressing a glowing azure hand against Qi Heng's chest to help him digest and absorb the pill.

After that, he laid Qi Heng flat against the ground, and several elders and disciples immediately converged around him with concerned expressions.

Han Li turned to exchange a glance with Qilin 9, following which both of them took a glance up at the sky in unison, and they certainly weren't encouraged by what they saw.

There really wasn't much suspense left when it came to the battle taking place on the main island. With the assistance of the Dao Warriors, the cultivators of the Ubiquitous Pavilion had already seized the absolute upper hand, and the eight giant puppets of the Holy Puppet Sect had all been taken out.

Furthermore, over half of their True Immortal cultivators were either dead or wounded, while several of the Transient Guild cultivators were also missing, so they either fled the battle or met their demise as well.

In other words, if the Holy Puppet Sect didn't have any more tricks up its sleeve, the battle would draw to a conclusion before the outcome of the battle between the Golden Immortals in the sky was decided.

Right at this moment, a burst of yellow light exploded violently in the sky, sending bursts of terrifying shockwaves and gusts of ferocious wind sweeping several hundred kilometers in all directions.

A white figure then plummeted out of the sky before falling toward the plaza.

Close behind the white figure was a blue figure that hurriedly descended out of the heavens, then caught the white figure with a pained look on her face right before it smashed into the ground.

The white figure was none other than the daoist priest puppet that had been fighting alongside Bai Fengyi earlier, and it had been knocked out of the sky after shielding her from a particularly vicious attack from Xue Han.

Han Li took a glance at the puppet to find that the light in its eyes had completely faded, and its body wasn't giving off any spiritual fluctuations. Furthermore, a large hole had been blown straight through the center of its chest, clearly indicating that its core had been completely destroyed.

A grim look flashed through Bai Fengyi's eyes as she stowed the puppet away, then quickly made her way toward Bai Suyuan.

Bai Suyuan hesitated momentarily before approaching Bai Fengyi, and Han Li was rather befuddled upon seeing this.

Is there some type of connection between them as well?

"Are you alright?" Bai Fengyi asked.

Bai Suyuan nodded in response as she gestured to Han Li and Qilin 9 as she replied, "I'm fine. These two fellow daoists from our Transient Guild saved me in the nick of time."

Bai Fengyi cast her gaze toward Han Li and Qilin 9 upon hearing this, then gave the two of them a slight nod.

Han Li became even more convinced that Bai Suyuan had to have been related to this deputy sect master of the Holy Puppet Sect in some way upon seeing this.

"Li Feiyu..."

Right at this moment, a voice suddenly rang out in Han Li's mind, and he was rather alarmed, but remained composed as he subtly inspected the area around him. As it turned out, Qi Heng had woken up and was staring directly at him.

"Don't be alarmed, Fellow Daoist Li. I'm the one who's speaking to you right now."

With that, it was confirmed that Qi Heng was the voice communicating with Han Li through voice transmission.

"How did you recognize me?" Han Li asked.

"I don't recognize you, but I recognize that black wheel treasure of yours. I had the misfortune of facing that treasure in the Profound Ice Mountain Range, and in the end, you destroyed my physical body, with only my nascent soul managing to escape," Qi Heng explained.

Han Li was enlightened upon hearing this, then replied, "Ah, so you were the one back in the Profound Ice Mountain Range. No wonder I felt a sense of familiarity when I first saw you. Are you seeking vengeance for what happened back then?"

"That was originally my intention, but not only have you come to assist our Holy Puppet Sect in its hour of need, you also saved my life just now, so I can't bring myself to resent you any longer. Besides, with your powers, even if I were at my peak, I would still be no match for you," Qi Heng replied as a wry smile appeared on his face.

"I'm only assisting your Holy Puppet Sect for the sake of the mission reward, and all I did just now was dig you out from under some rubble, so if you want to seek vengeance, then you're free to do so. However, prior to that, I really want to know why you tried to abduct that disciple of our Blaze Dragon Dao," Han Li said.

"To be honest, that was all just a misunderstanding. That female disciple is an ancestor of Deputy Sect Master Bai, and I was acting under orders to bring her to the Holy Puppet Sect," Qi Heng explained with a resigned expression.

"In that case, why did you ambush her in the Profound Ice Mountain Range instead of visiting our sect and openly declaring your intentions?" Han Li asked.

"Deputy Sect Master Bai instructed me to carry out this task in secret, but I was never told why," Qi Heng explained.

Han Li was left feeling rather speechless upon hearing this. Such a minor misunderstanding had almost led to the demise of a True Immortal, and it felt a little absurd.

A thought then suddenly occurred to him, and he hurriedly asked, "What is your deputy sect master's name?"

"Bai Fengyi," Qi Heng replied.

Han Li turned to take a surprised glance at the woman in the blue palace dress upon hearing this.

Right at his moment, another resounding boom rang out in the sky, and a streak of light came plummeting down toward the plaza from the heavens.

As the streak of light landed on the ground, Yun Ni was revealed with a section of one of her sleeves torn away to reveal a part of her arm, but she didn't appear to have sustained any injuries.

Bai Fengyi and Bai Suyuan hurriedly rushed over to her, and the latter asked with a concerned expression, "Are you alright, Mistress?"

"I'm fine. The other Golden Immortal came after me with a sneak attack, but I was able to escape just in time," Yun Ni replied.

"It's all my fault for not being able to keep him at bay," Bai Fengyi said with a dejected expression.

"Now's not the time to be pointing fingers and assigning blame. At this point, the outcome of the battle is already largely decided, and there's not much point in continuing this battle," Yun N sighed.

"The main island of the Holy Puppet Sect is a mechanical array in itself, and if worse comes to worst, I'll activate the array and detonate the entire main island to send it sinking to the seabed. I won't let these bastards get anything!" Bai Fengyi declared in a cold voice.

"If that coward had agreed to come with me, there's no way we would be in this situation right now. What a foolish bastard he is! He's lived for so long, yet he's still dumber than a dog! Even after so long, he's still hung up over a bunch of insignificant things," Yun Ni grumbled as a hint of displeasure flashed through her eyes.

A faint smile appeared on Bai Fengyi's face upon hearing this.

"It's quite a rare occurrence to hear you cuss, Mistress. I thought that after my departure, that would pave the way for you two to come together, but alas... "

Her smile gradually faded as she spoke, and in the end, she couldn't help but heave a forlorn sigh.

"You are the only one who did nothing wrong in all of this, yet you had to bear all the consequences, and that's extremely unfair on you. Regardless of what happens here today, I'll make sure that the two of you can escape safely," Yun Ni said in a decisive voice.

Bai Fengyi shook her head in response. "I owe a great debt to the Holy Puppet Sect and its sect master, so I definitely can't leave at a time like this. Just take Suyuan with you when you go. Now that I've met her, I leave this world with no regrets."

An urgent look appeared on Bai Suyuan's face upon hearing this, and she was just about to raise objections when Lu Ji and Xue Han descended from above, hovering high up in the sky as they looked down at everyone with cold expressions.

With the most powerful combatants from both sides appearing on the scene, the battle that was taking place on the main island gradually drew to a halt.

All of the remaining Holy Puppet Sect cultivators formed a circle around Bai Fengyi, while the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators didn't dare to get too close to Bai Fengyi and Qilin 3, so they surrounded the entire plaza alongside the azure-armored Dao Warriors.

Chapter 294: The Restricted Area and the Golden Immortal Puppet

"Fellow daoists of the Transient Guild, you've already done more than enough for the Holy Puppet Sect. Are you really going to lay down your lives for a sect that has nothing to do with you? If you leave now, we won't stop you," Xue Han declared in a booming voice that was audible across the entire main island.

Bai Fengyi's heart immediately sank slightly upon hearing this, and the remaining Transient Guild members also began exchanging uncertain glances with one another.

They had already fulfilled their mission by protecting the array islands to the best of their abilities, but they had failed due to factors outside of their control, and several of them had most likely already met their demise, while the rest of them were at a very real risk of meeting the same fate.

The reward offered by the Holy Puppet Sect was indeed quite substantial, but it certainly wasn't worth dying for.

Right as everyone was hesitating about how to proceed, Yun Ni's voice suddenly rang out in their minds.

"The compensation issued by the Holy Puppet Sect is already in my storage bracelet, and they've given twice the promised reward. All you have to do to receive the reward is defend the Holy Puppet Sect to the best of your abilities."

Everyone's eyes immediately lit up upon hearing this, but it didn't take long before they calmed down, and someone transmitted their voice to Yun Ni in response.

"The compensation is indeed very alluring, but it won't matter for anything if we're dead. If we keep this up, there's a very good chance that we'll all be wiped out here."

"Rest assured, I naturally won't let all of you die here. I'll issue the order to retreat at the right opportunity, but prior to that, anyone who dares to flee will be deemed to have disobeyed orders. I'm sure you all know what the consequences of such a transgression are," Yun Ni threatened in a cold voice.

Some of the Transient Guild members were still reluctant to stay, but no one dared to leave in the face of the combination of the increased reward and Qilin 3's threats.

Right at this moment, an earth-shattering boom suddenly rang out from behind the plaza of the Holy Puppet Sect, and a pillar of white light erupted into the sky before disintegrating.

"Looks like Fellow Daoist Zhong Luan has already succeeded on his end," Xue Han chuckled.

A hint of elation also flashed through Lu Ji's eyes as he nodded in response, while all of the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators were extremely alarmed and infuriated by this turn of events.

"Something's happened at the restricted area! How could this be? I left five elders there!" Bai Fengyi exclaimed.

"Haven't all of the most precious treasures of the sect already been transferred elsewhere? Is there something important in the restricted area?" Yun Ni asked.

"There's a Golden Immortal Stage immortal puppet in the restricted area, and it's the most precious treasure of our entire Holy Puppet Sect," Bai Fengyi replied with a wry smile.

"If you had such a thing, then why didn't you use it before?" Yun Ni asked with a perplexed expression.

"The immortal puppet has been passed down in our Holy Puppet Sect for a very long time, but it's not a complete immortal puppet as it's missing a suitable core. Hence, it can only be used when fused with

our sect master, in which case it can display mid-Golden Immortal Stage power. Outside of that, it's constantly being nurtured in a spirit pond in the restricted area," Bai Fengyi explained.

As soon as her voice trailed off, seven or eight more pillars of white light erupted into the heavens in unison from behind the plaza.

"The restrictions in the restricted area are about to be broken!"

An alarmed look appeared on Bai Fengyi's face, and she was just about to fly away in that direction when she was stopped by Yun Ni.

"Don't panic. You still need to oversee proceedings here, and if you leave, all of the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators will be without a leader. If that happens, I don't think they'll even be able to withstand a single wave of attacks," Yun Ni cautioned.

Bai Fengyi forced herself to calm down upon hearing this, then turned to several of the nearby Holy Puppet Sect elders as she instructed, "Elder Yu, Elder Fu... Go and reinforce the restricted area right now!"

Meanwhile, Yun Ni's gaze roamed back and forth between Han Li and Xiong Shan for a moment before she finally decided, "Worm 15, go and give them a hand."

Han Li nodded in response before flying away with the three Holy Puppet Sect elders.

"Qilin 9, assist Deputy Sect Master Bai to keep that scar-faced man occupied to the best of your abilities. I'm going to use a secret technique to try and wound the other Golden Immortal," Yun Ni said as she turned to Xiong Shan.

Xiong Shan also nodded in response before making his way over to Bai Fengyi's side.

"Looks like it's time for the final battle, Fellow Daoist Lu Ji," Xue Han chuckled as he watched the four True Immortals depart from the battlefield.

He then turned to the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators and the azure-armored Dao Warriors down below as he yelled, "Everyone, victory is imminent! Charge!"

His declaration was met with a resounding collective war cry as all of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators surged toward the center of the battlefield, and with that, the final stage of the battle commenced.

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Meanwhile, a string of resounding booms were ringing out incessantly within a well-concealed valley behind the plaza on the main island.

As Han Li and the others arrived outside the valley, they saw eight pillars of white light erupting straight into the heavens, forming a vortex of white light up above.

"The array has already been breached! Perhaps the enemy has already entered the restricted area!" a Holy Puppet Sect elder with white hair and a white beard said in a concerned voice.

"We have to enter the valley right away," another azure-robed elderly man yelled in an urgent voice.

The four of them immediately flew into the valley, and along the way, they were greeted by the sight of toppled mountains, severed rivers, felled trees, and countless bodies that belonged to Holy Puppet Sect disciples and elders.

"Elder Lu!"

The azure-robed elder who was flying at the forefront suddenly shuddered as a pained look appeared on his face.

Everyone looked down to find that portly old man with a benevolent-looking face had been pinned to a cliff face up ahead by a longsword.

That man was none other than the azure-robed elderly man's closest friend in the sect.

However, there was no time to stop and grieve, and everyone continued to fly toward the place in the valley where the pillars of light had risen up.

Before long, they reached the end of the valley, where a waterfall that was over 1,000 feet tall awaited them.

The waterfall was cascading down from above, sending water splashing in all directions to form a series of arched-bridge-like rainbows in the air.

Beneath the waterfall was a large green pond, within which was an octagonal white stone altar, and that was what the eight pillars of white light were rising up from.

Outside the pond, a battle was still taking place. A tall elderly man with his entire body drenched in blood was fighting alongside an eight-armed puppet against three Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, and it was clear that the elderly man wasn't going to be able to last much longer.

Scattered around them were the remains of around a dozen Holy Puppet Sect cultivators and puppets, all of which were in horrific condition.

Out of the three Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, only one of them was at the True Immortal Stage, while the other two were both at the Grand Ascension Stage, so they were extremely alarmed by the arrival of four enemy True Immortals and hurriedly took a glance at the vortex up above.

The azure-robed elder was furious, and he immediately charged toward one of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, who slashed a crimson halberd through the air to release a streak of crimson light, which swept directly toward the azure-robed elder's throat.

At the same time, he made a strange hand seal with his other hand, and a layer of crimson light appeared over his body.

"You're not getting away!" the azure-robed elderly roared in a furious voice, then knocked the halberd aside with his longsword, and a burst of azure light erupted out of the sword's blade, instantly elongating by several feet to decapitate the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivator.

At the same time, the azure-robed elder swept his other sleeve through the air to release a burst of flames that enveloped his opponent's head before incinerating it into ashes along with his nascent soul.

The other two Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators didn't dare to hesitate any longer upon seeing this, and they hurriedly fled in opposite directions.

One of them was only able to fly about 1,000 feet before he was pinned down firmly against the ground by a giant lion puppet.

As for the only True Immortal among the trio, his entire body was enveloped in a layer of hazy starlight, and with just a single punch, he was able to knock back the Holy Puppet Sect elder that was standing in his way, following which he leaped over 10,000 feet up into the air to escape from the valley.

Everyone was just about to give chase when the tall elderly man suddenly stumbled and began to fall forward.

Han Li immediately appeared beside the elder to support him, but he was looking in the direction that the Ubiquitous Pavilion True Immortal had fled in with a peculiar look on his face.

The tall elderly man's body was riddled with over 100 wounds that were deep enough to expose bone, and not a single spot on his body wasn't drenched in blood.

However, he paid no heed to the severity of his own injuries as he pointed at the vortex in the sky with a trembling finger and said in an urgent voice, "Hurry... Go... Someone has already entered the restricted area!"

The three Holy Puppet Sect elders' expressions changed drastically upon hearing this.

The azure-robed elder pierced through the head of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivator pinned under the giant lion puppet with his sword, making sure to destroy his nascent soul as well, then returned to the tall elderly man's side before feeding him a pill.

After taking the pill, the elderly man was finally unable to cling onto consciousness any longer, and he slumped to the ground in an unconscious state.

Meanwhile, the severely ravaged eight-armed puppet stumbled over to the elderly man's side before falling apart into a pile of scrap materials.

The azure-robed elder hesitated momentarily, then approached Han Li as he said, "Fellow daoist of the Transient Guild, may I trouble you to go after the person that just escaped? It doesn't matter if you manage to successfully kill him or not, just make sure that he won't come back here."

Han Li took a glance at the vortex in the sky, and he knew that the three elders were about to enter the restricted area to pursue the intruder. As an outsider, he naturally couldn't be allowed into the restricted area, and that was why he was being diverted away.

With that in mind, he nodded in response. "Sure."

After that, he vanished from the spot, flying away as a streak of light.

Following his departure, the azure-robed elder turned to his two companions as he said, "Leave the snow lion puppet behind to look after Elder Fang. We have to go in right away."

The other two elders nodded in response, and the three of them flew into the vortex in the sky in unison.

Meanwhile, Han Li had only just flown out of the valley before stopping in his tracks.

He stood in mid-air as he swept his gaze across his surroundings, and a faint smile appeared on his face as he flew toward a forest outside the valley.

Chapter 295: Great Universe Origin Arts

Before long, Han Li descended onto a plot of empty land in the forest, then looked around momentarily, following which a faint smile appeared on his face.

"You're quite a cunning fellow, aren't you? You're waiting for the battle in the secret area to be decided, ideally with both sides taking each other out so you can sneak back in and reap the spoils," Han Li mused as he cast his gaze toward a huge tree several thousand feet away.

As soon as his voice trailed off, an imposing figure slowly emerged from behind that tree, and it was none other than the True Immortal cultivator that had fled earlier.

"Isn't it rather unwise for you to have pursued me here on your own, Fellow Daoist?" the burly figure chuckled, following which his hands balled up into tight fists.

At the same time, a string of loud cracks and pops rang out from within his body, and he had suddenly grown noticeably taller.

"If I hadn't come on my own, you most likely wouldn't have revealed yourself so easily," Han Li chuckled.

He took a step back as he spoke, then adopted a casual fighting stance as he cast his gaze toward the burly figure.

"You sound very confident!"

The burly figure lunged forward like lightning, reaching no more than 1,000 feet away from Han Li in the blink of an eye before throwing a vicious punch.

Seven blue specks of starlight emerged on his chest and his abdomen, and his arm suddenly thickened significantly. His fist had also turned as translucent as jade, and it was hurtling through the air with tremendous force, leaving a trail of ripples that were visible even to the naked eye in the space in its wake.

Han Li raised an eyebrow as a layer of golden scales appeared over his arm, and the sound of metallic grating rang out from the joints of his fists as he met the burly figure's fist with a punch of his own.

A resounding boom rang out as a burst of tremendously violent power erupted in all directions, sweeping up ferocious gusts of wind that tore through many of the surrounding trees, sending them tumbling down onto the ground while countless wood scraps and branches flew through the air.

The burly figure was sent flying back, and after landing on the ground, he stumbled back around a dozen steps before steadying himself. Meanwhile, Han Li hadn't moved back even a single step, and a surprised look appeared in the burly figure's face as he exclaimed, "You're also a Profound Immortal?"

"Why do you sound so surprised?" Han Li asked with a smile.

"No wonder you dared to trade punches with me in such a casual manner. Looks like I was too careless," the burly figure mused.

A Profound Immortal would normally be able to gain a significant advantage if they could get close to a cultivator of the same cultivation base, but of course, that didn't apply if the other person was also a Profound Immortal.

"It seems like you didn't go all-out with that punch just now. How about you show me your full power?" Han Li asked.

Upon realizing that Han Li was also a Profound Immortal, the burly figure's overbearing attitude completely faded, and he replied in a softer tone, "If you wish to see my full power, then I'm happy to oblige."

As soon as his voice trailed off, the seven specks of blue starlight on his chest and abdomen appeared again, but right after that, more specks of blue light emerged on his shoulders, arms, and waist as well.

To his surprise, Han Li was able to count 18 specks of starlight on the burly man's body, and that wasn't even counting the ones that could've been present on his back.

His brows furrowed slightly, and this time, he didn't wait passively for the burly man's attack. Instead, he took a step forward, and a layer of golden scales appeared over his arm as seven specks of blue starlight appeared on his body as well.

"That's the Big Dipper Origin Arts!" the burly man exclaimed upon seeing this.

However, neither of them displayed any intention of stopping as they traded another punch with an earth-shattering boom.

An enormous cloud of dust swept through the air in all directions, and all of the trees in a radius of close to 10,000 feet were completely destroyed, opening up a huge, barren area around the two combatants.

Both Han Li and the burly man were sent flying back through the air with their feet plowing massive trenches into the ground, and only a distance of several thousand feet had been opened up between the two of them did they each draw to a halt.

Han Li sprang out of the trench beneath his feet, hovering in mid-air as he looked down at the burly man and asked, "Would you like to continue, Fellow Daoist?"

The burly man remained standing on the spot without making any moves, and a massive black wheel had appeared right above him, revolving rapidly while releasing formidable law fluctuations.

He took a glance up at Han Li, then heaved a faint sigh as he lowered his fists, and the specks of blue light all over his body also faded away.

"Who are you? How did you manage to obtain the Big Dipper Origin Arts?" the burly man asked with a perplexed expression.

"Before I answer that, why don't you tell me how you were able to open up so many profound acupoints with your Big Dipper Origin Arts?" Han Li asked with a smile.

Instead of answering Han Li's question, the burly man asked, "What do you plan to do to me?"

"What do you want me to do with you, Fellow Daoist Cold Flame?" Han Li countered through voice transmission.

The burly man shuddered upon hearing this and an incredulous look appeared on his face. Only after staring at Han Li for a long while did he ask through voice transmission, "Are you... Fellow Daoist Han Li?"

"You're a smart man, Fellow Daoist Cold Flame."

Han Li made no attempt to deny his identity.

"Truth be told, the Big Dipper Origin Arts is a cultivation art that I obtained by chance in a set of ancient ruins, and I don't believe it's being passed down anywhere else. Hence, my chances of encountering someone else who's also using this cultivation art are slim to none.

"On top of that, I felt a sense of familiarity from you, and that led me to the conclusion that you were Fellow Daoist Han Li. However, I didn't think that you would reach the mid-True Immortal Stage so soon after your ascension. Your rate of progress is truly astounding," Patriarch Cold Flame sighed.

Instead of making small talk or catching up with Patriarch Cold Flame, Han Li said, "Indeed, it seems that we were fated to meet here, but before we talk about anything else, I'll have to ask you to answer my question about how you managed to open up so many immortal acupoints."

A slightly hesitant look appeared on Patriarch Cold Flame's face upon hearing this.

"I'm sure you're not considering trying to deceive me, are you? You've already seen how formidable my spiritual sense is, and we are acquaintances of sorts, so don't force me to use a soul search technique on you," Han Li warned in a meaningful voice.

Patriarch Cold Flame took a glance at the Heavy Water True Axis that was hanging above his head, then composed himself as he replied, "I wouldn't dare to try and deceive you, Fellow Daoist Han. Truth be told, the Big Dipper Origin Arts that you're cultivating is related to body refinement cultivation art that I obtained by chance from a set of ruins. After I mastered the cultivation art, I compiled it into a simplified version for the descendants of my sect to cultivate."

"Oh? In that case, what is the name of the complete cultivation art that you discovered?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"It's called the Great Universe Origin Arts. You can have a copy of it if you'd like."

Patriarch Cold Flame flipped a hand over to produce a gray stone slab as he spoke, then handed it to Han Li without any hesitation.

Han Li made a grabbing motion to release a burst of azure light, which enveloped the stone slab, and only after verifying that the slab hadn't been tampered with did he draw it to himself before carefully inspecting it.

The stone slab was only around the size of a human hand, and it was riddled with tiny antiquated text on both sides.

Han Li inspected the stone slab for a moment, following which his brows suddenly furrowed slightly as he asked, "If I'm not mistaken, the cultivation art recorded on this stone slab is incomplete, right?"

"I'm afraid that can't be helped, Fellow Daoist. I only managed to obtain half of the Great Universe Origin Arts at the risk of my own life in those ruins, and I don't have the other half," Patriarch Cold Flame hurriedly explained.

Han Li could tell that he didn't appear to have been lying, so he flipped a hand over to produce a jade slip, then pressed it against the stone slab before making a hand seal, and a few seconds later, a copy of the cultivation art had been made.

After that, he withdrew his Heavy Water True Axis with a wave of his hand, but instead of returning the stone slab to Patriarch Cold Flame, he tossed him the jade slip.

Patriarch Cold Flame's expression remained unchanged as he watched Han Li stow the stone slab into his storage bracelet while he caught the jade slip that was tossed at him.

"You've killed a bunch of people on the island, so I'm sure you must've already reaped some substantial spoils, right? I advise you to leave the island right away. The Holy Puppet Sect's defeat is already sealed, but there's no telling how ferocious its retaliation could be in its final moments, so it would be unwise for you to stay," Han Li advised.

"Thank you for your advice, Fellow Daoist, I was just about to leave," Patriarch Cold Flame said as he cupped his fist in a salute.

Indeed, he was planning to leave after this foray into the restricted area anyway.

Furthermore, once the Holy Puppet Sect was destroyed, the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators would've completed their mission, and they would've no longer been bound by the Ubiquitous Pavilion.

Even if a battle didn't immediately break out, there was inevitably going to infighting over treasures and resources, so leaving before that would spare Patriarch Cold Flame a great deal of trouble.

Han Li took a meaningful glance at Patriarch Cold Flame. Even back in the Spirit Domain Realm, he had felt Patriarch Cold Flame to have been quite a shrewd and cunning man who was more adaptable than the native immortals of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region.

That thought only flashed through his mind for a moment before he turned and flew back toward the restricted area.

Patriarch Cold Flame looked on at Han Li's departing figure, and he was holding onto the jade slip in his hand so tightly that the tips of his fingers were slightly pale.

Only after Han Li had completely disappeared out of sight did he heave a long sigh of relief before murmuring to himself, "That was way too close! Why did I have to run into him of all people? Thank heavens I managed to get out of that one unscathed! I really have to be more careful when taking on missions like this from now on."

After that, he stowed the jade slip away, then summoned a silver flying boat with a sweep of his sleeve before leaping onto it and flying away.

Chapter 296: Intense Clash

Before long, Han Li was already back in the valley.

He looked up to find that the eight pillars of light were still standing, as was the giant vortex in the sky.

The elder with the Fang surname was also still laying beside the pond in an unconscious state, while the snow lion puppet was on guard duty by his side, and it displayed no reaction to Han Li's arrival.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li descended out of the sky, yet before he landed on the ground, he felt a burst of formidable spatial fluctuation erupting out of the white vortex above the pond.

He hurriedly stopped in his tracks, then looked up to discover that the vortex had begun to revolve rapidly while radiating dazzling white light.

Immediately thereafter, a figure plummeted out of the vortex with their body riddled with wounds that were deep enough to expose bone, while their azure robes were completely drenched in blood.

He appeared to have been in just as horrific a condition as the unconscious Elder Fang, and as soon as he spotted Han Li, he immediately yelled in a frantic voice, "Save me, Fellow Daoist!"

Han Li only took a brief glance at him before turning his gaze to the vortex with tightly furrowed brows.

Another burst of white light surged within the vortex, following which a black figure emerged from within.

The black figure was holding a long black blade, and he chortled, "Why did you abandon your companion? Weren't you talking about avenging Elder Lu not long ago?"

Han Li's gaze immediately fell upon the long black saber in the black figure's hand, and he discovered that it was none other than the saber that had been previously used by Fang Pan before being sold by him in the Transient Guild.

"Oh? Looks like there's someone else here. I wasn't really satisfied yet anyway, so I'll take care of you as well," the black figure chuckled as he spotted Han Li.

Beneath the figure's black hood was a slightly yellow face with some type of metallic headgear on his forehead, and it was none other than one of the three leaders of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, Zhong Luan.

With a flick of his wrist, he slashed his black saber toward Han Li.

It was a very casual-looking swipe, but in the instant that the saber was sent sweeping through the air, all of the spirit patterns on its surface instantly lit up, following which hundreds of extremely formidable black saber projections erupted through the air, with the majority of them hurtling toward Han Li, while only a minority were aimed at the azure-robed elderly man.

The azure-robed elderly man was horrified to see this, and he injected what little remained of his immortal spiritual power into a pair of silver balls before hurling them forward, and the silver balls instantly transformed into a pair of silver puppets that situated themselves in front of him.

At the same time, a suit of already severely ravaged azure wooden armor appeared over his body amid a flash of azure light.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly as he flipped a hand over to summon an azure longsword, then slashed it at the oncoming blade projections.

Hundreds of azure sword projections instantly erupted out of the longsword before scattering far and wide to clash against the black blade projections.

A string of metallic clangs rang out as the black blade projections clashed against the azure sword projections, all of which exploded violently into a vast expanse of black and azure light.

All of a sudden, the azure-robed elderly man yelled, "Look out, Fellow Daoist! That black blade..."

Before he had a chance to finish, a peculiar turn of events began to unfold.

The black blade projections had already disintegrated into specks of black light, but they quickly reformed into more black blade projections that continued to hurtle toward Han Li and the azure-robed elderly man, and their power hadn't been diminished in the slightest.

The two silver puppets in front of the azure-robed elderly man were wielding jointed steel whips that they lashed out at the black blade projections with, but they were no match for the oncoming blade projections, which shredded their whips before punching countless holes straight through their bodies to destroy them on the spot.

Immediately thereafter, the suit of azure armor that the elderly man was wearing also began to tremble violently in the face of the black blade projections, looking as if it could be torn apart at any moment.

This suit of azure armor was his final line of defense, and if it were to also be vanquished, then his demise would immediately follow.

In this dire situation, the nearby snow lion puppet suddenly pounced forward, landing in front of the azure-robed elderly man before swiping its front paws through the air to unleash countless claw projections.

As soon as the claw projections came into contact with the blade projections, they were immediately destroyed, but most of the blade projections were also nullified, while the snow lion puppet withstood the rest with its body.

A relieved look appeared on the azure-robed elderly man's face upon seeing this, but he then threw up a mouthful of blood before slumping to the ground.

In contrast, Han Li was far more calm and collected.

With a flick of his wrist, he swung his longsword through the air, unleashing a string of sword projections that formed an azure sword barrier around him.

The black blade projections struck the sword barrier in a relentless barrage before exploding and reforming over and over again.

Only after many cycles of this did the blade projections finally run out of spiritual power and disintegrate for good.

Up to this point, only a few seconds had passed since Zhong Luan unleashed his initial attack.

"Looks like you're not quite as useless as those idiots! Very good. Let's see how long you can last!" Zhong Luan cackled as he licked his own lips.

As soon as his voice trailed off, he closed both of his hands around the hilt of his saber, and bursts of black light began to appear over his body.

Immediately thereafter, a layer of black light appeared on the surface of the black saber alongside a series of thin golden lines, forming numerous antiquated runes that were giving off terrifying energy fluctuations.

Gusts of ferocious wind were swept up in the surrounding air as the nearby world's origin qi surged toward the black saber in a relentless wave.

With the injection of the world's origin qi, the golden lines on the black saber glowed brighter and brighter, as did the runes on its surface, which looked as if they were about to emerge from the blade itself.

Waves of black and golden light surged through the surrounding area, carrying tremendous law power fluctuation that caused the entire space to tremble and quiver.

Han Li's brows furrowed tightly with befuddlement upon seeing this.

It was the same black saber, but this man was able to unleash far more formidable power with it than he and Fang Pan had been capable of, and Han Li couldn't help but wonder if he was the saber's original owner.

Right at this moment, Zhong Luan suddenly let loose a loud roar, then spun around in mid-air, using the momentum of his pirouette to slash his saber at Han Li.

A sharp clang rang out as a black and golden saber projection that was over 10,000 feet in length came crashing down from above, devouring all of the world's origin qi in the area while giving off a burst of terrifying spiritual pressure.

A solemn look appeared in Han Li's eyes as he made a hand seal with one hand while slashing his sword diagonally upward with the other.

The spirit patterns on the longsword were glowing brightly as it released wave upon wave of surging azure light, which transformed into dozens of azure sword projections in the blink of an eye.

Immediately thereafter, all of the sword projections combined as one to form a huge azure sword projection that was over 1,000 feet in length before hurtling toward the giant saber projection.

The sword projection was threatening to tear the very space apart, and an earth-shattering boom rang out in the sky as the pair of enormous blade projections clashed against one another.

Devastating tremors were sent sweeping across the entire main island of the Holy Puppet Sect, to the point that all of the people battling on the plaza were stopped cold in their tracks for a moment before the battle resumed.

Even Yun Ni and the Ubiquitous Pavilion Golden Immortals detected the disturbance taking place on the main island, but the battle that they were engaged in was too perilous for them to get distracted, so none of them released their spiritual sense to check what was happening.

"Looks like the Holy Puppet Sect still has some more tricks up its sleeve, but I wonder if they'll be able to contain a madman like Zhong Luan," Xue Han chuckled with a relaxed expression.

Beside the pond in the valley, the azure-robed elderly man was struck by a burst of tremendous shockwaves resulting from the clash, and he threw up a large mouthful of blood before finally falling unconscious.

In the instant before he lost consciousness, his heart was filled with immense regret.

After witnessing Han Li's power, it occurred to him that if he had chosen to bring Han Li into the restricted area with him instead of diverting him away, perhaps the other two elders wouldn't have died, and the immortal puppet wouldn't have been taken.

However, there was no point in crying over spilled milk, and at this point, he could only pray that Han Li would be able to overcome his opponent.

An earth-shattering boom rang out as Han Li was sent plummeting out of the sky before crashing into the pond in the valley.

Dozens of enormous waves instantly erupted out of the pond, while a massive crater was smashed into its bottom, causing the water level in the pond to drop rapidly, revealing large patches of the pond bed as a result.

As for Zhong Luan, he was also sent flying back by the clash and involuntarily rose up much higher into the sky.

A grim look appeared on his face, and after steadying himself, he immediately shot back toward the pond in the valley at an astonishing speed while slashing his saber downward once again.

Right at this moment, a burst of loud buzzing suddenly rang out from within the pond, immediately following a black wheel treasure emerged from the water while revolving rapidly.

The Time Dao Rune on the surface of the wheel was glowing brightly as it rose up with half of the water in the pond, ascending toward Zhong Luan with incredible power.

Chapter 297: Destined to Cross Paths

Zhong Luan let loose a low roar as the muscles on his arms bulged, mustering up even more power as he swung his long black saber down onto the Heavy Water True Axis with ferocious might.

A resounding boom rang out, and a jolt of numbness shot through Zhong Luan's arms. A burst of indescribable power surged along his saber, and he was stopped cold in his tracks as if he had hit a wall.

Immediately thereafter, bursts of tremendous water law powers surged toward him, forcing him back and threatening to send him flying.

Zhong Luan's expression immediately changed slightly as he felt the unique aura of the Heavy Water True Axis, and even though he was clearly on the back foot, he suddenly burst into laughter.

"I've been looking for you everywhere, but never did I think I would be able to find you here, Han Li! You've saved me a trip to the Ancient Cloud Continent!"

As soon as his voice trailed off, his eyes suddenly turned an inky-black color, and he opened his mouth to release a glowing black thread that vanished into his saber in a flash.

The black saber began to tremble violently as a layer of translucent black light appeared over its surface, and its weight was instantly multiplied by severalfold.

Zhong Luan let loose a thunderous roar as wisps of black mist began to slowly seep out of his body, and he pressed his saber down with both hands, managing to force back the Heavy Water True Axis.

At this point, Han Li had already emerged from the pond, and he made a beckoning motion to draw the Heavy Water True Axis back to him as he hovered in mid-air while holding his azure longsword in one hand.

He cast his gaze toward Zhong Luan as he asked in a cold voice, "How are you related to Fang Pan?"

Even though he had no idea who this person was, the fact that he was able to unleash the true power of the black saber coupled with the fact that he knew Han Li's true name indicated that he had to have been related to Fang Pan somehow.

After all, Han Li had been using false aliases this entire time in the Immortal Realm, so no one should've been aware of his true name.

The three people that had attacked him all those years ago had been killed one after another, but that person that was able to control those mysterious chains from afar, the original owner of Fang Pan's black saber, and the person who had instructed Fang Pan to come after him were still all people that he had to be wary of.

There was a very good chance that this person was the original owner of the black saber, but Han Li still didn't know how he was tied to Fang Pan.

"That junior martial brother of mine may be an incapable fool, but I had thought that it would've at least taken a late-True Immortal cultivator to kill him, but the information that I gathered from the Ubiquitous Pavilion told me that you're only an early-True Immortal Stage Profound Immortal. I will admit, you do have some powerful tricks up your sleeve," Zhong Luan remarked as he looked at Han Li from afar.

Han Li's heart stirred slightly upon hearing this, and he said, "So you're Fang Pan's senior martial brother. Have you come to avenge him?"

"I have better things to do with my time than to avenge that idiot, but in order to take you down, he paid a heavy price to borrow this Black Emperor Immortal Slaying Blade of mine, only for you to turn around and sell it. Do you not owe me an explanation for this?" Zhong Luan asked in an unhurried voice.

"That saber of yours is indeed a rare treasure, and my intention was to return it to its original owner, and that's why I put it up for sale in the Transient Guild to see if anyone recognized it. It looks like my efforts paid off and you were reunited with your saber, but there's no need to thank me," Han Li replied.

"It sounds like I owe you a favor if you put it that way! However, the fact that my junior martial brother was so determined to kill you indicates that you must be harboring some important secrets. On top of that, I have to recover the Origin Separation Law Chains on your body for my master, so you'll have to die. Rest assured, I'll grant you a swift and painless death to repay you for returning my saber!" Zhong Luan chuckled.

As soon as his voice trailed off, the black mist that was revolving around him instantly swelled to inundate his entire body.

Immediately thereafter, a gentle breeze blew past, and the black mist was scattered to reveal nothing inside.

Han Li had already released his spiritual sense to encompass the entire surrounding area, but in the instant before the mist was scattered, he was still of the opinion that Zhong Luan had been concealed within it.

In the next instant, a cloud of black mist suddenly began to take shape in the air behind him, and before it had even fully formed, a black saber shot out from within it, piercing directly toward the back of Han Li's chest.

Han Li's Heavy Water True Axis instantly appeared behind him at his behest, and a loud clang rang out as the tip of the black saber struck the Heavy Water True Axis, grating against it with an ear-piercing screeching sound.

Zhong Luan slowly emerged within the black mist with a cold smile on his face, and the wisps of black mist around his black saber formed a series of extremely thin black needles that shot forth along the tip of the saber, piercing straight through the gaps in the Heavy Water True Axis to attack Han Li.

A layer of golden scales instantly appeared all over Han Li's body amid a flash of golden light, and a string of crisp clangs rang out as the black needles struck Han Li's golden scales before being repelled and shattering into black mist again.

Han Li immediately swung around as he slashed his longsword through the air, and with a single sweep of his sword, he was able to slice Zhong Luan's body cleanly in half.

However, Zhong Luan merely grinned at him before the two halves of his body disintegrated into a cloud of mist.

A sense of foreboding welled up in Han Li's heart upon seeing this, and he instantly flew back tens of thousands of feet to get away from the cloud of black mist.

However, before he had even drawn to a halt, he suddenly felt a cold sensation running down his back, as if there were a slippery snake slithering down his spine.

He hurriedly made a hand seal, and the protective spiritual light around his body instantly expelled the thing that was adhered to his back, revealing it to have been a small cloud of black mist that resembled a living creature.

There were countless soft feelers that were as thin as strands of human hair on its surface, and those feelers were writhing incessantly, trying to get close to him and burrow their way into his body.

Han Li reached out to conjure a glowing azure palm projection to seize control of the cloud of black mist, and he carefully inspected it to discover that it contained an extremely faint hint of law powers.

It was so faint that he was unable to determine exactly what attribute the law power was, but thankfully, he hadn't withdrawn the layer of protective golden scales over his body, and that had kept the black mist at bay.

All of a sudden, the space around the cloud of black mist began to tremble, and wisps of black mist emerged out of thin air, following which Zhong Luan's body re-emerged without any warning.

The piece of black cloth that was obscuring his face had been removed, revealing a large yellow-skinned face, and he opened his mouth to release a thread of translucent black light that shot directly toward Han Li's face at an alarming speed.

Han Li immediately slashed his longsword diagonally upward, instantly shattering the black thread into a burst of black light upon contact.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he immediately shot back in retreat.

As soon as he did so, another black thread appeared at the spot where he had originally been standing, and it began to fly toward him again.

As expected, those black threads can also reform after being destroyed, just like those blade projections from earlier.

All of a sudden, the newly formed black thread was somehow able to connect itself to the azure longsword in his hand from afar, and it darted up along the blade of the sword before shooting into the palm of his hand.

Han Li felt a slight numb sensation in his hand, and he immediately began to inspect his own internal condition, but he didn't notice anything else amiss aside from that fleeting sensation of numbness in his hand.

However, that only made him feel even more uneasy.

Right at this moment, he detected several auras approaching from afar through his spiritual sense, but he was unable to determine whether these were allies from the Holy Puppet Sect or more enemies from the Ubiquitous Pavilion.

Han Li's brows were tightly furrowed, and after a brief moment of contemplation, he made a beckoning motion with both hands to stow his azure longsword and Heavy Water True Axis away.

Regardless of whether the people approaching the scene were from the Ubiquitous Pavilion or the Holy Puppet Sect, he was planning to leave this place.

His opponent's abilities were extremely troublesome to deal with, and he seemed to have been able to wield some type of law power related to mist. Furthermore, Han Li was unable to go all-out here, and that placed him at a severe disadvantage.

With that in mind, he made a hand seal with both hands, and arcs of silver lightning sprang out of his body, forming a huge lightning array around him in the blink of an eye.

A loud thunderclap rang out as several thick bolts of silver lightning erupted out of the center of the array, and in the next instant, Han Li vanished from the spot, leaving behind only a faint charred odor in the air.

"Interesting! I guess I can play with you for a while longer," Zhong Luan mused with a cold smile, following which his body disintegrated into a cloud of black mist once again.

.....

Meanwhile, the battle on the plaza on the main island was still raging, but the commotion had already died down significantly.

Almost all of the Holy Puppet Sect's puppets had already been destroyed, while the majority of the surviving disciples were carrying injuries and had been trapped in a far smaller encirclement than before.

What was quite moving was that despite the dire nature of the situation, not a single one of the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators surrendered or fled the battlefield. Instead, all of them continued to fight on with determination in their eyes.

One reason for this was that all of the people that had chosen to remain behind in the sect had already resolved themselves to defend the sect with their lives, while the other contributing factor was that all of them had relatives that had already been evacuated from the sect.

As long as those people remained safe, they were able to fight without any qualms.

In contrast, the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators hadn't been able to gain much of an upper hand at all. Not only had the majority of them already perished or sustained injuries during the battle, many of them had departed in advance just like Patriarch Cold Flame, so there weren't all that many of them left on the plaza.

At this point in the battle, everything had slowed down significantly.

All of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators who had managed to survive to this point were quite cunning, and they knew that a cornered beast was more dangerous than anything else, so they couldn't afford to be overly aggressive in this situation.

Instead, it was much better to maintain the status quo and slowly grind down the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators so that they could secure an easy victory later.

As a result, the Dao Warriors released by Xue Han had become the main force that was battling the remaining Holy Puppet Sect cultivators, and they were at the forefront of the encirclement.

Chapter 298: Imminent Defeat

Somewhere among the Holy Puppet Sect cultivators, Bai Suyuan's clothes had already been completely stained black by blood, and the drenched fabric was clinging to her body, further accentuating her alluring curves. Even the pair of white earrings that she was wearing were covered in a layer of dried blood.

However, most of the blood on her body belonged to Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, and there was also a lot of blood that had splashed onto her from nearby Holy Puppet Sect cultivators. The only injury that she was carrying was a gash on her right arm from a sneak attack from a Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivator.

The attack had been aimed at her heart, but the peachwood talisman gifted to her by Bai Fengyi had saved her in the nick of time, diverting the attack away so that it had only managed to graze her arm.

She had retreated to the center of her crowd and taken her final regenerative pill to replenish her magic power, but she wasn't actually as fearful and uneasy as she had been at the beginning of the battle.

In the past, she had only ever been involved in small-scale battles that couldn't even have held a candle to a battle of this magnitude and this degree of brutality.

Not only did Bai Suyuan possess exceptional aptitude, she had been forced to fend for herself from a young age, so she was certainly no vulnerable little girl, and the battle unfolding around her had brought the cold and decisive side of her personality to the fore.

Not only that, but her cultivation bottleneck was also beginning to display signs of budging, and she was confident that if she could survive this crisis, then she would definitely have been able to make a breakthrough after no more than 20 years of seclusion.

However, was this a crisis that she would be able to survive?

A grim look appeared in her eyes as this thought crossed her mind, and she looked up at the sky to find that a massive hole with a that was over 1,000 feet wide had been torn into the dark clouds up above, and it extended for several thousand kilometers.

Inside the hole, countless streaks of sword qi were surging incessantly, plunging the world's origin qi into complete disarray while relentlessly tearing at the very space itself amid bursts of deafening rumbling.

An enormous snow lotus flower projection could be seen slowly revolving within the hole, and glowing white petals that were giving off powerful energy fluctuations were flying off the lotus flower one after another.

A massive sword projection was bearing down upon the snow lotus flower projection with tremendous might, but it was unable to break through, and an impasse had ensued between the two.

Yun Ni was standing at the center of the lotus flower projection, making a string of hand seals while chanting an incantation that struck the listener with a sense of intoxication. Furthermore, there was a pink glow in her eyes, and her entire body was enveloped in a hazy floral projection, giving her an extremely seductive and unforgettable appearance.

As her chanting continued, countless barefoot women stepped out from the stamen of the snow lotus flower projection before springing up into the air from the flower's petals.

A massive artwork was unfurled within the clouds, and there were hundreds of barefoot women depicted within it. There were colorful silken belts around their waists that spread open like the canopies of peacocks as the women danced through the sky, presenting an incredibly beautiful sight to behold.

If a mortal had even witnessed this scene, even for just a split second, their soul would've come straight out of their body and entered the artwork to become sustenance for the dancing celestial maidens.

Even cultivators who were lacking in cultivation base or mental fortitude wouldn't have fared much better than mortals if they were to get too close to the artwork. At the very most, they would've only been able to last a few moments before their souls were also sucked out of their bodies.

Directly in front of the artwork stood Lu Ji with his sword held in his hand.

His clothes were smooth and pristine, not creasing in the slightest despite the ferocious wind blowing through the sky.

At this point, he appeared more like a peerlessly sharp sword than a human, and it was as if no amount of wind, no matter how fierce, would be able to crease his clothes even in the slightest.

Instead of looking at the artwork in the sky, his gaze was focused intently on Yun Ni inside the snow lotus flower projection. A layer of faint pink coloration had already appeared in his left eye, but his right eye was completely clear and unchanged.

Meanwhile, in the sky above the sea several thousand kilometers away, a nine star golden sword that was over 10,000 feet in length was glowing radiantly as it came crashing down upon Xue Han.

The sword left layers of golden sword projections in its wake alongside countless specks of dazzling white light, resembling a spectacular golden starry sky.

Xue Han's robes were tattered in many places, but there was a mocking look on his face as he sneered, "It's very impressive that a pair of mere True Immortals like yourselves were able to keep me occupied for this long, but unfortunately, you won't get to live to tell the tale."

As soon as his voice trailed off, he swept a hand through the air to summon a large black flag that was around 10 feet tall.

The flag was torn in many places, and at the center of it was embroidered a series of golden vortex designs, around which were numerous antiquated runes that were giving off an incredibly formidable aura.

Xue Han closed both of his hands around the shaft of the flag, then chanted an incantation before swinging the flag through the air.

The surface of the flag immediately began to ripple like the surface of a turbulent sea, and the runes that were embroidered onto its surface flew out one after another, releasing dazzling golden light that obscured the entire sky.

At the same time, the golden vortexes on the flag also began to rapidly revolve as if they had sprung to life, then flew out of the flag as well to send bursts of tremendous force surging through the air.

As soon as the golden starry sky came into contact with these vortexes, it was immediately sucked in by the immense suction force that the vortexes were releasing.

As the starry sky rapidly diminished in size, the aura of the nine star golden sword was also becoming weaker and weaker, and by the time it actually fell upon the flag, the sword had been reduced to no more than 1,000 feet in length. In its weakened state, it was barely even able to move the flag before it was repelled.

Qilin 9 raised a hand to catch the golden sword, and he couldn't help but stumble backward. He had expended so much immortal spiritual power that his immortal spiritual power circulation was becoming a little stagnant.

"How are you doing?" he asked as he turned to the figure beside him.

"I'm just about ready to go. You can take some time to recover now," Bai Fengyi said as she rose to her feet with a slightly pale complexion.

Just now, she and Qilin 9 had attacked Xue Han together, and Xue Han had intentionally displayed a façade of weakness to lure her in, only to unleash a golden ring treasure that struck her on her left shoulder. She was able to avoid major injury thanks to her protective treasures, but her immortal spiritual power was scattered, rendering her temporarily unable to draw upon it.

Thankfully, Qilin 9 had stepped in to protect her, allowing her the respite that she needed to take some pills and recover somewhat from her injuries.

At this moment, her left sleeve had already been completely torn away, and a large gash had also been torn into her collar, revealing a large patch of fair and delicate skin.

As a result, one could see that she was wearing layers of strapping around her chest beneath her robes, restraining the voluptuous peaks there to make them appear smaller and more compact.

She switched positions with Qilin 9 so that she was facing Xue Han, while Qilin 9 tossed a couple of pills into his own mouth before focusing on digesting them.

Xue Han gave a cold harrumph, and he was just about to close in on Bai Fengyi when his expression suddenly changed slightly, and he cast his gaze toward the main island of the Holy Puppet Sect.

After a brief hesitation, he raised a hand to stow the black flag away, then sped away as a streak of light, quickly vanishing into the distance.

An alarmed look appeared on Bai Fengyi's face upon seeing this, and she hurriedly set off in pursuit.

If she couldn't keep Xue Han occupied, then he would be able to join forces with Lu Ji, and that would place Yun Ni in grave peril.

However, as a True Immortal, there was no way that she could catch up to Xue Han, and he arrived beside Lu Ji in what seemed like no more than the blink of an eye.

A hint of wariness appeared in Xue Han's eyes at the sight of the alluring artwork in the sky, and he took a glance at the peculiar pink coloration in Lu Ji's left eye before calling out to him in a low voice.

Despite the low pitch of his voice, it was extremely penetrative, and the pink coloration in Lu Ji's left eye instantly faded away as both eyes returned to their original clarity.

Immediately thereafter, he took a stride forward as he raised his longsword, and he swept his joint index and middle fingers of his other hand over the blade of the sword to release streaks of pristine white sword qi that transformed into a series of white dragons that revolved around the sword.

It seemed that all of this had come out of nowhere, but in reality, he had been preparing this attack for a long time.

Prior to this, he was on the verge of unleashing the attack, but at that critical juncture, he had fallen prey to Yun Ni's secret technique, and that was why the attack had been delayed up to this point, but it was also exactly because of this prolonged stage of suppression that the attack had accumulated even more formidable power.

All of a sudden, a clear draconic roar rang out, and a streak of white sword qi that was over 10,000 feet in length swept through the heavens. All of the white dragons revolving around the sword also instantly swelled to over 100 times their original size before pouncing at Yun Ni.

All of a sudden, thousands of dragons were surging through the sky, churning up the dark clouds and stirring up gusts of ferocious wind.

Yun Ni's expression remained unchanged as she witnessed all of this from inside her snow lotus flower projections, but she couldn't help but heave an internal sigh.

An ordinary Golden Immortal cultivator would've already lost control over themselves after being exposed to her Illusory Celestial Maiden Artwork for so long. Even if they didn't fall under her control, at the very least, they wouldn't have been able to oppose her any longer.

However, Lu Ji's mental fortitude far exceeded her expectation, and even though it appeared that he had fallen prey to her secret technique, he was able to immediately shut off his six senses to protect his own mind.

If Xue Han hadn't intervened, it would've taken Yun Ni at least several more minutes to completely immobilize Lu Ji, at which point she would've been able to turn her attention to Xue Han, and perhaps this crisis could've been averted, but as things were now...

Chapter 299: I Dare You!

In the face of the formidable army of sword dragons, Yun Ni began to chant an incantation, and the pink coloration in her eyes gradually turned a golden hue, while her aura also underwent a drastic change.

Inside the giant artwork in the sky, the clothes worn by all of the barefoot women gradually blurred before transforming into suits of golden armor, and all of the musical instruments that they were holding also transformed into artifacts such as demon restraining vials and devil vanquishing pestles.

At the same time, the intoxicating music ringing out from the artwork also turned into Buddhist chanting, and in the blink of an eye, the entire complexion of the artwork had changed.

Bright golden light was glowing in Yun Ni's eyes, and all of the golden-armored women on the giant artwork flew out at her behest, forming a huge shimmering golden array in the sky.

A massive female projection that was over 10,000 feet tall appeared at the center of the array, and it bore a very close resemblance to Yun Ni, but it was lacking her seductive allure.

The projection was clad in a suit of golden armor and was wielding a golden sword that it slashed toward the oncoming sword dragons.

A vast expanse of golden light erupted from the golden sword to clash against the streaks of white swordlight, and the golden light exploded violently to illuminate all of the dark clouds in a golden hue, while gusts of fierce wind were sent sweeping in all directions.

Everyone on the plaza below was astonished by what was unfolding up above, and they all stopped what they were doing to look up at the sky.

After a brief impasse, the army of white sword dragons was able to break through the golden light before surging into the golden projection.

A burst of rumbling rang out as the golden projection was instantly split apart down the center, exploding into countless specks of light alongside all of the white dragons.

The sound of tearing fabric rang out, and the giant scroll in the sky was also torn apart down the center, then rapidly shrank down amid erratic flashes of golden light before drifting down from above.

Yun Ni was struck by a sense of tightness in her chest, and she forcibly suppressed the blood that was threatening to gush out of her throat as she stowed away the two halves of the torn scroll.

At this point, Bai Fengyi had already arrived by her side, and she hurriedly approached Yun Ni asked in a concerned voice, "Are you alright, Mistress?"

"I'm fine," Yun Ni replied with a wry smile.

A dejected look appeared in Bai Fengyi's eyes at the sight of Yun Ni's expression, and she heaved an internal sigh.

She knew that Yun Ni had done everything in her power, but the Holy Puppet Sect was simply beyond saving.

However, the inevitability of the outcome made her feel as if a heavy load had been removed from her shoulders, and a bright smile appeared on her face as she said, "Take Suyuan and leave, Mistress. I am honored to have been your disciple this lifetime."

A forlorn look appeared on Yun Ni's face upon hearing this, and she opened her mouth to say something, but couldn't find the words. In the end, she could descend toward the plaza down below with Bai Fengyi.

Lu Ji's expression eased slightly upon seeing this, and he turned to Xue Han before extending a grateful salute.

"You have my thanks."

"Don't worry about it, Fellow Daoist Lu Ji," Xue Han replied with a dismissive wave, then said, "I don't know what Zhong Luan is up to, but he suddenly left the main island and is already outside of my spiritual sensory range."

Lu Ji's expression changed slightly upon hearing this, and he replied, "You were the one who recruited him for this mission. Surely he hasn't been overcome by greed and decided to take that incomplete immortal puppet, has he?"

"I don't think so. His branch of disciples have never been interested in puppetry, so he's probably gone to do something else. In any case, I'll be sure to contact him after everything is said and done to recover that immortal puppet for you," Xue Han assured.

"That would be best. For now, let's eradicate the Holy Puppet Sect," Lu Ji replied in a cold voice.

As soon as Yun Ni and Bai Fengyi descended onto the plaza, they were immediately surrounded by remaining Transient Guild members.

"Fellow Daoist Qilin 3, while it's true that you're the leader of the mission, if you continue to try and force us to stay here and sacrifice ourselves, then don't blame us for resisting your orders!" one of them immediately said.

He wasn't communicating to her through voice transmission. Instead, he had spoken out loud, instantly drawing everyone's attention as he did so.

"Indeed, we've already done everything that can be reasonably expected of us!"

"Even if we raise this matter to the guild's supervisory division, we have a watertight case!"

All of the other Transient Guild members also immediately chimed in with their complaints.

Yun Ni took a glance at Bai Fengyi and Bai Suyuan, then turned her gaze toward the other Transient Guild members as she declared, "This mission is over, you're free to leave as you please now."

She summoned a batch of storage rings as she spoke and handed one out to each Transient Guild member.

After receiving their reward, all of the Transient Guild members briefly inspected the contents of the storage rings with their spiritual rings, and ecstatic looks appeared on their faces before all of them departed one after another, with the exceptions of Bai Suyuan and Qilin 9.

For some reason, they were allowed to leave by the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators and the azure-armored Dao Warriors.

Before long, all that remained on the plaza were Yun Ni's group and what little remained of the Holy Puppet Sect's forces.

Qilin 9's gaze roamed back and forth between Yun Ni and Bai Suyuan, and he appeared to have been rather hesitant.

"You can go as well," Yun Ni sighed.

Qilin 9 was silent for a moment, then cupped his fist in a salute toward Yun Ni before flying away as a streak of light.

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Meanwhile, in an area of the Thunderstorm Sea tens of thousands of kilometers away from the Holy Puppet Sect's main island.

A loud thunderclap suddenly rang out as a pillar of lightning as thick as a water vat crashed down from the heavens, striking the surface of the sea to churn up massive waves and raise a vast expanse of water vapor.

Immediately thereafter, a figure emerged from the lightning, standing on the surface of the water.

It was none other than Han Li, and as soon as he appeared, he immediately released his spiritual sense to encompass the entire surrounding area in a radius of thousands of kilometers.

A few moments later, a hint of befuddlement appeared on his face.

Could it be that he's not coming after me? Wait, no...

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly as he cast his gaze toward a certain direction, and the space several dozen kilometers away began to ripple, following which a cloud of black mist emerged out of thin air before transforming into Zhong Luan.

The befuddlement in Han Li's eyes faded upon seeing this, and he made a hand seal to conjure up another lightning array to teleport himself away.

A mocking sneer appeared on Zhong Luan's face upon seeing this, and he also vanished from the spot as a cloud of black mist.

.....

Back on the plaza, the Holy Puppet Sect had fewer than 1,000 members left, and almost all of them were carrying injuries. At this point, they had lost all hope and had already prepared themselves to sink to the bottom of the sea with the main island.

"You should go as well, Mistress," Bai Fengyi said as she took a long glance at Bai Suyuan.

"Ancestor..."

Tears began to well up in Bai Suyuan's eyes.

"Work hard in your cultivation under Mistress, and don't consider vengeance until you've reached a sufficient cultivation base," Bai Fengyi said as she slipped off her storage bracelet before putting it on for Bai Suyuan.

Bai Suyuan was silent for a moment before nodding firmly in response.

"Are you really not going to come with us? Even if I bring the two of you with me, there's no way those two will be able to stop us as long as I sacrifice some of my cultivation base," Yun Ni said to Bai Fengyi through voice transmission.

Bai Fengyi merely shook her head with a faint smile and offered no response.

Yun Ni could tell that she had already made up her mind, so she latched onto Bai Suyuan's hand and was just about to fly away when a loud voice rang out in the distance.

"You're not getting away!"

Yun Ni was rather taken aback to hear this, and she turned to discover Lu Ji and Xue Han emerging from behind the other Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, all of whom parted to open up a wide path for the two of them.

"Oh? You think you can stop me?" Yun Ni scoffed with a mocking sneer on her face.

Lu Ji's expression remained unchanged as he said in a calm manner, "I can tell that you have close ties with the Holy Puppet Sect, so if I let you leave now, that'll be sure to spell trouble for us down the line."

Xue Han was originally against the idea of facing a Golden Immortal in a battle of life and death, but after hearing what Lu Ji had to say, he also realized that they had no choice but to strike down Yun Ni here.

He knew that it wasn't going to be easy to slay a Golden Immortal even with their combined powers, but that was still a preferable option over having to constantly worry about vengeance from a formidable Golden Immortal like Yun Ni.

"You must really have fallen deeply in love with me if you want to kill me just to keep me. It's a pity that I already have someone I love, so I must go today," Yun Ni said with a seductive smile as she gently tucked some strands of stray hair behind her ear, and all of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators interspersed throughout the azure-armored Dao Warriors were instantly completely enraptured by her charm.

"Don't fall for her seduction!" Xue Han yelled, and his voice wasn't very loud, but it was clearly audible to all of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, who shuddered in unison as they snapped back to their senses before turning to Yun Ni with lingering fear in their eyes.

If Xue Han hadn't snapped them back to their senses, they would've fallen under her control and been reduced to mindless puppets.

"Don't be such a spoilsport. We're significantly outnumbered here, so I was just trying to borrow some people from you," Yun Ni chuckled.

On the surface, she appeared to have been quite relaxed, but internally, she was already considering using that secret technique that would burn through her cultivation base.

"We'll hold them at bay while you get away, Mistress," Bai Fengyi said with a determined expression.

Xue Han immediately burst into laughter upon hearing this, as if he had just been told the most hilarious joke. "You think you can stop us with this ragtag bunch of scrubs? What a joke!"

Before Bai Fengyi had a chance to respond, a thunderous voice suddenly rang out in the heavens.

"I dare you to lay a hand on them!"

Chapter 300: Bad Signs

The voice seemed to have come from somewhere very far away, and it was reverberating incessantly in the sky.

Xue Han and Lu Ji both faltered slightly upon hearing this, and right as everyone was scrambling to see where the voice had come from, a streak of silver light came flying in from afar, dragging a fiery silver tail behind it, much like a comet.

A myriad of emotions welled up in Yun Ni's heart upon seeing this, and Bai Fengyi was slightly dazed for a moment before a hint of surprise appeared in her eyes.

Within the streak of silver light was a silver gourd that was around 70 to 80 feet in size, and it was covered with glowing spirit patterns, giving it quite a remarkable appearance.

A long red rope was tied into a love knot around the tapered section of the gourd, and the two ends of the rope were hanging down and swaying in the wind.

An daoist priest who appeared to have been in his forties was standing on the gourd in a pristine white daoist robe that was flapping in the wind, giving off an air of grace and elegance that was similar to Lu Ji's disposition.

If Han Li had been on the plaza at this moment, he would've been stunned by the sight of the newcomer as the person who was standing on the silver gourd was none other than the seemingly perpetually drunk Elder Hu Yan.

On this day, he had made a drastic change to his usual sloppy appearance. His graying hair had been combed impeccably and arranged into a tall bun under a brand new purplish-golden lotus flower crown, beneath which was a slightly jade face.

His facial hair had also been carefully groomed, and what was particularly noteworthy was that his normally sleepy and murky eyes were incredibly clear and bright at this moment, giving off a sharp gleam that was completely uncharacteristic of the usual Elder Hu Yan.

Tied around the waist of his pristine daoist robe was a green jade belt, hanging from which was a red wine gourd that had also been restored to brand new condition.

A cold look appeared on Lu Ji's face as he cast his gaze toward Daoist Hu Yan, and his longsword, which had already been returned to its scabbard, was drawn out by several inches once again, with its blade reflecting a bright white gleam.

Xue Han's expression changed slightly at the sight of Daoist Hu Yan, and he laid a hand onto Lu Ji's arm to stay his sword. "I know this man. He's one of the 13 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords of the Blaze Dragon Dao, and he's referred to as Daoist Hu Yan."

Daoist Hu Yan was renowned for being an avid wine enthusiast, as well as a master in the arts of pill refinement and puppetry. In his younger days, he would often leave the sect to go on long journeys, but it had been a very long time since he had last left the Ancient Cloud Continent, so Lu Ji didn't recognize him.

However, as an elder of the Ubiquitous Pavilion, Xue Han knew all of the important figures in the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region like the back of his hand, so he was naturally able to identify Daoist Hu Yan right away.

However, he wasn't wary of Daoist Hu Yan for his identity.

The Ubiquitous Pavilion had records on all 13 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords of the Blaze Dragon Dao, and those records included their history, cultivation arts, cultivation, and even their personalities and likes and dislikes. He clearly recalled all of the information that the Ubiquitous Pavilion had on Daoist Hu Yan, and when it came to the assessment of his combat prowess, the Ubiquitous Pavilion's records only contained one word: "Unknown".

Given how incredibly proficient the Ubiquitous Pavilion was at gathering information, there were definitely no more than 10 people in the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region that had such a status in their records, and Daoist Hu Yan was one of them.

This was a clear indication that he was definitely not someone to be easily messed with.

"If you're going to retreat just from a Golden Immortal's verbal threat, then your Ubiquitous Pavilion is hardly worthy of its status in the Northern Glacial Immortal Realm," Lu Ji said in a cold voice.

"Hold on a second, Fellow Daoist Lu Ji. The fact that he's come here on his own indicates that he's most likely made some preparations, so let's watch the situation unfold for now. If he's unwilling to settle this matter peacefully, then we can examine his power together," Xue Han communicated to Lu Ji through voice transmission while also informing him of the Ubiquitous Pavilion's appraisal of Daoist Hu Yan.

Lu Ji's expression remained unchanged upon hearing this, but he didn't immediately lash out, either.

As for the other Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators, they didn't know who Daoist Hu Yan was, but they could tell that he was on the Holy Puppet Sect's side, and he wasn't making any effort to conceal his immense Golden Immortal Stage aura, so everyone knew that he was no to be messed with.

At the moment, it appeared that the Ubiquitous Pavilion held the upper hand in the battle, but the ones that were truly going to decide the battle were still the Golden Immortal cultivators, and now that both sides had two Golden Immortal cultivators each, the situation had naturally taken a drastic turn.

In fact, many of the Ubiquitous Pavilion cultivators were already contemplating retreat.

At the center of the plaza, Yun Ni withdrew the disguise of her Transient Guild mask, and there was a slightly dazed look in her eyes as she looked up at Daoist Hu Yan.

After staring at him for a while, a warm smile appeared on her face.

"You came, after all..." she murmured to herself with a mixture of elation and displeasure in her voice.

In her eyes, Daoist Hu Yan's figure was gradually blurring and overlapping with a younger version of him.

At the time, Hu Yan had been a handsome young man with a perpetually impeccable lotus flower crown on his head, and his white daoist robe was also always pristine, giving him a clean and refined appearance.

Back then, he hadn't been such a heavy drinker, and in the place of that red wine gourd, he had a crimson longsword strapped to his waist, giving him the appearance of a sword immortal more than a daoist priest.

However, later on, that red wine gourd had appeared on his waist, while the crimson longsword was casually strapped to his back, and the sword immortal had turned into a drunken sword immortal that had a more casual and unrestrained flair about him.

He had never been good in matters related to love, and in the love triangle between the three, both he and Bai Fengyi had chosen to run away, while Yun Ni was the only one left actively pursuing an outcome, and she had already lost count of how many years she had been waiting for him.

However, her waiting had finally paid off, and now that he had arrived, he wasn't going to be running away any longer.

Meanwhile, Bai Fengyi was also looking up at Daoist Hu Yan, then turned her gaze to Yun Ni, and a faint smile appeared on her face. In that instant, all of the pent-up guilt and internal conflict in her heart had washed away.

Xue Han took a step forward as he declared, "Dao Lord Hu Yan, need I remind you that your actions are pitting the Blaze Dragon Dao against our Ubiquitous Pavilion?"

"You sure talk big for such a cowardly bastard! There's no need for the sect to intervene, I can take care of this matter on my own," Daoist Hu Yan said in an indifferent voice as he took a disdainful glance at Xue Han.

After that, he removed the wine gourd from his waist and took a swig of wine before sweeping his gaze across the plaza down below.

His brows furrowed slightly as he caught sight of Bai Fengyi, and he murmured to himself in a confused voice, "They don't seem to be as big as I recall..."

Yun Ni couldn't hear what he was saying, but she had a rough idea of what he was referring to judging from the look in his eyes, and her expression immediately darkened slightly.

As for Bai Fengyi, she was feeling a little uneasy under Daoist Hu Yan's scrutiny and unconsciously averted her gaze.

Bai Suyuan had noticed the subtle silent exchanges taking place between the trio, and given what she already knew, she was able to quickly come to some conclusions.

The bastard and coward that Yun Ni had been referring to was most likely none other than Elder Hu Yan.

He's a little old, but he's definitely way more handsome than Elder Li...

As soon as this thought occurred to her, a faint blush immediately appeared on her face, and she couldn't understand why her mind had automatically drawn a comparison between Daoist Hu Yan and Han Li.

Daoist Hu Yan strapped his wine gourd back to his waist, following which he cast a cold gaze toward Lu Ji and Xue Han as he asked, "Are you the ones trying to lay your hands on those fine ladies over there?"

At the same time, the giant silver gourd rapidly shrank down to its original size before returning to his grasp.

"If you want to fight, then let's not waste any time with unnecessary words!" Lu Ji countered as he sprang up into the sky, facing off against Daoist Hu Yan from over 10,000 feet away.

"There's no hurry. It looks like you're enjoying quite a nice numbers advantage here, so how about I give you a taste of your own medicine? I just so happen to have to air out my beans as well. Otherwise, they're about to grow mold," Daoist Hu Yan said with a smile, then made a hand seal with one hand while tipping the silver gourd in his other hand upside-down.

The spirit patterns on the silver gourd began to glow brightly as a burst of white light emerged from the opening of the gourd, following which countless pea-like black beans were poured out onto the ground below.

All of a sudden, close to 1,000 black beans had appeared in the sky, producing a sound that resembled falling rain.

As soon as each bean landed on the ground, it immediately began to glow with black light while swelling rapidly in size, transforming into a giant black Dao Warrior that stood at around 10 feet in height.

These Dao Warriors were far taller than the average person, and they weren't clad in suits of armor. However, each of them was wielding a huge black ax, giving them a very formidable appearance.

These black Dao Warriors were far outnumbered by Xue Han's azure-armored Dao Warriors, but their auras were significantly more powerful, and as opposed to the dazed and wooden expressions on the faces of the azure-armored Dao Warriors, the faces of these black Dao Warriors were far more expressive.

A grim look appeared on Xue Han's face upon seeing this, and thoughts of retreat instantly crept into his mind.

It was clear to him that these Dao Warriors were of a far superior caliber to his own, and at this point in the battle, most of the azure-armored Dao Warriors had already perished, so there was no way that they could contend against their superior adversaries.

Furthermore, with the arrival of Daoist Hu Yan, they had also lost their advantage in Golden Immortal numbers, so there was no point in continuing this battle.