

The Ages 341

Chapter 341 - Fight to the Last Breath

No one spoke on the Aircloud Godcrane. They just wanted to quickly return to the Grand-Orient Sect and turn on the Grand-Orient Barrier.

“Master, is the Grand-Orient Barrier powerful?” asked Tianming.

“The barrier itself is powerful, one of the best in the Grand-Orient Realm. But it requires power to function, and the sect can only bring out a fifth of its power at our current scale,” said Ye Shaoqing.

Tianming nodded, his eyes narrowed into slits. Looking at the mountains and rivers up ahead, he suddenly whispered in Ye Shaoqing’s ears, “Master, are you hiding something from me together with my godfather?”

Ye Shaoqing was momentarily stunned, looking at Tianming with his eyes wide.

“Sure enough. You guys are keeping something from me.” Tianming had already guessed that when he saw his master’s face. His main suspicion came from his observation of Li Wudi. Whenever he looked at Li Wudi, he didn’t seem like someone that would waste his life away. Perhaps almost everyone had thought he was useless, but Tianming believed in his intuition. He could sense something different in Li Wudi, especially when he was cultivating in the Li Mausoleum, where he felt some horrifying changes that might be coming from Li Wudi.

Tianming already had his guesses, but he just kept them to himself. After all, Li Wudi had been staying in the Li Mausoleum every day, and had been the one who found the good fortune. So who knew if Li Wudi had already used it on himself before bestowing it to him.

Tianming didn’t know how Li Wudi resisted the Venomdrake Spike’s pain, so he could only make guesses. But he did remember an interesting episode. When Tianming had brought Jiang Feiling into Li Mausoleum, Li Wudi asked him, “Why did you bring your wife here?”

Before that, not even Yuwen Taiji could tell that he had Feiling’s Spiritual Attachment on him. Back then, he was briefly stunned when he heard it. Although Feiling had told him that Li Wudi wasn’t simple, Tianming initially didn’t pay too much attention to it. But as he continued to observe Li Wudi, and the clues from Ye Shaoqing’s words, he came up with some guesses. And he now felt it should be time for him to ask about it.

Ye Shaoqing was dumbfounded for a long time, then winked. “Who told you about it?”

“Would you believe it if I tell you that I guessed it?”

“Are you a wunderkind? How did you guess that?”

“Just tell me if I’m right.”

“Since you’re already sure about it in your heart, why are you still asking me?” It wasn’t actually necessary for Tianming to ask about it.

“So, what are the details?” asked Tianming.

“This isn’t the right place for the story. But you just need to know that he’s been patiently waiting to take revenge. He’s been cultivating for the past fourteen years in life and death.”

“He’s undergoing Lifesbane!”

“He’ll give you a surprise when the day comes.” Ye Shaoqing’s eyes brimmed with confidence.

“Will it be far from now?”

“Not far from now. Maybe he’ll have already succeeded by the time we return.” Ye Shaoqing was filled with expectation.

“Great. I hope he can lead to the Grand-Orient Sect to defend against Heaven’s Elysium’s assault and become a real sect leader.” Now that all his guesses had turned out to be true, Tianming’s mood immediately grew better. So much so that he was filled with more expectation than Ye Shaoqing, because he had a better understanding of Lifesbane. After all, he himself was an Aeon Grandbane, which would reduce his lifespan by nine-tenths.

It was terrifying, and Li Wudi’s method of cultivation was equivalent to an accumulation. So just how dreadful would it be when the curse breaks out? The first ancestor’s Lifebane was ordinary, but it lasted fifty years and allowed him to awaken as a pentabane. So Tianming had no idea how far Li Wudi’s Lifebane would change his tetrabane. After Tianming confirmed his guesses, he was happy for Li Wudi.

“How unexpected that a zombie like him would be undergoing Lifebane for the past fourteen, nearly fifteen years!” Tianming could only express admiration for someone like Li Wudi. He had no idea how painful the process was, but someone who could get through it was worthy of his sincerest respect. He had always respected Li Wudi, but this time, Li Wudi’s image instantly reached the peak and became his idol.

“I really have no idea how he persevered through the years....” Tianming was in deeper shock the more he thought about it. He was already anxious to return to see if Li Wudi finally had toughed through hard times.

“To bear such humiliation for the past fourteen years, pretending to be drunk and wasted, but he’s actually been painstakingly cultivating to take revenge.... His hatred is so much stronger than mine, and only someone like him can become the soul of the Li Saint Clan.” Even though Tianming had been prepared for it, he was still shocked. It wasn’t much to worship someone like Li Wudi, right?

Fourteen years of cultivation while bearing the Venomdrake Spike’s pain so that he could complete the Lifebane the day he pulls out the spike. Tianming wanted to rush back and knock on Li Wudi’s head to see if everything was real. Otherwise, he would feel like he’d been dreaming.

“Don’t get too excited. Only your grandmother, you, me, my father, my sister, and Weisheng Tianlan know about this,” said Ye Shaoqing.

“You guys have really hidden it well,” said Tianming.

“Yeah. Did you know that he’s not allowed to pull out the Venomdrake Spike before that? Otherwise, all his effort will go down the drain.”

“No, I don’t know that.” Tianming shook his head.

“Then you know it now. Honestly speaking, you’ve already greatly helped him by annulling Qingyu and Li Jincan’s engagement, as well as saving her twice from the Yuwen Clan. I know that he already regards you as his son,” said Ye Shaoqing.

“Then I’ll have to see what he has. I won’t believe it if it’s just boasting,” Tianming laughed.

“Haha!” Ye Shaoqing fanned himself with a smile plastered on his face. He then whispered in Tianming’s ears, “You’ve made a great contribution to the Grand-Orient Sect by retrieving the Grand-Orient Sword. Before this, the Grand-Orient Sword was held by the Elysian Emperor, who’s been inseparable from it, and he’s long been able to unleash the full power of the sword. So by taking the sword from the Elysian Emperor, it’s the same as weakening him. When your foster father completes his Lifebane, I’ll give him the Grand-Orient Sword. If he can reach the same level of control as the Elysian Emperor, it’ll greatly boost the Grand-Orient Sect’s overall strength. So you’ve already controlled the life and death of the Grand-Orient Realm at such a young age, and in this respect, you have my admiration.” He wasn’t stingy with his praises.

Tianming had never imagined that he would bring such hope to the sect by bringing back the Grand-Orient Sword. It was equivalent to helping Li Wudi again. At this moment, Tianming finally saw the hope of the sect’s survival and his heart blazed with fighting spirit.

Tianming also knew how to be grateful in his heart. Since entering the Grand-Orient Sect, he had owed it to Li Wudi’s selfless contribution and Ye Shaoqing’s protection. If he didn’t have the Li Saint Clan’s Kunpeng Sacred Seal, Li Shenxiao’s tombstone, and the Prime Tower, he would have been defeated by the Aeonian Grandbane and died.

The reason why he could cultivate faster than he aged was highly related to Li Shenxiao’s tombstone and the Prime Tower, the tower especially. If it weren’t for Ye Shaoqing’s arrangements, he wouldn’t even have had a chance at competing for the Prime Tower. It wasn’t easy to climb up as an outer disciple.

Right now, his greatest wish was that Li Wudi would complete the last step and obtain everything he deserved. He also hoped that the Grand-Orient Sword he’d obtained with great difficulty could let the Grand-Orient Sect and Li Saint Clan survive under Heaven’s Elysium’s pressure.

“Fight to the last breath!” Tianming had already made up his mind to fight to the last breath if a sect war struck. That would no longer be a battle between geniuses, and his opponents wouldn’t be geniuses as well. It would be a life and death battle between beastmasters, and there was a possibility that he would even have to face beastmasters much older than him. In sect wars, there was nothing a genius could do about it. Although Tianming had seized the Grand-Orient Sword, he still wanted to fight to the end, protecting the Grand-Orient Sect and Li Saint Clan.

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Half a day passed in the blink of an eye, and they still had one-third of their journey left. Tianming and Ye Shaoqing stood on the Aircloud Godcrane as they looked out into the distance. All of a sudden, a towering elder came over to Ye Shaoqing and asked, “Shaoqing, why aren’t you taking the opportunity to examine the Grand-Orient Sword?”

“There’s a possibility that Yuwen Taiji already has an ambush waiting for us. So you should spend more time comprehending the sword and increase our overall strength.” The elder who spoke was the sixth elder, Zhao Zhiyuan.

Looking at Huangfu Fengyun and the others, Ye Shaoqing replied, “The ten elders that stayed behind said that there haven’t been any movements from Yuwen Taiji. There are twenty-five of us here, so he won’t be able to snatch it.”

“They must be dreaming if they think they can snatch the Grand-Orient Sword with the eight of them,” said Huangfu Fengyun.

“We’ll follow our previous arrangement, turning on the Grand-Orient Barrier when we return while Shaoqing starts comprehending the sword. Don’t give Yuwen Taiji any opportunity.”

Everyone nodded their heads. It shouldn’t be a problem for them to protect the Grand-Orient Sword with so many of them there. After all, the Grand-Orient Sword was with Ye Shaoqing. And even though Yuwen Taiji was strong, it wouldn’t be easy for him to seize it.

“I’ve only seen the Grand-Orient Sword in books, and I’ve never seen or touched it personally. Shaoqing, why don’t you let us take a look at it? This is something that the first ancestor brought back from the Theocracy of the Ancients, the dream and stigma of everyone in the Grand-Orient Sect,” Zhao Zhiyuan exclaimed.

“Sure.” Ye Shaoqing smiled and nodded.

But just when he was about to retrieve the Grand-Orient Sword, he suddenly stopped and glanced at Zhao Zhiyuan. “Let’s forget about it for safety’s sake. I’m sorry, the Grand-Orient Sword is too important and we can’t afford any mistakes here.”

Zhao Zhiyuan was briefly stunned, then suddenly raged, “What are you trying to say here? You suspect that I’ll steal it?”

Ye Shaoqing was briefly stunned when he heard that.

“You’re courting death, humiliating me!” Zhao Zhiyuan suddenly threw his punch out, a punch from a saint. In that split second, Ye Shaoqing grabbed Tianming and retreated, dodging the punch. But Zhao Zhiyuan had suddenly launched an attack without any warning, and his punch landed on the Aircloud Godcrane. The Aircloud Godcrane immediately issued a mournful cry, then everyone began freefalling.

Chapter 342 - Yuwen Taiji’s Shadows

The Aircloud Godcrane naturally couldn’t take a punch from Zhao Zhiyuan without any preparation. When traveling at high speed, even the slightest movements from the Aircloud Godcrane could throw someone off, not to mention spinning around from a punch. Including Tianming, everyone was freefalling like meteorites.

But with their cultivation in the Saint stage, it wouldn’t be a problem for them to land safely on the ground from a few thousand meters in the air. A few elders immediately surrounded Tianming. Shangguan Yunfeng and Zhao Lingzhou also had someone receiving them, so they were all basically fine. But when Zhao Zhiyuan landed on the ground with his lifebound beast, a Blackfiend Ape, out, he

charged at Ye Shaoqing like a lunatic. At the same time, his Blackfiend Ape faced Ye Shaoqing's Azureflame Dragon.

"Zhao Zhiyuan, are you insane?! You want to snatch the Grand-Orient Sword? There's no benefit in it for you!" Huangfu Fengyu roared.

"Don't bother about it. Yuwen Taiji must've promised him something." Ye Shaoqing didn't take out the Grand-Orient Sword. When he spoke, Ye Qing and the other elders went up to surround Zhao Zhiyuan.

"Zhao Zhiyuan, why are you doing this?! The junior sect master is such a talent, so why do this?!"

"That's right! Old Zhao, we've been friends for so many years! Don't be silly!"

Ye Qing was in the same generation as Zhao Zhiyuan, and they even had a good relationship. So he couldn't believe Zhao Zhiyuan's betrayal.

"Let's stop! Zhao Zhiyuan, what did Yuwen Taiji give you for you to be his lackey?!" Huangfu Fengyun roared. But Zhao Zhiyuan didn't utter a single word. He was focused on Ye Shaoqing no matter who tried to stop him.

"Grandfather, what's wrong with you?!" Of everyone, Zhao Lingzhou had taken Zhao Zhiyuan's betrayal the hardest. He was dumbfounded. Was this still the man he revered since he was a child? But no matter how others tried talking to Zhao Zhiyuan, he was only focused on chasing Ye Shaoqing.

"Doesn't he know that he can't succeed?" Tianming narrowed his eyes into slits. He was baffled as he watched the scene playing out in front of him. Truthfully speaking, not even Yuwen Taiji could snatch the Grand-Orient Sword away with so many elders here. So Tianming couldn't figure out why the friendly elder had changed into another person all of a sudden.

"He won't even be able to touch me, let alone the Grand-Orient Sword... WAIT!" Tianming was protected by elders like Huangfu Fengyun and Shangguan Jingshu. But he suddenly felt his scalp tingle because he found something amiss about Zhao Zhiyuan. Zhao Zhiyuan's method of snatching the Grand-Orient Sword was too stupid, and it would be impossible for him to succeed. After all, shouldn't Zhao Zhiyuan come up with a fail-proof plan if he wanted to snatch it?

Right now, he just seemed to be trying to draw everyone's attention. No one could think of what Yuwen Taiji had given Zhao Zhiyuan, but Tianming thought of another problem. Were there others like Zhao Zhiyuan? When he suddenly thought of that, danger descended in the next moment. It came from half a meter away from him, so how could he react to it in time? Not to mention that all the elders were Saints who had cultivated for over a hundred years. This time, it was someone that Tianming had never expected—the fourth elder, Shangguan Jingshu! She was someone from his great grandmother's generation, and suddenly appeared behind Tianming, reaching her hands for his neck.

"Don't move!" her hoarse voice rang out beside Tianming's ears, sending chills down his spine. She was a longtime friend of Huangfu Fengyun, and she projected the image of an amicable old lady, even showing care and concern for Tianming. Back then, she had gone with Huangfu Fengyun to protect Tianming when he'd killed Yuwen Shendu. So Tianming had suspected everyone, except for Shangguan Jingshu and Huangfu Fengyun, who had been protecting him.

But funnily enough, her nails had dug into his neck. Someone like her only needed a split second to decapitate him; his life was entirely in her hands. The scene made many people baffled, including Huangfu Fengyun.

“Jingshu, what are you doing...” Disbelief filled in his eyes as he watched Shangguan Jingshu take Tianming away from the crowd. The other elders were also left dumbfounded by this scene, and no one dared to move. “Shangguan Jingshu, are you insane too?!”

The elders all felt a chill in their hearts. They were facing the threat of Heaven’s Elysium, and they were going back to make preparations for a war. But they never expected that they would have to face betrayal along the way. As the second figure among the elders, they all felt it unbelievable that a senior like Shangguan Jingshu would go after Tianming.

Or maybe this had been the plan that Shangguan Jingshu had discussed with Zhao Zhiyuan. Zhao Zhiyuan would act as a decoy to give Shangguan Jingshu the rightful excuse to protect Tianming. When everyone was distracted by Zhao Zhiyuan, it would be easy for Shangguan Jingshu to capture Tianming as a hostage—the perfect plan. Then again, this also had to do with Shangguan Jingshu’s usual behavior. No one would’ve imagined that someone like her would be a traitor; even Huangfu Fengyun was stunned.

The two were great friends, sharing over a century of friendship. But that was also the reason why he didn’t have his guard up against her. Shangguan Yunfeng was the same as Zhao Lingzhou; the two were stunned when they saw this scene unfolding. Shangguan Yunfeng couldn’t believe what he saw and asked, “Great grandmother, are you playing a joke on us?”

But no one replied to him. Shangguan Jingshu looked at Ye Shaoqing coldly and said, “Cut the nonsense. Hand the Grand-Orient Sword to Zhao Zhiyuan, or I’ll kill Tianming right here.”

“Jingshu, don’t be impulsive! I believe you have your own difficulties in doing this. Does Yuwen Taiji have something against you? You can just tell us about it! We’ll help you!” Huangfu Fengyun quickly spoke out.

Shangguan Jingshu’s nails dug deeper into Tianming’s neck. It felt like he was being stabbed with five swords; the pain was horrible, and Tianming was even struggling to breathe. When the other elders saw that, they immediately called out, “No!”

Tianming naturally wanted Li Wudi to have the Grand-Orient Sword. But judging from the current situation, Shangguan Jingshu didn’t seem to be messing around.

“Ye Shaoqing, don’t force me! Hand it over immediately!” Shangguan Jingshu yelled. They had already experienced everything in life at their age, so they definitely wouldn’t hesitate once they made up their mind. Not even the Prime Tower could stop Shangguan Jingshu’s nails from digging into Tianming’s neck.

“Let him go,” said Ye Shaoqing. His eyes were blazing with azure flames as he took out the Grand-Orient Sword while everyone was still thinking about it, then Zhao Zhiyuan snatched it and immediately fled.

“Don’t chase after him. I’ll let him go in half an hour. Don’t worry, I won’t kill him.” Shangguan Jingshu began tearing up once Zhao Zhiyuan had left with the Grand-Orient Sword. She loosened her grip, but still kept Tianming beside her. She wanted to give Zhao Zhiyuan the time to deliver the Grand-Orient

Sword to Yuwen Taiji. From the tears that rolled down her cheeks, everyone could see that she wasn't voluntarily doing this. At the very least, she hadn't harmed Tianming's life.

"Don't chase after him!" she emphasized once more. It was clear that she would take Tianming's life hostage again if anyone dared chase after Zhao Zhiyuan, which made many elders burst into rage.

"Jingshu, are you stupid?!" Huangfu Fengyun's eyes had turned red. He had so much anger pent up within him that he wanted to spew blood. On the other hand, Shangguan Jingshu clenched her teeth as tears streamed down.

"Elder Shangguan, why don't you tell us how Yuwen Taiji made his comeback? We still have no idea what's going on." Ye Shaoqing smiled. He had chosen Tianming over the Grand-Orient Sword without any hesitation, but this scene had impacted them significantly.

"Yeah. There's no point in hiding since you've already done it."

Under everyone's furious and helpless gazes, Shangguan Jingshu sighed. "Shaoqing, you won't be able to win against Yuwen Taiji. He isn't just powerful, but he also has meticulous thoughts. He had many plans laid right from the start, and the only mistake he made was allowing Tianming to kill Shendu. But since he already had everything laid out, how will he lose so easily? For example, Zhao Zhiyuan and I were poisoned by the nethermare venom he made from ancient records. Only he has the antidote to set us free... otherwise, we have to suffer the torture of having our hearts burned. So what do you think I'd choose?" Shangguan Jingshu said with tears streaming down her face.

"The nethermare venom?! Isn't that a spirit herb with over thirty saintly heavenly patterns?"

"I've heard of this poison. It's famed for torturing its victim, and when it breaks out, the victim will experience having their internal organs burned, and only the maker has the antidote." Everyone now knew why they'd lost—they had underestimated Yuwen Taiji.

"Shaoqing, just give up. The Ye Clan won't be able to win against Yuwen Taiji. With him holding the Grand-Orient Sword, he can protect the Grand-Orient Sect better than you. The Li Saint Clan is already history. So if you want to protect the junior sect master, you should leave with him right now," said Shangguan Jingshu.

When the other elders heard that, all of them fell silent. Shangguan Jingshu was right that Yuwen Taiji with the Grand-Orient Sword could better protect the Grand-Orient Sect.

"Yuwen Taiji won't lose, and there's something even more terrifying. Zhao Zhiyuan and I didn't have a choice but to snatch the Grand-Orient Sword today, but how do you know there aren't others hidden among us? They're all under Yuwen Taiji's manipulation, and they can stab you in the back any time. Even I have no idea about their identities. Yuwen Taiji's schemes far surpass your imagination, so run while you still can."

Chapter 343 - The Last Hope

"Jingshu, that's enough. Don't push the blame on others when you're the one that's scared of him." Huangfu Fengyun frowned as he gazed in the direction where Zhao Zhiyuan had flown off. None of the elders could chase after him, so there was no chance of taking back the Grand-Orient Sword.

The rest of the wait was excruciating, as Shangguan Jingshu kept her distance from the rest of the elders with Tianming still under her control.

"I'm sorry, child. Run away from the Grand-Orient Sect while you still can and let the Ye Clan take you somewhere safe. With your talent, you'll one day gain the power to fight Yuwen Taiji. And when that time comes, you'll take back the sword and bring glory to the Li Saint Clan." Shangguan Jingshu's face was pale.

"How is Elder Shangguan so sure that with the sword, Yuwen Taiji is capable of defending our home from the combined assault of the three sects?" Tianming asked.

"At least he has better odds of saving us compared to your mentor. In fact, no one is more suitable for this role in our entire sect. Yuwen Taiji also has at least seven other elders supporting him," Shangguan Jingshu explained.

"Then what if he joins hands with Heaven's Elysium and turns against our own people?" asked Tianming. Perhaps, if he told her about Li Wudi, she may have regretted her choice.

"You underestimate him. I've known him for years, and no one in this world can make him kneel, not even the Elysian Emperor! He's destined to be the owner of the sword for the next decade."

Tianming knew he had no chance of convincing her. Sure enough, Shangguan Jingshu released him after an hour's time. Despite her traitorous act, there was nothing the rest of the elders could do but reprimand her.

It was a battle against time, as Huangfu Fengyun rode his Aircloud Godcrane at full speed in an attempt to catch up with Zhao Zhiyuan. Tianming rode along with Ye Shaoqing on the Azureflame Dragon, since he no longer knew which elder he could trust.

"Shaoqing, you should bring him somewhere else," Huangfu Fengyun suggested. The situation would be out of his control once they returned to the sect.

"Even if Yuwen Taiji gets his hands on the sword, he'll need time to master it. As for me, I still have people to fetch back in the sect if I were to leave," Ye Shaoqing sulked. The Ye Clan and Li Qingyu were still there, so how could he leave without them?

"Master, it's not your fault that we lost the sword. They're too cunning, and we failed to see through Elder Shangguan." Seeing that Ye Shaoqing was in a bad mood, Tianming consoled.

"I should've stopped this from happening. I failed your father's expectations," Ye Shaoqing sighed.

"None of us expected her betrayal. Shangguan Jingshu was a respected elder who put in her all for our sect, so who could've known?" Ye Qing said.

"There's no point in blaming yourselves. The real question is, what can we do now?" Tianming asked.

"Since Yuwen Taiji holds the Grand-Orient Sword, it's up to him to defend the sect against Heaven's Elysium. Once we get back, we'll immediately gather our clans and find somewhere to hide. It doesn't have to be too far away from the sect, and we can discuss the remaining details once your father succeeds and leaves the Li Mausoleum. No one knows how strong he'll be then," Ye Shaoqing said.

“That’s right. Yuwen Taiji’s target is only Tianming. Now that the war with the other sects is imminent, he’ll need all the help he can possibly get, which means the other elders won’t have to worry about being targeted yet,” Ye Qing explained. That was also the reason why they had the courage to return even though Yuwen Taiji was about to get a hold of the sword. The Grand-Orient Barrier required massive manpower to support it, so Yuwen Taiji should prioritize the sect’s survival and spare their lives. In fact, if the elders were to promise him their loyalty, he might even reward them. But the drawback of letting that happen was that they would never be able to take back the Grand-Orient Sword.

“The rest is up to your father.” Ye Shaoqing gazed into the distant hills of the Grand-Orient Sect with burning sword intent in his eyes.

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A while later, the crane and dragon arrived at the sect. The fourteen returning elders, first returned to Fatepath Peak where ten other elders remained.

“What happened! Zhao Zhiyuan returned earlier and passed the Grand-Orient Sword to Yuwen Taiji. Things are getting troublesome!” The ten elders had clearly been anxiously waiting for their return.

“What happened then?”

“They left the sect, probably to find a hidden place where they can study the sword.”

“All of them?” Huangfu Fengyun asked.

“Correct. They’re probably afraid that you may try to steal the sword, so he has seven other elders, plus Zhao Zhiyuan, to be his guards.”

“Before he left, he told us to make sure that Li Tianming and Ye Shaoqing stay here, or all ten of us will die!” Even though their voices were trembling, there was an unmistakable hint of coldness when they looked in Tianming and Ye Shaoqing’s direction. Their fear of the Grand-Orient Sword had already determined that they couldn’t be reliable allies.

“To be frank, we never expected the junior sect master to be capable of winning the Grand-Orient Sword. But it’s even more absurd that you couldn’t even defend it! Don’t tell me that Zhao Zhiyuan is stronger than all of you and snatched the sword all by himself.” The ten elders couldn’t figure out what had happened. Still, they had no choice but to close in on Tianming.

“It was I who abducted the junior sect master, allowing Zhao Zhiyuan to bring Yuwen Taiji the sword.” To everyone’s surprise, Shangguan Jingshu stepped out and confessed.

“But why?” The others stared in shock.

“Because he has something to control me. I don’t believe I’m the only one, for that matter,” she explained.

“We’re clean!”

“Elder Shangguan, you made a terrible mistake! As a senior, you betrayed Ye Shaoqing and the junior sect master’s trust....”

Sadly, what had happened was already history, so they could only lament.

“We heard from Zhao Zhiyuan that the junior sect master battled seven elysian children, and even killed Elysian Long. His story would’ve been a legend in the entire Grand-Orient Realm, but it truly is a shame—”

“There’s nothing to be ashamed of. Let the junior sect master and the Ye Clan go, on my order,” Shangguan Jingshu interrupted.

“Are you sure about that, Elder Shangguan? Yuwen Taiji will have your head!” the rest of the elders said in unison.

“Then his wish shall be satisfied. But let me die in battle against the three other sects, where I’ll fight to my last breath to protect our sect. Even then, I won’t take back what I said. Handing the sword to Yuwen Taiji is our sect’s only chance of surviving this war!” Her last sentence was meant for Tianming and the Ye Clan.

At the same time, Huangfu Fengyun backed her up.

“For those of you that didn’t go to Heaven’s Elysium with us, you have no idea how determined they are to destroy our sect this time. We should let the junior sect master and the Ye Clan find a safe place to hide. As for Yuwen Taiji, he can do whatever he wants to me if our sect survives.”

With things looking desperate for the Grand-Orient Sect, the situation was different. All of the elders had spent their entire life in the sect, with their ancestry tracing thousands of years back. It would be no mistake to say that they loved the sect more than anyone else. While they used to fear for their own clans; survival in the situation that Yuwen Taiji obtained the sword, now it wasn’t just their own family that was at stake. The war between the sects would determine everyone’s fate.

“Let the junior sect master go. He’s the last hope of our sect and the Li Saint Clan. If we lose, at least old fools like us can leave this world knowing that not all hope is lost. And one day, the junior sect master can return stronger than anyone else, crush Heaven’s Elysium, and revive both the Li Saint Clan and our sect!” Tears flowed down Huangfu Fengyun’s cheeks before he could even finish his sentence.

“Junior sect master, just leave. I’m responsible for the loss of the Grand-Orient Sword, but I also wish that you can make it out of here alive. That’s the best outcome I can hope for.” Shangguan Jingshu was in tears as well.

Perhaps they were cowards that previously feared for their own life, but in front of the greater good for the entire sect, they were even willing to put their own lives aside. It couldn’t be said who was right or wrong, but one thing was true: they all loved their sect and were willing to see it to its end.

Led by the two of them, the more than twenty elders finally came to an agreement. As for the other ten, who were initially against it, they were eventually convinced after being told of the danger the sect was in.

“Let me gather my clan.” Ye Qing returned to the Azure Immortal Mountain. The Ye Clan only had about a dozen-odd members in its direct branch. While there were branches across the entire sect, they weren’t important enough for Yuwen Taiji to take note of. As for those remaining in Fatepath Peak, only Li Qingyu and Li Jingyu were worth his attention.

“Tianming, let’s go fetch grandma and Qingyu,” Ye Shaoqing said.

“They’re over there.” Tianming pointed at the Kunpeng Sacred Hall, and sure enough there stood an old lady together with a young girl. They had been waiting there for a while, and heard enough to have a sense of the future that lay ahead of their clan and their sect.

When Yuwen Taiji had left with the Grand-Orient Sword, he’d cast a glance at Li Qingyu. While he hadn’t acted then, he had specified that she was one of those to be kept under watch. But clearly, the twenty-three elders here didn’t intend to follow suit. It was probably because of their premonition that the sect wouldn’t survive this war, and securing two pentabanes was the best they could do. After being fence-sitters for so long, they had finally come to a firm stand.

Chapter 344 - The Three Barriers

Soon, Ye Shaoqing brought Li Jingyu and Qingyu over.

“Grandma, Qingyu.” Seeing the two safe and sound brought a smile to Tianming’s face.

“My child, your performance in the Realm War is truly something I’ll remember for the rest of my life. You’re the greatest blessing given to our Li Saint Clan for the past thousand years, and our ancestors will be so proud of what you have achieved!” Li Jingyu said with a smile. However, there were tears at the corner of her eyes. The news of winning the Grand-Orient Sword and the news of them losing it had arrived concurrently, putting her in a great shock that she had yet to recover from.

“Don’t praise me too much or I’ll blush,” laughed Tianming.

“If it weren’t for the situation we’re in, I wouldn’t mind running around the entire sect with a banner, telling everyone how amazing my grandson is.” Li Jingyu was still in the mood to joke, at least. In contrast, Qingyu was clearly lost in thought, her eyes swollen.

“Qingyu, which level are you at now?” Tianming recalled that she was at sixth-level Unity before he left.

“Eighth-level.”

“Impressive, you’re almost catching up with me,” Tianming exclaimed. In fact, Qingyu had talent beyond a normal pentabane, and coupled with her own diligence she could easily surpass people like Yueling Long. Being able to catch up with Tianming would be a totally different story, though.

“You’re way more impressive, being the hero that represented our sect in the Realm War.” Qingyu said seriously.

“Too bad this hero you speak of is being forced to leave the sect now,” Tianming smirked.

“We’ll definitely come back!”

“Of course.”

As they were chit-chatting, Ye Qing had brought back the dozen-odd Ye Clan members, Ye Ziyi included. One of them was a bulky middle-aged man that Tianming had never met before. He was scanning the surroundings with hostility, and Tianming reckoned he was Ye Qing’s eldest son, Ye Tianlong. Supposedly, his cultivation was unsatisfactory and even lagging behind Ye Yuxi.

“Father, why did you bring him along?” Ye Shaoqing frowned.

“What do you mean by that? What, you want your eldest brother to die here? It’s all your fault that we’re in such a mess. How useless must you be to lose the Grand-Orient Sword?” Ye Tianlong stared at his younger brother.

“Speak for yourself, weren’t you living the life by being Yuwen Taiji’s dog?” Ye Shaoqing retaliated.

“That’s enough. With his ability, no one wants him now,” Ye Qing said.

“Then you’d better not betray your own family and make everyone die with you,” Ye Shaoqing said to Ye Tianlong.

“Don’t worry, second brother, I’ll keep a watch on him.” Ye Yuxi sighed. Although they were all siblings, they were worlds apart.

Now that all those who needed to leave had gathered, there was no time left to waste.

“Junior sect master, please survive this. The future of the Li Saint Clan is in your hands!” Huangfu Fengyun said as Tianming and the rest boarded the Azureflame Dragon. The rest of the elders were there to witness their departure as well.

As the dragon took off, Tianming took a last look at the blood mist behind Fatepath Peak. It was coming from the Bloodbane Barrier’s direction. Had Tianming hidden within the barrier, there would be nothing Yuwen Taiji could do to him. However, leaving the barrier would be a problem, and Tianming decided that it wasn’t a good time to disturb Li Wudi.

The blood mist of the Bloodbane Barrier was fluctuating, making it look like a giant heart beating, each pulse stronger than the last. If so, then this heart had to be the heart of the Grand-Orient Sect, and the man behind it was none other than Li Wudi.

“Cloud Piercing Peak is over at the western corner of the sect. It’s steep, so few go there, and it can offer us some good hiding spots. On top of that, the western corner of the barrier is the most ideal landscape for Heaven’s Elysium’s attack, so we’ll have a good view of the battlefield from there,” Ye Shaoqing suggested.

“Understood!”

Once the battle began, Tianming’s strength would be close to that of the lowest Grand-Orient guardians. If he could only fight those in the first few levels of Heavenly Will, then he would be nothing but cannon fodder.

All he could do now was wait. Wait for the battle to begin, and wait for Li Wudi’s return. Of course, while waiting, he could still cultivate.

Once they arrived at Cloud Piercing Peak, they quickly settled down.

“What are we doing here? Admiring the end of the Grand-Orient Sect? If I were you, I’d bring Li Tianming somewhere he can actually survive,” Ye Tianlong said.

“No one asked for your opinion.” Ye Yuxi rolled his eyes.

“You’re just waiting for your own death here. Should anything happen, I’ll be the first to leave with my kids.”

“Be my guest.” If Ye Tianlong had his own goals, then there was no point in stopping him.

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As night fell, Tianming and Qingyu sat on top of the peak, looking up into the starry night sky.

“I wonder when Ling’er will wake up. Hope she’ll be fine,” Qingyu said worriedly.

“Hmm,” Tianming murmured, feeling the warmth of Ling’er’s Love in his hand. He had a hunch that it wouldn’t be long before Feiling’s return.

“Big brother, look there!” Qingyu suddenly hopped up and pointed toward the sect’s direction, her white hair dancing in the moonlight. Following the direction she was pointing, Tianming noticed a semi-spherical barrier that had suddenly appeared. It glistened with five different colors, all of them different types of heavenly patterns.

Out of the five different colors, blue-colored patterns covered half of the barrier, while the other half was equally shared by gold, red, green and violet. Tianming knew that the patterns appearing on barriers and tomes weren’t real heavenly patterns, but imitations made by patternscribes based on real ones. Because of that, the colors on the barrier didn’t represent their rank, but instead their elements.

The blue patterns likely belonged to the water element, and this would be because of the water-type spirit hazards stored within the Heavenly Pattern Barrier. The four other colors represented metal, fire, wind, and thunder respectively. It was a common technique used by the Li Saint Clan to fuse the other four elements into the water element.

The barrier radiated under the constellations like a colorful eye belonging to the earth itself. Its radiance was so bright it even lit up the siblings’ faces. However, being pretty wasn’t all it was good for, as it was the brainchild of countless generations of ancestors, its purpose to protect all who lived in this home. Should the Grand-Orient Sect ever be invaded, it would be the key to ensuring the sect’s survival. Once it was broken, all of the non-combatants would be completely exposed to the enemies.

“So this is the Grand-Orient Barrier. This is the first time I’ve seen it. So pretty,” Qingyu murmured.

“These are the five colors of the Li Saint Clan?” Tianming was also touched by the splendid view.

“That’s right. The barrier was built by our first ancestor after he established the sect. It took ten thousand years of strengthening and improving the barrier to reach this scale. Even though there haven’t been any upgrades to it for the past thousand years, it still remains as one of the three strongest barriers in the Grand-Orient Realm,” Qingyu explained.

“And the other two are?” Tianming asked.

“One of them is Heaven’s Elysium’s Elysium Barrier, while the other is our Li Saint Clan’s

Bloodbane Barrier. The Bloodbane Barrier was the first barrier to be made in our realm, and was also made by our first ancestor. In fact, it’s the only self-sustainable barrier that doesn’t require external

input, and it can last for fifty thousand years on its own. Its downside is that it can only cover the Li Mausoleum and allow two people in it," Qingyu said.

"The secrets of heavenly pattern barriers sure are impressive," Tianming exclaimed. Just hearing these stories made him admire his first ancestor more than ever. Only a master patternscribe could create barriers like these that could protect his sect and offspring for hundreds of centuries to come.

"They definitely are. But it's said that the Southsky Barrier from the Southsky Sect is even prettier. It lets the entire Southsky Island descend into the ocean, after which it absorbs all the seawater within ten thousand kilometers to expand the reach of the barrier and protect the Southsky Sect. It's also very efficient, as it can leverage the energy of the ocean. Even with their sect's current strength, they're capable of utilizing the barrier to its fullest for an extended period of time," Qingyu said enviously.

"That sounds incredible," Tianming was even more fond of the art of patternscribing after hearing that.

"They do have the advantage of being surrounded by the sea, though. It's said that the Southsky Barrier was made by our first ancestor together with his wife, Weisheng Yuyin," Qingyu added.

"Him again? What a monster," Tianming exclaimed.

"Big brother, that's our ancestor you're talking about!" Qingyu rolled her eyes at Tianming. Although, it's true that he really was a monster.

"Don't you feel that this ancestor of ours was a little biased? Why is the barrier he built for his wife so much stronger than the one he built for his descendants?" Tianming joked, shaking his head.

"That's not true, since the Grand-Orient Barrier is much more powerful than the Southsky Barrier, if fully utilized. We just don't have the natural advantages that the Southsky Sect has. The Grand-Orient Barrier was built based on the ability of the Grand-Orient Sect thousands of years ago. I'm sure that with the power they had back then, they could easily put it to full use."

"As for now, we can barely make use of a fifth of the barrier's full power. And who knows how long that can last," Qingyu sighed. The Li Saint Clan's downfall was no doubt one of the main reasons why the Grand-Orient Sect had lost its former glory.

Chapter 345 - The Grand Army Arrives

"They move fast. They've already activated the Grand-Orient Barrier, and I expect the Skysouth Barrier is up already too," Li Tianming said emotionally. While such barriers could be activated instantly in times of danger, they were already being activated for the sake of caution.

"Big brother, did you see that the barrier only encloses the thirty-three holy mountains and not the ninety-nine mountains outside?" Li Qingyu noted.

"That's the right move. Shrinking it can increase its defensive powers, so the outer sect disciples of the ninety-nine mountains should have moved to the thirty-three holy mountains already," Tianming said.

"Yes, but I expect the thousands of years of construction and traces of countless generations of disciples to be gone after the enemy arrives. We'll have to rebuild after the war," Li Qingyu said regretfully. Fatepath Peak would likely be a casualty as well.

“Rebuilding is easy. What’s important is surviving.”

Li Qingyu agreed.

The barrier was resplendent, and they were probably doing their final military mobilizations inside.

Tianming was naturally uncomfortable hiding here as the junior sect master of the Grand-Orient Sect. He asked, “There’s an entrance to the Abyssal Battlefield inside the sect. Are there any precautions for if the enemy attacks from there?”

“The barrier can go through the Bottomless Pit. There’s a barrier on that side too. The two combined form a sphere.”

Tianming continued questioning, “Is the barrier there as resplendent as this one?”

“No. I hear it’s brown on that side. That’s the main portion of the barrier. It uses an earth-type spirit hazard called the imperial dragon pulse. Its attack power is roughly the same as all of the spirit hazards here added together,” Qingyu explained.

“That’s good.” Tianming had originally been worried, but as expected, the seniors had already thought of this.

“Still, I expect the pressure on that side to be even greater,” Qingyu said.

“Why?”

“There’s many wildbeasts in the Abyssal Battlefield. They can be easily lured over by some treasures and become a beast tide. The enemy will definitely use that to attack the barrier, because that’ll be like having an army that’s unafraid of death.”

“I understand.” Tianming frowned. It seemed like there was only bad news for the sect and no good news. Could Yuwen Taiji really control the Grand-Orient Sword after he went off now?

“I believe only the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School will come here,” Ye Shaoqing said.

“Why not attack us together? We can only defend,” Tianming said.

“Mainly because the Southsky Sect’s barrier is too hard to break,” Ye Shaoqing said.

“So, they want to attack the Grand-Orient Sect and lure them out.”

“Right. Still, two sects are already too big for us to handle. They want us to struggle but still have hope. In that situation, we’ll definitely ask for aid. No matter what the Southsky Sect chooses to do, there’ll be internal conflict. If they choose not to help, it’ll render our alliance meaningless. Heaven’s Elysium has ten years—unifying the Grand-Orient Realm isn’t something that needs to be done overnight,” Ye Shaoqing explained.

Li Tianming understood now.

“Heaven’s Elysium is just looking for a way to take down the Southsky Sect with as few losses as possible. As for the losses the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School will take, they don’t care,” Ye Shaoqing said.

However, what choice did the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School have?

The Onyx Sect had already knelt, and Heaven's Elysium had control over them. As for the Cloudmist Sword School, they had even less choice but to go wherever their master pointed.

The Grand-Orient Sect had no choice but to fight for their home, as did the Southsky Sect.

Heaven's Elysium had all the time in the world to watch from the side and wait for an opportunity to seize the Grand-Orient Realm with the smallest price.

They could attack the Southsky Sect, but what if they fell to the level of the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School? They had already suffered losses in the war with the Onyx Sect, just not as bad. After all, the Onyx Sect was ancient and not so easily defeated. If they hadn't been arrogant and left their barrier to do battle with Heaven's Elysium, they wouldn't have been conquered.

Southsky Island in the Azure Sea was even more impregnable than the Onyx Sect.

Heaven's Elysium was strong, and could crush the Southsky Sect in a direct confrontation. But it was a different story when they attacked the sect, and the Southsky Barrier—the blood and sweat of the sect's ancestors—was involved.

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From the Grand-Orient Sect's northwest, a dense horde of beasts could be seen at the limit of the horizon. There were a full seventy or eighty thousand of them, from beasts that flew, to those that swam, and those that ran on the ground. Many of them were saint beasts!

Everything in their path was leveled, be it cities or villages.

Countless beastmasters in the seven hundred countries across the Grand-Orient Realm dreamed of joining these superpower sects. However, on the day the sect war began, those small countries were but ants. If they were unlucky, they might be trampled to death.

Fortunately, there were no countries or human habitations for a thousand kilometers around the Grand-Orient Sect.

The majority of the horde were avian lifebound beasts. They blotted out the sun, leaving an enormous shadow on the lands below.

As endless roars and snarls shook the world, everyone and everything hid away and trembled. Three days later, the beasts arrived at the Grand-Orient Mountain Range, whereupon they roared at the Grand-Orient Barrier.

This was the Cloudmist Sword School from the north! Within this array of beasts, every one of them was accompanied by a beastmaster of at least thirty-five years of age. These were the Southsky sentinels. Most were middle-aged, and those younger would be the more talented ones; and there were likely even Saint stage generals. And at their head was Sikong Jiansheng, and over forty sect elders!

The school had turned out in full strength.

“I wonder if the Onyx Sect has arrived at the Grand-Orient Sect on the Abyssal Battlefield side yet.” Sikong Jiansheng’s gaze was sharp as he looked at the barrier.

“They want to use some bug lifebound beasts to lure a beast tide over. They’ll probably be a little slower. We should wait for their message.” A man in white clothes stood next to Sikong Jiansheng, his eyes completely bloodshot. He was Jun Niancang!

Not only had he come, but he’d also brought along a crystal coffin. A beautiful woman was inside. She was dressed cleanly, and her hands were resting on her stomach as she lay peacefully inside.

Jun Niancang had made his first ever oath in his life, swearing to bury her at the Grand-Orient Sacred Mountain’s highest peak and let all of Grand-Orient Sect accompany her in death.

Now, he had come here as the first step.

By his side were a young man and woman. In terms of aura and bearing, they weren’t at all inferior to Jun Niancang.

The man was dressed in pale yellow full body armor. He was taller than Jun Niancang by a head, and had rarely-seen brown eyes.

As for the woman, she was dressed in an elegant light purple skirt, and there were even some purple lightning patterns on her face. Her gaze was exceptionally fierce, and thunder was rumbling whenever she blinked her eyes. Electricity ran across her eyelashes.

Although her features should have been classically beautiful, her gaze was enough to ward people off and instill fear.

When she looked at the Grand-Orient Sect, she exclaimed, “Jun Niancang, the heavenly pattern barriers you have in the Grand-Orient Realm aren’t half bad. It’ll take quite some effort for you to take down this sect.”

“Meh, it’s passable. It’s worse than the one in our Earthorigin Sect by a few grades. Are you actually sure this sect reigned for over ten thousand years?” The man shook his head.

“Yes. They used to be strong, but now, they’re on the brink of annihilation,” Jun Niancang said.

Interesting. I didn’t expect to see such a good show when we came to bring you back to the Divine Capital. We’ll stay for a while.”

The two exchanged looks of understanding. There were always benefits to be had when such large sects fell.

Chapter 346 - Blood Boiling

As if the arrival of the Cloudmist Sword School had been discovered, the Grand-Orient Barrier shone even brighter with a faint rumble coming from within. The young man from the Earthorigin Sect folded his hands together and spoke with contempt, “They have already activated the barrier spirit hazard? They’re pretty scared of death.”

“Yuan Chen, does your Earthorigin Sect have similar opponents in the Earthorigin Realm?” Jun Niancang asked.

“We don’t. All of our opponents have already been cleaned up by our forefathers. As long as you eradicate them, they won’t dare to show their faces again. This is the reason why our clan will rule over the Earthorigin Realm for eternity,” said Yuan Chen.

“So that means the Li Saint Clan was generous enough to allow other sects to take root in the Grand-Orient Realm. After all, they ruled the Grand-Orient Realm in the past,” replied Jun Niancang.

“Brother Jun, this isn’t being generous, but stupid. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be facing extermination today. Your father is a man with courage, and he’s absolutely right to take this step. You can only gather all the resources in the territory by wiping out the other sects. So in the next tens of thousands of years, no one will be able to challenge Heaven’s Elysium’s authority.” Yuan Chen sounded pretty experienced. When he said those words, he didn’t care that the Cloudmist Sword School’s Sikong Jiansheng was around. But Sikong Jiansheng had already long considered the Cloudmist Sword School to be part of Heaven’s Elysium, so he wasn’t offended when he heard that remark.

“Yuan Chen is right. Many realms have moved toward the path of unification, holding absolute authority. The God Capital doesn’t care about that,” said the purple-haired woman standing beside them.

“What Zhenzhen said is right,” said Jun Niancang.

“Zhenzhen is a descendant of the Ancient Kirin Clan, and she grew up in the God Capital. So you can take her words seriously.” Yuan Chen smiled. The purple-haired woman clearly had the noblest status here; both Jun Niancang and Yuan Chen were more than polite to her.

“Jun Niancang, let yourself go and take revenge this time,” said Yun Zhenzhen. She couldn’t help but shake her head with pity in her eyes when she looked at Yueling Long, who lay in the ice coffin.

“I heard about Long’er from Brother Jun, and I never expected that something like this would happen.” Yuan Chen gnashed his teeth. It was a terrible regret.

“Jun Niancang, how much longer are we going to wait? I can’t wait to watch a good show,” asked Yun Zhenzhen.

The bearing and aura of the visitors were at the same level as Jun Niancang, but their bloodline was nobler by comparison. The three of them were strong, and they represented the strongest batch of their generation. It was especially so after visiting the Theocracy of the Ancients; their horizons naturally became much higher.

“We can start as soon as we receive a message from the Onyx Sect,” said Jun Niancang. He was more impatient than everyone else, but he restrained himself. Even if he was on the verge of losing control, he still had to listen to the strategy set by his father.

Sikong Jiansheng and his sect were all prepared. The roaring of lifebound beasts was heard and every single beastmaster drew their swords. They were just waiting for the signal to attack. The Cloudmist keepers had sword ki surging in their eyes and the blood of their lifebound beasts was boiling, causing

them to leave claw marks on the ground and rocks. Seeing the army ready to fight was a magnificent sight.

The Grant-Orient Sect had many bottomless holes leading to the Abyssal Battlefield in the surroundings. Roughly half a day later, an elder from the Onyx Sect traveled across the bottomless hole over to Sikong Jiansheng and reported, "Sect Master Sikong, Young Master Jun, the legion has already started the beast tide. They'll start charging the barrier half an hour from now."

"Everyone, we can start the countdown and attack!"

They had waited for this moment long enough.

"Roger!" Sikong Jiansheng nodded his head and raised his sword. In that split second, everyone's gaze was focused on him.

"Cloudmist Sword School, listen up! The Elysian Emperor has ordered us to start the attack and give the Grand-Orient Sect a show of our strength! We will strike fear in them! And now, our Cloudmist Sword School will have to take this seriously. So much so that we have to perform better than the Onyx Sect in order to not let the Elysian Emperor down!

"Keepers! Trample the Grand-Orient Mountain Range with me! We will exterminate the Grand-Orient Sect! Let our swords slaughter everyone from the Grand-Orient Sect, and let those fools tremble beneath our feet! KILL!!!" Sikong Jiansheng roared, soaring into the sky on a phoenix. As the sect master, he naturally had to take the lead at the Grand-Orient Sect. Under his encouragement, the Cloudmist keepers also roared out.

"KILL!!!!" Their screams instantly swallowed up Sikong Jiansheng's voice. Shortly after, the roaring of their lifebound beasts overwhelmed their voices. The ground began trembling, and even the clouds opened up a path for this elite army.

Everyone in the Cloudmist keepers was at least in the Heavenly Will stage, and if they were placed in a small kingdom, they would be considered as masters. At the very least, they were all at Li Yanfeng's level. And if tens of thousands of them came together, along with their lifebound beasts, anyone could imagine what a powerful force it would be.

The Grand-Orient Sect had a developed mountain and river system. There were many rivers flowing down the mountain, so that made the sky, land, and rivers the battlefield. The Cloudmist keepers and their lifebound beasts traveling through the battlefield was a majestic scene. Sikong Jiansheng held nothing back, since this was their first attack, and they had to intimidate the Grand-Orient Sect before devouring them bit by bit.

At the same time, the Grand-Orient Sect finally welcomed enemies. Tens of thousands of beastmasters charged into the heavenly pattern barrier under Sikong Jiansheng's lead. The barrier was massive, and it looked like the army was devoured by it.

When the Cloudmist keepers charged into the barrier, they found their surroundings had changed. They weren't young and ignorant, but they had never seen a barrier on the scale of this before, and it was their first time experiencing its power. When they stepped into the Grand-Orient Barrier, the first thing

they encountered was a fog. The boundless fog had enveloped the entire Grand-Orient Barrier, obstructing the Cloudmist keepers' vision.

With their vision blocked, they couldn't see their enemies, nor could they see the path through the barrier to the Grand-Orient Sect. Tianming had encountered the blood fog in the Throughpath, and it was a reduced version of this white fog. The white fog wasn't poisonous, but it looked boundless and completely covered the Cloudmist keepers. Even breathing too much of it could result in numbing and fatigue. The fog was enchanted on the Grand-Orient Barrier, becoming part of it. Then again, that was only the first layer of defense.

"Kill!" Just the fog alone naturally couldn't stop their footsteps. At the very least, it would just make them lose their direction. The Cloudmist keepers tore through the fog with their swords. When their lifebound beast charged forth, the entire barrier trembled.

"Come out!" the Cloudmist keepers yelled as they moved through the fog, vigilantly guarding themselves in the chaos. In fact, many of the Grand-Orient guardians had already entered the Grand-Orient Barrier, but their vision wasn't affected by the fog. This barrier had been created by their ancestor, so it followed strict rules to operate. The Grand-Orient Barrier would never be used on those standing on the Grand-Orient Sect's side. It was just like how the Bloodbane Barrier would never attack Tianming, since he had received the Kunpeng Sacred Seal's recognition.

So how did the Grand-Orient Barrier identify allies and enemies? That involved the internal and external version of the barrier. The Grand-Orient Barrier was a defensive barrier, so all invaders were marked as enemies the moment they stepped into it. For those who stepped into the barrier from the inside, they would be marked as allies.

This heavenly pattern barrier was a miracle creation that was complicated, but had strict rules of operation. So once marked as an ally, it was impossible for them to be attacked by the barrier. But if they were marked as enemies on their first entry, they would still be attacked by the barrier even if they re-enter it later.

For example, everyone from the Cloudmist keepers had a colored halo on them. That was the mark that the barrier left when they entered, and it could only be removed in the Grand-Orient Sect by the one who controlled the barrier. The marking was part of the barrier's power, to begin with. With the barrier marking, the Cloudmist keepers and Grand-Orient guardians stepped into the battlefield. While the Cloudmist keepers and their lifebound beasts had their visions obscured by fog, the Grand-Orient guardians had a clear view ahead of them, an advantage right from the start.

Aside from the mark, the other important part of the barrier was the barrier's spirit hazard. When the Grand-Orient Barrier was created, the creator fused barrier spirit hazards into it, making it a powerful weapon of the heavenly pattern barrier. Natural spirit hazards didn't have an owner, so they couldn't be controlled. But barrier spirit hazards could be controlled, and they could even attack by themselves based on the markings. For example, the barrier's spirit hazard immediately appeared when the white fog filled the battlefield.

Chapter 347 - No Mercy

It started pouring when the Cloudmist keepers pressed forth, but the raindrops were white. They gathered and formed into rivers splashing down.

“Watch out! It’s the whitebone chillwater!” It was a water spirit hazard with black heavenly patterns. As the name would suggest, the water was cold and it could freeze people into white bones. If the victim didn’t have enough beast ki, they wouldn’t be able to resist the chill.

But the whitebone chillwater was only part of the Grand-Orient Barrier. On the other side, there was a tidal wave of black water that threw the keepers into chaos. The black water began corroding their bodies when they came in contact with it, and many of them were swallowed by the tidal wave.

“Watch out!”

“Out of the way!”

“Retreat!”

Screams began echoing from the keepers.

Many of them had been killed, but it was their first time facing a sect’s defensive barrier. Furthermore, the Grand-Orient Barrier had over a hundred barrier spirit hazards, but only a minority of them had been fused into the barrier by the first ancestor. The rest was done by the Li Saint Clan’s ancestors over the years, empowering the barrier over the ten thousand years and benefiting their descendants today.

There was purple lightning, a region in the barrier that had turned into a sea of flames, powerful gales that split people into two, and goldnether fog that was made of countless tiny worms. When those worms powered their way through the keepers, they would leave holes in those keepers.

For a moment, it seemed like the Grand-Orient Barrier had turned into hell, throwing the invaders into chaos. Then again, only a small portion of the Cloudmist keepers were experiencing the spirit hazards, since they had come in great numbers, invading from all directions. So despite the white fog and spirit hazards, some of them managed to break through the defenses and made their way deep into the barrier.

But in the depths of the fog, the Grand-Orient guardians were waiting for them. The guardians didn’t have any fog hindering their vision, and the spirit hazards would avoid them. Even the goldnether fog made a detour.

This was the advantage that the guardians had in their home ground.

The sixth elder, Zhao Zhiyuan, was clad in heavy black armor as he stood before the Grand-Orient guardians, his eyes bloodshot. He had returned to the Grand-Orient Sect before the war began, and he hadn’t told anyone about Yuwen Taiji’s location. He just silently took up his weapon and joined the war.

“Everyone listen up! We’ll kill anyone who stands before us! The thirty-three immortal mountains are behind us, and they’ve been our inheritance land for the past ten thousand years! We have many young disciples and families behind us, and they’ll only be butchered if they meet the Cloudmist keepers. So we can’t afford to lose this fight! They’ll have to ask our weapons if they want to trample over our sect! The Cloudmist Sword Sect is only qualified to be someone’s lackey, so why do we have to be afraid of garbage like them?!”

“We can die, but we have to make these bastards who are trying to destroy our inheritance pay the price! If any of you is going to die, then die bringing five down with you! KILL! SLAUGHTER THEM ALL!” He wasn’t just mobilizing the guardians, but he was also the first elder to be on the battlefield. However, he was also the one who had snatched the Grand-Orient Sword.

Humans were complex creatures. Zhao Zhiyuan was afraid of the nethermare venom, but now that his clan and sect were facing the threat of being slaughtered, he was willing to put his life on the line to fight. Perhaps only this could relieve the guilt in his heart. After all, he knew Tianming wasn’t dead, and there was a chance that he had already gone far away.

Beginning with Zhao Zhiyuan, the guardians charged at the Cloudmist keepers, who were being tortured by the spirit hazards. No one was alone in this war. With the help of the fog and spirit hazards, their numbers far exceeded the Grand-Orient guardians in small-scale fights. The Cloudmist keepers who made it through the spirit hazards could only be killed. Swords broke, corpses were split in two, and lifebound beasts were torn to pieces. In a short moment, the entire battlefield had overflowed with blood.

While the fight was going on, lightning would descend and a keeper, who had already been killed, took a bolt to his head and exploded. Deaths were also accumulating for the guardians. But judging from the current situation, the keepers had a higher ratio of deaths. One side was the invader, while the other side was determined to protect their home. With different motivations between the two factions, the power they could exhibit was also different. So much so that many keepers were frightened.

Honestly speaking, there were only ten thousand guardians from the Grand-Orient Sect, and their numbers were less than one-fifth of their enemies. But with just over ten thousand people, they withstood the first wave of invaders from the Cloudmist Sword School.

Blood was flowing on the ground and countless dismembered corpses were falling, with spirit hazards wreaking havoc in the battlefield. The guardians weren’t alone in the war. Within the barrier were the thirty-three immortal mountains with the Grand-Orient Sacred Mountain situated in the center.

If one stood atop the Grand-Orient Sacred Mountain, they would see countless colored rays extending out in the barrier. The rays were so tightly packed together they looked like a net. Because of those rays, the thirty-three immortal mountains looked even more gorgeous. On every immortal mountain, there were hundreds of rays extending out and converging on the sacred mountain.

Countless disciples stood beside their masters beneath colored rays, transmitting their beast ki into them, which was ultimately gathered in the Grand-Orient Barrier. Those colored rays were also known as the barrier spirit threads. Those threads were an important part to the barrier; they were the source of its energy.

Even the weakest disciple could do their part and transmit their beast ki over to participate in the war. They would take turns resting and transmitting their beast ki to help maintain the barrier’s operation. Perhaps some of them felt fear, but more of them were determined to fight the Cloudmist Sword School to the last person standing.

Their beast ki lit the threads, which converged at the sacred mountain and allowed the elders and chiefs to control the entire barrier. There were ninety-nine barrier nuclei on the sacred mountain, protecting

the barrier core. Today, all ninety-nine elders and chiefs were present, controlling the barrier. Aside from the automated attacks of the spirit hazards, most attacks were controlled by a master in their barrier nucleus for more efficiency and power.

The barrier nuclei could control the direction of the white fog and spirit hazards. This required an enormous amount of beast ki, so the masters on the sacred mountain were separated into two groups. So if someone got tired, another master would step in and replace them. The entire Grand-Orient Sect was actively participating in the war—some were controlling the barrier to kill their enemies, some were fighting on the front line, and some were contributing their beast ki to ensure the maintenance of the barrier.

The Elysian Emperor had been right; if the three sects had come together to crush the Grand-Orient Sect, everyone would give up in despair. But the Cloudmist Sword School was the only one attacking right now, which allowed them to have some confidence in fighting off the invaders. Massacre could only be seen on the sacred mountain. Although the war had just begun, the corpses of lifebound beasts lying on the ground had brought the intensity of the war to a whole new level.

No one could take a step back when they saw their friends and family dying in battle. The eyes of the keepers were bloodshot, and the guardians had their families behind them. None of them had a choice but to fight to their last breath.

“The Cloudmist Sword School is just kissing up to Heaven’s Elysium to survive!”

“They’re just a bunch of people who are used to being lackeys. They don’t have any backbone at all!”

“You bunch of hyenas want to destroy the Grand-Orient Sect? Dream on!”

“Brothers, let’s show them the power of the guardians!”

“Sikong Jiansheng, why hide away and only watch the battle? Are you a coward? Come out and let me kill you!”

The guardians mocked, but only the roaring of lifebound beasts could be heard.

“Who says that only our Cloudmist Sword School is attacking?”

“You guys are dead! The Onyx Sect is probably starting from the Abyssal Battlefield!”

“They still have the wildbeast tide with them! Haha! Your Grand-Orient Sect is finished!”

“Your Grand-Orient Sect flourished for ten thousand years, but you guys are just a bunch of weaklings now! And someone like you dares look down on our Cloudmist Sword School? Wake up from your fantasy!”

“After today, the Grand-Orient Sect will only be left with corpses!” They didn’t need to speak, because everyone here knew that this wasn’t the only battlefield. The Abyssal Battlefield probably had to withstand a stronger pressure coming from the Onyx Sect and their beast tide!

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The highest sacred palace on the sacred mountain only had half the barrier nuclei. The other half were in the Abyssal Battlefield. Seated at the center, the fourth elder, Shangguan Jingshu, was taking control of the overall situation. Sitting on a barrier nucleus, the countless threads were gathered onto her, making her part of the barrier. "More power! The first elder is currently facing the beast tide, and the pressure there is greater than ours. We need to get some people over!"

"Roger!" the elders and chiefs echoed with their eyes blazing. Veins were bulging on their foreheads.

"Don't lose!" Shangguan Jingshu arranged for ten chiefs and thirty hall prefects to provide backup to the Abyssal Battlefield side. She could see the entire battlefield with her own eyes. When she saw the guardians dying in battle and spilling their blood, tears rolled down from her cheeks. They were only holding on because they still had hope in their hearts.

"Yuwen Taiji, it's all up to you now...." Yuwen Taiji had left with the Grand-Orient Sword days ago— shouldn't he come back and take on the responsibility as sect master?

Chapter 348 - Death to the Invaders

The Abyssal Battlefield was covered in lightning as the calamitous sun hung high in the sky, casting its indifferent gaze over all lives below. In the desolate Abyssal Battlefield stood the black Grand-Orient Mountain Range. At this moment, it was enveloped by a huge hemisphere, which was the other half of the Grand-Orient Barrier.

This half wasn't as colorful. Looking from the outside, only a densely packed brown pattern could be seen circulating on the barrier, while it was a whole different world from the inside. Compared to the colorful spirit hazards on the Flameyellow continent, the Abyssal Battlefield only had brown; the color of earth.

But today, there was something unusual happening on the battlefield. The ninety-nine mountains had actually turned into ninety-nine dragons made of rocks and mud, soaring within the barrier. They weren't ordinary rocks and mud; the dragons could dive into the ground like the sea. As a result, the battlefield had turned into a sea with ripples spreading out while the dragons soared in the sea and sky.

Although the dragons could dissipate at any time, they could also recondense anywhere! It was actually a kind of earth spirit hazard, known as the imperial dragon pulse. The imperial dragon pulse was born in the depth of the ground, and it was extremely lethal. They were captured by the first ancestor for use as the barrier spirit hazard on the Abyssal Battlefield side.

At this moment, the dragons were letting out a roar as they descended upon their enemies on the battlefield. When Tianming was searching for manna in the Grandpeace Domain, he would never have expected that the Onyx Sect would launch an attack from this direction.

Before the Onyx Sect could even be seen, the ground was already violently trembling and countless wildbeasts were unleashing their roars, creating a huge cloud of dust that covered the Grandpeace Domain. The first thing everyone saw was the countless crimson eyes of the wildbeasts. This was a beast tide directed at the Grand-Orient Sect, with thousands of wildbeasts shaking the earth with their charge.

When the Grand-Orient guardians saw the beast tide, all of them sucked in a cold breath. Their opponent wasn't only the beasts, but also the Onyx Sect behind. However, just the fearless beast tide alone was a major problem for the barrier.

When the beast tide approached, everyone saw that the wildbeasts were being led by a second-order Saint Beast, the Skyscent Butterfly. Skyscent Butterflies could produce a fragrance that causes wildbeasts to lose control. So male wildbeasts smelling the fragrance would treat the Skyscent Butterfly as their mate and chase after it.

There were ten Skyscent Butterflies in total. If they had enough time and numbers, it wouldn't be a problem for them to attract over ten thousand wildbeasts. Without any intelligence, those wildbeasts could only fall for the Skyscent Butterflies' manipulation. In the next second, thousands of wildbeasts charged into the Grand-Orient Barrier, causing the entire barrier to tremble.

There were thousands of species of wildbeasts in the horde, and there were even demon beasts charging into the barrier with their enormous bodies. Following behind the beast tide was the Onyx Legion. The lifebound beasts from the Onyx Hole were mostly poisonous- and dark-type. Among them, the insect species numbered the most, but there were also other poisonous lifebound beasts like snakes.

Moreover, those lifebound beasts had all grown up, and most of them were eighth-order lifebound beasts with a small portion of saint beasts. The most conspicuous among them were broodmother lifebound beasts, such as the Onyx Bugqueen, and each of them could unleash an entire swarm. The thousands of wildbeasts were the first wave of attack on the barrier, taking the pressure off the Onyx Legion.

"Charge!" The Onyx Emperor and Empress didn't charge at the frontline, like Sikong Jiansheng, but commanded the invasion from the rear. Some high ranking elders stood beside them, and those elders were generally old, which represented their strength. Other than them, dozens of elders took the lead in the invasion. The Grand-Orient Barrier was like an enormous jaw that swallowed the beast tide, the Onyx Legion, and their lifebound beasts. As tens of thousands of beasts charged into the barrier, the cloud of dust caused by their charge alone was enough to cover the sky.

"Sikong Jiansheng has already entered on his side."

"The Grand-Orient guardians are estimated to number fifty thousand, but they're divided into two battlefields. So at best, each battlefield will only have a little over twenty thousand."

Honestly speaking, it wasn't easy for outer disciples to join the Grand-Orient guardians. Most of the outer disciples would leave when they saw no hope in rising, and scatter around the Grand-Orient realm. So the fifty thousand guardians were all elites. Then again, the seventy thousand Onyx Legion were also elites.

"A little more than twenty thousand, along with a small number of saints. They won't last long."

"I bet the wildbeasts are enough to cause them a headache."

"If the Elysian Emperor hadn't instructed us to slow down our invasion, we'd probably flatten the Grand-Orient Sect in just one day."

The high ranking members standing in the rear were planning strategies as they watched the ninety-nine dragons charging around in the fog within the barrier. Before the beast tide could reach the dragons, most of them fell into the quagmire. For a split second, the scene was in a complete mess.

At the same time, the dragons dove into the ground and started a massacre. In the direction of the saint mountain, with Huangfu Fengyun taking the lead, ninety-nine masters were controlling the dragons as if they were fighting themselves. As a spirit hazard, the imperial dragon pulse couldn't die. So they had turned into a gale and dove into the ground to wreak havoc. When the next time the dragons appeared, the wildbeasts had already been torn to pieces.

In front of the ninety-nine dragons, the wildbeasts were constantly being slaughtered, only leaving the saint beasts that were difficult to deal with behind. But the Onyx legionnaires, who were riding their lifebound beasts, were harder to deal with at the rear. There were many broodmother lifebound beasts among the horde, which made the Onyx Legion seem like a horde a few hundred thousand strong, especially the swarm of insects in the sky. If it weren't for the white fog, they would've already charged into the Grand-Orient Sect.

"Kill!" There were more than ten thousand guardians waiting behind the imperial dragon pulse. If any wildbeasts or beastmasters broke through the defense of the imperial dragon pulse, they would immediately charge forth.

At the beginning, the guardians could still hold their ground because the imperial dragon pulse was enough to deal with the invaders. But as time passed, the Onyx Legion had their eyes turning red from the killing. Although the fog and quagmire had obstructed them, a large portion of them had still made it over to the guardians. After all, they had a large advantage in numbers.

"Die!" When the two factions came in contact, blood splashed around with every death. The fight between lifebound beasts was the worst—when they charged at each other, they could throw out all sorts of abilities that made the battlefield chaotic. Not only was there a possibility of them dying from the enemy's abilities, but there was also a possibility of them being killed by one of their own. There was no way they could avoid it with abilities flying all over the place.

This was a real sect war.

"Heaven's Elysium is just using you as cannon fodder, hoping that we perish together. So why are you guys still so foolish as to work for them! At this time, our three sects should be united to destroy the Cloudmist Sword School and resist Heaven's Elysium together. That's our only chance of survival!

"If you guys insist on being stubborn, it'll only lead to the death of both our sects! And from then on, only Heaven's Elysium will be left in the Grand-Orient Realm! You guys must know that once the Grand-Orient Sect and Southsky Sect perish, Heaven's Elysium will have no more need for you guys! Not even the Cloudmist Sword School!" Huangfu Fengyun's voice reverberated out on the battlefield. The Onyx disciples naturally knew that, but they still continued desperately fighting after a brief hesitation.

In response, the Onyx Emperor shook his head with a wry smile. "It's too late for you to say this now. I don't have a choice, I'll only die faster if I don't listen to orders. At the very least, we'll have some time after annihilating the Grand-Orient Sect." It was already destined that both sides would fight to their last breath when the barrier was invaded.

“The Elysian Emperor has ordered us to take down the Abyssal Battlefield barrier and take control of the Grand-Orient Sect’s bottomless hole!” That way, they would’ve captured half of the Grand-Orient Sect and could travel through the bottomless pit to destroy the Grand-Orient Sect from inside the barrier. But the Elysian Emperor wanted to force the Southsky Sect to make a move by dragging the battle out and pushing the Grand-Orient Sect bit by bit. As for how they were going to force the Grand-Orient Sect, that was for later. So if the Onyx Sect could take control of the barrier in the Abyssal Battlefield, they would’ve won half the battle, and they just had to devise a plan for later.

The Onyx Sect was more difficult to deal with, compared to the Cloudmist Sword School, especially how they could manipulate wildbeasts to attack the barrier. They also had a complete overall strength. Many legionnaires who had survived the imperial dragon pulse charged over and clashed with the Grand-Orient guardians. Furthermore, their numbers also began increasing.

Huangfu Fengyun immediately requested reinforcements from the other side. But judging from the current situation, they would have a difficult time withstanding these venomous lifebound beasts. The barrier was filled with poisonous fog, which dealt great damage to the guardians. If things went on at this rate, there was a high likelihood that the Onyx Legion would pass through the barrier.

At that time, it would be difficult for the elders to maintain the barrier, and they might even have to fight themselves. But if they fought, there would be no one maintaining the barrier, which meant the barrier would collapse. If the barrier collapsed, the Onyx Legion would be able to strike right at their heart.

With the balance destroyed, the gap between them would only grow larger. They only had about twenty elders here, while the Onyx Sect had nearly fifty elders! Huangfu Fengyun’s eyes turned red and sorrow rose in his heart. “Is heaven going to doom the Grand-Orient Sect?”

He looked into the distance, where the Onyx Emperor, Empress, and elders stood together. They didn’t participate in the battle, but indifferently looked on as the Grand-Orient Sect collapsed bit by bit. All of a sudden, a group of people came from their rear, and they were shocked as they turned their heads back immediately.

“Yuwen Fengtian! Su Yunzhi!” The Onyx Emperor narrowed his eyes into slits. He naturally knew those two, they were the second and third elders of the Grand-Orient Sect. He never imagined that these people would be outside the barrier.

“Today’s your funeral!” Yuwen Fengtian cast a murderous glare at the Onyx Sect members in front of him.

“A loser like you? Are you joking?” the Onyx Emperor sneered.

But when he finished speaking, Yuwen Fengtian immediately stepped away, revealing the man behind him. The man had one black and one white pupil as he gazed indifferently at the Onyx Emperor. As lightning rumbled, the man held onto a gold and black sword in his hand.

“Death to the invaders!” he pronounced.

Chapter 349 - Yin-Yang Saber Prison

“The Grand-Orient Sword!” Everyone from the Onyx Sect was captivated by the sword that man was holding.

“Yuwen Taiji?”

Many people’s eyes were burning as they looked at the man with black and white pupils. Everyone knew that Yuwen Taiji was the strongest person in the Grand-Orient Sect. But what was the strongest person in the Grand-Orient Sect doing here, instead of being in the barrier? But before the Onyx Legion’s party could ponder about it, Yuwen Taiji grabbed onto the Grand-Orient Sword with both hands. His eyes were cold, striking fear deep into the hearts of everyone from the Onyx Sect.

“Kill!” an icy voice came from Yuwen Taiji. Under his command, the other seven Grand-Orient elders immediately attacked, since Yuwen Taiji had given the order. The seven elders were Su Yunzhi, Yuwen Fengtian, Su Jiudao, Su Zhen, Qin Wulie, Gongsun Shengji, and Chen Nantian.

The seven of them summoned their saint lifebound beasts at the same time. Their lifebound beasts were enormous, and their roars were intimidating. Yuwen Fengtian was riding on a hideous stout black beast, the Skyquake Taotie. On the other side, Su Yunzhi had a huge flaming snake beside him. The snake had tens of thousands of densely packed eyes, whose eerie looks could draw ommetaphobia from the bottom of people’s hearts. It was a fifth-order saint beast, the Myriadeyes Flysnake.

The Su Clan’s lifebound beasts were all snakes, and they came in all forms. As for the three remaining elders, their lifebound beasts were a blazing locust, a steed with stars shining on its body, and an ape shrouded in wind and lightning. But none of their sacred lifebound beasts were comparable to Yuwen Taiji’s Yangfiend Taotie and Yinfiend Taotie. When Yuwen Taiji locked on to his target with the Grand-Orient Sword, the two taoties beside him immediately charged forth, causing the ground to tremble.

When the Onyx Sect leaders saw Yuwen Taiji’s group had launched their attacks without any forewarning, they immediately summoned their lifebound beasts. When both parties collided, all kinds of spiritsource abilities were thrown around.

“The Elysian Emperor was only able to exhibit thirty percent of the Grand-Orient Sword’s power after comprehending it for a lifetime. But Yuwen Taiji has just gotten the sword, so it should be useless in his hands. Hold your ground! We’ll capture Yuwen Taiji after the elders return from the barrier!”

Under the Onyx Emperor’s arrangement, an Onyx elder ran into the barrier to seek reinforcements. They had more people with them, and they only needed twice their original number to defeat Yuwen Taiji’s party. If they could capture these elders from the Grand-Orient Sect, then they would have already won!

In the battle, every Onyx elder was being specifically targeted. Yuwen Fengtian and Su Yunzhi had besieged the Onyx Emperor together with their Skyquake Taotie and Myriadeyes Flysnake. The two of them weren’t as old as Huangfu Fengyun, and they were considered to be in the same generation as the Onyx Emperor. They were at the pinnacle of their lives at this moment. They had built a rapport over the years, and when they joined hands, they directly forced the Onyx Emperor to retreat a few hundred meters.

On the other hand, Yuwen Taiji had reached the Onyx Empress. This battle could be seen from high terrain in the barrier, especially the ninety-nine people at the barrier’s core. All of them could clearly see

Yuwen Taiji wielding the Grand-Orient Sword. Huangfu Fengyun felt relieved when he saw Yuwen Taiji fighting the Onyx Empress.

“Yuwen Taiji might be a junior, but he has a high chance of defeating the Onyx Empress with his cultivation and the Grand-Orient Sword.” One must know that Yuwen Taiji and the Onyx Empress represented the Grand-Orient Sect and Onyx Sect. The Onyx Empress wasn’t any weaker than the Onyx Emperor. Her lifebound beast was a Royal Pentavenom Centipede. It had a long body with thousands of feet and was enveloped in thick, spike-covered armor that dazzled in five colors and was filled with poison. The colors represented five powerful poisons that could even poison saint beasts and demon beasts.

The poison of a fifth-order saint beast was even more terrifying than the Venomfiend Bloodclaw’s bloodfiend venom. So with such a centipede wrapped around the Onyx Empress’ curvaceous body, the pair’s eyes were ferocious.

“A mere junior who’s the so-called strongest in the Grand-Orient Sect dares to fight me alone? So what if you have the Grand-Orient Sword?” the Onyx Empress sneered, her eyes filled with a terrifying chill. But when she spoke, Yuwen Taiji had already appeared before her with the Grand-Orient Sword and unleashed a great dazzle. Yuwen Taiji hadn’t uttered a single word from the start, but when he fought with his lifebound beasts, it instantly caused heaven to shake.

The Yangfiend Taotie had executed its spiritsource ability, the Great Yang Vortex, turning it into a dazzling white light and converging into a vortex. As for the Yinfiend Taotie, its spiritsource ability was the Great Yin Vortex, turning it into a black torrent and converging into a vortex.

When the black and white vortexes collided together, there wasn’t any explosion, as would be imagined. The two vortexes merged together, connected from end to end, formed a yin-yang diagram, and descended on the opponent. As the diagram spun at terrifying speed, it unleashed a terrifying pressure from the sky.

When the Royal Pentavenom Centipede came out, the black and white vortex had descended, enveloping it together with the Onyx Empress. But the biggest threat was Yuwen Taiji. The Grand-Orient Sword unleashed a blinding radiance in his hand. When he swung it out, the blinding brilliance lit up the dim Abyssal Battlefield, burning the Royal Pentavenom Centipede. Due to the width of the Grand-Orient Sword, it could be used as a war saber, and this move was known as the Yin-Yang Saber Prison.

“Die!” Yuwen Taiji’s eyes flashed fiercely. Under his control, the Grand-Orient Sword exploded with terrifying power. When he swung the sword, the saber ki formed a prison. In that split second, the Onyx Empress, who was shocked by the Grand-Orient Sword and two taotie’s strength, was devoured by the yin-yang vortex. Although she attacked, her retaliation was too weak, compared to Yuwen Taiji and the Grand-Orient Sword.

She’d underestimated Yuwen Taiji, which had placed her in a disadvantageous position from the beginning. But she wasn’t the only one—even the Royal Pentavenom Centipede was covered in wounds, despite its armored body. Even its spiritsource ability had been cleaved in half by the Grand-Orient Sword.

Just as the black and white vortex was above the Royal Pentavenom Centipede, the two beasts had also charged and flipped the centipede over. Their collision caused the earth to tremble and hills to collapse.

“You!” The Onyx Empress was dumbfounded. Before she could catch her breath, she was devoured by the Grand-Orient Sword. “Arghhhhhh!”

The battle had started too quickly, and not even her lifebound beast’s spirit-source ability, Pentavenom Clouds, could stop Yuwen Taiji. In other words, even if Yuwen Taiji didn’t have the Grand-Orient Sword, his strength was comparable to the Onyx Emperor. But with the Grand-Orient Sword, the Onyx Empress was being handily beaten by Yuwen Taiji.

“He’s unleashing at least twenty percent of the Grand-Orient Sword’s power!” The Onyx Empress had heard that except for the Li Saint Clan, no one had ever tapped more than thirty percent of the Grand-Orient Sword’s power! But no one knew that Tianming had a special connection with the Grand-Orient Sword, and could create a black vortex in his body.

The Grand-Orient Sword was rumored to be a god’s creation, and mortals weren’t able to control it completely. At best, they could only use a tiny portion of its power. It was rumored that the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower held the secrets of godhood. Tianming was the closest person to those two, but he had only just started exploring with them.

Back when the first ancestor had wielded the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower, his name was widely spread throughout the Theocracy of the Ancients. As Tianming’s bloodline could resonate with the Grand-Orient Sword, he was probably the first person after the first ancestor.

Before the Onyx Empress recovered from her shock, Yuwen Taiji stabbed forth with the Grand-Orient Sword once more. When she tried to block that stab, the brute strength tore through her hasty block and pierced her body, splashing blood into the surroundings.

“Urghhh!” The Onyx Empress’ eyes widened. That sword didn’t piece into her vitals, but it had heavily injured her, and the wound was nearly fatal. “Yuwen Taiji!”

She immediately retreated, but before she could take another step, Yuwen Taiji was already slashing his sword at her head. Just when the Grand-Orient Sword was about to cleave her in two, Yuwen Taiji suddenly changed his attack and slapped the flat of the sword on her head. As blood flowed from her head, her eyes grew blurry. But at the very least, she was still alive!

“I’ll kill you!” the Onyx Empress screamed out like a lunatic, despite her injuries. But it was a pity that Yuwen Taiji wasn’t a kindhearted person. When she had just raised her hand, the Grand-Orient Sword came slashing down at her again. This time, the Onyx Empress’ hand fell to the ground.

“Arghhhhhhhh!” She took a stab to her abdomen, a slap on her head, and now, her hands were both cut off! With injuries like those, she wasn’t far from death.

“Why are you still screaming?” Yuwen Taiji stepped on her head, pressing it down into the soil, and placed the Grand-Orient Sword behind her. He was stepping on one of the Onyx Sect’s sect masters!

The Onyx Empress was groaning out in pain as she struggled. But with her head being stepped on, and the Grand-Orient Sword placed at her back, how could she move? Who could’ve expected that the Onyx Empress would be defeated by Yuwen Taiji and look so tragic?

The injuries on her abdomen and head were nothing much. But if she didn't immediately reattach her hands, her fighting strength would drop by at least half! Even her life and death was in Yuwen Taiji's hands right now. Stepping on the Onyx Empress' head, Yuwen Taiji scanned his black and white pupils out at the battlefield.

"Stop right now or I'll tear this person to pieces!" His loud voice echoed through the battlefield. Although those inside the barrier couldn't hear what he said, those at the rear had instantly turned their gazes in his direction. The Onyx Emperor also looked over at the same time. When he saw Yuwen Taiji standing on the Onyx Empress' head, he immediately took in a cold breath, and nearly his last breath.

"Yuwen Taiji! Let her go this instant!" The Onyx Emperor immediately withdrew from the battlefield and ordered the other elders to stop fighting. Even the Royal Pentavenom Centipede could only stop and look at Yuwen Taiji.

"How naive you are, Onyx Emperor." Yuwen Taiji wore a contemptuous smile. He grabbed the Onyx Empress by her hair, lifted her off the ground, and placed the Grand-Orient Sword at her neck.

"You have ten breaths to retreat and withdraw three hundred miles from the Grand-Orient Sect. Unless you don't mind returning with your wife's corpse on the first day of the war," said Yuwen Taiji. His words were like a sword, stabbing into the Onyx Emperor's heart.

Chapter 350 - Conspiring Against the Onyx Sec

All throughout history, the weaker side would always try to capture the commander in war. The Onyx Sect had two sect masters, and they had been married for many years. Looking at the Onyx Empress in this state with her face turning pale from the pain, how could the Onyx Emperor not listen to Yuwen Taiji?

Everyone else from the Onyx Sect were also dumbfounded as they looked at Yuwen Taiji. Not even the Onyx Emperor could have imagined that a junior could defeat the Onyx Empress so quickly! As for the Grand-Orient guardians, most of them had seen it happen, since the barrier was transparent to them. No matter what Yuwen Taiji had done in the past, everyone from the Grand-Orient Sect was cheering for him at this moment, calling out his name on the battlefield.

Even Huangfu Fengyun's eyes were brimming with tears as he muttered, "He didn't let Jingshu down.... He actually managed to control the Grand-Orient Sword to this extent and defeat the Onyx Empress!"

"Yuwen Taiji!!" Cheers echoed out on the battlefield. The Onyx Legion was still trapped in the white fog, so most of them had no idea what was going on. They had no idea that Yuwen Taiji had reached the highest point of his life in this battle. Yuwen Taiji had never had so many people willingly cheering his name. He had captured the Onyx Empress on his return, grasping the advantage in this war. It was something that Huangfu Fengyun could never have imagined. So you could tell how shocked they were!

"Quick, or she'll die! Heaven's Elysium is using you as cannon fodder, so why are you putting your lives on the line? Why don't you wait until I slaughter the Cloudmist Sword School, then retreat openly?" Yuwen Taiji used the Grand-Orient Sword to lift the Onyx Empress' chin and continued, "Tell your husband what he should do!"

The Onyx Empress' face was twisted as she glared at the Onyx Emperor. "Why aren't you retreating? Do you want me dead?!"

"W-we can't do that... we'll break through the barrier soon..." an elder said, his voice becoming weaker and weaker as he spoke. All of them felt terrible; they knew they could soon complete their task in conquering the Abyssal Battlefield and slaughter their way into the Grand-Orient Sect. But all of a sudden, Yuwen Taiji had appeared from nowhere and ruined it all. With the Onyx Empress in his hand, the situation would probably turn in the Grand-Orient Sect's favor.

"Yuwen Taiji, I never imagined that there was someone like you in the Grand-Orient Sect! I've heard that you're pretty capable, and have ambitions of becoming the sect master. But I never expected you'd be so powerful! I underestimated you today, but so what if you're powerful? You're just one man, and it's inevitable for Heaven's Elysium to rule the Grand-Orient Realm! Even with the Grand-Orient Sword, there's nothing you can do to change things by yourself. Just the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School are three times more powerful than the Grand-Orient Sect!" the Onyx Emperor said in a cold voice.

"Thanks for your concern, but do what you should," Yuwen Taiji replied faintly. It had already been ten breaths, and he'd already given the Onyx Emperor a chance. Seeing that the Onyx Emperor wanted to delay for time, he moved the sword in his hand.

"Stop! We'll retreat!" The Onyx Emperor trembled. His face was pale as he stepped into the Grand-Orient Barrier with the elders to summon the legion back.

"Disperse the fog and allow them to leave!" Huangfu Fengyun said to the surrounding saints.

"But what if they continue attacking?"

"They won't!"

Things went as Huangfu Fengyun had said. After the fog dissipated, the Onyx Legion reluctantly retreated under the Onyx Emperor's orders. After all, who would feel good being forced to withdraw just when they were about to crush their enemies? The Onyx Legion was shocked when they looked at the Onyx Empress' tragic state, and they began inquiring about Yuwen Taiji's identity.

In the blink of an eye, the Onyx Legion retreated from the battlefield, drenched in blood. There were some lifebound beasts still alive, but their beastmasters had died in the battle and vice-versa. Of the seventy thousand Onyx legionnaires, there were at least two thousand people and three thousand lifebound beasts killed in the battle. As for those who had lost their lifebound beasts, their future was basically equivalent to being crippled.

The Onyx Sect's loss was greater than it looked.

After all, the imperial dragon pulse wasn't just for show. For the Onyx Legion to fight in the Grand-Orient Sect's territory, they would be bound to have more deaths. When they turned back to look at the battlefield, the ground was covered in blood and littered with corpses.

The Grand-Orient Sect had also suffered casualties, roughly about half of what the Onyx Legion had taken. So in this war, only Heaven's Elysium could still laugh, as they hadn't made their move yet. They had so far managed to preserve their strength while having their lackeys fight the war. After this battle,

both the Onyx Sect and Grand-Orient Sect had a whole new understanding of Heaven's Elysium's ruthlessness and tyranny.

"Yuwen Taiji, why aren't you releasing her now that we've already retreated?!" the Onyx Emperor said in a ferocious voice.

"Are you joking with me?" Yuwen Taiji dragged the Onyx Empress by her hair.

"You're not going to let her go?!" the Onyx Emperor raged.

"Of course not. But don't worry about it, as I have no intention of taking her life. I'll release her after your Onyx Legion retreats from the battlefield," Yuwen Taiji replied.

Listening to Yuwen Taiji's words, the Onyx Emperor's frown grew deeper. He knew that Yuwen Taiji was making full use of his advantage, and he would probably have done the same if he were in Yuwen Taiji's shoes. Since Yuwen Taiji had captured someone important, there was no way he would release her so easily.

"The Onyx Sect will have to behave. If you guys dare to come close to the Grand-Orient Sect and attack the barrier again, I'll be sending her head to you immediately. Then again, you can try me if you like," Yuwen Taiji added. His words immediately sent the Onyx Sect into rage.

"This will be troublesome...." The Onyx Emperor closed his eyes. With the Onyx Empress in Yuwen Taiji's hands, there was no way they could continue their attack. They wouldn't suffer any losses if they didn't continue their attack, but what if Heaven's Elysium issued an order for them to attack after finding out what had happened here? Wouldn't that be forcing the Onyx Empress to death?

The Onyx Emperor, and everyone else from the Onyx Sect, bled from their hearts when they saw the Onyx Empress captured. Truth be told, they had no grudges with the Grand-Orient Sect, but they were now placed in a difficult position. They now had two choices laid before them: they could either go against Heaven's Elysium, or continue their attack and ignore the Onyx Empress' death. This matter involved the entire sect's life and death, and not even the Onyx Emperor could easily come to a decision.

"Hold it for now!" the Onyx Empress said with tears rolling down her cheeks. They had already retrieved her arms, and there was still a chance for her to reattach them as long as she was still alive. But she knew the function of her arms wouldn't be the same afterward.

In the end, the Onyx Emperor could only nod his head and sigh. All by himself, Yuwen Taiji had toyed with the Onyx Sect in the palm of his hand. Yuwen Taiji suddenly waved his hand at the Onyx Emperor, signaling for them to talk privately.

"I know that you guys are afraid of Heaven's Elysium because of the last war, where your barrier was destroyed and damaged at its core. And without the barrier, you guys can't defend yourselves against Heaven's Elysium. But then again, Heaven's Elysium will definitely use you guys as cannon fodder to unify the Grand-Orient Realm. But you should know that they'll slaughter the entire Onyx Sect once we're defeated.

"Don't be in a rush to reject my words. Heaven's Elysium is more ruthless than you think. So don't be naive and think that they'll keep you guys around just because you submitted to them. I can say that even the Cloudmist Sword School will die at that time!" Yuwen Taiji revealed the Onyx Emperor's

deepest worries. Without a barrier protecting the Onyx Sect, there was no way they could resist Heaven's Elysium. They were in a terrible position, compared to the Grand-Orient Sect and Southsky Sect.

"Yuwen Taiji, what are you trying to say?" The Onyx Emperor narrowed his eyes into slits.

"You guys will need to be resolute if you want to survive," Yuwen Taiji replied.

"What do you mean?"

"The courage to let your Onyx Sect come into our barrier," said Yuwen Taiji.

"Are you sure?" The Onyx Emperor and Onyx Empress had their eyes wide as they looked at Yuwen Taiji.

"You're not afraid that we'll immediately betray you upon entering the barrier? If nothing is stopping us in the barrier, it'll be easy for us to slaughter you," said the Onyx Emperor. He was deeply shocked by Yuwen Taiji's suggestion.

"I know. That's why I said it'll take courage. Furthermore, I believe that you have a deeper hatred for Heaven's Elysium. You were forced to submit, and if there's a possibility, you'll definitely take revenge." Yuwen Taiji looked at the two with his eyes blazing. He had seen through the Onyx Emperor and Onyx Empress. The Onyx Sect was only in this position because their barrier was destroyed, so how could they not have any hatred? They just didn't dare show it on their faces, but Heaven's Elysium knew about it as well. So there was no way Heaven's Elysium would let them off after this sect war.

"Don't bother working for Heaven's Elysium. You're just daydreaming. Like us, you don't have any other choice. Why has no one unified the Grand-Orient Sect over the past millennia? That's because the Grand-Orient, Onyx, and Southsky Sects kept them in check. This current situation is because you dragged us down. But if you're no longer concerned with your barrier, and join the Grand-Orient Sect to resist Heaven's Elysium, they won't be able to destroy the Grand-Orient or Southsky Barriers. So we can first plan to get rid of the Cloudmist Sword School. After we're left with Heaven's Elysium, what can they do to all three of us?" Yuwen Taiji said with fire blazing in his pupils.