

The Heavens 341

Chapter 341: Chase Big-Head to the Death!

However... just as Patriarch Big-head was about to go all out, the bright, sunny sky was suddenly split by the appearance of a bolt of lightning. The Tribulation clouds were gone, but the lightning bolt shot down toward Meng Hao nonetheless.

It descended with incredible speed, landing directly onto the hat on Meng Hao's head. A deafening boom filled the air.

Meng Hao wasn't hurt, but wisps of greenish smoke rose up from the hat. Meng Hao gaped in shock. He looked up into the sky only to find it as beautiful as ever. The lightning bolt seemed to have been a fluke.

"That was the aura of Heavenly Tribulation...." thought Meng Hao with a frown. Thankfully, the lightning bolt hadn't done any damage; it had been absorbed by the meat jelly hat.

The scene also shocked Patriarch Big-head, who looked up into the sky as well. However, he quickly recovered and began to flee with all the speed he could muster. He wanted to establish as much distance as possible between himself and Meng Hao.

Meng Hao frowned. He suddenly had a very bad feeling. The lightning bolt just now had been too sudden, without any warning whatsoever. The sky above was a deep, beautiful blue. Meng Hao's gaze once again came to rest on the fleeing Patriarch Big-head.

Meng Hao gave a cold snort, then strode forward.

Mustering incredible speed, he shot off, disappearing in an instant.

Patriarch Big-head's face was paler than ever as he fled. He had already been running for an entire day, and his bag of holding was now devoid of medicinal pills used for healing. His internal injuries were getting worse, and he could only employ forty percent of the power of his Cultivation base.

“Dammit, dammit....” His eyes were bloodshot and he gnashed his teeth. Meng Hao followed behind, stuck onto him like marrow onto bone.

Occasionally, a blast of Core Qi would whistle toward him, which would leave Patriarch Big-head scared witless. He couldn’t think of anything else to do other than to run away with all the power he could muster.

“Just how long is he gonna keep following me!?!?” Patriarch Big-head felt like he was about to collapse. He could sense nothing but ill tidings regarding Patriarch Rubicund and Patriarch Pockmarks. Of the hundreds of people who had begun this matter, he knew that he was the only one left alive. He was filled with regrets; the dogged pursuit he was enduring left him filled with despair and dread.

Suddenly, a Core Qi attack shot toward him. In response, Patriarch Big-head spit up a mouthful of blood. The air beneath his feet seethed as a cloud of spectres appeared, boosting his speed and instantly increasing the distance between him and Meng Hao.

A strange light shone from Meng Hao’s eyes. There had been multiple occasions throughout the day during which he was just about to catch up to his opponent; however, every time, Patriarch Big-head would use some method relating to evil spirits to add distance between them.

Meng Hao hadn’t encountered situations like these very often. Behind him, the more than one hundred Cultivators were also in pursuit. Their speed couldn’t compare to Meng Hao’s, but they had Meng Hao’s Blood Clones to lead them, so they were able to follow along nonetheless.

As dusk fell, it grew more difficult to see things clearly. Up ahead was a wide plain which was filled with residences organized in rings and surrounded with a stockade.

The stockade village was home to more than a hundred Cultivators, who had been meditating moments ago, but who had stood up and were now looking out toward Patriarch Big-head as he approached. Three old men flew out to meet him.

“It’s the Patriarch of the Talisman Sect from Dongluo City, Senior Ouyang!”

“It really is Senior Ouyang. But who is he fleeing from?”

The three old men's faces flickered, and they hesitated for a moment. Patriarch Big-head neared, his eyes filled with a look of pleasant surprise.

"Fellow Daoists, please help me by stopping this hoodlum!" said Patriarch Big-head. There was no anxiety in his voice, only calmness, lending much credibility to his words. "I was in secluded meditation when he launched a shameful sneak attack. I was injured and my Cultivation base damaged. Fellow Daoists, if you can just delay him for a few moments, maybe enough time for half an incense stick to burn, then I can recover my Cultivation base. Fellow Daoists, after I slay him, I will definitely be in your debt. I'll even help you to reach Core Formation!"

Without even waiting for a response, Patriarch Big-head shot off into the distance. As for whether these people would comply with his request, he didn't stay around to find out. If they did, great; if they didn't, there was nothing he could do about it.

The three Cultivators were in the late Foundation Establishment stage. After hearing Patriarch Big-head's words, their hearts began to pound. There was little that could entice them more than the prospect of assistance in reaching Core Formation.

They hesitated for a moment. For someone to successfully launch a sneak attack against a Sect Patriarch meant that whoever was chasing him was no weakling. He would definitely be of the Core Formation stage. However, the prospective reward was too enticing; they exchanged glances as Meng Hao approached, followed by the more than one hundred Cultivators.

The sight immediately caused these late Foundation Establishment Cultivators to grow more nervous and hesitant. One of them finally gritted his teeth and flew forward, clasping hands and bowing to Meng Hao.

"Senior, please wait a moment, I..."

"Screw off!" said Meng Hao, his expression cold, flying directly past the man.

The bowing Foundation Establishment Cultivator's face flickered and his scalp went numb. Meng Hao's glance just now had caused his heart to tremble with fear. However, the reward promised by Patriarch Big-head nagged at his heart.

The other two Foundation Establishment Cultivators held him back, then clasped hands in salute to Meng Hao. They didn't dare to do even the slightest thing to try to delay him. They, too, thirsted for

the reward promised by Patriarch Big-head, but Meng Hao's words and cold glance left their minds reeling and their Dao Pillars quivering.

Meng Hao didn't slow down in the slightest. He whistled through the air, followed by the more than one hundred Cultivators who were still being led by the Blood Clones. They glanced at the local Cultivators with cold smiles as they passed, shooting through the air like meteors.

Some time after they were gone, the three late Foundation Establishment Cultivators let loose sighs of relief. Their faces were somewhat pale, because they knew that their greed just now had led them halfway to the grave.

"Who was that guy?" they thought, exchanging glances. "He managed to make Senior Ouyang take to flight...."

As he flew through the air, Meng Hao waved his hand out in front of him. The air rippled as arcs of golden light appeared. They shot toward Patriarch Big-head, but before they could get too close, the man spit up some more blood. The air around his feet grew blurry, and his speed increased, allowing him to evade Meng Hao's attack. In the blink of an eye, he was roughly three thousand meters away.

"So fast!" thought Meng Hao, giving a cold harrumph as he continued onward. Throughout the course of this chase, Meng Hao's interest in Patriarch Big-head's legacy techniques had certainly been aroused.

Patriarch Big-head's face was pale. He gritted his teeth and continued to flee, his heart pounding. A sensation of life-or-death danger floated in his heart. The only thing he could think to do was use every possible means to evade the pursuit and escape death.

Bitterness filled his heart. After reaching Core Formation, he had always been the one to chase and kill others. This was the first time he had been pursued like a stray dog.

"If I can make it out of this, then all of this humiliation will be paid back a hundredfold!" he thought, his eyes filling with madness. He increased his speed, traveling another three thousand meters in the blink of an eye.

After half a day of employing the ultimate speed possible within the Core Formation stage, Patriarch Big-head spotted some earthen walls off in the distance. This city was not as flourishing as one of the United Nine, but clearly a powerful group resided within.

As he neared, Patriarch Big-head cried out, "Fellow Daoist Chen!" Immediately, a beam of colorful light shot out from within the city. Inside was a muscular, bare-chested man of the mid Core Formation stage, with flowing black hair. When he saw Patriarch Big-head, he gaped in surprise.

"Big Bro Ouyang, what's going on...?"

"Fellow Daoist Chen, please stop the hoodlum that's chasing me!" he gushed as he shot past the muscular man. "You and I have similar Cultivation bases, but I was ambushed while in secluded meditation. I've been poisoned and I need an incense stick's worth of time to suppress the poison. I owe you!"

The muscular man's eyes glittered as he saw Meng Hao approaching.

Meng Hao glanced at the earthen city wall, and the muscular man who hovered in mid-air.

"Another person who doesn't know the difference between life and death," said Meng Hao as he flew forward.

The muscular man hesitated for a moment, but after seeing Meng Hao, he got the impression that since Meng Hao's Cultivation base was only at the mid Core Formation stage, he wasn't someone to be too worried about. However, the golden glow surrounding Meng Hao, as well as the sense of danger that radiated out from him, caused the man to be cautious. "Fellow Daoist, please wait a moment. There's no flying allowed in my city!"

As the words came out of his mouth, the more than two hundred Cultivators within the city flew out. Their aura billowed out, forming into a sealing power. They stood there glaring hatefully at Meng Hao.

These people had a variety of different Cultivation bases. Some were Core Formation, most were Foundation Establishment or Qi Condensation. However, all of them radiated dense killing intent. Obviously they had killed many people in the past.

Meng Hao didn't care at all about people such as this who were clearly seeking to die. He continued forward without stopping, causing the muscular man's expression to flicker. He lifted his right hand to perform an incantation, when suddenly he saw the look in Meng Hao's eyes.

It was a coldness filled with killing intent. As the gaze passed over him, the muscular man's heart began to pound. Cracking sounds could be heard coming from his Core, as if it might shatter into pieces. He was astonished, but before he could retreat, Meng Hao was upon him. Meng Hao slammed a fist into the man's chest, and then shot past him. As Meng Hao passed, blood sprayed from the man's mouth; then he trembled and... directly exploded into bloody pieces.

His death caused looks of terror to fill the faces of the rest of the Cultivators from the city.

“Everyone here who pledges allegiance to me will live. Anyone who doesn't...” Meng Hao knew that in the Black Lands, one could not be softhearted. The only way to establish power and gain respect was through ruthlessness. As his voice rang out, his Blood Clones approached, along with the hundred or more Cultivators, whose killing intent billowed to the Heavens. They shot toward the city Cultivators, and immediately the sound of killing rose up, accompanied by miserable screams and cries.

Meng Hao glared at Patriarch Big-head, his eyes flashing with killing intent. “Let's see how many people you manage to get killed along the way!” He shot off again in pursuit.

This Cultivator was a strange one. No matter what powers Meng Hao employed, he was like a loach, slippery and difficult to lay hands on.

This was especially true considering his secret art of speed boosting. He had used it multiple times to put more distance between himself and Meng Hao. Even more bizarre was his fearsome ability to sense danger. Every time Meng Hao attacked, he seemed capable of predicting it and dodging out of the way.

“That damned no-good fool, he couldn't even hold the guy up for half a second!!” Patriarch Big-head gritted his teeth. Hair in disarray, clothing ragged, breathing heavily, he shot forward. He was exhausted, but Meng Hao was still chasing him. He lifted his head up to the sky and howled.

Chapter 342: Patriarch Golden Light!

Two days later, a black-robed figure flew out from a valley.

“Don't worry, Big Brother Ouyang,” said the voice arrogantly. “I shall help you take care of this despicable fellow. It won't be long before we can use his skull to drink alcohol together!” The figure shot through the air to meet an incoming beam of golden light.

This person possessed Core Qi in the form of an enormous mountain. The power of the Core Qi was joined by a howling totemic Giant Ape which smashed down toward Meng Hao.

Big-head was off in the distance looking on with an expression of appreciation. He'd finally found a friend willing to do something to help him.

The first thing he did was to turn and flee off into the distance as fast as possible.

However, before he had flown for the space of a few breaths, a blood-curdling scream rang out, which was cut off by a massive explosion.

Heart trembling, Big-head looked back to see the giant ape falling to pieces and the mountain crumbling. The Cultivator who had been attempting to block Meng Hao's way exploded. All of that was the result of a single fist strike from Meng Hao.

The sight of Meng Hao's right fist caused Big-head's scalp to grow numb. Spitting out another mouthful of blood, he went all out to flee as quickly as possible.

"What a psycho! When did someone so inhuman show up in the Black Lands? And how come I had to provoke him...?" Heart filled with bitterness, he lowered his head and shot forward at top speed.

Four days later a dusk....

"Fear not, Brother Ouyang!" said a bald Cultivator, lifting up his glass. "We, the Black Mountain Nine Saints, might not measure up to you in terms of Cultivation base, but when it comes to our spell formation, we can trap anyone under the Nascent Soul stage for at least three days."

Big-head, his face pale, reluctantly lifted up a glass of alcohol. However, his glance was drawn off into the distance, where eight figures were shooting toward an approaching beam of billowing, golden light.

"Brother Ouyang, you really don't need to worry. Just don't think about going back on your word about the Gilded Lizard totem you said you would give us." The bald-headed Cultivator laughed, but within his gaze was an imperceptible trace of scorn.

According to the rumors he had heard, this Ouyang from the three great Sects of Dongluo City had offended a mid Core Formation Cultivator of the junior generation. The two had been involved in a deadly chase across half of the western region of the Black Lands.

Seeing the terrified state of Ouyang, the bald Cultivator couldn't help but look down on him, and had come to the conclusion that the man's previous reputation had been considerably inflated.

The bald Cultivator took a drink of alcohol and then said, "How come a trifling mid Core Formation Cultivator is being called Patriarch Golden Light? How laughable! We Black Mountain Nine... huh?" Before he could even finish speaking, a massive boom filled the air, and the ground trembled. Even more shocking to the man was that even though it was clearly midday, in the location where the fight was going on could be seen a starry sky!

Even as the bald Cultivator was shocked into silence, Ouyang's mind began to buzz. A forlorn expression appeared on his face as he tossed the glass of alcohol down. He slapped his chest, forcing some more blood out of his mouth to activate his secret technique. He shot off into the distance at high speed, something that had already become a force of habit. The bald Cultivator watched on with gaping mouth.

A mocking look appeared on the man's face. A moment later, while the look was still plastered there, the hair all over his body stood on end. An intense feeling of danger suddenly filled his mind. He spun as if he had been struck by lightning. There in front of him was a scholarly young man bathed in golden light. It was impossible to say when he had arrived. He picked up the flagon of alcohol and took a sip.

"You...." said the bald Cultivator. He turned to look off into the distance, where the bodies of his eight compatriots were still falling down from mid-air.

He gasped, and backed up. Everything began to go dark.

However, before everything went black, the bald Cultivator blurted out: "I'll pledge allegiance to Patriarch Golden Light!" Suddenly, his vision went back to normal.

The chase continued for seven more days!

Patriarch Big-head chose not to return to his Sect; he was a Patriarch, and had brought the Sect Elders with him on his excursion. The only people left back in the Sect were of the Foundation Establishment stage. There wasn't even a single Core Formation Cultivator.

Furthermore, in his current state, he would be incapable of operating the Sect's Grand Spell Formation. Also, he knew that if he stopped anywhere, he was dead for sure.

Therefore, he could do nothing other than flee, seeking out the powerful people he was familiar with in the area. Unfortunately, none of those people had sufficient Cultivation bases; not a single one was of the Nascent Soul stage.

Generally speaking, Nascent Soul Cultivators were the most powerful experts one would see in the Black Lands. Under other circumstances, he should have been able to go plead for help from some Rogue Nascent Soul Cultivators. Unfortunately... because of the chaos in the Black Lands, Nascent Soul Cultivators were now extremely valuable assets to the Alliance of United Nine Cities and the Black Lands Palace. Both forces were using everything they had at their disposal to recruit them; Big-head clearly couldn't compete with that.

So he fled from place to place in bitter struggle. He thought of going to Dongluo City, but he was well aware of the ruthlessness of Black Lands Cultivators. Considering his current condition, he wasn't worth anything to Dongluo City. They wouldn't do anything for his sake. If he had pledged himself to them earlier, it would have made things easier; they would have been forced to help him.

Unfortunately, in order to try to get the most out of the deal, he had told them he would consider their offer, but hadn't formalized an agreement. As such, it would be difficult to solicit their aid.

"Dammit! When did such an inhuman beast appear in the Black Lands!" he thought, cursing Meng Hao in his heart. Suddenly, he caught sight of a golden beam of light behind him. He spat up some more blood and fled. It felt as if he had spat up a lifetime's worth of blood recently. His face was pale white, and his injuries were even more severe, exacerbated by his blood loss.

However, he had no other options. He couldn't fight, so he had to run.

Behind him, Meng Hao whistled through the air surrounded by surging golden light. Following him were nearly four hundred Cultivators. These were people from the power groups that Big-head had tried to get help from. Faced with the prospect of death, they had chosen to side with Meng Hao.

One of them was the bald mid Core Formation Cultivator from Black Mountain. The entire group flew through the air, looking up ahead at Meng Hao and the golden light.

Strength came with numbers. During the past seven days, this group had gained quite a bit of fame in this western part of the Black Lands. Wherever they passed, their shadows darkened the land and blotted out the sky. When you added in Meng Hao and the golden light which he intentionally caused to shine out from his body, it was really a shocking sight.

It was hard to say who first called out the name Patriarch Golden Light, but word began to spread, and soon all the powers in the area knew of the name.

A day later, Big-head was exhausted to the extreme. Despite that, he gritted his teeth and flew ahead toward a tall mountain. The mountain was a sinister one, the base of which was surrounded by black waters. Five enormous vultures circled around its peak, occasionally calling out with shrill shrieks.

Sitting cross-legged at the very top were three old men. The one in the middle wore a seven-colored robe and was of the late Core Formation stage; the other two were of the mid Core Formation stage.

Unsightly expressions covered their faces. They sat there cross-legged, seemingly in meditation. However, their Cultivation bases were rotating, and they appeared to be on guard. Their eyes were fixed on the approaching big-headed Cultivator and massive golden glow that was following him.

“Dammit, it’s Patriarch Golden Light!”

“The past few days, everyone has been talking about how Patriarch Golden Light is trying to kill Ouyang. Anyone who helps out Ouyang ends up getting slaughtered!”

“I heard that more than ten Core Formation Cultivators have died at Patriarch Golden Light’s hands.... The weakest were of the mid Core Formation stage, and there were two of the late Core Formation stage!”

“Have you forgotten about the three great Sects of Dongluo City? Ouyang is on the run for his life, but the Patriarchs of the other two Sects haven’t appeared. They must have already met a dark end. If you add them in, it means that the number of Core Formation Cultivators who have fallen to Patriarch Golden Light is incredible!”

Their faces were incredibly unsightly by this point. They were friends with Big-head, but that friendship wasn’t enough to get them to stand up to Patriarch Golden Light. And yet, Big-head was clearly heading to them seeking refuge.

“Fellow Daoists, save me!” he cried, his voice filled with a pleading tone. Considering his status and the level of his Cultivation base, for him to cry out in such a manner showed what a wretched position he’d fallen into. His voice reached the mountain peak, and the ears of the three old men. They couldn’t help but feel a bit sympathetic.

Meng Hao approached, whistling through the air, surrounded by golden light. “Do the three of you want to get involved too?” he said coolly, his voice echoing out in all directions like thunder.

The faces of the three old men flickered. This was especially true of the two men with the weaker Cultivation bases. Their minds spun and their faces drained of blood. Their Cores quivered inside of them. All three men took in deep breaths.

They couldn’t help but think about the rumors that had been spreading regarding Patriarch Golden Light.

He ripped the Cores out of Cultivators and ate them raw! He massacred, leaving no survivors! His methods were cruel and vicious!

It wasn’t clear how such rumors had begun to spread about Meng Hao. He actually hadn’t killed very many people in the past few days; most of the deaths were caused by his hundreds of followers.

In any case, as soon as Meng Hao’s words fell upon the ears of the three men on the peak of the mountain, the old man with the highest Cultivation base, the one with the seven-colored robe, shot to his feet. A smile covered his face as he clasped hands and bowed.

“Greetings, Patriarch Golden Light. We will definitely not interfere in the matter between you two.” Having said that, he stamped his foot down, causing a glowing shield to rise up around the mountain. Big-head had absolutely no chance to enter.

Big-head let out a plaintive wail. He spit out some more blood to activate his secret technique and speed away. He was now emaciated and frail, which made his big head even more conspicuous. He flew along in the air, so weak he could barely even form a fist, his head drooping down.

Grief and indignation filled his face as he charged onward.

Two days passed. Big-head's indignation continued to grow. No matter where he went, his friends all began to use their magic to block his way. It was like he had turned into some sort of plague.

In fact, there was one power group who had been slow in employing their spell formation. When he slipped in to beg for help, his friend had flipped out and attacked him. Apparently the man had been afraid of causing a misunderstanding with Patriarch Golden Light.

Big-head was now completely without hope. He floated in mid-air looking around in all directions. Unfortunately, there was no one he could turn to for help. He was out of power, and could flee no more. Face ashen, he turned and looked at the approaching Meng Hao.

After the space of about ten breaths, Meng Hao came to stop in front of him. "Done running?" he asked coolly.

Chapter 343: Rent by Lightning!

Big-head stared at Meng Hao, his heart filled with a feeling of powerlessness. The days on the run, the constant pursuit, the despair he felt after repeatedly begging for help, all of it had left him completely drained and exhausted. He was dog-tired, and the constant use of his forbidden technique had pushed his injuries to the point where they could no longer be fully healed. At the moment, he could only use about twenty to thirty percent of the power of his Cultivation base.

To use such limited power to fight against Meng Hao, who led a group of hundreds of Cultivators, and who had already killed so many of the people Big-head had recruited to help him... well it was simply impossible. He had no way to resist or fight back, not even in the slightest.

Big-head knew all of this, as soon as Meng Hao spoke, he let out a roar. This was not an attack, nor was it a self-detonation. It was a roar to release all of the pressure that had been pushing down on him. The sound of it echoed out.

"Even if I, Ouyang, die, I won't bow my head to a villain like you! Even if I die today, I'll be a Cultivator again in the future! Destroying my soul won't keep me from the cycle of reincarnation. Maybe I can't decide how I'll be born, but I can decide how I die, you lightning-damned, evil...." Even as his words rang out, even as he gave vent to all his rancor, and seemed about to really lay it on thick, suddenly....

Without any warning, a lightning bolt appeared in the blue, cloudless sky. It shot down toward Meng Hao at incredible speed, seemingly giving no chance at all for a reaction. The lightning bolt slammed onto Meng Hao's hat with a boom.

Sparks showered off of the hat, some of them landing on Meng Hao, which caused his hair to stand on end. A greenish smoke rose up off of the hat.

It almost looked like the Heavens viewed Meng Hao's pursuit to be immoral. After all, the lightning had struck down right in the middle of Big-head's speech....

Big-head gaped in astonishment at Meng Hao. This was the second time recently that he had seen lightning suddenly fall from the sky for no reason. The lightning appeared ordinary, but it actually had the power to eliminate an early Core Formation Cultivator.

"Retribution!" roared Big-head. "This is the retribution villains like you receive! To be rent in two by lightning!" Trembling, he began to laugh uproariously. As for Meng Hao, his face was a bit unsightly. He knew that Patriarch Big-head had already lost all of his will to fight, so his attention was now more focused up above.

"This is the second time," he thought. The bad premonition in his heart only continued to grow more intense. Not even half a month had passed, and two bolts of lightning had already randomly come after him. Their speed was incredible, and they didn't seem to be associated with any particular time or location. Furthermore, each of these bolts of lightning had emanated the aura of Heavenly Tribulation.

Others would have a hard time recognizing such an aura, but Meng Hao was familiar with Heavenly Tribulation. He was absolutely certain that this was none other than Tribulation Lightning.

"Why is it doing this?" he thought. "It happened twice already. Does that mean it will happen a third time? Perhaps more...?" Suddenly, he thought back to what the meat jelly hat had said shortly after the parrot went to sleep, and before it began to rest. It had said that it and the parrot had helped someone transcend Tribulation once, only for that person to end up trying to kill them.

"Don't tell me... this is the aftermath of delaying the Tribulation? Lightning is going to constantly be falling down onto me?" Meng Hao's face twisted as he looked back at Big-head and coolly asked, "Do you want to choose how you'll die?"

The soil below churned as vicious vines exploded upward. They swayed about, not approaching; however, the mouths at the end of the vines were filled with razor sharp teeth that dripped with viscous fluid.

Their reddish color, their bizarre undulation, their fearsomeness, as well as the rotten smell that emanated out from them would cause anyone who saw them to feel shocked.

“I...” Big-head laughed coldly and gave Meng Hao a scornful look. His expression was one of pride as he lifted his hand up toward his forehead.

He had no intention of begging for his life. Considering the bloody path left behind by his pursuer, Big-head knew that he had little chance of escaping this calamity. Therefore, if he was going to die, he would die in robust fashion.

However, the instant his hand was about to press down onto his forehead, another bolt of lightning suddenly appeared out of the blue. It shot down toward Meng Hao with such speed that in the blink of an eye it was less than ten meters away from his head.

However, because of the previous two lightning bolts, Meng Hao had already begun to keep some of his attention focused on the sky. In almost the same instant that the lightning bolt began to fall, he slapped his bag of holding and pulled out a semi-transparent soul embodiment.

This soul embodiment was none other than the Li Clan Patriarch. A thin thread connected him to the blood-colored mask, making it so that even though he was now floating outside, he would be unable to flee. His life or death could be determined by a single thought from Meng Hao.

Suddenly being pulled out in this fashion caused the Li Clan Patriarch to look around in confusion. This was the first time in many years that he had ever seen the sky in the outside world. However, before he could heave any emotional sighs, he was flung up into the air by Meng Hao.

A boom rattled out as the lightning bolt slammed into the Li Clan Patriarch's soul embodiment. A miserable shriek echoed out as the Li Clan Patriarch quivered. A roar of pain and rage bellowed out from him. His soul embodiment had nearly been shattered, giving him quite a scare. He rapidly did everything he could to solidify it.

If the soul embodiment dissipated, then he truly would turn into dust on the wind.

His confusion quickly vanished, forced away by the unfortunately circumstances. He roared, gnashing his teeth as he floated there in mid-air, looking down at Meng Hao. If hatred itself could kill, then he would rip Meng Hao to pieces mouthful by mouthful.

The lightning didn't stop at three bolts, however. After a few breaths' time, a fourth lightning bolt descended. Before it could fall, Meng Hao, his face expressionless, tossed up the Li Clan Patriarch.

The lightning slammed into him, causing the Li Clan Patriarch to let out a miserable cry. Thankfully, his soul embodiment was vigorous. After being subjected to the torment of the meat jelly, it was actually quite resilient, despite its weak appearance.

After the boom echoed out, the Li Clan Patriarch grew almost completely illusory. And yet, before he could even catch his breath, a fifth lightning bolt fell, and another miserable shriek echoed out. Big-head watched all of this with gaping eyes.

For the first time while standing in front of Meng Hao, he couldn't hide the fear in his eyes. He sympathized with this soul embodiment. As far as he was concerned, Meng Hao was absolutely the most savage Cultivator in existence. It seemed he would shrink from no evil, and did not shirk from outraging men and gods alike.

"This soul embodiment is already in a wretched state, and yet he does this to it," thought Big-head. "I wonder what great enmity exists between them.... That soul embodiment seems on the verge of dispersing completely." He sighed inwardly, his mind spinning because of Meng Hao's viciousness. His impression was now thoroughly settled.

"That guy must have just been too attached to life, and wasn't decisive enough. His soul got snatched up by this vicious Cultivator. I, however, have steady resolve. I won't end up like that. If he stole my soul, I would end up like this, tormented into dissolution." Having psyched himself up to this point, Big-head lifted his hand to strike his forehead, when suddenly his body began to shake, and his resolve shattered.

His eyes opened wide, filled with disbelief and intense dread. This was because just as the soul embodiment seemed about to be shattered by the lightning, a violet glow flickered in Meng Hao's eyes. He spit out a mouthful of golden Qi, which was filled with his own life force. There wasn't much, but after it merged with the Li Clan Patriarch's soul embodiment, all of his wounds began to recover.

Just when he was almost completely recovered, a sixth lightning bolt fell. A thunderclap rang out, accompanied by a miserable cry. Grief filled the eyes of the Li Clan Patriarch, along with despair. It was a hopelessness in which the desire for death exceeded the desire to live.

The sight caused Big-head's scalp to go numb and his face to turn pale white. He began to quiver. He had been preparing to say some grand words just now, but now he could only swallow with a

gulp. The hand that had been moving toward his forehead fell to his side. The pride in his eyes had been replaced by hopelessness.

He suddenly realized that even if he managed to deliver a deadly blow to himself, he was a Cultivator. In the moments after his death, there were a variety of methods that could be used to extract his soul.

He could attempt to self detonate, but seeing how adept Meng Hao was with inflicting torment, Big-head could see that dying was not necessarily a way of escaping.

He didn't fear death, but what he did fear, was living a life worse than death.

Meng Hao was currently ignoring Big-head, and was instead focusing completely on the lightning, as well as the Li Clan Patriarch's soul.

What he noticed was that even as the soul embodiment was on the verge of collapsing, sparking remnants of the lightning were fusing into the soul. Thanks to the healing provided by Meng Hao's life force, the recovery of the Li Clan Patriarch's soul embodiment resulted in much more lightning residing within him.

"Refine a Soul of Lightning, huh...? It seems it requires a bit of a sacrifice to refine such a thing!" Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he looked around for more lightning. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, a final bolt of lightning appeared. After the Li Clan Patriarch absorbed it, Meng Hao put him back into the blood-colored mask. He cursed Meng Hao vigorously the entire time.

Finally, Meng Hao looked thoughtfully back at Big-head. He lifted his hand up and was about to kill him and then let the vines consume him and pull out his special techniques.

After all, Big-head's attitude just now had been one of firm resolution, even willingness to die. No matter how much Meng Hao tormented him, there would be no way to know of if he was telling the truth about this techniques.

However, even as Meng Hao lifted his hand up, Big-head began to quiver and his face filled with intense dread.

“Fellow Daoist.... Fellow Daoist, listen to me,” he gushed. “I happen to know the location of the secret Treasure Pavilions of all the three great Sects. There’s lots of stuff hidden there! I’ll give all the treasures of my Talisman Sect to you as a gift. I’ll do anything you ask, I’ll even face mountains of swords and seas of flames. I, Big-head, won’t even frown!” Meng Hao’s methods just now had left him trembling; he had no desire to have his soul tormented after he died.

Meng Hao gaped at Patriarch Big-head for a moment. This caused the man to begin to pant and get more nervous. He could hear the sound of his own heart pounding. However, a look of resolve appeared in his eyes. He swore a poison oath, and, gritting his teeth, even extracted some soul blood from his forehead which he offered to Meng Hao. With that, Meng Hao would be able to kill him at any time.

Big-head believed that it was only with such a resolution that he could truly evade calamity.

Meng Hao thought about it for a moment; it didn’t take him long to figure out what Big-head was thinking. He looked at the man for a moment and then a faint smile touched his face. Finally he reached out and accepted the soul blood.

“Now,” said Meng Hao coolly, “explain to me that bizarre legacy of yours.”

Chapter 344: The Great Church of the Golden Light!

Bitterness filled Big-head’s heart; however, in order to preserve his life, he put on a delighted expression and then obediently retrieved a small jar from his bag of holding.

It was about the size of a fist, and a handful of holes could be seen on its surface. When wind blew through the holes, they would emit a mournful whistling. There didn’t seem to be anything special about the sound, and looking at the jar, Meng Hao couldn’t see anything very unique about it. Even his Spiritual Sense didn’t reveal anything special.

In fact, had he slain this Patriarch Big-head, upon searching his bag of holding, even if Meng Hao happened to pick up the jar, he would most likely have taken it to be some sort of musical instrument and then paid it no more heed.

Apparently fearing some sort of misunderstanding, Patriarch Big-head quickly bit his left index finger, then dropped some blood into nine of the holes which covered the jug, doing so in some specific order.

It appeared as if it were some type of locking mechanism that Meng Hao had never seen before. Now that it had been opened by Big-head, the jar began to emit a black glow. There was clearly no wind in the area, and yet the jar continued to make the whimpering noises.

Suddenly, streams of magical symbols began to float up from the small jar. They circled around the area, along with a sinister aura.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. He lifted a finger on his right hand, causing the black jar to fly over to him. It landed on his palm, whereupon he examined it closely.

Gradually, Meng Hao began to get excited. The magical symbols were forming together to make the images of howling souls. Looking at it, he got the profound sense that this was indeed some sort of legacy.

“This is a treasure I stumbled upon in some ruins many years ago,” said Patriarch Big-head, choosing his words carefully, and not daring to leave anything out. “I discovered it on the body of a Demonic Cultivator that had two horns on its head. It also had a jade slip, which I read and then destroyed. Recorded within was the method for using this Evil Wind jar. It also said that the Demonic Cultivator came from some place called the Fourth Mountain, and that before dying, needed to pass on the legacy.”

If Patriarch Big-head hadn't mentioned the Fourth Mountain, then Meng Hao might have continued to be suspicious. But after hearing the term, an imperceptible flicker ran through his eyes.

Matters regarding the Nine Mountains and Seas were not things that average Cultivators knew about. In Meng Hao's estimation, people who were aware of such topics were definitely extremely scarce.

Without batting an eyelid, he gathered up the small jar and then looked at Patriarch Big-head.

The man immediately began to grow more nervous, and quickly said, “Fellow Daoist, when I'm around, the Treasure Pavilions of the three great Sects should be safe. But since the other two Sects know that their respective Patriarchs are dead, it won't be long before their disciples start dividing up the treasures. Sir, don't you think we should get there as quickly as possible?”

At the moment, hundreds of beams of light were approaching from off in the distance. The impressive sight of so many people made Big-head even more nervous.

His fear of Meng Hao couldn't become any greater. His trepidation reached deep into his heart; if he could go back in time, he definitely wouldn't ever provoke this inhuman creature.

Even if he did provoke him somehow, he definitely wouldn't do anything to break the man's spell formation. In fact, to save his own life, he would immediately kill the other Patriarchs from the other two great Sects.

Meng Hao could tell what he was thinking with a mere look. After a moment's thought, he nodded.

Big-head let out a sigh of relief, but then suddenly became nervous once again. He really was worried that the disciples of the other two great Sects would divvy up the treasure. Moments later, he and Meng Hao became prismatic beams of light that shot back toward the region of Dongluo City.

A few days later, a glowing yellow shield could be seen covering a snowy white mountain which was some distance from Dongluo City. The whiteness of the mountain and the yellow glow mixed together to make a beautiful sight, albeit a bit incongruous.

Meng Hao hovered outside of the mountain. He hadn't personally attacked. No, that had been left up to Big-head and the bald-headed Cultivator who had once been a member of the nine Cultivators from Black Mountain. They, along with the hundreds of other Cultivators following Meng Hao, filled the sky. Booming explosions rang out from all directions.

Big-head spared no effort whatsoever. His eyes were bloodshot; he feared that they would be unable to break through the shield to get inside. The bald Cultivator was thinking similar thoughts, and clearly wanted to ingratiate himself to Meng Hao. The two of them almost seemed to be competing as they went all out with various techniques.

Beneath the powerful attacks of two people like this, bolstered by hundreds of other Cultivators, this trifling great Sect was only able to hold out for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Then, the shield collapsed into countless fragments of yellow light. As the shield disintegrated, the whiteness of the snowy mountain beneath became visible.

No massacre was necessary; after the shield broke, the nearly one hundred Cultivators of the Han River Sect immediately pledged allegiance to Meng Hao.

Furthermore, they respectfully handed over the wealth and treasures of their Sect. Meng Hao's forces now numbered nearly six hundred as they headed toward another of the great Sects.

They moved with incredible speed, but this time, they met some resistance. It was a middle-aged man who had three totem tattoos on his body. He was quite tall, and his attacks were accompanied by the illusory image of a mountain and river as well as a writhing Poisonous Flood Dragon. Even as everyone else pledged their allegiance, this man launched a vicious sneak attack. He instantly killed several of the other disciples who had suggested to capitulate, and then attempted to flee.

Even as he attempted to break past the sealing spells to escape, Meng Hao's eyes glittered coldly. He shot forward, and in the blink of an eye was in front of the man. He punched him lightly with one fist.

A boom filled the air, and blood sprayed from the man's mouth. His eyes filled with venomous hatred, but before he could use any magical techniques, Meng Hao punched him again. He didn't kill him, but instead took control of his Cultivation base and then knocked him out.

As for the final Sect, the Talisman Sect, there were no problems there. With Big-head present, there were no defenses to break through, and the hundred or so disciples of the Sect welcomed Meng Hao respectfully.

The main gate of the Talisman Sect was located in a wide basin surrounded by mountains. The Sect was quiet and tasteful, constructed in an orderly fashion. Upon seeing it, Meng Hao decided to occupy the place for the time being.

A few days later, the parrot and the meat jelly both regained their senses. The parrot was extremely excited to see the roughly seven hundred new followers. It flapped his wings, squawking out orders as it began to train the Cultivators.

As for the meat jelly, it lazily flew onto the head of someone who caught its eye, whereupon it continued to deride and criticize the parrot as usual.

Meng Hao asked them about the lightning randomly falling down from the sky. However, each time he brought it up, the parrot and meat jelly would glance around quickly and then suddenly disappear.

Finally Meng Hao intentionally provoked the parrot. Once its honor was challenged, it blurted out something that caused Meng Hao's face to look unsightly: "So what!" it said. "Lord Fifth delayed

the Heavenly Tribulation. Of course some lightning will slip through every once in a while. It's not going to kill you, it's only a bit of lightning!"

With that, the parrot flapped its wings and quickly flew off, leaving Meng Hao alone in the secluded meditation chamber that used to belong Big-head.

Time flashed by, and soon it was half a month later. During the half month, the name of Patriarch Golden Light had risen to complete prominence in this entire region of the Black Lands. Granted, the name hadn't traveled too far, but all the local Cultivators knew the name.

According to the growing legend, Patriarch Golden Light loved killing Cultivators. He drank alcohol out of Dao Pillars, consumed Cores, and committed any imaginable evil. Such descriptions grew more and more exaggerated, until everyone who talked about him grew pale in the face from fear.

Patriarch Golden Light, a fierce Cultivator and leader of a generation. He was now thoroughly entrenched as a power in the area.

People in the Black Lands were becoming more anxious. Ten days before, one of the eight remaining Clans of what had once been the Alliance of United Nine Cities, was suddenly attacked by the Black Lands Palace. It was completely exterminated, and overnight, the city changed hands. Then, the Black Lands Palace issued a command throughout the entire Black Lands.

It said that the Black Lands Palace was now the only power within the Black Lands. As for the seven other Clans who made up the so-called United Nine, they were to be exterminated.

A great war had truly begun!

Amidst the chaos and general feeling of nervousness, Meng Hao's power base suddenly became something of a safe haven. More and more Cultivators joined, including some of the Core Formation stage.

During the half month in which all of this happened, Dongluo City grew emptier and emptier. Suddenly, they began to look toward Meng Hao and his force of nearly a thousand people the same way that a tiger eyes its prey.

A few days later, the term 'Church of the Golden Light' began to spread. Other than the Dongluo Clan itself, it was now the most powerful force in the region of Dongluo City.

In this wartime situation, Meng Hao's force of nearly one thousand men continued to grow. He was thoroughly in command in this area!

Actually, Meng Hao wasn't really aware of a lot of the developments. The parrot and the meat jelly seemed incredibly interested in recruiting more Cultivators. The meat jelly felt that converting a thousand people at once was definitely something it had never done before, and would be an amazing accomplishment regardless of whether you were talking about past, present or future lives.

As far as the parrot was concerned, when it heard the voices of roughly a thousand people chanting the words regarding having faith in the Lord Fifth to gain eternal life, all of the feathers on its body would stand on end.

It seemed to have already forgotten about how every few days lightning would fall from the sky and shoot toward Meng Hao.

Chapter 345: Lotus Sword Formation!

Boom!

One early morning, a bolt of lightning appeared above the elegant basin, outside one of the buildings.

The roof of this building was long since gone, apparently destroyed. Black ash was visible everywhere. There were roughly a thousand Cultivators here now, and all of them were more or less used to the lightning.

As the parrot soared through the air, it looked up into the sky and gave a sympathetic sigh, then thought about how helpful it had been. After that, it wheeled off with determination to go train the Cultivators in the use of the Celestial spell formation.

"This formation uses people as its base! With hundreds, you can rock Core Formation. With thousands, you can strand Nascent Soul. With tens of thousands, Spirit Severing doesn't count for a fart! With millions, you can shake Immortals! Back when Lord Fifth swept over the nine great Mountains and Seas, no one refused to bow to him!" A wistful look appeared in its eyes, and it sighed as it seemed to recall its past glory. Then, it redoubled its efforts to train the Cultivators.

Inside the building that had just been struck by lightning, Meng Hao's face was unsightly. Even more unsightly, however, was the face of the Li Clan Patriarch, who looked as if he were on his last legs.

"You're my ancestor!" he wailed, his soul embodiment trembling. He seemed to be on the verge of going crazy. "My ancestor, okay?! Just let me go.... I can't hold on much longer. Just let the lightning rend me in half, okay...?"

Meng Hao didn't say anything. He put the Li Clan Patriarch's soul embodiment away, then looked back up at the sky. It seemed clear, completely devoid of any lightning. At this point, he wasn't quite numb to the situation, but had gotten used to it.

After some practice, he had developed some methods to pull out the Li Clan Patriarch even more quickly. By now, it had developed into a sort of intuition; as soon as a bolt of lightning appeared, the Li Clan Patriarch would be called upon.

Currently, Meng Hao didn't reach complete success at first. However, the dangerous training method worked, and soon he was able to use the technique almost perfectly each time.

Under these circumstances, Meng Hao's intuition with the lightning gradually formed into a type of instinct.

At the moment, Meng Hao couldn't quite keep his face completely calm; it still looked a bit pained, although not as much as the Li Clan Patriarch's. Meng Hao looked over at the middle-aged man who lay in front of him, body trembling, face pale, seemingly locked in place and unable to move. This man was even worse off than the Li Clan Patriarch.

This Cultivator was not from the Black Lands, but rather the Western Desert. This was the man Meng Hao had knocked out earlier, the one who had three totem tattoos. Meng Hao had taken him here, sealed him to prevent him from moving, and began to study him.

Meng Hao loved studying. Back when he was a scholar, he would study books. After he entered the Cultivation world, he would study magical techniques or contemplate alchemy.

It didn't matter when, as long as he had some time on his hands, he would take time to study something. This always led to further understanding on his part.

However, this was his first time studying a person.

Meng Hao had already been studying him for three days, inside and out. Whenever he encountered some area he didn't understand, he would make some cuts and focus further until he understood.

Meng Hao had learned a lot in these three days, which left him very excited. As for the middle-aged man, however, it was a nightmare, as if he were residing in the depths of hell. The feeling was hard to describe. His coldness had turned into misery, cursing and insanity. Eventually, he just began to wail, and to truly believe that Meng Hao was the most fearsome person in the entire Cultivation world.

At the moment, Meng Hao was studying the Cultivator's blood. He reached out toward the man's arm, which was covered in wounds and scabs. Some of it was even missing pieces of flesh. Meng Hao made a long scratch and then collected some blood.

He placed the blood into a pill furnace and began to refine it.

The man's face was ashen, his eyes listless and filled with despair. He didn't know how much longer this treatment would go on, and his mind was on the verge of collapse. In fact, the previous night when Meng Hao was preparing to study his brain, the fear caused tears to leak out of his eyes.

At that point, Meng Hao had hesitated and then decided not to proceed.

Meng Hao had always been extremely interested in the totem tattoos of Western Desert Cultivators. After much analysis, he had come to the conclusion that they contained a power similar to medicinal pills, a power that came from outside the body of the Cultivator

For example, totems could be used to break through from Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, and then to Core Formation. This realization gave Meng Hao quite a bit of enlightenment.

Meng Hao had long since had the feeling that he could break through from the mid Perfect Core Formation stage to the late stage. The feeling only grew more intense. Eventually, he realized that in order to break through to late Core Formation, he would need to allow the Heavenly Tribulation to bear down on him in full. After transcending it, he would then be able to enter late Core Formation.

However, once that happened, he had little confidence regarding the Nascent Soul stage. The Nascent Soul stage was a huge step that few Cultivators were ever actually able to take.

Throughout the years, many Cultivators could reach the late Core Formation stage. However, few were able to break through to Nascent Soul. It might seem like there were a lot of Nascent Soul Cultivators, but that had more to do with their vastly extended lifespan. Few members of any particular generation would ever actually break through.

One of the most critical factors for Meng Hao was the fact that he was missing the section of the Sublime Spirit Scripture that had to do with the Gold Core. Without the proper technique, it would be difficult to achieve a Perfect Nascent Soul.

It wasn't very likely that he would be able to acquire the manual, either. He had no idea where it was. However, Meng Hao had the strong feeling that the totems of these Western Desert Cultivators would enable him to forge his own path toward the Perfect Nascent Soul.

Meng Hao focused on the blood in the pill furnace as it slowly transformed into a mist. Eventually it dissipated, whereupon a bright glow shone in his eyes. "Interesting. There is no totemic aura within the blood."

"Skin, muscle, bone and blood. Without exception, they are all completely ordinary!" Meng Hao sat in thought for a while and then looked back up at the man in front of him. The man's heart trembled, and he was about to open his mouth to beg for his life when Meng Hao's right hand descended onto the totem tattoo on the man's arm.

"This totem has faint traces of Demonic Qi, which is also the so-called Essence of the Ninth Mountain and Sea." As Meng Hao lifted his hand back up, the man let out a shrill wail. The totem tattoo slowly separated from his skin, pulling up until Meng Hao held what looked almost like a patch of skin in his hand. After separating, it rapidly faded away until it was completely gone.

"So once it leaves the body of the Cultivator, the totem vanishes." He frowned. "Just what is a totem? The manifestation of some great Demon of Heaven and Earth?"

Meng Hao looked outside; it was already evening, and the sky was filling with clouds. A variety of thoughts spun through his head, but no answers.

After a while, Meng Hao waved his hand; the seals binding the middle-aged Cultivator vanished. He rose to his feet, trembling. He immediately clasped hands and bowed to Meng Hao, continuing to shake violently.

“You can go,” said Meng Hao coolly.

To the man, the words seemed like those of a Celestial being. His heart was filled with so much appreciation that he wanted to weep. He immediately left, speeding away as fast as possible to leave this land of nightmares.

More time passed. Meng Hao bowed his head and laughed. “I think I’m getting ahead of myself,” he murmured. “I have the power to bestow Demonic Qi, but to understand totems will require a lot more time. Full enlightenment can’t be gained in a short period of time.” However, determination gleamed in his eyes; he would not give up on his desire to understand totems.

He smacked his bag of holding to produce an earth-yellow band of soft, cloth-like paper with uneven edges.

This was none other than the object which had led to the rise of Patriarch Golden Light, the flag which the parrot had helped Meng Hao to steal from the auction. After waking up, the parrot had helped him to refine it.

“A talisman used by an Immortal, which can help me to gain enlightenment regarding the magical symbols in the Black Lands. This will definitely be a huge help.” He rubbed the paper as he thought about the vastly expanded area within which his followers could search for the Celestial soil now that he was Patriarch Golden Light. Obviously, it was much greater than before.

Vast quantities of Celestial soil were being delivered to him. Now, all he had to do was touch the soil to this talismanic paper, and it would immediately suck in the aura of the soil, leaving the soil completely ordinary in nature.

After sucking in the aura, magical symbols would appear on the paper, which were gradually forming into the shape of a seal.

Meng Hao was sure that after enough time had passed, and enough soil was collected, more magical symbols would appear on the paper. With further enlightenment of the symbols, he would definitely be able to employ some shocking divine ability.

It was in this way that he planned to have completely unique Celestial magic prepared for when he reached the Nascent Soul stage!

The next day at dawn, Meng Hao put away the talismanic paper and then took out the Wooden Time Sword and began to further refine it. He had consistently been working on this particular sword since arriving in the Black Lands, and as of now, it contained three sixty-year cycles of Time.

In addition, he had quite a quantity of Spring and Autumn trees in his bag of holding that contained two sixty-year cycles.

“It’s not very difficult to forge a Time treasure that contains a sixty-year cycle,” he thought. “It only takes a bit of effort. As for two sixty-year cycles, I only have a thirty percent chance of success. Failure means complete loss of all the resources. That’s not really a big deal, though. What’s truly scary is the Time treasures of three sixty-year cycles. There’s only half a percent chance of success. Without the copper mirror, I probably wouldn’t be able to forge even one in my entire life.” He looked at the sword in his hand, which emitted a blinding blue light. Its surface seemed to flow like flowing water, and waving the sword through the air caused ripples to spread out. The ripples caused the surrounding structures to immediately show signs of decay.

Meng Hao was just about to put the sword away when suddenly, he lifted his head up and looked at something far off in the distance. He frowned.

“So, the Dongluo Clan really just can’t hold themselves back,” he muttered. He sent his Spiritual Sense out to find the parrot and impart some instructions. Next, his body began to grow blurry, and ghost images sprang up. Moments later, a second Meng Hao appeared. One was sitting cross-legged, the other slowly sank down into the ground.

Meng Hao waved his right hand, whereupon ten Wooden Time Swords flew out from his subterranean chamber to circulate about in the air overhead.

The tips of the swords faced outward, and as they spun, they began to create a vortex in the shape of a lotus flower. The power emanated by the lotus-shaped sword formation caused the building Meng Hao was in to begin to decay. Soon, it was nothing more than ash. All of the aura in the area soon began to fill with ancientness and decay. The minds and hearts of the thousand Cultivators trembled. They immediately dispersed, looking back wide eyed at Meng Hao, who sat cross-legged, a giant lotus spinning above his head. Around him, everything in the basin was beginning to decay.

It was at this moment that the moon rose. Moonlight cascaded downward onto the swords, causing them to gleam with a silver glow. They looked like a blooming lotus, bizarre and beautiful.... Everyone who observed the spectacle would remember it for the rest of their lives.

As the lotus rippled, the Patriarch beneath it lifted his head and said in a cool, echoing voice: “This is my Time Sword Formation!”

Chapter 346: Who The Hell Are You?!

Meng Hao gazed at the Lotus Sword Formation. It came from the three-page booklet he’d acquired when conning the hundreds of Cultivators who were chasing him. As for who it had originally belonged to, he had no idea.

However, the small booklet had given Meng Hao a sense of great enlightenment. Before, he’d never realized that swords... could be organized into formations!

His research in recent days hadn’t been limited to totems and the small jar that was a legacy from the Fourth Mountain. He’d also spent significant time studying sword formations. The three-page booklet had no text, only illustrations; if you understood it, you understood it. If you didn’t, you never would.

Meng Hao didn’t understand very much, but based on what he did, he could form the lotus that he had just now. Even still, the sword formation was able to emanate shocking, explosive power.

Creating a formation like a lotus enabled him to unleash the deadly power of Time!

He paid little attention to the surrounding thousand Cultivators, but they had no choice other than to pay close attention to him. Meng Hao was their Patriarch, the soul of the Church of Golden Light. The name of Patriarch Golden Light had long since been placed in the highest position in the area.

Everyone’s hearts shook as they observed Meng Hao, the spinning lotus, and the decaying buildings in the basin. Big-head’s face was pale and his breathing ragged. His eyes filled with intense fear. Before, he had assumed Meng Hao had used all the power he possessed to chase him; however, the sight of this sword formation caused him to tremble in terror.

“Who in the Core Formation stage could possibly stand up against a sword formation like that?” he thought, his heart and mind trembling uncontrollably.

The lotus spun and Time danced. Heaven and Earth were shaken, and everything in the area crumbled. It was impossible for Meng Hao not to be the center of attention.

The parrot looked on in shock, its eyes filled with an expression that rarely existed there. It stared fixedly at the Lotus Sword Formation, panting. Next to it, the meat jelly gaped with equally wide eyes.

The two of them hadn't noticed the booklet, and had been focused on managing the thousand Cultivators. They hadn't paid attention to Meng Hao and his research of sword formations. Without thinking about it, they exchanged a glance, whereupon they noticed the mutual look of shock in each other's eyes.

"I've never heard of this Lotus Sword Formation," said the parrot, blinking. "However... looking at it gives me the chills..."

"It's too wicked," said the meat jelly solemnly. "An evil sword formation like this is too domineering. The aura is too bizarre. It should be destroyed! Such a thing should not even exist!"

"Lord Fifth feels a certain lack of understanding regarding this particular Master..." murmured the parrot.

Meanwhile, a group of a few dozen Cultivators hovered in the air at the edge of the basin, looking at the Lotus Sword Formation. One of their number was an old man. He watched on with a look of concentration, his eyes shining with a brilliant light.

This was one of the three Nascent Soul Patriarchs of the Dongluo Clan who had infuriated the parrot back in Dongluo City. Behind him were none other than Dongluo Ling and Dongluo Han, as well as other Dongluo Clan Cultivators.

All of them watched on in silence. The Cultivators who were under the Nascent Soul stage saw the ripples emanating out from the sword formation, and were shaken. They saw the decaying power contained within; the mountains grew old and even the ground itself was becoming ancient.

It was at this moment that Meng Hao's eyes suddenly opened. They gleamed brightly as he waved his right hand. The Lotus Sword Formation streaked through the air toward the Dongluo Clan Cultivators.

The Nascent Soul Cultivator who floated in the lead position immediately waved his hand. A glowing shield appeared directly behind him and in front of the other Dongluo Clan members.

Meng Hao's expression never changed. His right hand flickered in an incantation gesture, and then he waved a finger toward the sword formation. A buzzing sound filled the air. The lotus no longer rotated; the ten Wooden Time Swords transformed into ten beams of light that shot toward the old Nascent Soul Cultivator.

The man's eyes glittered as he raised his right fist up into the air. Then, he slowly opened it and said, "Stabilize!"

As soon as the word left his mouth, the air seemed to collapse. A boom resonated out, and the land shook. The ten Time Swords suddenly stopped moving; they seemed incapable of flying forward even a teeny bit. However, the Nascent Soul Cultivator's face suddenly fell.

The shield behind him began to fall into pieces, as if it had been in existence for a very long time. As it collapsed, the man's face suddenly seemed to grow older.

It was as if his longevity were being sucked away. Even as his expression flickered, Meng Hao waved his right hand. The ten swords immediately flew back toward him and then disappeared.

Meng Hao rose to his feet. His black hair floated in the wind, and his long green robe gave him an elegant, erudite appearance. His refined features contained both the dignity of a scholar and the loftiness of a Cultivator. "I was working on my spell formations just now," he said coolly, "and was a bit careless. Senior, I hope you can forgive me."

It was only at this moment that the surrounding thousand Cultivators realized that dozens of Dongluo Clan Cultivators had appeared on the nearby mountain ridges. The eyes of the thousand Cultivators began to glow, and their power merged together to form a crushing weight that emanated out in all directions.

This land was their Sect, a place that outsiders were not permitted to enter without permission. Any visitor should announce themselves and make a formal request to pay a visit. However, the Dongluo Clan had showed up without any of the formalities.

Clearly, they came with ill intentions. This was even more apparent... because of the presence of the Nascent Soul Cultivator leading the group.

“Don’t worry about it,” said the Nascent Soul Cultivator with a laugh. “There’s no need to blame yourself, lad.” He advanced forward into the basin, followed by the dozens of Clan members. As he moved forward, his expression was normal, but his heart was filled with shock. The thousand Cultivators present all had different Cultivation bases, and yet the feeling they gave off was that they were integrated into a whole.

The feeling caused the heart of the Nascent Soul Cultivator to fill with amazement. Then he saw the decayed buildings in the area, and suddenly began to feel a bit of hesitation.

What caused him to hesitate was not Meng Hao’s Cultivation base, but rather the sword formation that he had just employed.

“This sword formation can absorb longevity...” The Nascent Soul Cultivator couldn’t shake the feeling that this place was completely bizarre. The two things that Nascent Soul Cultivators valued most were their lives and their longevity.

They had long lifespans, and because of that, any reduction to their longevity was very bothersome.

The original plan had been to travel to this place and force Meng Hao and his followers to join the Dongluo Clan. Should he refuse, the Dongluo Clan would resort to certain methods of force.

Meng Hao had grown a bit too powerful in the area, leading the Dongluo Clan to their current course of action.

However, it only took a moment for hesitation to fill the heart of the Nascent Soul Cultivator. He had just barely made contact with Meng Hao’s Lotus Sword Formation, but could tell that he had lost several months of longevity.

The next thing that happened was that he saw the parrot flying through the air. Suddenly, he sighed inwardly. At this point, he was quite certain that the parrot was the same as the muscular man he had encountered back in Dongluo City, transformed via some unknown technique.

All of these things, however, merely made him hesitate. They by no means made him abandon the plan laid out by the Dongluo Clan. He continued to advance until he was a bit more than thirty meters away from Meng Hao, whereupon he stopped. His eyes suddenly blazed with an aggressive aura as he stared at Meng Hao.

Hands clasped behind his back, he slowly said, “Unfortunately, lad, if word of your inadvertent actions spread, then it would have an adverse effect on my reputation.” He gave Meng Hao a meaningful look. “I assume you know why I’ve come here today. Please provide your response. What happens here today all depends on you.” His words were filled with an air of authority. Behind him, the dozens of Dongluo Clan members glared out in all directions.

It was only Dongluo Han who had an apologetic aura to him. Next to him, Dongluo Ling was the picture of loftiness; her expression was one of scorn as she stared at the hated Meng Hao, just waiting for him to bow his head in acquiescence.

As the old man’s words rang out, one figure after another suddenly appeared in the region surrounding the basin. They simply stood there, not entering the basin, but slowly emanating crushing pressure which descended upon the thousand local Cultivators.

The parrot looked around proudly, even scornfully. The meat jelly was currently perched atop the head of Huang Daxian, who was trembling in fear. A look of dignity covered its face as it attempted to count how many people were surrounding them.

However, no matter how it counted, there only seemed to be three....

As for the thousand Cultivators, their faces were filled with anxiety. It was only Big-head who set his jaw and then muttered to himself, “These Dongluo City people can mess with anyone they want, and they choose to mess with this inhuman villain....”

Meng Hao looked calmly at the Nascent Soul Cultivator in front of him. His Cultivation base was at the early Nascent Soul stage. He stood there like some kind of mountain, exerting powerful pressure. He held himself like the Lord of this area, as if he were in charge of the thousand Cultivators, as if their lives or deaths could be determined by a mere thought on his part.

His expression the same as ever, Meng Hao asked, “How will joining the Dongluo Clan benefit me?” It was as if he hadn’t even noticed the people standing on the surrounding mountain ridges.

“By becoming an auxiliary branch of the Dongluo Clan, you will have the right to occupy this position,” said the Nascent Soul Cultivator, his voice calm. “You can also receive financial support from the Dongluo Clan. Of course, you will need to consume the Clan’s medicinal supplements. When the appropriate time comes, we will of course dispel them.” He was convinced that Meng

Hao would capitulate; there was really only one option available. Meng Hao wasn't powerful enough to make any other choice.

Actually, considering the current crisis in the Black Lands, the Dongluo Clan had little other choice than to do things in this way. Because of the chaos everywhere, few people would willingly join them. The results of their recruiting efforts lately had been abysmal. Meng Hao and his thousand followers looked like meek lambs. Furthermore, Meng Hao's Cultivation base was not high enough to cause them any concern. Even if his military might was strong at the moment, exterminating him wouldn't be very difficult.

"I shall give you three breaths of time to consider," said the old man with the flick of a sleeve. "You're a smart fellow, you should be able to figure out what the right decision is. Even if you don't want to concede, you will!"

"Who the hell are you again?" replied Meng Hao coolly, his expression the same as ever. "Is the Dongluo Clan looking for a new boss?"

Chapter 347: The Magical Fog Becomes a Sea!

Meng Hao's words boomed out like thunder.

It wasn't just the Nascent Soul Cultivator who stared in shock after hearing them; all of the surrounding thousand Cultivators gaped.

When the words rang out, Big-head was off in the distance reveling in Meng Hao's misfortune. He gasped. In his opinion, Meng Hao's words were simply too pretentious.

Dongluo Ling's eyes went wide; she had never imagined someone could be so wildly arrogant. Dongluo Han also stared in shock, along with all of the other Dongluo Clan members, who looked on in disbelief.

The Nascent Soul Cultivator started to laugh. His laughter grew louder, and the look on his face became grimmer. His killing intent had long since begun to emanate out.

"You stripling, you really don't know the height of the Heavens and the depth of the Earth! Well, if you're looking to die, I can fulfill your wish!" Even as he spoke, he began to stride toward Meng Hao.

Simultaneously, the Dongluo Clan members on the ridges around the basin transformed into prismatic beams of light and shot downward.

However, even as they sprang into action, the parrot, who was currently soaring through mid-air, suddenly cried out in its shrill voice: “Get into formation!”

The screeching voice slammed into the ears of the thousand onlookers. Immediately, the more than one hundred Cultivators who had been with Meng Hao from the beginning began to run, almost out of instinct. Their action spurred on the other Cultivators. They had been training for many days with the parrot, essentially developing this skill out of nothing. It was difficult, but they had already started to become familiar with the spell formation; working in unison with others made things much simpler.

At the same time that the Cultivators began running, the Nascent Soul Cultivator was closing in on Meng Hao. His right hand lifted up, forming a palm which he then closed into a fist. The air around Meng Hao collapsed, shrinking rapidly, crushing down onto Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered sharply. As the old man neared him, the Lotus Sword Formation suddenly appeared and shot forward. A booming rang out, and as it did, Meng Hao struck out his right hand with incredible power.

The old man frowned. He suddenly stopped moving forward and then disappeared, completely evading Meng Hao’s sword formation. Then, he reappeared behind Meng Hao, a snide look on his face. He reached out his left hand and closed it into a fist. “Shatter,” he said.

Another boom filled the air as the air around Meng Hao shattered, along with him, slicing his body into infinite pieces.

“Now you know the gap between the Core Formation stage and the Nascent Soul stage,” said the old man. “It doesn’t matter if you have an amazing sword formation or some bizarre power in your right fist. In the... huh?” Even in the middle of his diatribe, then old man’s face suddenly flickered and filled with shock.

This was because Meng Hao’s body had been shattered, not into pieces of bone and flesh, but rather, Qi.

“A clone!?!? How could a Core Formation Cultivator have a clone!?” His face twisting, he spun around. Even as he did, he saw a vast fog, within which massive figures nearly thirty meters tall could be seen, running to and fro.

The dozens of Clan members who had accompanied him here were nowhere to be seen.

“This....” The man’s face was unsightly. If he didn’t understand that he had been trapped, then he didn’t deserve to be a Nascent Soul Cultivator.

“This trifling spell formation can’t hold me,” he said with a cold harrumph. His body flickered, and he disappeared as he employed another minor teleportation. When he reappeared, his face was filled with thorough shock. This was because he had discovered that he was still surrounded by endless fog.

“So minor teleportation doesn’t work....” The old man slapped his bag of holding to produce a strip of bamboo. He rubbed its surface, causing it to ignite. A howl rang out from within the flames and smoke; it transformed into the phantom image of a vicious beast, which charged toward the fog.

“Break!” cried the old man.

As the boom resonated out, Dongluo Ling and the others looked around with fear at the fog. They had all been separated, and occasionally, miserable shrieks could be heard.

The Dongluo Clan members who had been charging down from the ridges above all looked shocked. Any of them who entered the fog instantly became lost. As for the Cultivators who didn’t enter the mist, they took deep breaths as they looked down at the basin. As of this moment, it looked as if it had become a lake of fog!

Fog had filled the entirety of the basin!

The fog roiled and churned with amazing power; within could be seen tall phantom figures running back and forth. The figures seemed to be chanting something, although it wasn’t clear. Their running caused the earth to quake; up above, the sky turned pale and clouds began to amass.

The Dongluo Clan members who had not been drawn into the fog were just about to retreat, when they suddenly found that, unbeknownst to them, a fog had appeared behind them! They were trapped! A fatal blow was about to be delivered!

The only people who knew about this spell formation of Meng Hao's were the hundreds of Cultivators who had tried to kill him. However, almost all of them were dead. Any of them who hadn't died were now part of Meng Hao's forces, and under the compulsion of poison. Of course, they wouldn't spread any information about it.

Therefore, this spell formation was Meng Hao's greatest trump card. No one knew about it, and with one thousand people to power it, it gave Meng Hao a shocking advantage.

At the moment, he sat cross-legged in a secret underground chamber, his true secluded meditation zone. As he looked up, his vision passed through the ground to see everything that was happening up above.

He saw the deaths of the Dongluo Clan members and other Cultivators they had brought. He also saw the old Nascent Soul expert frantically trying to break through the spell formation. Unfortunately for him, the power of the spell formation had already been unleashed. When it was completely in play, even a Nascent Soul Cultivator would be unable to break it.

"The Dongluo Clan came with vicious intent," thought Meng Hao. "You can't blame me for responding in kind." He pushed his right index finger down the ground. Immediately, Demonic Qi coalesced to form an illusory body. In the blink of an eye, it assumed the appearance of Meng Hao, then passed through all the dirt and soil to join the events in the outside world.

Meng Hao then stood up and left the secret chamber. When he appeared in the mist, a multicolored streak of light flew toward him; it was the parrot, who landed on his shoulder, its face filled with arrogance and complacency. It looked around with derision.

"Meng Hao, let's sack the city! Plunder that random Clan, whatever it was called. What's theirs shall be ours! With Lord Fifth's spell formation, we can screw those no-good sons of b*tches to death! Then I can go visit those cute birdies again. Hahaha! Lord Fifth is always the most badass! Birdies, just wait for Lord Fifth, alright? Lord Fifth has already decided that from now on, that Dongluo City is going to change its name to Peacock Screwing City!"

Meng Hao ignored the parrot. His body flickered as he shot forward. Because of the parrot's help, the fog did absolutely nothing to Meng Hao. Traversing about within it was as easy as walking down a paved road.

Chapter 348: Assault on Dongluo City

“Are you sure your spell formation can hold a Nascent Soul Cultivator?” Meng Hao asked coolly as he walked through the fog.

“Of course, no problem,” replied the parrot. Slapping its chest with its wing, it said, “Lord Fifth’s human-powered Celestial spell formation is unique in all the Nine Mountains and Seas. It draws its power from people. Since we have more than a thousand, well, we might not be able to kill a Nascent Soul Cultivator, but we can definitely trap one inside. Child’s play.” Its tone was lofty, as if its actions were doubly efficient.

“Can the spell formation move?” asked Meng Hao, his eyes glittering. He stopped walking for a moment as he caught sight of a Dongluo Clan Cultivator of the early Core Formation stage off in the fog. The man was frantically attacking the mist around him, an expression of terror and despair on his face.

He couldn’t see Meng Hao, but Meng Hao could make him out quite clearly. Meng Hao shifted into motion again, and within a moment was at the man’s side. He waved his hand, and the fog coalesced, surrounding the Dongluo Clan Cultivator, enveloping him. When it dissipated, Meng Hao walked off. Behind him, the Dongluo Clan Cultivator had collapsed unconscious onto the ground.

“Of course it can move. As long as our men keep running, then Lord Fifth’s spell formation can go anywhere, and take the people inside along with it.” An expression of arrogant pride covered the parrot’s face.

Meng Hao nodded and continued to proceed forward. It wasn’t long before he found Dongluo Han. The man’s face was pale and filled with vigilance. He peered around at the fog; his Core Qi was in full play and he was on guard against any changes.

Meng Hao looked at him thoughtfully for the space of a few breaths, then shot over. The fog began to seethe, and Dongluo Han’s face flickered. Before he could react, though, a hand shot out from the fog next to him and pushed down onto his back.

A great power shot through him, sealing his Cultivation base. He didn’t even have the strength to turn his head now. Instead, he fell to the ground, unconscious.

Meng Hao walked out from within the fog and looked down at Dongluo Han. He didn’t kill him; knocking him out was good enough for now.

Meng Hao turned and continued to walk off into the distance. Whenever he ran into Dongluo Clan members, he disabled them and rendered them unconscious.

Some of them, however, ended up in the paths of the running figures. These ones could only perish with miserable shrieks under the power of the spell formation.

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao found Dongluo Ling within the fog. Her hair was in disarray, and her beautiful features were filled with hopelessness and anxiety. She had used every method she had at her disposal, but was unable to escape. How could she not feel despair?

She couldn't see her fellow Clan members; it was as if the entire world had turned into fog, and she was the only person left. When the massive phantoms went running by, they emitted a great pressure which filled her heart with fear.

How could she ever have imagined that the person who pissed her off so much would have such a fearsome spell formation? She didn't dare to approach the running phantoms; she had already seen a few of her fellow Clan members run into them and instantly be trampled to death.

In fact, she could smell the odor of fresh blood rising up in the air.

Meng Hao looked at her, his eyes cold. He lifted up his right hand, causing the fog to roil and rush toward her. It immediately enveloped her, then slowly dissipated. She was now unconscious on the ground, completely still.

In addition to the Dongluo Clan Nascent Soul Cultivator, there were over seventy Clan Members left in the fog. By now, Meng Hao had already incapacitated about half of them.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao slowly lifted his hand up from the middle of the back of yet another listless Dongluo Clan member. The man spit up a mouthful of blood and then collapsed unconscious.

"That's the last one," said Meng Hao. Turning, he looked off through the mist toward the stranded Nascent Soul expert. He was currently shooting divine abilities off constantly, as well as employing minor teleportation. In his mind, he was traveling forward slowly, but from Meng Hao's perspective, he was merely going in circles.

Going in circles would not enable him to escape the fog.

“The Dongluo Clan came with malice,” said Meng Hao, “so let’s teach them a lesson. Move the spell formation.” Immediately, the parrot on his shoulder lifted its head up and let out a powerful squawking howl.

The fog around them immediately began to roil. The thousand running Cultivators within no longer ran in a circuitous path. Their eyes were closed, as if their wills were fused with that of the parrot. According to the parrot’s thoughts, the spell formation began to move toward Dongluo City.

Looking at the fog from outside, it was like a roiling sea within the basin. As it churned and seethed, it slowly began to move, climbing out of the basin, growing at the same time.

The fog sea was huge, tens of thousands of meters in diameter. As it passed along, it was as if an enormous beast made of fog consumed everything it touched.

The fog sea moved forward, and as it did, giant figures slowly became visible. Their roaring voices slowly became clearer.

“Have faith in the Lord Fifth, gain eternal life...”

The sound of it rolled out, growing louder and clearer. Eventually, it shook Heaven and Earth, drawing the attention of the Rogue Cultivators who resided in the region surrounding Dongluo City. They stared fixedly with wide eyes at the unbelievable sight of the roiling fog.

More and more people began to watch the mass of fog; it seemed to be moving slowly, but actually proceeded on with great speed. Some of the people flew along in mid-air to watch, panting, eyes wide.

Currently, the fog was about five hundred kilometers from Dongluo City, slowly moving forward. Onlookers had no idea what it was, but they could hear the indistinct voices emanating out from within. The sound of it left them shocked.

“What does it mean?”

“What a huge swathe of fog. It looks like there are people inside running around...”

“No, whatever things are inside are much bigger than people. It looks like they’re more than thirty meters tall! Just what is this fog?”

By now, there were several hundred Cultivators floating up in the air watching. These were all Rogue Cultivators who hadn’t joined any of the local power forces. They stared on with wide eyes, fearfully keeping their distance so that the fog wouldn’t envelop them.

The fog moved along, drawing closer and closer to Dongluo City. 500 kilometers, 400 kilometers, 250 kilometers, 150 kilometers....

The fog billowed up high into the sky, and as it moved along, it emitted a thunderous rumbling sound that shook the ground. Dust flew into the air, and an immense pressure emanated out. The Cultivators who were following along in mid-air retreated further away in fear.

Meanwhile, in Dongluo City everything was relatively desolate. Other than the Dongluo Clan members, the only other Cultivators in the city were a handful of Rogue Cultivators. As they all became aware of what was going on, their hearts began to fill with consternation.

They had no idea what the fog was; all they knew was that Dongluo City clearly lay directly in its path. Given the speed with which the fog was moving, it would arrive in the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

As it neared, the people inside Dongluo City began to shrink back in fear, as if they wanted to flee.

“What happened? Is it the Black Lands Palace?”

“Dammit, how come it’s moving so fast? Just what Black Lands Palace technique is this? This fog is so immense it’s frightening....”

Most of the Dongluo Clan members were gathered up in the second layer of the city. There were roughly five hundred of them, and all of their faces were filled with unsightly expressions. Standing in front of all of them were two old men with grim faces.

These two old men were the other of the three Nascent Soul Cultivators of the Dongluo Clan. Standing next to them was the current Dongluo Clan Chief. He was frowning, and his expression was one of anxiety.

Up above them, three Scarlet Peacocks circled about in the air looking uneasy. They emitted plaintive wails as they eyed the incoming fog.

An oppressive aura had come to rest over the entirety of Dongluo City.

One of the Nascent Soul Cultivators standing next to the Clan Chief, a middle-aged man, said, “According to my investigation, all of the forces that Third Elder took with him to the Church of the Golden Light have gone missing.... After that, the Church of the Golden Light was completely empty.... That’s when this bizarre fog appeared. Its target is clear: Dongluo City!” He paused for a moment, a look of bitterness, fear and reverence on his face. “I arranged for seven men to investigate the mist from various directions as it approached, but.... Regardless of the level of their Cultivation base, as soon as they touched the fog, they were sucked in. After that, we lost all contact.”

The Clan Chief sighed inwardly. He might be the Clan Chief, but even if his opinion differed from that of the Elders, he still had to comply with their wishes. His opinion regarding the Church of the Golden Light had been to cooperate with it and form an alliance.

However, the three Elders viewed the Church of the Golden Light as nothing more than a group of Rogue Cultivators. The Church’s founder, Patriarch Golden Light, was only a Core Formation Cultivator, and therefore not qualified to enter an alliance with the Dongluo Clan. He could either capitulate or be enslaved, those were his only options.

It was under these suppositions that Third Elder had set out.

Now, the Church of the Golden Light was obviously striking back at them, in a way that far surpassed the predictions of the Dongluo Clan. The Black Lands Palace hadn’t even come their way yet, but they were already facing a crisis.

The other Nascent Soul Elder coolly said, “Does a firefly dare to compete with the full moon? Employ the Clan’s Grand Spell Formation. If the Church of the Golden Light wants to attack us with fog, then the Dongluo Clan will break them with our spell formation!”

At this point, the fog was now about 25 kilometers away from the city.

Green beams of light began to emanate out from Dongluo City, transforming into sheets of leaves which covered over the city.

Within the fog, Meng Hao looked out at Dongluo City. His eyes glowed with coldness. Above his head spun the Lotus Sword Formation. Surrounding him were more than seventy Dongluo Clan Cultivators who had previously been unconscious. They were awake now, although, their eyes were filled with blankness. They seemed to have lost their senses, as if their bodies weren't even under their own control.

Meng Hao had used the art of Righteous Bestowal to take control of them.

“Demon Sealers don't usually exchange blows with others,” Meng Hao murmured. “The blows are delivered by means of Righteous Bestowal.” He lifted up his right hand and waved it out in front of him.

Chapter 349: Killing With Poison of Time!

The hundreds of Rogue Cultivators floating in mid-air didn't leave; they wanted to stay and watch the battle.

Each and every one could tell that this fog was not the work of the Black Lands Palace. Many of these people had lived in the area for a long time. After making some inquiries, they came to find out that the fog belonged to none other than the burgeoning Church of the Golden Light.

They gazed with intense looks as the speed of the fog increased, drawing it ever closer to the defenses of Dongluo City.

15 kilometers, 10 kilometers, 5 kilometers, 2.5 kilometers....

All the way until a massive explosion shook the land and sent vibrations out through the air. When the fog slammed into Dongluo City, sky and earth turned pale. Dongluo City shook as the leaves surrounding it began to glow. The fog churned violently, and an intense rumbling emanated out from it.

Next, the onlookers stared raptly as the fog began to cover over the leaves, slowly enveloping the entirety of Dongluo City.

As of this moment, Dongluo City was no longer visible; the only thing that could be seen was an all-encompassing fog.

However, those who looked closely could see that even though the Dongluo City defensive spell formation was covered by the fog, it hadn't been broken yet, and wouldn't anytime soon. This was not a battle between Cultivators but a struggle between spell formations.

Booming sounds rang out one after another. Suddenly, a thousand enormous phantoms appeared within the fog, causing the hundreds of Cultivators watching on from mid-air to gasp. These phantoms were roughly thirty meters in height, and they ran with incredible speed, black smoke streaming off of their forms.

As they ran, the fog grew thicker, and rumbling booms filled the air.

Furthermore, the top of the fog layer began to churn, and a figure rose up. He wore a long green robe, and his black hair whipped about in the wind. Golden light emanated out from his body; this was none other than Meng Hao.

“Patriarch Golden Light!!”

“So this fog is the work of Patriarch Golden Light! Is he crazy? He's only at the Core Formation stage, but he dares to pick a fight with the Dongluo Clan!”

“That spell formation might be strong, and the Dongluo Clan doesn't have a Spirit Severing Patriarch. However, they do have three Nascent Soul Elders. That's more than enough to hold a solid position in the entire area. Nobody around here dares to provoke the Dongluo Clan!”

Meanwhile, the fog-covered Dongluo City showed no signs of weakening. The countless leaves surrounded the city, within which were about a hundred Rogue Cultivators who had chosen to side with the Dongluo Clan. They were nervous, but having seen the effectiveness of the Dongluo City defenses, they were confident in their decision.

In the second level of the city, the Dongluo Clan Cultivators were breathing sighs of relief. The two Nascent Soul Elders' eyes shone with cold light, and they let out cold harrumphs.

The fact that the city's spell formation could resist this bizarre mist put them in an unassailable position. Even the Dongluo Clan Chief was feeling a bit more at ease.

One of the Nascent Soul Elders pulled out a jade slip. "I'm interested to see how formidable this guy's spell formation really is," he said, smashing the jade slip between his fingers. A green aura swirled up to form a light that shot out toward the city's leaf defense.

In the blink of an eye, the leaf spell formation began to emit a buzzing sound as hundreds of toxic wasps flew out from within. Each toxic wasp emitted a dangerous aura as it flew out from within the spell formation. However, even as they charged forward, the more than seventy Dongluo Clan members in the fog who were under the control of Meng Hao's Righteous Bestowal shot forward to meet them, their eyes glowing with a mysterious light.

"Dammit!" said the Dongluo Clan Nascent Soul Elder, his face falling. Obviously, he was observing the scene outside through the eyes of the toxic wasps. His right hand flickered with an incantation, causing the toxic wasps outside to veer away from the Clan members and search for Cultivators of the Church of the Golden Light.

Within the fog, the parrot let out a sharp squawk; immediately the running phantoms around him changed directions. Instantly, the fog transformed into a vortex, within which danced countless lightning bolts. The parrot's colorful feathers all stood on end and its eyes filled with a feverish look. It pushed the spell formation to the limits of its power in order to break the city's defenses.

"Lord Fifth swore an oath to screw this city!" it screeched, controlling the movements of the spell formation as if it were bewitched. "You just wait, Lord Fifth is coming!" The phantoms ran back and forth, trampling above the city, causing booms to fill the air, and the leaves to tremble.

As the two spell formations fought back and forth, Meng Hao floated in mid-air, looking down through the fog at Dongluo City within.

He lifted his right hand, flashed an incantation, and then pointed down toward the ground.

"Righteous Bestowal!" he said coolly. As his voice rang out, Meng Hao saw ghost images spring up everywhere. At the same time, strands of Qi rose up from all directions to circulate around him. He made a gesture toward the fog, and the Demonic Qi instantly began to coalesce and shoot toward it. It passed directly through the fog and then into Dongluo City's spell formation.

A boom rang out, causing everything to shake violently. Meng Hao continued to make incantation gestures with his right hand. More Demonic Qi surged forth, passing through the fog to slam into the other spell formation.

Everything that was happening caused the observing Rogue Cultivators to shake in their boots. They suddenly realized that Patriarch Golden Light was not someone to be looked down upon in the slightest.

Suddenly, a cold snort rang out from beneath the fog, filled with pride and scorn. “Paltry Church of the Golden Light! Piddling Core Formation child! You dare to use some bizarre fog spell formation to trap my Dongluo Clan members!?” The voice caused the air to shudder, echoing out far beyond the region of the fog.

Another voice rang out, that of an old man. “You don’t know the height of the Heavens and the depth of the Earth, you little punk!” Suddenly, Dongluo City’s leaf defenses began to emanate a bright green glow, within which, the images of leaves could be seen. It swirled around, emanating a booming sound that caused the fog to vibrate. The running figures inside suddenly began to show signs of weakening.

The parrot let out a squawk, and the fog suddenly began to churn. Rumbling sounds emanated out as the attack on the Dongluo City defenses redoubled.

A proud voice rang out: “The Dongluo City spell formation has been at the top for years. It has never been broken! Even the Black Lands Palace would have to pay a heavy price to get through it, let alone some piddling Church of the Golden Light!

“Your spell formation might be incredible, but how long will it last? Once you can’t hold out any longer, I’ll personally rip the skin off your body and hang it in my bedroom!” The echoing voice rang out to be heard by the hundreds of observing Cultivators, causing their hearts and minds to tremble.

A coldness glittered in Meng Hao’s eyes. The reason he had chosen to use the spell formation to isolate Dongluo City and then use the Dongluo Clan members to attack, was because he knew that the general chaos in the Black Lands would prevent the Dongluo Clan from going all out.

He wanted to send a warning to the Dongluo Clan to not trifle with him. He and they were separate entities, and although blood had been spilled, not all issues needed to be solved with a massacre.

However, the arrogance of the Dongluo Clan showed no signs of lessening. In fact, it seemed to be growing more intense. A cold smile touched the corners of Meng Hao's mouth.

"Well in that case, Meng Hao understands," he thought. Slapping his bag of holding, he produced a black-colored medicinal pill.

As soon as it appeared, it began to emanate a mysterious glow that seemed capable of sucking in one's consciousness.

This was a poison pill personally concocted by Meng Hao, one of the more powerful varieties. With the wave of a hand, crushing the pill into ashy powder. It flew down to be sucked into the spinning fog vortex. After a moment, it began to descend onto Dongluo City's leaf defenses.

As the powder descended, the leaves began to contract and show signs of decay. They even emitted squealing sounds.

At the same time, Meng Hao pulled out another medicinal pill. He crushed this one as well, and as he sprinkled the resulting powder down, a Flame Sea sprang into being. The flames were mysterious and bizarre as they passed through the fog and down toward Dongluo City.

Next, Meng Hao produced a third pill, then a fourth and a fifth. He crushed them all into powder and sent them floating down, three deadly poisons that merged with the Flame Sea to become a five-colored hyper toxic poison.

The hyper toxic poison was something specially designed by Meng Hao using his skill in the Dao of alchemy. Poison pills that he created were not necessarily things that Nascent Soul Cultivators would fear, but anyone under that stage who were infected by them would be incapable of dispelling the poison without Meng Hao's assistance.

This fog was now a poison fog!

Multitudinous hissing noises rose up, and the fog seethed. In the space of an instant, Dongluo City went completely quiet. Everyone inside was looking up at the leaf shield, their faces flickering with various emotions.

The Dongluo Clan Cultivators all looked on with unsightly expressions. Even the two Nascent Soul Elders had looks of shock on their faces.

“This guy’s also a poison expert!!”

“Dammit! How come no one uncovered such an important piece of information!?”

“Poison Cultivators are usually less powerful in direct combat, but in large-scale conflicts, their abilities can determine victory or defeat!”

The Dongluo Clan members were shocked, but the hundreds of observing Cultivators could do nothing more than gasp and looked at Meng Hao, their eyes filling with dread.

“Poison is only part one,” said Meng Hao, his eyes gleaming with a sharp light. He waved his right hand, and the Lotus Sword Formation flew out toward the fog. Within the fog, it began to spin rapidly, sending out vast ripples containing the power of Time.

As the ripples spread out, it carried fog with them, which in turn contained Time power. The combination of the ten swords was equal to the power of more than ten sixty-year cycles of time.

The poison alone could cause extreme damage. However, combined with the power of Time, it transformed into a sort of terrifying baptism. The ripples spread out, bolstered by the unimaginable power of the fog spell formation. Poison, the power of Time, the imprisoning power of the spell formation, all of these things caused the spell formation to surge with boundless power.

As the Time ripples spread out, a handful of observing Cultivators who were relatively close by could see the vegetation on the ground withering up. Even the soil itself seemed to fill with signs of decay; signs of it could even be seen in the air.

Before the Cultivators who saw this could flee, the ripples hit them, and their faces flickered. They then employed every method possible to get away as quickly as they could. Even still, they weren’t fast enough. All of them suddenly transformed from being middle-aged to being old. One of them even began to emanate a faint aura of death.

All of the observers gasped when they saw this, their faces filled with looks of unprecedented shock. Immediately, they began to fall back, fearful of coming into contact with the ripples.

“What magic is that?!?!”

“Time! That’s Time, the power of Time! It’s a divine ability that can cause you to age almost a whole lifetime in the blink of an eye!”

“Patriarch Golden Light is so powerful.... No wonder he dared to provoke the Dongluo Clan!”

Chapter 350: The Indomitability of Time

What is Time...?

Many years later, Dongluo Han would never be able to forget what he saw that day as he stood atop that bright green leaf. His eyes were blank, but his mind was awake. He saw his body beginning to grow old. He saw the green leaves around him growing decrepit and old. He saw the land around him becoming ancient.

As the Lotus Sword Formation spun, and its power emanated out, Meng Hao hovered above the fog looking down inside, observing the effects of the power of Time which he wielded.

On the one hand, it was something of ultimate flexibility within Heaven and Earth. On the other hand, it contained paramount indomitability.

No person, no living thing, no creature could stand up to that gentle onslaught which is Time. It didn’t matter if you used spell formations or divine abilities, illusory or tangible items. All of it... would deteriorate under indomitable, smashing Time.

And this was a single Lotus Sword Formation formed with Time Swords. Only one of them contained three sixty-year cycles; the others were incomplete. If all the Time Swords contained three sixty-year cycles, then that combination would be a power of Time equal to one thousand eight hundred years. That was enough to shock the Heavens and rock the Earth.

This is Time!

In this moment, all of the surrounding Rogue Cultivators had lost the power to even breathe. They stared in shock at the land. It looked somewhat yellow, like an old painting which was slowly fading away into dust.

Within the fog, the Dongluo Clan members who were under Meng Hao's control were coming to their senses. However, even as they did, they wished they hadn't. This was because as they recovered, they found themselves on the verge of becoming ancient.

Dongluo Ling looked down at her hands; they were covered with wrinkles. Her body was withered. All she could do was stare out blankly.

The green shield of leaves surrounding Dongluo City was in the process of rotting. It started to show signs of breakage, and there were some areas where the shield couldn't even cover the city. Fog started to pour inside, along with the power of Time, and the hyper toxic poison.

This all gave birth to intense dread within the city; all of the Dongluo Clan Cultivators felt their hearts and minds trembling.

Before they could even take any countermeasures, the fog began to seethe violently. The parrot suddenly shot out from within, flying up into the air and giving out a piercing cry.

Beneath it, the fog began to transform into columns of black smoke. The boundless fog, which was nearly five thousand meters in diameter, congealed into hundreds of bands of black smoke, which shot up to circulate around the parrot. Within them were the more than one thousand Cultivators of the Church of the Golden Light. Their eyes were closed, and they were surrounded by black smoke, as if they were part of the spell formation itself.

The trembling onlookers watched as the black smoke congealed rapidly to form into the shape of an enormous black raven!

The raven's body emanated a black aura. It let out a piercing cry which seemed capable of causing the living to close their eyes and the dead to open theirs. It echoed out throughout Heaven and Earth, then slammed down onto Dongluo City like a meteor falling from the Heavens.

This spectacle was a familiar sight to some of the audience. They had seen something very similar that night some time ago in Dongluo City.

Here it was again; however, the amount of power they could sense was far, far greater than that from before.

They watched on in awe as the black raven screamed through the air directly toward the green leaf shield of Dongluo City.

An enormous, deafening boom filled the air. The defense shield had already been weakened. Now, it trembled, unable to stand up to the force which assailed it; it suddenly began to collapse.

As it exploded, vast quantities of trees within Dongluo City also began to fall apart. The leaves shattered. The shield... was completely gone!

At the same time, the black raven began to disperse; it transformed into vast quantities of fog, which once again dispersed out to cover Dongluo City.

Miserable shrieks filled the air, along with explosions. The hyper toxic poison, along with the power of Time, swept through the city. Outside the fog, everything was quiet. No one spoke. The hundreds of observing Cultivators watched on blankly, their minds spinning. Everything that was happening was being sealed onto their minds, never to be forgotten.

Within Dongluo City, the two Nascent Soul Elders stood pale-faced. The vast fog which surrounded them made it impossible to see their fellow Clan members. All they could hear were bloodcurdling screams echoing about.

They were Nascent Soul Cultivators. Compared to everyone else around them, they were at the pinnacle of power. However, within this spell formation, they weren't even able to move. No matter what divine abilities they utilized, they could not escape, nor break through the fog.

Rage sprang into being in their minds, but even their rage was useless against the spell formation.

On the first day, they were still able to come up with ideas about how to break out. On the second day, it was the same. In fact, they maintained this optimism until the fifth day. After that, though, they no longer heard any bloodcurdling cries from their fellow Clan members. Hopelessness filled them, and their expressions filled with complete frenzy.

Their features had been assaulted by the power of Time for over five days. They were Nascent Soul Cultivators, but they were unable to fight the changes that resulted from such an onslaught.

On the sixth day, the fog covering Dongluo City suddenly began to lift. It left the city, no longer filling it, but surrounding it. Not a scrap of fog was left to be seen inside.

What was clearly visible inside of Dongluo city was decay. Trees, leaves, everything looked as if it had been rotting there for hundreds of years.

There were only three people left inside of the city. They were none other than the Dongluo Clan's Nascent Soul Elders. The one who had been trapped inside the fog for the longest looked around in surprise as soon as it lifted. Immediately, his breathing grew ragged, and astonishment filled his eyes.

From beginning to end, he had assumed he was still in the basin of the Church of the Golden Light. Only now did he find out where the battle had actually been fought.

At the same time, he caught sight of the other two Nascent Soul Elders. They all exchanged glances, then looked up silently as Meng Hao strode out from within the fog.

The instant they saw him, the three of them began to grow blurry, as they prepared to use minor teleportation if necessary. Now that Meng Hao had made an appearance, they were determined to be prepared for anything.

Meng Hao looked at the three old men, then lifted his right hand. Immediately, hundreds of figures began to emerge from the surrounding fog. They were none other than all the other members of the Dongluo Clan, unconscious, dragged out by the fog itself.

The appearance of these people caused the three old men to give up any notions of using minor teleportation. With all of their Clan members here, they wouldn't take the risk.

They stood there silently.

"Enough," said Meng Hao. "You know, the fault is yours. If I hadn't fought back, you would have assimilated me. Joining you wouldn't be that bad, I guess, except you lack a bit in the sincerity department. I didn't kill very many of your Clan members. They're all here. I'll trade them back to you for this broken down city of yours." He looked at them, awaiting their answer.

The hearts of the three Nascent Soul Cultivators filled with bitterness. They exchanged glances, and then Second Elder gritted his teeth and nodded.

"Things being the way they are," he said, "we agree with everything you've said. Except...." Before he finished speaking, he locked gazes with Meng Hao. It seemed as if he were engaged in a

respectful interchange, but suddenly, the bodies of the three Elders vanished. Using minor teleportation, they reappeared off to the side, looking as if they were going to make a run for it.

Even as Meng Hao looked over at them, First Elder, who hadn't spoken the entire time, suddenly grew blurry. As he did, killing intent filled his eyes. When he reappeared, he was standing behind Meng Hao. His hand shot out hatefully, slamming into Meng Hao.

A boom filled the air as the Meng Hao in front of First Elder exploded into pieces. However, what dissipated out was nothing more than vast quantities of Qi.

Next, Third Elder shot toward the mist. He wasn't fleeing; no, his right hand flickered an incantation. His body began to emit a buzzing sound, and an enormous hand appeared behind him. It shot into the mist, where it grabbed someone.

The person it grabbed was none other than Meng Hao!

"Die!!" cried Third Elder. A boom rang out as the man clenched his fist. However... even as the boom filled the air, the Meng Hao within the fist suddenly dissipated into Qi.

The three Elders' faces fell. First Elder, Second Elder, who had been speaking just now, and Third Elder, all felt their hearts begin to pound.

They had come up with their plan based on a few mutual glances. However, their plan had been defeated in an instant. Suddenly, roughly a dozen people walked out from within the fog. All of them were Meng Hao!

Their appearances were completely identical, and all of them glared coldly at the three Elders.

"Patriarch of the Church of the Golden Light," said Third Elder of the Dongluo Clan, shamed into rage, "will you only rely on your spell formation? Or do you dare to fight one on one with any of us?!" The frustration he had felt over the past days exploded out. The power of his Nascent Soul Cultivation base also emanated out; his entire body brimmed with power.

One among the dozen of Meng Haos cleared his throat and said. "No, I don't." He looked a bit embarrassed.

Even as the words came out of his mouth, Second Elder appeared in front of him and launched an attack. Meng Hao's body dissipated into black mist. But then... ten more Meng Haos walked out from the fog.

The three old Cultivators were now starting to be inundated with a feeling of helplessness.

“Elders, don't you think your acting this way is a bit improper?” said one of the Meng Haos, looking a bit bashful. “I'm sincerely trying to discuss a way to resolve the situation. The Dongluo Clan is quite well known in the Black Lands. Your position in the United Nine might be weakening as of late, but if your entire Clan dies overnight, that would be really embarrassing for you. I would once again like to request that you three Elders agree to hand over the city to me. What do you say?”

Even as he spoke, the hundreds of Dongluo Clan Cultivators wrapped up in the fog started quivering as the fog began to wrap tightly around their necks.