

Unfathomable 231

Chapter 231

Zhang Dong had a small glass of bubbly liquor in his hand. He slowly moved it towards his lips and took a sip while glancing down. What he saw beneath were a group of beauties on their zithers playing a slow song while singing.

He was sitting in one of the booths with the group of twenty elders. Below them, a large group of people were seated around a stage area. The stage was well lit up, it kind of looked like a dancing stage with the floor shined to perfection.

There were some gems embedded in it that were shining bright. If you looked closer from his angle he could even look under the skirts of those lovely ladies that were down on that stage. He was lucky that his wife wasn't here with him.

He had been sitting here for over an hour already. First Sebas Tian walked out and did a small boring speech. He talked generally to everyone in the room without mentioning anyone in particular.

The Silver Spear Sect was here but their Patriarch was missing which did cause a little scene. The people that had come had their heads lowered and they would flinch whenever he looked at them. He wanted to just wave or throw a kissy face at them if he could, alas he needed to keep his senior attitude up.

He wished that he could be more relaxed around others, the only one he could show his true colors were his closest family. His wife already knew that he wasn't the super-serious cultivator that she once thought he was. Neither his grandfather or some of his retainers. The only ones that couldn't see it were his disciples, they were too far gone and would probably never see him more than a master to worship.

Zhang Dong took another sip from his glass and emptied it. He glanced at his own people that looked quite interested in the music. Their eyes were closed and they were taking in the slow tunes. He did notice that the tunes were strengthened by spiritual energy which meant that the women had some kind of Dao of sound. Probably a lesser one that was instrument specific.

After about another fifteen minutes the dancing and singing fairies finally were finished. Some of the younger cultivators clapped, the younger men were clearly enthralled by the women's beauty.

He knew that this wasn't just a relaxing concert. This was actually a scheme that the people from this city had cooked up. Having powerful cultivators interacting with their beauties could give various benefits to the rich merchants here.

This whole banquet was a place to gain new connections, be it in business or in the family. Zhang Dong theorized that the young beauties were probably wife candidates. In all likelihood behind closed doors, the older members of their families were already debating on which young master to wed them too.

This was one of the more distasteful traditions in this world. He would rather have the men and women be free to choose their husbands or wives. It was very rare that something like that happened. If there was nothing gained from the marriage the parents would not agree to it.

Zhang Dong was lucky enough to marry Feng Liena who was on equal footing with him. If he chose some lowly Qi condensation commoner the elders from his sect would start complaining. At most, they would

allow someone like that to be a concubine but not the main wife. Though he was in a high enough position in the sect to do what he wanted, this wasn't the case with most of the people in this world.

"Fellow Daoists, I hope you enjoyed the melody our young maidens have played for you this day."

Senior Tian walked out after the musical number was done. He even urged the young lords to give some gifts to the fairy-like beauties that performed them. They would apparently be leaving this hall to go outside and mingle. While the concert was taking place a feast had been given to them so there wasn't much left to do here.

"Follow me fellow Daoists, our Yinglong Pavilion leader will also be joining soon for the festivities."

The whole hall started rumbling a bit and a large gate rose up from the ground. The other sect members gasped at the display as this was a teleportation gate. Zhang Dong on the other hand rubbed his chin and squinted.

'Hm, looks inferior to the one that we have.'

After examining the contraption he was glad that his sect was already ahead of the competition. Even this large Yinglong Pavilion wasn't as advanced in some ways as his sect. The manuals he had received after that one expedition had turned out to be the most important treasure trove.

The secret ground they were in was in another sect's territory though. He wanted to visit it as it probably would answer some of his questions. He would probably need to put his younger sect members in danger though as it would certainly test them again. But maybe he could somehow enter the closed-door another way. He was able to enter the strange room with the cube without a problem and he felt like it was connected to that secret ground.

The problem was that if he wanted to go there he would probably have to declare war against the sect residing there. He was on the fence about that. He could also try sneaking in but then he would also need to get rid of anyone defending it. There were too many factors that could lead to a war and if he got sucked into that gate his sect might have to face the wrath of the other three sects without him.

The teleportation gate had a similar design to all the other ones he saw before. Some people were already going through it. Zhang Dong and the people that he came with moved from their balcony seats as well.

Everyone slowly moved towards that gate, the people on the lower floor were first, and only after that Zhang Dong and his sect members followed suit.

Everything here was preplanned and every sect was judged and ranked accordingly. His United Element Sect had suddenly joined the upper echelons. At least from the point of view of the Yinglong Pavilion that had placed them on the upper floor. This caused the ones that were left on the lower floors to not be amused.

The only thing that was holding them back from complaining was the fact that Zhang Dong had trashed the sect leader from the Silver Spear Sect in a one on one battle. He had also done it very one-sidedly which caused everyone to be frightened of his might.

The lower placed sects weren't the only ones raising their brows at this. The other nine sects that were up there with them had kept looking at him and his oldies throughout the whole concert. They were mostly curious as to why the Yinglong Pavilion would place them there. Some of them weren't amused, it were the sects that were taking spirit stones from him.

Finally, he and his people went through the gate as the first group from the second floor. Only people that were of core formation and above were allowed to walk through it, which left the juniors outside to mingle or prepare for the coming competition.

The teleportation gate brought them to a wholly new place. The moment they appeared there he could feel some wind against his face.

They were quite high up as the air was thin but thanks to his high cultivation that wasn't really a problem. The puffy white clouds were also hovering above them in the sky really closely.

Apparently, they were on a high mountain peak somewhere in the Yinglong Pavilion's territory. This was not a pocket dimension or any kind of treasure but the mountain they were on was quite hefty.

As he walked forward he could see people there already talking. There were many tables with various foods and the smell of something cooking filled his nostrils.

'I guess that was just an appetizer that we were having?'

He walked forward while glancing at the strange-looking fruits and dishes. They were different from what his clan members ate. The cuisine was quite varied and he could feel a high concentration of spiritual energy coming from them. If a person at the Qi condensation level tried eating some of these dishes they might even breakthrough. They also might explode if the Qi concentration was too high.

"Good to see you ol' chap."

Sebas Tian was there to greet him, the man certainly liked him for some reason or another.

"Yes, good to see you too."

Zhang Dong replied while walking forward, some of the oldies from his clan appeared behind him a bit disoriented. They soon realised where they were and continued forward. They were quick to pick up on what this was and started mingling with the crowds. They were instructed beforehand to interact with others to gain information and favor.

He was left with the monocle-wearing man that was apparently done with his job now. Someone else would be taking over and it was apparently the leader of this group of merchants.

He finally appeared after everyone had gone through the teleportation gate. The man had a sharp glint in his eyes. He did look like someone in his 60s like most of the nascent soul cultivators. His hair wasn't gray though, it was a deep crimson. His beard was in the same color and had an angular cut to it. He was quite short and robust looking which made Zhang Dong think about a certain fantasy race.

"Welcome comrades, I hope we can do business as always!"

The man was sitting in a large throne looking chair overlooking the other people that came. He was under something similar to a giant gazebo. It was made from gold and various precious metals were embedded into the beams.

“Take your time and enjoy the banquet to your heart’s content, your juniors will be soon starting with their competition.”

The man said while the people glanced to the side. Zhang Dong followed with his gaze to where they were looking. This mountain was high up and the peak was flattened so that they could stay there. But behind it was something peculiar.

There was a giant labyrinth with walls that were hundreds of meters tall. It was multiple kilometers in diameter and looked truly tremendous from up here.

Zhang Dong spread his spiritual sense into that labyrinth and could feel that there were various living beings there. Not only humans, there were also various beasts and even automatons like the wooden dolls his sect used for some trials.

This would be the proving ground for the junior members below the core formation level. They would compete against other sects and fight the beasts inside. There were various traps and other hard tests waiting for them there.

While glancing at the giant labyrinth Zhang Dong gave out a sigh. He had already witnessed similar proving grounds. He already knew that the young kids in there would probably end up killing each other. The fights for prestige and resources were truly brutal in this world. Luckily his disciples were not here and wouldn’t even be able to participate due to their cultivation level.

If he brought some of the better foundation establishment youths there would probably be a scandal. He’d expect them to just trash the competition at this point. He didn’t want to brag but some of his elite members were just too far ahead of most people in this world. Maybe the kids here were young masters from strong sects but he didn’t think they would match his own top juniors.

He looked at the large labyrinth from all the way up here. A nascent soul cultivator would be able to see everything that was happening there without the need for a camera. This was all thanks to their enhanced spiritual sense.

The junior members were already walking but there looked to be one golden-haired girl getting pushed in by force. It was a peculiar sight to see.

“What is the meaning of this?”

He looked to the side, there was a small group of nascent cultivators arguing and the one shouting was the man that was at the middle stage that he saw before.

His face was contorted and he didn’t look pleased at all. Apparently, something was about to happen but luckily his sect wasn’t the one in trouble this time around.

Chapter 232

The banquet had moved into the next phase. Every influential member from the large sects that ruled these lands was here. They had teleported onto a large mountain peak. This peak was overlooking a giant labyrinth and some people were already moving into it.

The labyrinth was the main competition that the junior members were able to participate in. The Yinglong Pavilion had hidden various treasures in this area and everything inside was up for the taking. Various high quality pills, weapons, and even cultivation manuals that could raise weak sects into behemoths.

These were all treasures that you could gain in this competition. The winner would even get a large monetary reward that consisted of high tier spirit stones. This was a big opportunity and honor for the junior's that were here. They were all foundation establishment cultivators and even one high tier spirit stone would allow them to live like kings.

They were all motivated greatly and wanted to win this competition at all costs. The treasures wouldn't just be handed over to them though. There were various traps and spirit beasts littered in the many tunnels. The contestants needed to watch their every step as one wrong turn could mean certain death.

Even with all the dangers that the Yinglong Pavilion had prepared in the competitions, this wasn't the thing that the participants were afraid of. The things that they would have to fear the most were each other. Most of the deaths and injuries in this type of competition were delivered by the contestants. Battles for the artifacts broke out constantly and there were no rules against it.

Killing and crippling each other was allowed. The nascent soul cultivators above the labyrinth could look over their juniors but they weren't supposed to interfere. They weren't but they could, there was a certain rule that allowed the guardians to protect their junior members. They would need to either convince the other party's senior to order their juniors to spare theirs. They could do it forcefully but that had some ramifications later. Sometimes even death battles between the nascent soul masters occurred due to this.

Something like this was rare, one of the sides relented most of the time. No nascent soul Patriarch would give their life to defend a foundation establishment junior. So in general both sides ended up bluffing against each other until one side gave up. Only if both sides were bent on fighting each other a battle to the death would take place.

Something like this was starting, on the large peak, the Patriarch of the Divine Fist Sect was staring daggers at another nascent soul elder. He had noticed that a certain golden-haired junior had been forcefully taken inside the labyrinth grounds. He could see her moving through the corridors with a sword in hand.

"What is the meaning of this, I didn't sanction something like this!?"

The man gritted his teeth while looking down, it was clear that he wanted to just fly down there and pluck his sect junior from that labyrinth.

"Fang Heng, what do you mean? Your niece wanted to participate in the competition to bring honor to your sect, my sect juniors just lent her a helping hand."

Another man replied. This person had a peculiar look. His hair was green as jade grass and his large beard looked like thick roots. His skin color was dark and looked like fresh soil that you would use for planting or gardening.

Zhang Dong was at the side and listened with one ear while glancing down at the labyrinth. He noticed who the man was looking at, it was a pretty young lass with blonde hair. It looked like she was being chased by people that had similar robes to this plant looking elder. From what he could tell this sect was called the Yggdrasil Sect.

He was familiar with this name. This sect was also part of the top ten and as the name implied there were cultivators versed in plants. They were wealthy due to producing superior grade pills and spiritual herbs. There were one of the biggest providers of herbs and plants in the empire. It had something to do with how they cultivated, their bodies were similar to plants after they went through some kind of body refining technique.

From his point of view, this tree hugger sect was clearly picking a fight with the other one. Why he didn't know but it might have something to do with the man's low cultivation. He could see the arguing elder backing off, the plant looking cultivator had activated some of his aura. He was at the late stage and was clearly more powerful.

Zhang Dong started moving back, this had nothing to do with him and the woman below wasn't in danger quite yet. He thought to himself that he couldn't risk getting involved in something like this.

While inching away from the commotion, some of the other cultivators moved closer. They seemed to be in cahoots with the Yggdrasil Sect as they started laughing at the old man from the Divine Fist Sect. This looked very suspicious to him; it was as if they had set this whole thing up. He even saw his old friend from the Limitless Sword Society joining in on the chuckling.

'Do they want to coax that Divine Fist elder to fight to save his junior or something? But judging by his level he would surely die.'

He glanced over to the labyrinth, the woman was constantly getting chased by the other juniors. They had smiles on their faces as if this was a fun activity. He could even see some other sects joining in the chase, this was probably no coincidence. This looked more and more like something planned.

"You might not know this ol' chap..."

While Zhang Dong was watching Sebas Tian from the Yinglong Pavilion joined him. For some reason he had come to give him the info about this, probably to gain favor.

"The Divine Fist Sect had tried hiding it but the news had spread, they should have not come..."

The man was sure to use a special technique to whisper the info right into Zhang Dong's ear. Apparently, this sect was one of the stronger ones, they were bordering with those tree huggers.

There had been some kind of newly evolved beast that moved in on their land. It was a beast king that could control various demonic beasts. There was a large scale battle between the sect and a monster horde.

There was no detailed info yet but it was clear that the Divine Fist Sect had suffered. The appearance of this man instead of the real sect leader was a giveaway. He was either dead or injured.

“So, are they testing him?”

Senior Tian nodded. The information wasn't complete so the sect leader of the Yggdrasil Sect probably decided to prod his opposition. If the Divine Fist Sect was truly just an injured animal he would put it out of its misery.

The beast tide was for now just a rumor. The strange appearance of a middle stage nascent soul elder instead of the old Patriarch was really suspicious. Even if he was alive this sect that was already on bad terms with them wouldn't care. They wouldn't lose much and they were just targeting a little junior member.

Even if they were wrong and the others came to their doorstep asking for face they could just pay them off with some spirit stones. On the other hand, if they didn't show up with their sect leader, this would mean that they couldn't retaliate. It was a low-risk gamble, the junior in question was just a relative of this middle stage elder. No sects would start wars over something like that at most they would need to give up the juniors that did the deed.

“Unfortunately, if the rumors are true then their sect might be done for...”

Zhang Dong looked down at the labyrinth and to the young girl that was fleeing for her life. Then he looked back to the man from her sect. Fang Heng was his name, he was holding onto his own neck while two nascent soul elders were focusing their aura on him.

They were clearly sending him a message. They probably weren't afraid of facing him in a deathmatch either. There was no winning in this situation if the man tried to act.

Maybe he wouldn't have to, nothing was written in stone. If the girl managed to survive through the labyrinth then it would be fine. There was a time limit on this thing and it would at most take two days. Even though the area this was constructed was immense, the juniors were already superhuman. They could get through this in two days, it was a closed-off space so there weren't that many places to go either.

Time passed and the spectacle continued. The golden-haired girl was now running away from her pursuers and she was holding out quite well. She was in the late stage of foundation establishment and was clearly gifted. The problem was that there were far too many people going after her.

Zhang Dong kept glancing between her and the elder from the Divine Fist Sect. He looked defeated and unable to act. He didn't feel good about himself either, he had to watch this obvious bullying from afar.

The other sect elders that were there averted their gazes. They clearly didn't want to have anything to do with this. Rightfully so, at least from this world's standpoint. There was nothing to gain from a rumored broken down sect.

This didn't sit too well with him. He remembered the old times, his clan was also forced along with him to go to that secret ground. They were brought there as cannon fodder on the whims of a powerful sect. If the rumors were true the fate of these two was sealed, the girl would probably die in the labyrinth and this elder might end in a similar fashion.

He didn't think the powerful sects would let a nascent soul master just waltz out of here in one piece. After he was away from the Rain Dragon City they would probably strike instantly. The only thing that could save them would be if their sect wasn't that damaged or if they had some kind of backup from a different one.

Zhang Dong shook his head as his mind drifted in a certain direction. He quickly tried to remove that thought from his mind. Being the person that he was, he was having trouble just sitting there and not helping. These people were just strangers to him, he didn't really have a reason to lend them a hand.

He was now a sect leader and had to think about his own people. He was also a father with a child and with another that was yet to be born. He couldn't be alienating other sects in his position, not unless his or his family's lives were at stake.

Though the more this charade continued the worse it became. The girl tried her best but there were just too many people after her. With the added traps and beasts in there, she stood no chance. She was now cornered and battered, no way of getting out of it.

Zhang Dong looked to the old man that was more or less out of commission. The other two sect leaders were keeping him quiet with their superior pressure and he was unable to even speak to challenge them. Even if he did, it would probably be a one-sided beat down.

He looked back to the girl, his emotionless face twitching as he had a hard time taking this sight in. The other people here were doing nothing. His own daughter's face started superimposing itself over the blond-haired girl's face and he started getting angry.

He did want to help but there was no good reason. How would he explain an outburst, he and the sect weren't related. Could he just say that he was hired by their leader as a guard? That could make some sense but why would he risk his life for a measly foundation establishment junior.

His system identified her name Fang Meili, she was clearly related to the old man here. He could even see the old man's eyes watering as he had to witness one of his family members getting attacked.

While watching the girl fighting for her life against six people he brought up his system window. Sometimes this thing worked in mysterious ways, maybe he could help her remotely by boosting her cultivation level or something. The problem was that he needed her to be part of his sect to do that, or maybe a disciple.

While going through the windows he noticed something strange. He did a double-take and his eyes went wide.

'No... how could this be possible... how far does his influence reach?'

He was now looking at something peculiar, this would probably give him a good excuse to act. The logistics of this circumstance were mind-boggling though but maybe it would all work out in the end.

Chapter 233

Fang Meili had come with her grandfather to this gathering of the sects. She had come unwilling and would have rather remained in the sect. Her brothers and sisters were now in dire need and it felt like she was running away.

She couldn't refuse her grandfather though, she was the youngest female family member that had survived the beast onslaught. She was also the favorite granddaughter of Fang Heng, one of the more prominent nascent soul elders of the sect. She knew what her grandfather was planning to do but it felt wrong to just run away and live quietly here.

She as a junior member wasn't allowed to follow her grandfather into the teleportation gate. She was left with some of her sect members outside and they were to wait till the competition was over.

Then it happened, a group of cultivators from the Limitless Sword Society and the Yggdrasil Sect appeared. They made quick work of the senior members from her faction and then forced her to enter the competition.

She was subdued by one of the powerful elders and couldn't move a muscle. The other people didn't seem to notice or just didn't care. She was thrown into the labyrinth and then her nightmare began.

She started running for her life, the people from those two sects had put a bounty on her head. She could clearly hear them mention it, the ones that either killed or crippled her would be given a reward. The junior members from those sects were a greedy bunch. They wouldn't mind slaying a child to gain some favor with their elders.

She fled and fought, she even managed to take out a couple of her pursuers that were stupid enough to get close while being weaker than her. There were just too many of them though and after many hours of running and hiding, she was now against a wall.

She was now grasping her belly, a blade had pierced through it and she was losing blood. Her body was more resistant than a regular humans was but the continued blood loss was getting to her.

She was now looking at a group of people. They varied by age and looks, some were male some were female but each one of them was grinning. They were clearly enjoying this process of chasing her down, they were just treating this as a game.

"I think senior brother should do the honors~"

A girl that looked to be in her early twenties called out from the side. She was hugging another cultivator's arm closely while smiling.

This was the strongest young master from the group, his cultivation level was in the great circle of foundation establishment. His skin was slightly green and he was clearly someone from the Yggdrasil side. There were some other youngsters here but they knew that this sect was the strongest, they couldn't complain.

"Yes, I think this hunt belongs to the senior brother."

Other people just nodded while cursing inwardly. They all wanted the promised rewards but could not go against this senior.

Fang Meili just spit down at the ground while glaring at the group of cowards. It was one thing to fight to the death one on one but another to just be hunted down like an animal.

"You'll never get away with this, you scum!"

She cursed at them while they laughed at her, the senior brother from the tree hugger sect took out a spear. He pointed it at her, it shone brightly and she could feel spiritual energy gathering on the tip.

Fang Meili was far too tired to do anything about it. She had long since burned through her spiritual reserves and was just running on fumes. She would not be able to take an attack even from someone at the early stage.

She knew that this was the end, her grandfather would have probably done something if he could by now. There was no help coming.

She removed her hand from her wound and grasped her weapon. It was a Ji, more popularly known as a type of halberd. It was a large weapon and she could barely hold it now, even with both her hands now.

“Let me end this farce!”

The young man said while scoffing. He could see that the woman here was unwilling to give up, he would need to deliver the finishing blow himself. He bolted forward with his spear, it would only take a little poke with it and the young girl would probably be dead. He could clearly see that the girl was holding herself up by leaning against the wall behind her. She had no strength to swing that weapon.

“Repent your sins in your next life!”

He delivered a thrusting attack forward, his spear started shining and the tip looked like it was spinning around. His hands extended in length and the green glowing spear tip headed for Fang Meili’s head.

The young girl kept her eyes open. This was the most she could do, she really couldn’t move a muscle. Her wound opened itself back up, her past experiences filled her head. It was over, she would die but at least she would look in the eyes of her murderer. Maybe if she was lucky enough to get reborn she could get her revenge.

However, before the spear could reach her head something astonishing happened. She could hear a strong voice fill the whole labyrinth. It sounded gallant and resolute, the moment the people around it heard it they felt weak in their knees.

“That’s enough!”

The young master couldn’t stop his attack anymore, it was flying right towards the girl’s head but this wouldn’t be the end of her. Following the booming voice, something collided with the labyrinth’s array wall.

Just like any good trial ground this one also had a protective barrier around it. It was in place to block out people from interfering and also to block the contestants from fleeing outside. Once you were inside you were trapped and on your own.

The array was attacked from the outside and everyone looked to the sky. They could see some kind of golden light pushing up against the transparent shield. The shield didn’t hold up at all and a golden ray of light invaded the labyrinth. Everyone could feel that the power of this attack was something immense.

This golden light made its way inside of the labyrinth in a certain direction. It traveled at a tremendous speed that these juniors couldn't follow and finally landed. It connected with the golden-haired girl, the spear was just a second away from blowing her head apart.

The golden light surrounded her body and when the spear hit it, the weapon shattered into a million tiny pieces. The youth that was holding on to the weapon was repelled and flew backward. His body embedded itself into the opposite wall nicely while his sect member went slack-jawed.

Fang Meili found herself floating now, the golden light felt warm and calming. It infused her body with new power and she felt that her wounds were getting closed. In a matter of seconds, the holy healing energies managed to heal her battered body.

This wasn't the end quite yet. The light didn't leave, it made her float upwards and into the air as if she was getting sucked into the sky. The other people that were in the trial saw a girl with gold hair flying upwards while flailing her hands around. It looked as if gravity was turned off for her and she was tossed into space.

She flew towards the rift in the protective array that was broken and squeezed right through it before it could mend itself. Soon she was nothing more than a glowing spec in the sky while heading towards the mountain peak where the elders were.

The juniors from the sects that were after this girl were stupefied. Who would be so brazen to go against their elders? Was the Yinglong Pavilion themselves making a move or was there another strong sect that didn't fear the consequences of a move like this?

Everyone knew that such an act would bring the wrath of both the Yggdrasil Sect and the Limitless Sword Society. The only thing that was remotely plausible was if the Divine Fist Sect had somehow falsified the beast tide incident. The two sects that were going after the Divine Fist Sect had spies that informed them about this. If it came out that they were somehow wrong they could be in for a war that they couldn't afford.

Fang Meili floated up into the sky, she was moments away from getting pierced by a ferocious spear technique a second ago. Now she was gently flying, the golden aura keeping her warm and protected from the cold weather and winds.

Soon she was able to see the person that helped her. When she reached the top she saw him, a handsome white haired man was standing there. His long hair was fluttering around and he was glowing in the same golden aura that she was. His eyes were crackling with energy and once in a while, she could hear the clap of thunder.

She was brought down right in front of this tall man. The moment he removed the golden shield that surrounded her she dropped down to her knees. She was far too flabbergasted by this whole turn of events that she couldn't utter a word.

The man that saved her was someone that she didn't know. Meili recognized him as a Patriarch from another sect, she had briefly seen him sitting in a booth during the pre-banquet pleasantries. Why he was helping she didn't know, the only reason she could think of was her grandfather.

Her grandfather on the other hand was confused just as the girl was. He had been held back by two other nascent soul masters and couldn't move a muscle. But then Zhang Dong shouted out and saved his granddaughter. Before he could ask about it the Patriarch from the Yggdrasil Sect spoke up, his tone unamused.

"What is the meaning of this? Who are you to interfere? You better have a good reason for this, otherwise..."

"Otherwise... what?"

Before the man that looked like a sentient tree could threaten Zhang Dong further the man's aura exploded. The people there were standing closest to him had to even back away. His golden aura began glowing stronger and small lightning bolts in the same color started to appear and crackle.

"A good reason? I have one! Why wouldn't I aid someone from my own family?"

Fang Meili and her grandfather had floating question marks above their heads. Why was this man claiming that she was someone from his family, was he just lying to save her?

"You jest, you clearly just interfered for no reason!"

The Patriarch from the Yggdrasil Sect wasn't having none of this, his aura exploded and clashed against Zhang Dong's but to his surprise, he couldn't overpower the golden sheen. Zhan Jie from the Limitless Sword Society saw this and aided his ally in the clash, it was now two against one.

The Yinglong Pavilion leader remained sitting there without moving a muscle. He was just waiting for this to play out. The other people in the area started backing away as this looked to be heading in the wrong direction.

"Hoh? You don't trust my words? Would you believe me if we did a simple bloodline assessment, don't think you would complain then! I bet the fellow Daoists from the Yinglong Pavilion can perform such a trifling task!"

Zhang Dong proclaimed while inserting more power into his own aura attack. The two men that were going against him were quite shocked that he was able to last against their combined assault.

There was a plan behind this whole scene. Zhang Dong had checked Fang Meili's status quite thoroughly and he had discovered something interesting. She was indeed related to him, he was her uncle. This of course was only possible thanks to one man, the one man harem Zhang Jin. His grandfather had apparently sired someone from her line and it was someone from his earlier conquests.

He wasn't sure about the logistics of it all. He could have left her with a baby in her belly and then run, the woman then had the child back at her sect and this child was Fang Meili's grandparent. Now the only thing left was to prove this and maybe he could evade a fight, if not this might be a lot more troublesome.

Chapter 234

Zhang Dong was just standing there, glaring at two nascent soul masters that were angry. He had come up with a haphazard plan just like many times before. He couldn't just watch a child getting murdered in

front of him. He would hate himself in the future if he just stood by, the problem was that now he had involved himself in this fiasco. He would have to see it through till the end.

He eyed the golden-haired girl with a side glance. She looked rather young and was looking at him as if he was some kind of alien. It would have been good if she followed his lead and acted like his family member in this situation. She didn't look like the scheming type though and probably didn't realize that he was trying to help her. That or she didn't trust him enough to go along with it.

Her grandfather on the other hand had been freed from the massive pressure as Zhang Dong had aided him with his own aura. He was also now looking in his direction with brows furrowed. He looked confused but luckily he had more sense than his granddaughter and went for it.

"Y-yes..., you should pay respect to your senior uncle!"

Fang Heng was now grasping at straws. He had no idea what this man called Zhang Dong was thinking. He had heard about his fight but knew nothing more than that. By the way, he was holding back the Yggdrasil Sect's Patriarch and his ally at bay it looked like he was a strong master.

He was claiming to be a family member of theirs from his granddaughter's side. If this was true or some kind of ploy he had no idea. At this juncture, he was willing to gamble his life. His favorite grandchild had almost died and he couldn't even lift a finger. It was this man that had saved her, maybe he was just interested in her for a different reason but he had to risk it. Otherwise, she would be dead for sure, he had to somehow help him.

Fang Meili looked at the handsome white-haired man that was looking to the side. He was currently in a spiritual battle with the two other Patriarchs. He still managed to look to the side and smile slightly.

Before the girl could act though she felt some of that nascent soul energy leaking out. Her whole body trembled from fright and she fell down to her knees while panting. She felt as if someone was holding her throat tightly and squeezing with all might.

"This is absurd! Why should we even let you go on with this farce, you've broken the rules!"

"That man never showed any respect for others, he needs to be taught a lesson!"

Zhan Jie from the Limitless Sword Society stepped forward. While his ally backed him up, it didn't look like this would be ending without a fight.

Zhang Dong could feel the pressure increasing against him and he was having trouble defending himself and the young girl from all this pressure. He was still only at the early parts of his middle stage level so going against these two that were close to the very top of late-stage was proving difficult.

That is if he didn't use one of his techniques. His Embodiment of the Thunder God technique had been upgraded and he could now use it even better. He took one step forward and a golden hue surrounded his body.

The other cultivators in the area could feel powerful fluctuations of Qi in the surroundings. Zhang Dong's lightning elemental Qi was of the utmost purity and everyone here could sense that.

The two people that were going against him felt their auras getting shoved back as their opponent walked forward. His energy had the telltale signs of someone at the middle stage but his power was even above theirs.

“Respect has to be earned! You forced my niece to take part in the competition, do you really think I didn’t see that? She was never included in the roster, do you think I wouldn’t notice?”

He had seen some people pushing the blond girl around and forcing her into the labyrinth. During that time he had luckily eavesdropped on them with one of his techniques. He noticed them talk it out with the judges standing guard, they were clearly bribed.

There was a rule in place to register the contestants a day before the competition. The sects that came first could even do it two days sooner. Zhang Dong knew that the people from the Divine Fist Sect did no such thing. They were clearly forced to participate and everyone here knew it. They all kept quiet as it wasn’t their business and they had nothing to gain from alienating the Yggdrasil Sect’s Patriarch.

The two sides began glaring at each other. Fang Heng even made his way over behind Zhang Dong and grabbed his granddaughter. The girl was clearly not powerful enough to take part in this and was barely conscious at this time. She was lucky enough that Zhang Dong had protected her from most of the aura that was seeping out.

“Stop lying, how could that girl be related to you. You are clearly just trying to slander our good names, what gall! Who do you think even allowed your sect to exist for so long? Did you finally lose it? Are you rebelling against the Limitless Sword Society!?”

Zhan Jie retorted while sweating. He could feel that this white-haired man was a lot stronger than he previously had thought. He had the other Patriarch next to him so he had some help, otherwise, he would feel as confident. He wasn’t yet out of his reach, in the sword master’s mind he felt like he could win a one on one fight even though it would be a hard-fought battle.

“Rebelling?”

Zhang Dong started feeling apprehensive about this. He didn’t quite want to start a fight with this sect or the other two. It was slowly becoming apparent that he might not have another choice.

“I and my sect have never and never will belong to you, how can we rebel? Do you think that little sum that we pay you gives you the right to our lands? Fine, from this day forth the United Element sect will cut ties with the Limitless Sword Society!”

Some of the people gasped, they didn’t know what this was going but they all felt threatened. Even though this was the Yinglong Pavilion if a fight between two top fighters broke out there could be some casualties.

“Y-you...”

Zhan Jie’s face contorted and he looked like a demon. The man was clearly angered to the fullest extent. Before he could act though another powerful aura filled the area. This aura came crashing down and just evaporated the spiritual energy that these three nascent soul masters were giving out.

“That’s more than enough of you three. There will be no fighting here...”

The man that spoke out was the leader of the merchant faction. He had remained silent and watched on from the sidelines. He had no stakes in either side but he couldn't let these people just do anything they wanted. This was his city and there were rules that he made.

"If you two wish to continue then you can clash in the arena, not here."

Zhang Dong and the two other elders started backing off and quieted down. Both parties were actually glad that the leader from the Yinglong Pavilion intervened as none of them were actually willing to fight.

"If what the Patriarch from the United Element sect says is true then I'll be lenient, first we must check if his claims are true."

It was time to clear things out here. There were some accusations thrown out there but no proof anywhere. First, they needed to see if this white-haired man was related to the golden-haired girl or not. If he wasn't then he was clearly just doing this to agitate the other side, for what reason that would be up to debate.

"Bring it out."

The man clapped his hands and a person brought out a certain treasure. It looked like a chalice that was made from precious metals. The people here knew well what this was as it was a popular item that could test someone's family roots.

The chalice was placed on a table. A person needed to put a drop of their blood into the item and let it mix with the other person's blood. If the chalice showed a reaction by glowing then it meant that the people were related to each other.

There were other more intricate artifacts like this. Some sects used them to test how pure their bloodlines were. This was mostly done with a reference to an ancestral senior. They would use their genetic marker as the base and compare the disciples to it. The closer it was the higher the position in the sect or clan for the junior.

Fang Meili looked at her grandfather, the old man just nodded.

"It's okay Meili'er."

Not like the two had any other choice. If Zhang Dong was a liar and he was just trying to start a fight they would go down with him.

Fang Heng was already grasping at straws, his original plan had gone down the drain. It was clear that the other sects knew something as they weren't worried that much when they took his granddaughter away. He was now sure that they were testing him. Probably the information about the state of his sect was already out there. How much was unclear.

The golden-haired girl nodded and moved forward. She was handed a dagger with which she poked her finger with. A droplet of blood landed inside the chalice and the artifact began to faintly glow.

Zhan Jie and the others were curious, was this girl really related to that man. It was really strange that he reacted as he did. A normal person wouldn't defend someone in this kind of situation from their standpoint.

They could only think of a few reasons that would make him do something like that. Either the girl was really related to him, or he was planning something. He seemed eager to go against them, was he really so brazen and sure about himself?

Zhan Jie's natural superiority complex was clouding his judgment. He was already maddened by the fact that Zhang Dong dared to break off ties and would not be paying his sect its dues. He wanted to show him how wrong he was to go against him and his sect. He didn't even add the other two sects into the equations as he was confident. His own sect was superior and so was he.

Zhang Dong was now up. He was handed a dagger that was a heavenly treasure, he looked at it for a moment and frowned. It looked like he was apprehensive about using it for some reason. This made the other cultivators question his motives, it made it seem like he didn't want to go through with this test.

"See, he was lying, he doesn't even want to proceed with the bloodline test!"

The Yggdrasil Sect's Patriarch proclaimed while pointing with his finger accusingly. The others nodded with approval as it did look like so.

"No, it's just... fine..."

Zhang Dong gave out a sigh and poked his finger with the dagger. The others looked with anticipation and waited for the chalice to be activated. There was a slight problem though.

"I thought so..."

They looked at Zhang Dong who poked his finger with that dagger but no blood was coming out. The item was a heaven grade treasure but it looked to not be able to pierce his skin. The pointy dagger tip even got bent out of shape when Zhang Dong added more strength to it.

"Sorry about that..."

Zhang Dong handed the dagger back to the person that brought it over. It was now really out of shape and looked unusable. It was clear from this display that this man's body was something that could resist heavenly grade treasures.

"I'll just use my own..."

The man then brought out his sword that he once used in the fight against the Silver Spear Sect Patriarch and poked his finger on the tip. Even this item had some trouble to pierce his skin but a small droplet was formed that dropped into the chalice.

The bloodline measuring device started working and it went through a couple of colors. Depending on the shine it gave out it could show how close they were related. It went from red to orange and then to yellow and continued to change. It finally stopped at a slightly darker green which meant that the two were indeed related.

"Green color, this means that they are within three generations!"

Zhang Dong already knew this as his system had shown him this. The person that Zhang Jin had shagged with was Fang Meili's great grandmother. She was indeed his niece and in the same generation as his two disciples.

The two sect leaders looked surprised, what was the meaning of this? This man was related to this girl, how was this possible?

The two looked at each other and their faces went pale. This was probably a rouse started by the Divine First Sect, they probably lied about the monster attack too!

Chapter 235

The people were stunned. A Patriarch from a new upstart sect was related to someone from a well established one. A previously powerful sect that was now losing power but was that really the truth?

Zhang Dong was to the side, his brows quivered a bit but he managed to keep his facial expression mostly hidden away. He knew those looks that the people were giving him, it were the looks of cultivators that were overthinking. What genius conspiracy theories they were coming up with was something that he would like to know.

He knew that people in this world didn't think much of luck or coincidences. They thought that everyone that was at the very top of the cultivation ladder was some type of schemer. It was more believable for them that the Divine Fist Sect and the United Element Sect were planning something together.

Luckily for Zhang Dong he had developed a little technique with the help of his system. He could now eavesdrop on the conversations of other cultivators that used special sound moving techniques for it. He could hear what the Yggdrasil Sect leader and his sword-wielding partner in crime were saying. This made his bottom lip quiver as he tried not to smile.

"It was probably a scheme, those two must be in cahoots! That monster tide incident either never happened or it was exaggerated to make us drop our guard. Now they know that we are working together!"

The two continued to talk. The gist of it was that they were convinced that the beast attack was a hoax. Zhang Dong's true identity was now that of someone from the Divine Fist sect. In their eyes, he was probably an agent from this strong sect and the United Element Sect was just a front.

The two now feared that Zhang Dong and his people were placed close to the Limitless Sword Society. They were probably there for a pincer attack, while Zhan Jie's forces were away their main sect ground would be attacked. They theorized that they had constructed teleportation gates at strategic locations and were now waiting to strike.

"Wait, this might have been a blunder on their part, now their secret is out!"

The two continued further, Zhang Dong's overreaction was questioned. Probably the golden-haired junior was someone he deeply cared about so it even made him drop his act. He defended her but with this, he brought attention to his true identity. Which was a powerful nascent soul master from the Divine Fist Sect.

This all made sense to them. This was probably why his aura felt like it was in the middle stage but he was so strong. It explained why he was able to defeat the Silver Spear Patriarch so easily. In their eyes, he was some hidden monster either in the late stage or in the great circle. His young appearance was probably just to make others let their guard down around him.

Zhang Dong had to move his head to the side. The things they were coming up with were just silly. They kind of made sense if you looked at it with one mindset but the far-fetched theories fell apart if you really thought about it. They were even thinking that he was the old retired sect leader that had hidden himself away and built power-up in the lower lands.

He didn't even need to do anything about this, the imagination these people had was truly immense. They just weren't able to wrap their heads around it just being an act of kindness from his side.

While the two people there were blowing things out of proportions and while the Yinglong Pavilion Patriarch was rubbing his chin, Zhang Dong shifted his gaze towards the two people from the Divine Fist Sect.

He used the same technique to talk with the old man and sent his voice right next to his ear.

"Greetings, I think I might have caused a slight commotion here and for that, I'll apologize."

The old man's eyes quivered slightly but he tried keeping his facial expressions natural.

"Apologize? You saved my granddaughter, for this, I will eternally be grateful honorable Senior!"

The man replied while using the same hidden technique.

"But... May I ask why Senior decided to help us and how are you related to my granddaughter? I didn't know that we had such honorable family members as you."

The man was quite formal and respectful. It was clear from his tone and choice of words that he didn't want to offend Zhang Dong.

"Ah, I have a strong bloodline technique, it allows me to feel people that I'm close with, It was more or less a coincidence. Who wouldn't help their cute niece if she was in trouble?"

Zhang Dong replied while just coming up with a plausible excuse. He was actually related to the girl, or at least this body that he occupied was.

"Senior can track a lineage through a technique? Truly fascinating but even with that your actions..."

Zhang Dong knew where the old man was going with this. Even if he was related to this girl, he shouldn't know her well enough to risk his life. However this was indeed the truth, he did only save her because it was the right thing to do in his opinion. He was the type of person that even in this sort of world didn't like to see others getting killed. Though he was in the vast minority when it came to this reasoning.

"Well, I know it's hard to imagine my reasons. How about you could just repay this favor in the future? Forming positive karmic bonds is something that I'm known for."

It was far easier for Zhang Dong to just ask for a favor in return. Some people did live their life through karma here. If you helped someone they were expected to return the favor, otherwise, they would be sewing bad karma. Which in term would bring bad luck upon them, either in this or the next generation.

The greater Dao of Karma did exist in this world but Zhang Dong's knowledge of it was shallow. It also tied into the Dao of fate but to affect people's future was something out of his reach, at least for now.

"Good karma? Ah yes, that does make sense..."

The old man replied while digesting the information. At this moment Zhang Dong decided to shift the conversation in a different direction. The two sect leaders that he had gone against him were still speculating with each other. He had to inform this man that he was now partially responsible for their plans.

“Elder Heng, It would seem that your enemies might have gotten the wrong idea about our relationship...”

Zhang Dong gave him a small rundown of the situation. About how the two thought that he was a hidden member of their sect. He explained how the two thought that he was some kind of backup plan. He was there to apparently perform a sneak attack with the main sect if the two other sects ever attacked them.

“This...”

Fang Heng didn’t know what to say. He certainly didn’t know anything about something like this, it did make a lot of sense as Zhang Dong was related to his granddaughter in some way.

“Yes, regrettably that’s not true. It was just a coincidence that one of my family members was related to your granddaughter. You’d know if you saw the rest of my family...”

He didn’t really feel like explaining how his grandfather operated, it wouldn’t bring anything substantial into the conversation so he decided to leave it out. It would also be kind of embarrassing to admit that he was related to someone promiscuous like that.

“This misunderstanding could be a godsend for you but you would have to trust me and explain your situation in detail. I’ve heard that a beast tide ran through your sect and many masters died, even your sect leader.”

Zhang Dong needed more information. If he went along with the misunderstanding he could actually give the Divine Fist Sect some time to recuperate their losses. The Limitless Sword Society would probably also leave his people alone if they thought that Fang Heng’s side was still powerful.

“If those two think that their misunderstanding is true, your side will probably acquire much needed time. You could even recover if their spies get caught.”

He knew that if the other sects weren’t at least 80 or 90 percent sure of their victory they would probably wait it out. The same thing happened to him, the three sects left him alone out of fear of his Wei Hung persona. He was also lucky enough to have a system in place that protected him from spies. Without any new information reaching his enemies, they could do nothing but wait, attacking his sect was far too much of a risk.

Fang Heng had to think for a moment. He looked at this granddaughter that was there. She was now standing behind him along with some of the sect elders from his sect. He was a bit apprehensive about this situation.

The man before him did indeed save his family member but his motives were unknown. He could as well be working for those two sects and just trying to get information out of him in a more roundabout way.

This elder had a hard time believing that the other sects would go to such lengths. They already had basic information about the monster attack. They just didn't have clear numbers of how many people perished. The first incident with his granddaughter was probably what his enemies had planned. This man probably belonged to a whole different faction but if he was telling the whole truth would remain to be seen.

"I..."

The man stuttered, he thought about his situation and if it could get any worse. Was there something he could do without getting outsiders involved? His plan was to quietly leave Fang Meili here and then return to his sect. There wasn't really a thought about his own survival there, he even feared that he wouldn't reach his sect grounds after he left this city.

There wasn't really much he could lose anymore. If the other two sects decided to attack they would probably only be able to bunker up in their main city for a few months. The information this man could spread wouldn't really add that much.

"Senior asks for much but if what you're saying is true then maybe my sect can still be saved. I only wish for one thing in return, please protect my granddaughter, if you swear this I will trust you."

Zhang Dong eyed the blond girl, she had been staring at him for quite some time now. He had probably left quite an impression on her at this point. If he agreed to the man's terms he would need to take her to his sect. He would also probably need to look after her or dump her onto one of his elders as a pupil or something.

'Maybe Liena could accept her as a disciple or something...'

He didn't really need to do this though. He could just walk out of here and worry about Zhan Jie and his cronies later. Getting them to think that he was part of a stronger sect could get him out of a fight later on though. He still had them fearing his master persona too but if he came off too threatening they might try to attack him out of fear.

"You have my word, I can take her to my sect where she will be well protected."

In the end, his good hearted nature had come out on top. Now he needed to listen to what this old man had to say and then decide on how to spin this. Zhang Dong hoped that the Divine Sect's situation wasn't completely unsalvageable. They still were in a good spot and probably had a lot of cultivation resources. He could probably even add them to his own as future payment.

"That feels reassuring, senior. I will put my trust into you..."

The man finally decided to talk in detail. In a matter of moments, the full truth was revealed and Zhang Dong was already strategizing about how to salvage the situation.

Chapter 236

Fang Heng finally decided to give Zhang Dong a recap of what had transpired back at his sect. The two had some time till the Yinglong Pavilion leader made his decision and the other guests were just whispering amongst each other as well.

"About a month ago we came across a strange set of ruins, this was the beginning of our troubles..."

It all started normally with a new interesting discovery. Some people had dug up a passageway that led them into some underground ruins. There was a labyrinth worth of corridors down there and a team of cultivators was dispatched to map the place out.

There wasn't much at the beginning but after a week all signs of the first team of cultivators were lost. They couldn't get any information on their progress and their communication jades weren't responding. It was as if they just vanished.

This prompted the sect to send out a second party of slightly stronger cultivators to go check. The team arrived at an empty camp with no one in sight. There weren't any signs of struggle but after some digging, they could see that their sect members had entered the underground ruins.

Most of the team then entered into the underground passages while a few members remained outside. They reported regularly every hour to the people back at the sect. Then at night, there was a worrying report of some strange sounds coming from the discovered entrance.

Soon the second team met the same end as the first one and finally, the nascent soul elders moved into action.

"Yes... if maybe they arrived sooner we could have done something but it was too late, the creature that slumbered there had already absorbed too much blood..."

Zhang Dong raised his eyebrow but didn't stop the man from speaking. Fang Heng after stopping for a moment continued with the story.

The area was closed off and one of the powerful elders moved in with a weapon in hand. He was greeted by his sect members or at least by what was left of them. They all had turned to horrendous monstrosities, not resembling any kind of demonic beast that they had ever seen.

Some looked like masses of tentacles with eyes, others looked like leeches with giant shark-like teeth. Others were just fused together bodies that gave out dreadful screams of pain that even caused dementia to lesser cultivators.

The monsters then started pouring out of those ruins, attacking everything that they saw. Every defeated enemy was assimilated in one way or the other which made their army grow.

This wasn't even the worst part, that was the leader of the monsters.

"Wait..."

Zhang Dong had to pause after the man had described the big bad monster that was behind all of this.

"Webbed wings... humanoid in shape... big arms with claws at the end and a face that looks like an octopus... also of giant proportions..."

He gave out a sigh as he knew what this creature was. He had even fought other variations of this beast before, they weren't at the nascent soul realm though. This one apparently was.

"Something wrong senior?"

"Ah no, please continue..."

The massive monster took flight and caused widespread panic in their lands. Nothing could stop it and the cities it went through turned into its minions. Even their nascent soul masters couldn't stop it as it continued to even turn them into their minions.

In the end, the hidden elders from the Divine Fist Sect used some kind of forbidden art to critically injure the monster. The monster vanished afterward but they weren't sure if it was dead or if it was just waiting to strike again.

The reserve elders had used up most of their life force in that attack and half of them died while the other was in a self-induced coma. They were using some healing arts but they wouldn't be waking up any time soon.

Their sect leader wasn't quite dead either, he had been infected by the monster's poison. He was apparently being kept alive by some of the sect's healing treasures. This was also why he wasn't able to attend this meeting.

Fang Heng was the only nascent soul elder that hadn't been hurt during the onslaught. There were still some lesser monsters roaming around. Their sect was slowly clearing out the infected cities.

'This sounds like some kind of horror movie, I bet that thing isn't dead...'

Zhang Dong felt a bit responsible as he had fought those occult beings before. He still was speculating that the first one had been here because of him. He wasn't sure if it was the same creature, it might have been evolving each time.

He might have to kill it again but this time around he would need to erase every atom down to the soul. He was now a nascent soul master so he could do it this time around.

"I see...I think I need to see those ruins..."

"You want to examine the ruins senior?"

The man was quite surprised. After hearing that story any normal cultivator would evade the trouble. The monster was strong enough to go against multiple nascent soul elders at the late stage.

"Yes, if that monster is what I think it is... then it probably isn't dead, it will be best to strike while it is injured."

Zhang Dong frowned, another big problem had fallen down on his shoulders. The monster was very good at regenerating and was probably not dead. The old man was from a sect that used divine energies which made him believe that it was weak to those. This was in all likelihood the reason why it fled.

This also made him more confident as he was someone that was versed in the Dao of the holy element. It was a Dao that was above the divine dao that Fang Heng's sect practiced.

"It looks like the fellow Daoist from the United Element Sect did not lie, he is indeed related to that junior."

Before he could think about what to do next the leader from the Yinglong Pavilion finally spoke up. He glanced from the green glowing chalice to him while leaning on one of his hands. Everyone in the room also stopped with their whispering, it was time for the verdict.

“Still, you have interfered in the sacred competition, you have to be fined.”

The man rubbed his chin while looking at Zhang Dong, Fang Meili didn't even dare to look at the monstrous elder that could smite her with a quiver of his brow.

“A low grade heaven artifact should be enough, none of the other contestants were hurt by him and the competition continues.”

Zhang Dong nodded and pulled out an intricate-looking spear. It radiated the might of a heaven grade artifact and was indeed a low grade one. This was one of his earlier products and was more or less a failure in his eyes. He didn't want to give weapons that he created to other factions but in this case, it was fine.

He gently guided the weapon towards the Yinglong Pavilion leader so that he could inspect it. The man grabbed the spear by the shaft and started looking over it, after a moment he gave a resounding nod.

“A fine spear. With this your involvement in the competition will be forgiven, if you wish to engage with the other sects in battle then please step forward.”

Zhang Dong looked to the other two. If they challenged him to battle he would accept. Fighting one on one against each one of those two would be better done here. He could at least deliver a long lasting wound and he wouldn't need to worry about other nascent soul masters getting involved.

He didn't think that he would be confronted here though, the other two were now suspicious of his motives. For them, this was some kind of scheme by the Divine Fist Sect. In their eyes, Zhang Dong was their agent and might have even been placed here to fight them.

Just as Zhang Dong had reasoned the tree looking elder didn't make a move. Zhan Jie looked quite maddened and was staring daggers at him but he also didn't come forward. Zhang Dong could even hear the two bickering a bit as the sword fanatic wanted to do battle with him.

After a bit of glancing from both parties, it was clear that no one was willing to step forward from either side. Zhang Dong didn't want to be the instigator even though a one on one fight might have been more favorable for him. There was also a chance that something could go wrong, you never knew what could happen. These two elders were also much stronger than the Silver Spear Sect leader.

“I see that no one wishes to step forward. Let us continue with the banquet then and forget about this little incident.”

The commotion was finally over and the competition continued. The atmosphere was quite tense and people kept looking at Zhang Dong. After the drama was settled he remained seated with the elder from the Divine Fist Sect and his granddaughter. She was allowed to stay here under their supervision.

They continued to silently discuss with each other while the young girl was kept out of the loop. She had enough maturity to know that she didn't have any say in this conversation. She would wait for her grandfather to speak up.

“Here take this.”

Zhang Dong took out a small box and handed it to Fang Heng. The man looked at the item and could feel that it was a complex artifact.

“This is?”

“It’s a beacon, take it to your sect when you return and activate it in a safe location. I will be able to travel directly to you then.”

The item that he was giving the old man was a portable teleporter. He didn’t want to go with them immediately. They didn’t need to give out their plans to their competition, it would be better if they thought he was back at his own sect.

“Hoh... thank you senior.”

The man looked at the artifact and placed it in his spatial ring. The other people could see them but what the item was no one knew. It looked like a square box with some runic designs on it.

“You just need to add some spiritual energy into it with the correct code and it will activate.” Zhang Dong explained how the device worked and also gave Fang Heng the correct code to activate it. There was more than one of them, they were in place to alert him if the one activating the beacon was in trouble.

“Anyway, Fang Meili was it?”

Zhang Dong had finally finished up his conversation with the older man. They had decided on a plan of action and now they just needed to get through this banquet. The competition wasn’t quite over and it would probably take another day for the juniors to finish up with this one.

“Y-yes honorable senior!”

The young girl flinched when her name was called and dropped her head instantly.

“Ah, you can relax. Think your injuries should be healed, does it hurt somewhere?”

Zhang Dong asked while scanning the younger girl with his spiritual sense. The girl just blushed a bit after feeling what the man was doing, his eyes were very deep and mysterious.

“I’m fine senior, you don’t need to worry about me.”

The girl started bowing repeatedly while panicking. It seemed that she wasn’t used to interacting with people like him that much or she was just the shy type.

“That’s fine then, your grandfather and I have discussed a couple of things and one of them concerns you.”

Zhang Dong turned to face Fang Heng. The old man just nodded as he knew that it would be better if it came out of his mouth. She would be returning with Zhang Dong and his people while her grandfather would be going back to his own sect.

With the other factions blowing things out of proportions with their imagination they should be able to return home safely as well. Returning back home was the first thing Zhang Dong was planning to do. His wife was close to giving birth and then he had a squid monster to face off against, this time around he hoped it would be the last time...

Chapter 237

The banquet came to a close. The winner of the competition was a junior member from one of the ten greater sects. It was not the young master that went after Fang Meili's life. After getting repelled by Zhang Dong as he was saving the girl one of the other young masters betrayed him.

This was something only natural, he got stabbed in the back during the whole commotion and no one even knew who was the perpetrator. He wasn't dead but heavily injured and his battle prowess sunk low. If he wasn't from one of the better off sects he would have probably ended up dead.

There of course was a fighting tournament that luckily ended within the day. With the help of pills, the junior members were able to recover their wounds and stamina. This was quite the opportunity for the young warriors but for Zhang Dong it was just boring.

On the third day, it was finally over. The other sects sometimes gave him strange looks but no one took him up on the offer for a fight. If it wasn't for the people from the Divine Fist Sect then he probably would have coasted through this banquet with no incidents at all.

They did give him some valuable information about an old enemy though. He knew that the monster that he would fight wouldn't just pose a threat to him but all the other people in this land. He didn't think that the other sects would help out though. They would only get involved if their factions were directly involved and in danger.

He, on the other hand, saw the bigger picture, if the monster kept creating more abominations from the cultivators it slew then soon the whole empire would be overrun. He saw first hand how the monster could evolve by sucking energies from other living beings when he fought it the first time. He needed to go back to his sect and prepare, maybe even get some of his sect elders involved in the fight.

The senior members from his sect that he brought along didn't get into any trouble. Some of them even managed to make some lesser connections. He left it to them to make some trade deals as they did have many materials they could trade for.

In his dimensional regalia, there were various high level spiritual herbs and even minerals now. The more spiritual energy they inserted into that immortal treasure the larger it became. Somehow all of that energy didn't just dissipate but it combined into the land and created more. Even some pockets of precious metals started popping up for the sect members to mine and use for crafting.

"Well then, I will be off. You should be careful of the Yggdrasil sect, they might try something during your return, activate the beacon if something occurs and I'll come aid you."

Zhang Dong was in the hotel now and talking to Fang Heng. It was time to say their goodbyes.

"Senior Dong, you have already done so much it would be rude for me to demand even more help..."

The old man clasped his fists and did a small bow his granddaughter that was standing behind him did the same.

He was afraid that the old man would be ambushed during his return. The other factions were probably planning such a thing before he got involved. Their speculations didn't mean that they would drop their old plan. However, it was likely that they would make some changes.

He needed them to get that teleportation beacon there. Without it, he would need to make the journey there himself. This would take him through enemy territory and if he was spotted could cause more trouble for him.

He couldn't just transfer himself to places that he had never been to before. All of the teleportation gates he used had their own coordinates. These couldn't be changed, if they were then a person going through one could end up dead.

People weren't sure what exactly happened but they would sometimes get teleported to some random location. This could be inside of a wall or a volcano. If they were less lucky they would never return, lost within the gate, or just being disintegrated into particles.

Zhang Dong deliberated on lending his new ally his flying ship. It would probably be strong enough to protect them from any enemies. He didn't want to endanger his own people too much though or lose a very important asset in enemy territory.

He also couldn't make the journey himself with the old man. He was too worried about his wife and child. It was around that time and it could happen at any moment. He knew that the birth could be very dangerous for both of them, only if he was there to aid Feng Liena would he feel at ease.

"Fine then, take care on your journey and I hope you will make it safely back to your sect."

"You too, Senior. I hope our paths will cross again!"

Fang Heng clasped his hands and turned to his granddaughter. She was next to the two while they were talking so she heard it all. The old man placed his hand on the girl's shoulder and gave her a contemplative look before speaking out.

"Take care of yourself and listen to your senior uncle."

The girl had tears in her eyes while looking at the old man that was slightly smiling. She didn't want to leave and going with this man was a big risk. There wasn't much that she could do though, she was just a lowly junior at the foundation establishment level.

"I... will I ever see you again grandfather?"

Fang Heng looked at his granddaughter and placed his hand on her head.

"Silly child, your grandfather isn't so easy to kill and I've also made a promise with your senior uncle that I will reach our sect!"

He smacked his own chest with some force and then finally parted with Fang Meili. The girl watched as her grandfather flew away towards the ships from the Divine Fist Sect. The other members from her sect followed right after her.

"Young miss, we need to go..."

A female voice called out to Fang Meili. She turned to face this person and saw a girl close to her age. This was one of her maids, she and another one would be coming with her to tend to her needs.

Fang Meili just stood there and looked at the man that had saved her. She still had trouble processing everything that had happened.

The man called Zhang Dong looked at her back. She couldn't tell what he was thinking from his facial features. He was quite the handsome man and if it was any other occasion she would have probably been head over heels for him.

This wasn't the case, she was feeling pathetic for not being able to do anything. Soon her sect where she spent her entire life might not even exist. The only person that could aid them was standing before her. How far he would go to aid them was unknown, her grandfather was putting his trust in Zhang Dong. She couldn't do the same; she was still skeptical of his true motives.

"Fang Meili was it? You're going to glare a hole in my forehead if you continue like that..."

He chuckled slightly while the blond girl opened her eyes widely. She didn't know when but she started rudely staring at him. The moment this fact was revealed one of her maids stepped forward.

"Please have mercy, my lord, the young lady didn't know her place."

She dropped down to her knees and started begging. Fang Heng that was of similar status as this man was now gone. Without him around the maids worried that their young miss could get into trouble by offending Zhang Dong.

The young lady in question started trembling slightly, would she get punished already. Staring at someone as established as this person would be considered a huge offense. Some people took things like etiquette very seriously. In some sects like that she could even be sentenced to death along with her maids.

"Please my lord anything but the young lady, punish me instead!"

"Yes great lord, punish us instead."

She saw her two maids going down to her hands and knees with their heads lowered. These two were servants assigned to her when she was but a child. They were in their 30s and started out as teenage girls. The two girls were very loyal and were even trying to give their own lives away for her.

She couldn't allow this, this was her mistake. Even though she didn't trust this man, he was someone from the older generation. He was someone that her grandfather called a senior. He was clearly lowering himself before this man but she dared to stare at his face for so long.

"No please, punish me instead, my maids didn't do anything wrong, it was my inexperienced senior uncle!"

She followed suit and was now kneeling down. Her head was down and she wasn't even looking up.

Zhang Dong looked down at the girl that he was supposed to take care of. He was trying to ease up the tension with a small joke but the other's took it the wrong way. He as always forgot how these people worked.

For them, it was impossible for someone from the elder generation to be joking around with a junior. Not unless they were related or had some kind master-disciple relationship.

He just stood there shocked at the display, soon the three girls were kneeling. The elders that were behind him didn't help either as in their eyes this was an obvious offense. Some of them even looked like they were unwilling to let this pass.

"Such rudeness, is this how you should act around someone that saved your life?"

The one walking was Zhang Dong's great grandmother and also his wife's. She looked quite maddened by the fact that this girl had the audacity to stare at the sect leader with such irritation. The other oldies that were very much people that followed old traditions just nodded. From their point of view, the young woman would have to be punished in some way.

Before that could happen and this whole situation got out of hand Zhang Dong raised his hand up. A golden aura surrounded the three kneeling females and moved them all back to their feet.

"That's enough. You lot should knock it off, we don't have time for this and those are our guests. I promised her grandfather that I will take care of them, she is also my niece, so show some respect. Now let us depart!"

He surrounded everyone with his aura and started flying towards the Argonaut. He knew that if he let that continue for much longer that something bad could happen. One of the maids would probably try to end her life to appease the big bad elders from the United Element Sect. She would even think that her life would be well spent by offering it to the senior members.

"Relax, I have promised to your grandfather that I would protect you. You don't need to kneel and I would like you to refrain from doing such things in the future."

Zhang Dong said while they quickly flew towards that giant battleship that was waiting for them. The three women could only stare at each other without being able to react. The Argonaut was still hovering outside the city grounds. It stuck out like a sore thumb due to its massive size and strange design. For the time being there was a shield around it as some people did try to enter it. They were promptly blasted away into the stratosphere.

"Also don't worry about your grandfather, he won't die so easily."

It was time to return, if it would be smooth sailing on the way back it was hard to tell. For one thing, there was still the problem of the two sect armadas that had escorted him here. After the fiasco that happened back at the banquet, he wasn't sure if they would just let him go back home that easily.

Chapter 238

Fang Meili and her two servants were now flying through the air. They had apparently overreacted a moment ago and this man didn't seem as stuck up as some other nascent soul masters.

This wasn't the big surprising part though. They all were from the Divine Fist Sect and all of them practiced some form of divine arts. These arts harnessed holy energies from the world to power their techniques.

The golden shield that Zhang Dong surrounded them with was of very pure holy energy. The group of girls was at quite low level compared to this senior member. But even they could feel how pure and how powerful this energy was.

All of them knew that if you wished to have such a pure aura around yourself you had to be a good person. Fang Meili had witnessed the divine aura of her grandfather and some other elders before. This one was far more pure and gentle than that, it showed her that this man was probably someone trustworthy. Someone that was evil or malicious could not produce something like this.

If someone killed a lot of people their killing aura would seep out one way or the other. A life of slaughter would also impede a person's progress in the divine arts. You had to keep your soul clear of unnecessary negative emotions if you wanted to progress in them.

This was also why this purity of holy energies was mind-boggling. Normally even the grand elders from her sect would have at least one or two negative thoughts. These would delude their divine aura and lessen its power. Zhang Dong on the other hand didn't seem to have such an impurity in his aura. Either he was a saint or there was some other secret to why he was so pure.

Fang Meili was far too stressed the first time she met this man. Her grandfather also instantly blocked out other people from infecting her with their spiritual energy. She didn't have the time to process the information.

Now, she was slightly more reassured in going with this uncle of hers. She did even recall one of her grandmother's having some kind of love affair hundred of years ago. Maybe this man was related to that love affair.

"Get ready, we will be living immediately towards our sect grounds and we won't be waiting for the other sects to escort us back!"

The girl was brought back to reality by her new uncle's deep voice. The other sect members that consisted of old men and women nodded with agreement. One of them that had really dark skin then spoke up.

"I agree, the Patriarch from the Limitless Sword Society didn't look pleased, they might try to force our hand."

The girl frowned when she recalled the man in question. Zhan Jie was the leader of that sect, they were also part of the group that was chasing after her in the labyrinth. One of their members even landed a strike on her leg that caused an injury. She swore that in the future she would have her revenge, she just needed to get stronger.

In a matter of moments, they all left the city. They were flying through the air and in a flash arrived in front of a strange-looking flying object. The golden-haired girl and her servants went wide-eyed at the sheer size of this thing.

It was a lot larger than the ship that they came in and looked to be made from metal. Some strange buzzing sounds were coming out of it and even the girls could see a large number of cannons poking out from everywhere.

The barrier that the ship had opened up a small circular hole through that all of them flew through. Zhang Dong's barrier kept things like G-force outside so anyone inside wouldn't feel sick.

All of them finally landed on the deck and were greeted by the ship's captain. The man gave some kind of strange salute. He was also wearing unusual clothes and a strange looking hat. The young lady and her maids kept looking around, everything looked new and mysterious to them.

"Report!"

Zhang Dong called out while the man that was the captain nodded.

"Yes sir! We have remained on high alert, some of the sects tried testing our defenses but as instructed we retaliated accordingly!"

"Good, anything else?"

The girls just remained staring there, no one moved from their spots while the man in charge was speaking.

"The Limitless Sword Society ships have surrounded us from all sides and have been watching our movements since two days ago. The Demon Subduing sect and the Dragon Gate Sect have remained neutral and they have even begun pulling their ships away after your arrival."

The Dragon Gate Sect and the Demon Subduing Sect didn't seem like they were willing to tussle with Zhang Dong's faction after his power move during the banquet. There were too many unanswered questions for those two to interfere.

"Dragon Gate... even though they were the ones inviting us here, we didn't get much time to talk..."

Zhang Dong said while tapping his finger against his thigh.

"Don't worry Patriarch, me and the elders have managed to talk business while you were busy. We will bring the paperwork to you later as the Dragon Gate sect is willing to do business with us!"

One of the old men jumped in while clasping his hands together. The girl just listened while trying to figure this United Element Sect out.

From her point of view, their leader was really strong but his people didn't look that imposing. They were just a bunch of old men and women in the core formation stage. It didn't look like they would be making the jump towards the nascent soul stage either.

The flying ship on the other hand looked like a technological marvel. She could feel that it was a heavenly treasure but how strong it really was compared to the other flying vessels was still to be seen.

"Hm, we should talk about this inside..."

Zhang Dong said while looking to Fang Meili. The girl lowered her head slightly while still being a bit scared.

"Take these three to the guest cabin, treat them well, and don't let anything happen to them. The rest of you return to your stations, we will be returning home at full speed..."

The man said before turning around. His long white hair slightly bounced around as he made his getaway.

Fang Meili and her servants were guided through the metal monstrosity. On their way to their cabin, they could see United Element Sect members rushing around. They were wearing strange militaristic type uniforms and seemed somewhat organized. She didn't recognize anything that they were carrying but she somehow knew that it was related to weapons.

One of the crew members let them inside a certain cabin. It was quite large and looked like a hotel suite. Inside the spiritual energy was high and they could even see food placed on one of the tables. There were several beds in this room along with windows through which they could see the scenery outside. Only after the person that took them here left did the girls speak out.

"Young lady, we need to be careful, that senior looks benevolent but it might be a trick!"

One of the maids said while the other nodded with approval.

Fang Meili moved toward one of the tables. There was a juicy looking apple just there, she took it into her hand and then took a large bite out of the fruit.

"You two are worrying too much, not like we can do anything about it. I've promised grandfather that I would follow ... my Uncle to his sect..."

She paused before referring to Zhang Dong as an uncle. Everything was still surreal and she was still digesting this whole situation.

"Not like we could do anything about it... you've seen it... "

Fang Meili dropped down onto the largest bed and looked up at the ceiling. Her maids moved closer but knew what their young missy meant. Not like they could run away, even if they got outside this ship there was no place for them to go.

The other sects had already figured out that their Divine Fist Sect was weakened. If it wasn't for Zhang Dong, Fang Meili would already be dead.

"I owe that man... uncle Dong my life... I will wait and see... he said that I shouldn't worry and that I will meet my grandfather again...someone with such a pure divine aura shouldn't be a bad person..."

The two maids also nodded at that point. That senior did have an unusual divine source to himself. It was above anything that these three women had ever seen, far above any elder from their own sect that they knew.

Before the three could get comfortable a red light started flashing in their room and they could feel that the ship started to move.

"Code red, Code red... Everyone is to proceed to the battle stations."

The

Announcement

was loud and the whole flying ship started shaking violently. The girls looked at each other in surprise. They didn't have time to even fully sit down and now there was some kind of problem.

All of them moved towards one of the windows that let them see the outside. They could see three large more traditional looking ships flying their way.

“Is that the Limitless Sword Society emblem?”

“Those bastards want to attack us!”

The two maids cried out in fright. They were very much scared of that bloodthirsty sect. From what they knew it was one of the more ruthless ones. The people from that faction were known for their love for battle. They always liked to make their swords do the talking instead of bargaining or going for a compromise. They along with the Yggdrasil Sect were their biggest enemies.

“Calm down you two, look at that...”

Fang Meili pointed towards the three ships coming their way. They weren’t getting closer instead it looked like they were slowly getting left behind. This ship that they were flying in was slowly picking up the pace and leaving those smaller ones behind.

“How fast are we going?”

“Was it always that easy to run away?”

From what the girls knew flying ships of that size weren’t the fastest. Even as a heaven graded item the sheer size made the whole vessel slower.

But there they were, leaving the other flying ships in the dust. The trio continued to look outside the window and they could see more ships appearing. They continued their chase but it didn’t look like they would be catching up anytime soon. It really looked like their group would be making a clean getaway. That was before they felt a rumble and then saw the protective barrier flickering.

The girl’s cabin was in the back of the ship so they couldn’t see what was happening in the front. They could see the shield flickering multiple times which probably meant that they were getting attacked by something. The ships that were left in the dust also started catching up.

The alarm kept ringing and it looked like the members from the United Element Sect would be getting involved in the fight.

Fang Meili couldn’t just sit around in this room without any information. She decided to peek outside and luckily the door to her cabin remained open. There were also no guards around to push her back in.

“Young lady you mustn’t! We were told to stay here, it might be dangerous outside!”

The maids ran after their young miss that decided to go outside. She remembered from where they arrived and it didn’t take her long to reach the area outside. The ship crew was far too busy with their own assignments so there was no one to stop this trio from snooping around.

The moment she was outside she could see it. There were multiple burning flying ships around them along with cultivators on swords. There was a full-blown aerial battle taking place and explosions were happening everywhere.

“Face me, Zhang Dong!”

A booming voice was heard by her and brought her attention to the sky.

“You are even dumber than I had anticipated!”

She saw the man that brought her here. He was floating directly above the flying ship with a sword in hand. His opponent was the sect leader from the Limitless Sword Society. With him there were two more nascent soul elders, it looked like her savior was outnumbered.

Chapter 239

The United Element's Sect's flagship had left towards their sect grounds. The cultivators that had escorted them here were less than stellar about them leaving. The Argonaut just sped away leaving the three ships that were chasing them behind.

Zhang Dong had hoped that with his ship's enhanced speed he could just safely return home with haste. This wouldn't be that easy though as a certain person was already waiting for his arrival.

It was a classical ambush with multiple flying ships waiting for them. The people that were here were from the Limitless Sword Society without the aid of any other faction. The ships from the Demon Subduing Sect didn't seem to be there anymore. Probably their leaders decided to evade this battle after the strange happenings during the banquet. It seemed that Zhan Jie had other plans for the United Element Sect.

Even though there was only one faction here, Zhan Jie wasn't the only nascent soul master that arrived. There were two other people floating slightly behind him and both of them radiated nascent soul might.

Zhang Dong was standing around in the ship's bridge. The whole crew from the ship was looking at the screens and they could see the ships that they left in the dust closing in.

“Those two behind him are only early stage masters, can I leave them to you, Captain?”

He asked while looking at the rough-looking cultivator. The man looked like an old fisherman, his skin was tanned and his face looked scratched up. He also had an eyepatch over his eye and Zhang Dong totally didn't only choose him for his looks to be the ship's captain. He had some skills to back up that look of his.

“Leave it to us, Patriarch! The Argonaut is more than enough for the likes of them!”

Zhang Dong nodded while moving outside, before leaving he just gave one last order.

“You are free to remove the limiter, use the main cannon if you have to.”

The man just saluted, the whole flying ship started buzzing. It was time for everyone to head to the battle stations.

Outside Zhang Dong could see canons rising up and appearing on the main deck. These were all manned by train cultivators and all could fire condensed spirit bullets.

Those cannons were already large in scope but they all paled compared to the monster that was hiding inside. The ship's main cannon would only be activated when it was required, the power drain was quite staggering.

While the whole ship was transforming the enemy cultivators weren't passive. The leader from the other sect started shouting out the moment he noticed that Zhang Dong was leaving the confines of his ship.

"There you are, face me Zhang Dong!"

He looked over to the man, he already had his sword unsheathed and pointed at his head. He wasn't sure what this guy was thinking, he should know better. He himself had already proven himself in the arena and given the chance didn't think he would lose to this guy.

"You are even dumber than I had anticipated. Are those two behind you your backup plan? I guess you are at least smart enough to get some help."

Zhan Jie went red in the face while the two elders behind him moved closer.

"I don't need their help to take care of someone like you! Elders destroy that ship and bring me that woman, I need to hear the truth from her!"

Zhang Dong realized this man's genius plan. He probably thought that he was indeed part of the Divine Fist Sect.

The only worry that Matt had now was if the person from the Yggdrasil Sect was as daring as this guy here. He was one thing, but that old man wouldn't be able to go against a late stage cultivator. Though without him activating the teleportation beacon he wouldn't be able to help him.

For now, he had to worry about himself first. He was still up against three nascent soul cultivators. This reminded him of the fight against the Dark Palm Sect. That time he was lured into a trap and almost killed due to ignoring the weaker cultivators. This time around he would be more careful, he also wasn't alone, he had some backup.

Even before the fight could start the massive Argonaut gave out a strange sound. It started radiating energy and the cultivators around the area could feel it rising. The seemingly low graded heavenly treasure started giving out telltale signs of a middle graded one. It also didn't seem to be stopping just there as the power levels continued to rise.

"Well then, I hope those two can take care of themselves..."

Zhang Dong smirked while his sword appeared in his hand. Lightning covered his body and he just shot forward, his sword strike was met by Zhan Jie that was forced back while his fellow sect elders looked on with horror. They couldn't follow Zhang Dong's speedy movements at all.

As they turned around to aid their leader they were met with another problem. A barrage of Qi bullets flew right towards them as the massive flying ship started attacking. The Argonaut 1 wasn't just aiming for the two nascent soul targets, it was aiming for every ship in the area.

The two fast-moving human targets managed to dodge in time but that wasn't true for the slow-moving ships. Their shields weren't strong enough to resist the concentrated fire and they started exploding. The cultivators inside started to quickly abandon their ships as they escaped outside.

"How could this be..."

The two nascent soul masters found themselves dodging a barrage of fast-moving projectiles. They could feel that if they got hit by one of them they would be in serious trouble.

This meant that other people below their realm stood absolutely no chance. All of their ships returned fire, the core formation experts that were flying around did the same but the massive metal behemoth remained in place. Its shields lasted through the combined retaliation attack and the ship remained undamaged.

The massive fortress of the ship started to move, its guns firing in all directions. The smaller enemy vessels stood no chance. Their firepower and even their maneuverability was lower than this mass of metal that kicked up a storm like winds whenever it moved.

It wasn't quite a one-sided slaughter though, the enemy cultivators still had two nascent soul masters on their side. These two old men stood together and started shielding some of the ships from the cannon fire. The Argonaut was good at hitting large slow-moving targets but when it came to small human-sized ones it wasn't as accurate.

It soon turned into a battle of attrition where the massive ship continuously fired at the core formation and nascent soul cultivators that were dodging everything they could. The people from the Limitless Sword Society were quite good at flying on their swords. Which was the cause for prolonging this battle.

While the whole area turned into a bright light show, further up in the clouds two men were facing off against each other.

Zhang Jie and Zhang Dong started colliding in mid-air. Their sword attacks rained down against each other like a torrent of water. Each time they clashed they produced a booming sound that broke the sound barrier apart.

The shockwaves created from these clashes were periodically pushing the clouds they were fighting to the side. After a couple of exchanges, both of them flew back, both of them didn't suffer even a little nick

"Is this all?"

Zhan Jie snorted as this was more of just a prelude to what was to come. It was normal for two fighters to measure their skill level by exchanging some blows. These weren't meant to kill but just to get a grasp of your opponent.

"I should be saying the same thing, if that was it... it would be better if you just turned around. I'm really not someone that likes to bully weaker people, you can turn around and our sects can still coexist with one another."

Zhang Dong spoke out while looking at his opponent. He knew that people like this Zhan Jie didn't react well to taunts like this. In this situation, though it wasn't a taunt, he didn't feel like he was weaker in any shape or form. He would let this transgression be and even let them keep their lives if they just left.

"Coexist? Turn around? Are you mad! You should be the one groveling and asking for forgiveness, that fool from the Yggdrasil Sect might be wary of your motives but this Zhan Jie never flees from a good fight! You will fall to my sword like everyone that came before you!"

Zhang Dong just started spacing out after his opponent started giving him a long speech. At least he got some information out of it. Apparently, the leader of that other sect had told this guy to not engage.

This meant that they were probably unwilling to act just yet. Fang Heng's chances of survival had increased as they would probably not chase them after he left. The Limitless Sword Society leader was here so the old man should have a clear path home. That is unless there isn't another battle happy sect leader after them.

"Fine, have it your way. I might have been lenient with your types in the past but too many lives are at stake. Let us get this over with."

Zhang Dong gave out a sigh while Zhan Jie started fuming with anger. He waved his hand and his spatial ring was activated. In a matter of seconds, thousands upon thousands of white swords were hovering around the sword cultivator.

"I will show you why they call us the Limitless Sword Society!"

There were swords everywhere, they circled around the whole area and slowly started taking the shape of something. Zhang Dong wasn't passive though, he also activated his spatial ring and a couple of swords shot out, eleven to be exact.

He let go of the sword he was holding on to and the dozen blades placed themselves around his body. They paled in comparison to the huge mass of metal that finally took on the shape of a lotus flower with Zhan Jie in the middle.

The opponent in the white robe was surrounded by what looked to be a mass of metal. There were so many of those swords that they made the lotus flower have solid mass. It wasn't an illusion it was a giant flower made from swords.

With a wave of his finger, one of the huge silver flower petals parted from the sword formation. It gently floated as if it was getting carried by the wind but in a matter of seconds, it shot forward. Thousands upon thousands of blades rained down on Zhang Dong, each one of them infused with the man's nascent soul aura.

A dozen blades that were surrounding the sect leader from the United Element Sect sprung into action instantly. They started spinning and circling around his entire body while deflecting the rain of swords. The sound of metal clashing against metal at supersonic speeds couldn't even be heard.

Zhan Jie's had a smirk on his face after sending his first petal down. Soon it started contorting in the opposite direction as he saw that all of his swords were getting deflected. The twelve weapons that the man produced were somehow able to deflect or slice them apart. Not even a single strand of his hair was being damaged.

"How could this be..."

"What? Do you think even one of those earth grade blades can scratch one of my heaven grade blades? You think I didn't notice that you only have a few heaven grade ones hidden in there..."

Zhan Jie's forehead started showing quite a thick vein before he waved his finger again. Another two petals parted from the lotus flower and shot forward. Their aim to kill the man that wasn't even moving from his place.

Chapter 240

Zhan Jie's facial expression was mixed. He was standing in the middle of his Limitless Lotus Sword Formation that his sword sect was known for. It was the pinnacle of their power and it was a technique that brought them countless victories.

The look of confusion and anger was directed at his opponent Zhang Dong. The man that he was facing didn't move from that one spot for the entire time he unleashed his technique. The thousands of swords that he was utilizing were being repelled by just twelve blades. These blades danced around at speeds that even he had trouble following.

"This can't be possible..."

He shook with indignation while moving both his hands forward. Like a conductor directing a symphony, he started moving them around at a fast pace. The shiny silver lotus flower petals that were made from his swords started flying forward.

This technique was supposed to slowly wear down the opponent's defenses while drowning them in sword intent. But whatever he threw at Zhang Dong the man didn't seem to be moving from the spot he was standing in. It was as if the technique that he had spent countless years on honing was useless.

This was something that he couldn't just let be, his pride didn't allow it. All of the silver petals were utilized at the same time. The sheer concentration required to control this many flying swords was something noteworthy.

Zhang Dong managed to bounce or shatter every incoming sword with ease. His opponent wasn't willing to give him room for breathing as he saw a mass of swords getting in position around him.

The sky was blocked out by the shiny silver metallic blades. It looked like a million weapons were pointed straight at his head while he only had twelve to defend himself with. Even while looking at all of those he didn't falter and just kept his gaze at the person controlling them.

Zhan Jie without missing a beat swung his hand forward as if pointing his army of swords to go get this enemy. The blades reacted by simultaneously charging forward at sound breaking speed. They were thousands of small jet planes on a collision course.

Zhang Dong's aura exploded as he activated his defensive formation that only consisted of a dozen blades. These sharp treasures were clearly superior to the ones that were coming this way.

But they were like a large tree against a tsunami, would they still be standing after the massive wave of blades hit?

"Your sword intent is strong but it won't be enough! Now die!"

Zhan Jie shouted out while confident in his victory. Each blade that he sent had his sword intent included in it. This was the crystallization of all his knowledge and life as a swordmaster. How could a pseudo swordmaster like the one he was fighting against here be his match? Before the mass of edges

infused with spiritual energy and the dao of the sword, Zhan Jie felt a jolt run through his entire being. He wasn't the only one affected as the descending blades also trembled. It was as if they were going up against a superior predator.

"What?... no how could this be..."

Zhan Jie's eyes went wide and he almost got a heart attack. What he saw was something that he didn't think was possible.

Sword intent was a fabled state of mastery over the sword. A swordsman that had mastered it could even produce sword energies that could slice apart opponents.

This wasn't the pinnacle of swordsmanship, there was another fabled stage that surpassed this. There was close to no one that had reached that stage in many thousands of years. The ones that did were just a few and mostly hidden away as the sect reserves as they were hidden grandmasters.

The Limitless Sword Society leader could hear something akin to a heartbeat coming out of his opponent's twelve blades. This sound resonated outside and affected his large flying sword formation quite drastically.

The twelve swords charged forward releasing massive surges of blade energies outwards. The moment this wave of dao connected with the large mass of metallic blades a giant explosion occurred.

Zhan Jie flinched while flying back, all of his swords started trembling and slowly cracks were appearing on all of them. The ones that were closest to Zhang Dong just shattered instantly as they met their match.

"S-sword Heart!"

Six of the swords that were hovering around Zhang Dong's body broke out from the formation. The haven grade treasures were bathed in golden light that included sword intent and sword heart. The radiation of these energies could be felt by every cultivator in the area which caused them to stop.

The core formation experts from the sect that was attacking the Argonaut were shocked. Their flying swords started trembling as if they wanted to flee from this place. The blades of these practitioners had something like an instinct.

Weapons above the earth grade started getting something akin to a spirit. It would only fully awaken when they reached the heaven grade. But even now the tiny not fully formed primal souls in these blades were crying out in despair. They wanted to flee or swear allegiance to the person that was able to use sword heart.

The people on the Argonaut 1 were also surprised. It wasn't often that their sect leader showed off his skills. They had no idea that his mastery of the sword had reached this high. They felt proud, their grand leader was a sword grandmaster, a fabled existence in the whole empire.

The person that was up against him started retreating. The lotus flowers that were shining brightly while reflecting the sunlight started shattering into tiny fragments. The six swords continued to bulldoze through them, chopping them apart into tiny fragments.

Zhan Jie received a big hit to his stamina. This formation was very taxing on his cultivation, with the destruction of his blades he was getting weaker and weaker with every passing moment.

He wasn't even able to retrieve his massive collection of blades that took him hundreds of years to procure. The swords just trembled in the air as his enemy's sword heart overwhelmed the sword intent that he had mastered to its pinnacle.

He was still unwilling to surrender or run. This sword formation was only one of his techniques and he didn't feel like this was over yet.

The man clasped his hands together and his whole body started glowing white. A roar of a dragon was soon heard after as it flew up into the sky, Zhan Jie on its head with his main sword in hand.

Zhang Dong didn't remain passive either. His body turned to gold as a similar massive beast shout could be heard in the surrounding area. His massive golden dragon soul-beast was summoned instantly to clash against the other one.

Zhan Jie was also in the possession of a dragon type soul-beast. His was a classical eastern dragon that looked more like a serpent with deer antlers and silver scales.

The two beasts clashed in the sky against each other. The clouds were pushed apart and the earth trembled below as the two masters collided with each other.

The people from the two opposing sects halted their advance while backing away. The two nascent soul elders that were going against the ship looked up while evading cannon fire.

They could feel that their leader was losing. His sword formation was already broken and shattered weapon pieces were raining down from the sky above.

The two looked at each other and nodded. While backing away they also brought out their own soul-beasts. Instead of attacking the ship with them they turned around and flew upwards. They decided to help their sect master with the fight while their beasts kept the massive ship busy.

They were underestimating the flying behemoth too much. This was just what the captain of the Argonaut was waiting for. The moment they were summoning their soul-beasts was the moment that he gave the order.

"Activate the Gungnir! Aim for the soul-beasts!"

The massive ship's deck started spreading apart. On its bow, a large compartment was opening up. something that looked like a cannon was pushing itself outside while the machinery made space. The cannon didn't have a traditional circular barrel, it had a pentagon shape instead.

The cannon appeared outside and was already gathering power for the shot. The spiritual energy was making the air outside warp. Many tiny blue lights converged onto the canon's opening as it charged up for its attack.

"W-what is that... watch out brother!"

The two nascent soul elders finally noticed that something was off. They were concentrating on creating their soul-beasts and allowed the ship to power up its main cannon.

Just as the two large creatures were formed the cannon was also ready.

“Charge at 76% captain.”

“Doesn’t matter, take aim and fire!”

The person in charge of the new weapon grabbed what looked to be a joystick in hand. He was looking at a screen, this screen was showing him the scenery outside. There were a couple of circular indicators lining up and when they locked on one of the beasts the man pressed the button.

A strange sound escaped from the cannon right before it was activated. A giant spear of blue light shot forward, in a fraction of a second it was already at where the target was. The nascent soul masters that were there gathered up their energies in the hopes of producing a shield.

Everything was bathed in blue light and the people that were standing outside of the blast point were blinded. A massive ear shattering explosion occurred, the spot where the two soul-beasts were in looked as if it was on fire. It looked like a small blue sun appeared and was destroying everything in its path.

From inside that blue sun, strange screams and shrieks were heard. The two soul beasts didn’t have enough time to escape and took the brunt of this massive attack.

The Gungnir Cannon’s muzzle let out some smoke after it was fired, tiny electrical discharges bathed the bow of the ship. People could clearly follow the path of this cannon’s attack, right to the explosion.

After the dust had settled, the two massive soul beasts remained missing. They were turned to fine particles and their masters suffered a large backlash. If a person’s soul-beast died the cultivator would take direct damage to their own soul. Sometimes this was even fatal if the connection between master and beast was strong.

The two old men’s fighting potential fell by more than fifty percent. They cough up massive amounts of blood while escaping. They weren’t even thinking about helping their sect leader anymore, now their own lives were on the line.

This was a giant hit to the morale of this sword sect. Two of their masters were fleeing while being severely injured. What was left was a group of core formation cultivators that couldn’t hope in defending themselves against this massive flying ship. The only thing that could turn the tide was their sect leader.

All of them quickly looked up, their leader was still up there fighting Zhang Dong. What they witnessed was another brow raiser.

An even brighter flash of light followed by the parting of the clouds. It was as if the heavens were being cut apart.

This wasn’t their master performing this terrible swordmaster technique. This was the man from the United Element’s sect instead. On the receiving end was Zhan Jie.

He didn’t know how this could have happened but it did. His eyes were moving apart from one another at this very moment. It was as if he was becoming wider but in reality, he was sliced right in the middle.

His body was severed from head to groin and his body was parting to the sides. Even at this moment of death, he couldn't process what exactly he witnessed. His vision was blurring and the last thing he saw was a man bathed in golden energy. The man didn't look glad over his victory at all. The only emotion that could describe it, was pity.