

Doctor 1301

Chapter 1301: The Four Women in Black Dresses Reappear

In the following several days, Fang Bai devoted himself to healing Li Chenzhou in the deep pits of the underground Essence Stone Vein.

If it were his peak condition from his past life, it would have been effortless for Fang Bai to save a person still clinging to a thread of life. But at this moment, he was still far from reaching the Cultivation Level of the Innate Realm and he had little confidence in fully healing Li Chenzhou; he could only try his best.

The main purpose of Fang Bai trying to heal Li Chenzhou was to learn the exact location of the Teleportation Array leading to the three thousand great worlds from him.

According to the information within the Divine Sense of the "Lover's Tears" jade pendant, Fang Bai knew that before Li Chenzhou entered this deep underground mining area for cultivation, he had also searched for the Teleportation Array to the three thousand great worlds, and seemed to have some clues.

The three thousand great worlds, which is the Cultivation World, was where Fang Bai was born and where he cultivated in his past life. It was from there that he started, ascended to the Immortal Realm, and ultimately achieved the position of the Immortal Emperor.

Between different planes, travel is only possible via Teleportation Arrays established by strong and mighty beings. Hence, only by finding the location of the Teleportation Array in the True Martial Realm is it possible to unlock the gate from the three thousand minor worlds to the three thousand great worlds.

However, the Teleportation Array connecting the three thousand minor worlds to the three thousand great worlds is bound to be much more secretive than the one from the Secular World to the three thousand minor worlds, and it is an incredible challenge to locate it, with difficulties hundreds of times greater.

Even if a Martial Artist were to find the Teleportation Array, whether it can be successfully activated is another major issue.

To activate the Teleportation Array, not only does one need a huge amount of high-rank Essence Stones, one must also be proficient in Formations; both are indispensable.

However, for Fang Bai, the only real challenge was how to find the exact location of the Teleportation Array; as long as he could find it, with his abilities from his past life, activating the Teleportation Array would be as easy as flipping his hand.

Therefore, when Fang Bai discovered that Li Chenzhou still had a sliver of life force, he decided to do everything in his power to heal him.

Although the healing process might be long and consume a great deal of Essence Energy, Fang Bai felt that it would all be worth it if he could awaken Li Chenzhou.

Xia Chenyu saw Fang Bai sitting in front of Li Chenzhou, with his left palm radiating a faint Green Glow close to his chest and his right palm surrounded by a dark glow pressed against Li Chenzhou's Qi Sea. She understood that the Green Glow was Wood Element Qi that could stimulate vitality and the dark glow was Water Element Qi with healing properties.

The Wood Element Qi and Water Element Qi enveloped in Fang Bai's palms were extremely pure and unmatched by any other elemental energies in the world.

Xia Chenyu knew that to awaken Li Chenzhou, Fang Bai had even resorted to using the Chaos Origin Energy within his Qi Sea.

Chaos Origin Energy is a multicolored Essence Energy condensed in the Qi Sea after Fang Bai refined various types of Essence Energy absorbed into his body thousands of times.

While Chaos Origin Energy has miraculous effects, once consumed, it is not easy to recover. Fang Bai's willingness to use Chaos Origin Energy to heal Li Chenzhou showed his extreme importance to Li Chenzhou.

At this moment, Fang Bai had entered into a selfless state, using Wood Element Qi to stimulate Li Chenzhou's faintly pulsing heart meridians, providing them with strong momentum, and using Water

Element Qi to heal Li Chenzhou's damaged Qi Sea and internal meridians. By doing both, he attempted to awaken Li Chenzhou.

Xia Chenyu, having nothing to do on the side, simply sat down cross-legged again and began to Circulate her Cultivation Technique to practice cultivation.

Without Fang Bai's help, Xia Chenyu, with her strength, would not have been able to stay long in this unbearably hot and high-temperature location. But Fang Bai had earlier taken out the Water Ice Crystal from the Spatial Ring and handed it to her. With the Water Ice Crystal in hand, the dense and intense Fire Primordial Qi in the deep pit could not threaten Xia Chenyu.

Water Ice Crystal is a water-attribute treasure that Fang Bai acquired in the Secular World, which can perfectly counter the invasion of Fire Primordial Qi. Xia Chenyu gripped the Water Ice Crystal tightly in her hand, and the Water Element Qi it released pushed away the Fire Primordial Qi surrounding her body by several yards, forming a cool and serene world centered on her body.

After making all preparations, Xia Chenyu intentionally opened a gap in the Water Element Qi defense formed by the Water Ice Crystal. Then, the surrounding Fire Primordial Qi was absorbed into her body like trickling streams, not too intense and within the tolerable range of her Qi Sea and internal meridians.

Immersed in cultivation, Xia Chenyu was completely absorbed and lost track of time.

As the Fire Primordial Qi inside her body continued to accumulate, Xia Chenyu felt the signs of breaking through to the next level once again and was secretly overjoyed.

As for Fang Bai, he was only focused on exerting all his efforts to awaken Li Chenzhou, and had forgotten about his agreement with Manor Master Huang Canghai of the Golden Crow Manor to jointly expel the tens of thousands of martial artists gathered at the border of the Eternal Death Zone.

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Several days later, at the edge of the Eternal Death Zone, the number of people on the Martial Artists Alliance side had already surpassed two hundred thousand.

Meanwhile, the number of disciples on the Golden Crow Manor side was also increasing, but it was only around twenty thousand, with the gap in numbers between them and the Martial Artists Alliance side growing wider and wider.

The Martial Artists Alliance side, holding an overwhelming advantage in both numbers and overall strength, had an increasing number of martial artists provocatively crossing the middle line of the buffer zone every day.

"A storm is brewing!"

Elder Shi Cheng, standing atop the makeshift fortress outside the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein, listened to the continuous reports from the manor's disciples about the situation ahead, and his face grew somber as he thought to himself.

"Senior Fang and Chenyu have entered the underground Essence Stone Mine, and it's already been several days. I wonder why they have not come out yet..."

Shi Cheng thought of Fang Bai and Xia Chenyu, turned his head to look at the entrance to the Essence Stone Mine, and said with a frown, his expression tinged with worry.

"In that deep pit underneath the Essence Stone Mine, the temperature is incredibly high. Could something have happened to them?"

"That shouldn't be the case, right? Senior Fang's strength is on par with Manor Huang's..."

"But even Manor Huang couldn't possibly stay down in the deep pit of the Essence Stone Mine for several days!"

"Should I go down and check on the situation?"

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The higher-ups of the Golden Crow Manor, including Yu Huang, spoke one after another.

After a moment of contemplation, Shi Cheng said to Yu Huang, "Elder Yu, please go down and take a look... If you see Senior Fang, tell him that the Martial Artists Alliance has been frequently mobilizing today and may launch a large-scale attack at any moment, asking him to come out and defend together. After all, he also has a share in this Essence Stone Mine."

Yu Huang nodded, turned around to leap down the fortress, and headed to the bottom of the Essence Stone Mine to investigate.

Just then, four dark shadows appeared in the distance, entering the field of view of Shi Cheng and the others on the fortress, and with a speed indiscernible to the naked eye, shot towards their direction.

"A formidable enemy has emerged! Elder Yu, come back!"

Shi Cheng's gaze was fixed on the four fast-approaching dark shadows, he called out loudly.

Shi Cheng was a Universe Level high-rank expert; anyone he called a formidable enemy was at least at the same level of strength as he was. Yu Huang, upon hearing this, was startled and put the search for Fang Bai and Xia Chenyu out of his mind, turning back to rejoin Shi Cheng's side.

Yu Huang stood on the fortress, and as far as his eyes could reach, he saw four slim, bright-eyed, pearly-teethed young girls in black dresses, about sixteen or seventeen years old, coming towards them in two rows. Their black hair fluttered, their skirts billowed, and in the blink of an eye, they were near the fortress.

Chapter 1302: Not Simple, But Stupid!

"They are four Universe Level high-rank powerhouses!"

"They look exactly alike, must be twin sisters, right?"

"They must be under twenty years old."

"Such young and strong martial artists are rare throughout the entire True Martial Realm!"

"To my knowledge, no first-grade sect in the True Martial Realm has such talented disciples."

"Could they be disciples from an Innate Sect?"

"If the Innate Sects get involved in this matter, that would be troublesome!"

"It's not necessarily the case, let's wait and see..."

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Shi Cheng and the other high-ranking members of the Golden Crow Manor, watching the four young women in black dresses appear under the fortress, murmured among themselves with both shock and worry in their hearts.

The four young women in black dresses, hailing from the Martial Artists Alliance's side, obviously coveted the Essence Stone Vein, and as such, were naturally considered rivals by Shi Cheng and the others from the Golden Crow Manor.

The four young women in black dresses, wearing identical outfits, were clearly from the same sect. Despite there being only four of them, their strength was unimaginably powerful, enough to match the thousands of ragtag troops of the Martial Artists Alliance.

Although Shi Cheng and the other high-ranking members of the Golden Crow Manor did not want to associate the four young women in black dresses with the Innate Sects, it seemed that only the Innate Sects could nurture such young yet outstanding disciples in the whole True Martial Realm.

Those under twenty years old who were Universe Level high-rank powerhouses made even a warrior like Shi Cheng, who had only reached such a realm after living over a hundred years, feel utterly ashamed, thinking that perhaps only Senior Fang Bai, who had entered the Essence Stone Mine, could overpower these four young women in black dresses.

The four young women had tender, fair skin, rosy lips, and bright white teeth; their large, clear eyes, slightly upturned long eyelashes, and their innocent and dazed expressions made them seem extremely adorable.

These four girls were none other than Rou Fu, Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, and Rou Ling, the sisters who had previously stood up for Fang Bai and others in Divine Fire Town.

Rou Fu and her sisters had come from Divine Fire Town for the Essence Stone Vein as well; they arrived later than Fang Bai and others and had not met them. Otherwise, given their personalities, they would have most likely followed Fang Bai and Xia Chenyu through the buffer zone and into the Golden Crow Manor territory earlier.

"Hey, disciples of the Golden Crow Manor above, we are here to snatch the Essence Stone Vein!"

"You better leave quickly, as we four sisters are quite formidable!"

"If you don't leave, we'll have to start driving you out!"

"In the True Martial World, strength is revered, and the Essence Stone Vein should belong to the powerful!"

"Hmm... yes... belong to the powerful... and that's us!"

Rou Fu and her sisters halted their steps ten feet below the fortress, standing in a row with four delicate faces slightly lifted, their voices calling out coquettishly to Shi Cheng and the others above the fortress.

Hearing the words of Rou Fu and her sisters, Shi Cheng and the others exchanged looks and gave a bitter smile.

"They are four little girls who know nothing of the ways of the world!"

"But their formidable strength is enough to make up for their lack of worldly experience!"

"Reason with them, appeal to their emotions; I wonder if we could persuade them to back down..."

"I'm afraid that's unlikely! Even the most naive martial artist understands the importance of cultivation resources!"

"If we promise them a substantial amount of cultivation resources and persuade them to join forces with our Golden Crow Manor to resist the Martial Artists Alliance, I wonder if there's any hope."

"Hmm, it's worth a try..."

Elder Yu Huang of Golden Crow Manor and other high-ranking members discussed the situation using the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique on the ramparts, before Elder Yu Huang took the initiative to reason with the Rou Fu sisters, hoping they would voluntarily withdraw from the dispute. Later, changing his tone, he also highlighted the various benefits of joining forces.

Yu Huang had spent a long time speaking, his throat was dry, and after finishing, he looked at the Rou Fu sisters with expectation, awaiting their response.

Yu Huang felt that his words were full of motivation and temptation, and with the Rou Fu sisters' naive nature, they should be easily persuaded.

Unexpectedly, right after Yu Huang finished speaking, the Rou Fu sisters seemed to have a telepathic understanding and shook their heads in unison, indicating they intended to take possession of the entire Essence Stone Vein and no other conditions were to be discussed.

Yu Huang, having spoken earnestly and almost convincing himself, was infuriated when the Rou Fu sisters immediately rejected his offer without hesitation, showing no intention of negotiation or discussion, he nearly spat blood in anger.

"I've come to see that these four girls are not naive; they're foolish! The conditions I've offered were good enough, weren't they? Yet they rejected them without a second thought... all so stubborn!"

Having been crisply rejected by the Rou Fu sisters, Elder Yu Huang felt he had lost face, and with rolling eyes, he huffed and spoke.

Shi Cheng sighed with a wry smile, "It seems a battle is inevitable! Elder Lei, Elder Yu, and I will go down first to test the strength of those four young ladies. Steward Zhang, Steward Yang, the rest of you remain on the ramparts and observe the movements of the Martial Artists Alliance across the buffer zone!"

Shi Cheng, along with Lei Hu and Yu Huang, leaped down from the ramparts. They confronted the Rou Fu sisters across a distance of about thirty feet.

"Ladies..."

"The fight starts now! Charge!"

As soon as Shi Cheng landed, he was about to say something to the Rou Fu sisters when a delicate voice loudly exclaimed. The four sisters, with excitement on their faces, rushed over like lightning, closing the distance between them to less than ten feet in an instant.

The sword-type spirit weapons in the sisters' hands were all of medium quality. Although they weren't the most powerful top-quality spirit weapons in this world, they were extraordinary and could provide martial artists nearly a 30% boost in combat strength.

Shi Cheng and the other two elders, despite holding high positions in a first-rate sect, wielded only medium-quality spirit weapons as well, which showed that the sect of the four sisters was indeed rich in heritage.

Fortunately for Shi Cheng, even though both parties were high-rank Universe Level fighters, when they actually fought, he realized that they had a slight edge in individual combat strength. Putting in their full effort, they were able to fight on par with the sisters.

But considering the sisters' age, Shi Cheng and the other two elders couldn't help feeling disheartened, harbouring the sentiment that the next generation was surpassing the previous one, who would perish on the beach.

Shi Cheng, Lei Hu, and Yu Huang, the three Great Elders, practiced Fire System Martial Arts, while Rou Fu, Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, and Rou Ling, the four sisters, practiced Water System Techniques. The seven high-rank Universe Level fighters dueled in the open space in front of the fortifications, and their water and fire Essence Energy constantly collided. The strong Essence Energy shockwaves kicked up dust and stones for dozens of feet around, creating a deafening noise.

As the seven were engaged in intense battle, nearly two hundred thousand martial artists from the Martial Artists Alliance, led by their respective leaders, began to enter the buffer zone, rapidly crossing the middle line, and closed in on the fortifications.

Each of the nearly two hundred thousand martial artists wielded spiritual artifacts, surrounded by their Essence Energy, and their spirits were high. Their eyes were fixed on the increasingly near ramparts.

They knew that within the protection of that fortress lay the entrance to the Essence Stone Mine; as long as they broke through the fortress, the Essence Stone Mine would be within easy reach.

Chapter 1303: Tianji Sect Master Xuan Tianji

Below the fortress, ten thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor had already formed their battle formation, silently waiting for the great battle to come.

The ten thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor, each armed with a Spiritual Artifact and their fighting spirit soaring, had no expression of fear or panic on their faces, only a resolute acceptance of life and death.

The additional ten thousand elite disciples guarding the fortress above also harbored the same resolute determination to face death.

The nearly two hundred thousand martial artists of the Martial Artists Alliance each had their own schemes, fighting solely for their own interests. As soon as they find the situation unfavorable, they will certainly flee.

In contrast, the disciples of Golden Crow Manor had long made a vow to share the fate of the manor; even if they knew they were outmatched and might fall here, not a single one showed any sign of cowardice or retreat.

Moreover, once the battle starts, the twenty thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor will not fight individually but will engage using the Offensive and Defensive Great Formation personally instructed and trained by Feng Donglai, Elder Feng, to combat the Martial Artists Alliance.

In terms of individual fighting strength, a disciple of Golden Crow Manor could match two or even more opponents, and when formed into a formation, ten thousand disciples could withstand adversaries three to four times their number.

Initially, when the Martial Artists Alliance had only slightly more than a hundred thousand martial artists, the higher-ups of Golden Crow Manor, after some calculations, believed that if they could inflict heavy casualties on the Alliance during the early stages of the battle, causing them to lose confidence, the tide of the battle might turn.

But when the numbers of the Martial Artists Alliance increased to two hundred thousand, Golden Crow Manor felt the pressure double. At this point, they were no longer seeking to reverse the outcome but only to withstand the Martial Artists Alliance for a while, to prevent them from prematurely seizing the Essence Stone Mine entrance, waiting for changes and devising a breakthrough strategy.

In fact, two days before the numbers of the Martial Artists Alliance were about to reach two hundred thousand, Shi Cheng urgently sent disciples to Manor Master Huang Canghai asking for reinforcements; calculating the time, the reinforcements should arrive today. Unexpectedly, before the reinforcements could arrive, the Martial Artists Alliance initiated a large-scale attack, causing deep concern for Shi Cheng and others.

Before the fierce battle with Rou Fu and her four sisters, Shi Cheng secretly dispatched several disciples from Golden Crow Manor to check on the location of the reinforcements and to urge them to hurry.

Shi Cheng hoped that before the reinforcements arrived, they could hold this defensive line at the fortress, and the entrance to the Essence Stone vein would still be under the control of Golden Crow Manor.

The two hundred thousand martial artists of the Martial Artists Alliance initially maintained a consistent pace pushing steadily forward, but as they got closer to the fortress, everyone wanted to rush underground to the Essence Stone vein to gather more cultivation resources, and each exhibited their movement techniques to advance swiftly.

A portion of the relatively powerful martial artists were the first to crash into the ten thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor laid out in a defensive formation, like two huge waves colliding, stirring up a great surge.

Bloody light splattered accompanied by waves of wails. In this wave of collisions, countless on both sides were either injured or fallen.

Following that, the second wave, the third wave, the fourth wave... more and more martial artists from the Martial Artists Alliance crashed into the Defensive Array set up by the disciples of Golden Crow Manor, causing even greater casualties on both sides.

As blood and energy filled the air, Essence Energy unbounded, cries and roars never ceased, over two hundred thousand martial artists fighting for the underground Essence Stone vein, centered around the makeshift fortress constructed by the disciples of Golden Crow Manor, battled over life and death within a dozen miles.

Shortly after the battle began, the scent of blood floating in the air and over two hundred thousand streams of stirring Essence Energy alerted the Spirit Beasts lurking nearby in mountains, forests, rivers, ravines, and swamps.

The olfactory senses and perception of Spirit Beasts are much sharper than those of human Martial Artists. Sensing the smell of blood and fluctuations in Essence Energy, the Spirit Beasts quickly emerged from their respective nests and territories, moving closer to the battlefield.

Upon seeing the corpses of human Martial Artists scattered all over the ground, a greedy and covetous glint appeared in the eyes of those Spirit Beasts, looking for opportunities to drag away the bodies of Martial Artists and then consuming them.

The battlefield, already chaotic, became even more tumultuous with the interference of thousands of Spirit Beasts.

At the summit of a mountain a kilometer away from the battlefield, an elderly man in yellow clothing appeared at some unknown time.

This elderly man in yellow was over a hundred years old, with broken brows, small eyes, a nose sharp like a hawk's beak, and prominent cheekbones, reflecting a stingy and sharp demeanor. He stood proudly with his hands behind his back, looking down on the distant battlefield with a scornful gaze, his expression full of mockery.

"Two hundred thousand Martial Artists, taking so much time, and yet they still can't settle a mere twenty thousand disciples of Golden Crow Manor; truly a mob that can't achieve great things! After this battle, however, the elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor will mostly be depleted. My Tianji Sect just needs to strike like thunder, and Golden Crow Manor will inevitably face destruction! Hehe, then the treasures accumulated over thousands of years in Golden Crow Manor and the Essence Stone Vein underground will belong to my Tianji Sect!"

In his pride, the elderly man in yellow couldn't help but laugh aloud.

"But those four women, possessing considerable strength and unclear origins, are also eyeing the Essence Stone Vein, which really is troublesome... Could they possibly be disciples from an Innate Sect?"

The sharp, sword-like gaze of the elderly man in yellow fell on the Rou Fu sisters, who were fiercely battling Shi Cheng and his companions, his eyebrows furrowing as he muttered to himself.

The elderly man in yellow was Xuan Tianji, the Sect Master of Tianji Sect, a Universe Level perfection powerhouse. He was in the same realm as Huang Canghai, the Manor Master of Golden Crow Manor, and a top-tier powerhouse in the True Martial Realm.

The moment the Essence Stone Vein on the edges of Eternal Death Zone was discovered, it drew covetous looks from various powers. As the ambitious Sect Master of a first-grade sect, Xuan Tianji naturally did not want to miss the opportunity to claim it for his own.

Being the first-grade sect closest to the Essence Stone Vein, Golden Crow Manor had various advantages. Despite Tianji Sect's overall strength not being weaker than Golden Crow Manor, the sect

was thousands of miles away, and its elite disciples couldn't all arrive in time, thus it was difficult to fully compete with Golden Crow Manor.

Disciples of Tianji Sect were scattered across the True Martial Realm and well-informed. At the discovery of the Essence Stone Vein, Sect Master Xuan Tianji had already learned of it and personally rushed to the edge of Eternal Death Zone.

Highly scheming, Xuan Tianji knew that relying solely on Tianji Sect's power would not surpass Golden Crow Manor; hence, he employed the strategy of using others to eliminate his enemies, quickly spreading the news of the Essence Stone Vein to attract numerous Martial Artists to the edge of Eternal Death Zone, thereby restraining and exhausting Golden Crow Manor's power.

At this moment, with the battle between Martial Artists Alliance and Golden Crow Manor already underway, the long-hidden Xuan Tianji finally made his appearance, waiting only for both parties to fight to mutual destruction, thereby reaping a fisherman's benefit.

Once Golden Crow Manor was eliminated, with no other powerful sect capable of competing with Tianji Sect within tens of thousands of miles, Tianji Sect would monopolize the Essence Stone Vein and gain Golden Crow Manor's cultivation resources accumulated over thousands of years.

Chapter 1304: Adding Fuel to the Fire!

Fang Bai was previously seen in Divine Fire Town and then entered Golden Crow Manor, a fact that came to Xuan Tianji's knowledge. Unable to contain himself, he burst into a loud, unrestrained laughter, feeling a sense of serendipity as if saying, "all the toil in search is needless when the object of your quest falls right into your lap."

Having consecutively slain several key figures and important disciples of Tianji Sect, Xuan Tianji harbored a bone-deep hatred for Fang Bai. For this reason, he issued a Bounty Order across the entire True Martial Realm to hunt down Fang Bai. Now that he had Fang Bai's whereabouts, Xuan Tianji gnashed his teeth, preparing to take advantage of the destruction of Golden Crow Manor to conveniently kill Fang Bai and quench the hatred in his heart.

However, the appearance of the Rou Fu Sisters made the situation somewhat troublesome for Xuan Tianji.

Even though the Rou Fu Sisters were extraordinarily strong, the Tianji Sect, led by Xuan Tianji, had tens of thousands of elite disciples lurking nearby, with some even infiltrating the Martial Artists Alliance. With such strength, they could easily crush the Rou Fu Sisters.

What Xuan Tianji feared was that if the Rou Fu Sisters turned out to be disciples from an Innate Sect and were slain by his Tianji Sect, it would bring about tremendous trouble.

It's true that in the eyes of billions of martial artists in the True Martial Realm, a first-rank sect is an untouchable behemoth. However, only powerhouses at Xuan Tianji's level understand that the truly untouchable ones are those Innate Sects hidden from the world, uninvolved in mundane affairs, and solely dedicated to pursuing the peak of the Martial Dao.

It can be said that compared to Innate Sects, a first-rank sect is like a minor witch seeing a great sorcerer, not worthy of a snicker.

"Who cares! If I can obtain the treasure of Golden Crow Manor and the Essence Stone Mine, and then quietly cultivate for a few years, it's possible for my cultivation level to break through and reach the Innate Realm. Moreover, the senior officials and disciples of our Tianji Sect will also greatly advance in ranks. At that time, even Innate Sects cannot underestimate our overall strength. Why then should I fear these four little girls?"

With this thought in mind, Xuan Tianji felt a surge of boldness in his chest.

Below the mountain peak, the battle situation was brutal and chaotic, made even more tumultuous by the occasional attacks of Spirit Beasts. A full day and night passed, and it wasn't until the next morning that the situation gradually became clearer.

Under the relentless assaults of nearly two hundred thousand martial artists, the twenty thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor, grossly outnumbered, had sustained heavy losses and were showing signs of defeat, gradually retreating.

But the casualties on the side of the Martial Artists Alliance were even more appalling, with tens of thousands of martial artists either fallen or incapacitated by injury.

The Martial Artists Alliance was merely a temporary coalition driven by interests, without true unity—even calling them a disorganized mob wouldn't be an exaggeration. With tens of thousands of their numbers lost, their confidence was severely shaken. Had they not seen that Golden Crow Manor was at the end of its tether, even worse off than themselves, they might have collapsed, potentially causing an instant turnaround of the battle situation.

"Both sides haven't worn each other down enough! Hm, it's time to add fuel to the fire!"

Seeing that the martial artists of both sides were unable to conclude the battle quickly, Xuan Tianji could no longer hold back and let out a long, piercing howl to the sky.

This howl reverberated across the land for tens of miles around, and two Elders of Tianji Sect, already lying in wait atop another mountain peak, rose magnificently to their feet and howled in response.

Three howls, sharp and urgent, filled with an intense desire for slaughter, like a soul-stirring dirge that evoked a restless anxiety in those who heard it.

"That howl... damn it! Someone is summoning Spirit Beasts to attack!"

At Golden Crow Manor's side, Lei Hu and Yu Huang, two Elders engaged in fierce battle with the Rou Fu Sisters and skilled in the Beast Taming Technique, were shocked and their complexions drastically changed upon hearing the three howls.

"Such a familiar howl... it seems someone is indeed summoning Spirit Beasts!"

"It's unknown who is summoning the Spirit Beasts and which side they intend to aid."

"No matter who it is, anyone coveting the Essence Stone Vein is our enemy!"

"Right! Once we drive away these white-bearded old men, we'll take over the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein! Whoever dares to come forward, we'll beat them up!"

Amidst the fierce battle, the four sisters of Rou Fu and Shi Cheng and others were still chattering and communicating.

Shi Cheng and his companions exchanged helpless smiles, showing expressions of having no alternative.

Initially, Shi Cheng and his companions were gradually gaining the upper hand in the confrontation with the four sisters of Rou Fu. However, the sisters somehow formed an odd Formation that instantly turned the tide of the battle. Although they still couldn't defeat Shi Cheng and his companions, for the time being, neither could Shi Cheng and his companions defeat them.

Furthermore, Shi Cheng and his companions could tell that the four sisters of Rou Fu had no intention of putting them to death; at most, they wanted to severely injure them, so they would retreat knowing the difficulty.

Shi Cheng and his companions, all over a hundred years old, were mere fraction of the age of the four sisters of Rou Fu, who were young enough to be their great-granddaughters. However, these four young girls fought them for a day and a night without showing signs of defeat, filling Shi Cheng and the others with shame.

Continuous howling summoned tens of thousands of Spirit Beasts that roared toward the edge of the Eternal Death Zone and then recklessly charged into the battle between the Martial Artists Alliance and Golden Crow Manor, attacking wildly without distinguishing friend from foe.

Even though the tens of thousands of Spirit Beasts that rushed in were mostly on par with human Cosmos Level Martial Artists, their offensive and defensive capabilities were extremely formidable, like dropping heavy bombs into an already turbulent lake, stirring up even greater waves.

"The person behind the summoning of Spirit Beasts seems to be targeting all of us!"

Seeing the Spirit Beasts attacking indiscriminately, the shrewd Shi Cheng seemed to understand something. His face turned pale as he muttered to himself and then suddenly, with a jerk, he shouted aloud: "All disciples of Golden Crow Manor, quickly retreat into the fortress!"

The tens of thousands of Spirit Beasts, driven by Beast Taming Techniques, had already entered a frenzy. They disregarded life and death, without fear, and any Martial Artist who fought them head-on was acting foolishly.

Although the Elders Lei Hu and Yu Huang were also skilled in Beast Taming Techniques, they were entangled with the four sisters of Rou Fu and couldn't spare their attention to employ the techniques. Hence, to reduce the casualties among other disciples and preserve the strength of Golden Crow Manor, Shi Cheng decided to retreat into the fortress, to avoid the enemy's edge temporarily and consider other strategies.

At this moment, the four sisters of Rou Fu also realized something was wrong. They halted their intense battle with Shi Cheng and his companions, and their pretty faces changed slightly as they looked at the Spirit Beasts that crazily launched attacks between them and the Martial Artists.

"Who the heck is so malicious!"

"Does the person behind the Spirit Beasts want all of us to fall here?"

"If I catch the person behind this, I'll spank their ass till it blooms!"

"Master said that we are girls, and we should be gentle and amiable... Hm, I suggest if the person behind this is a man, catch him and beat him then feed him to the Spirit Beasts; if it's a woman, just spank her till her ass blooms!"

"That's settled then!"

The four sisters of Rou Fu widened their eyes, their eyebrows inverted in anger, hands on hips, they said huffily.

Chapter 1305: Collapse

The fierce battle between the Martial Artists Alliance and Golden Crow Manor became unprecedentedly chaotic due to the sudden intrusion of a massive number of violent and aggressive Spirit Beasts.

Thousands of Spirit Beasts, driven mad, charged wildly among the martial artists, launching suicidal attacks without any considerations for their own defense.

This crude and fearless method of attack, practically a life-for-life strategy, resulted in the fall of one martial artist for every two slain Spirit Beasts.

Facing the sudden invasion of a large number of Spirit Beasts, the martial artists of the Martial Artists Alliance and the disciples from Golden Crow Manor knew that if they did not cease fighting each other, they might very well end up as the feast for the Spirit Beasts. Thus, they tacitly stopped attacking each other and joined forces to contend with the Spirit Beasts.

However, as the increasingly agitated howls reverberated through the air, more and more Spirit Beasts surged from all directions, rapidly draining the Essence Energy of both parties' martial artists and shattering their morale.

"No more, I can't hold on any longer!"

"There are too many Spirit Beasts, powerful in attack; if we keep fighting head-on, we'll suffer heavy losses!"

"The Essence Stone Vein is important, but it's not worth more than our lives!"

"Better to retreat now and come back later!"

"That makes sense... I'm pulling out first!"

"If we are leaving, we should do it together!"

"Run for it!"

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As tens of thousands of martial artists from the Martial Artists Alliance contended with the Spirit Beasts, even as they strived mightily to fight, the mounting deaths sowed panic, dampening their fighting spirit and greatly affecting their combat power,

weaker martial artists, or those who were cowardly, had already begun running full-speed towards the surrounding woodlands and mountain areas, hoping to escape the dreadful and hated Spirit Beasts.

Collapse followed like a collapsing mountain.

When one martial artist fled, others followed suit, beginning to scatter in all directions.

Suddenly, the tens of thousands of martial artists from the Martial Artists Alliance crumbled, and no amount of shouting or rallying from their alliance leaders could help.

"Two hundred thousand martial artists scattered just like that? Sigh... A rabble after all, never meant for great achievements!"

"Eight Desolations Alliance" leader Wu Tongtian, seeing the number of martial artists around him dwindling, stomped his feet in frustration and felt a deep sense of powerlessness.

Actually, although there were many Spirit Beasts at the scene, if the martial artists of the Martial Artists Alliance had united and collaborated with the Golden Crow Manor's disciples who were also fighting the Spirit Beasts, they could have completely slain the Spirit Beasts together. Afterwards, the Martial Artists Alliance might have taken the opportunity to defeat Golden Crow Manor and occupy the entrance to the Essence Stone Mine.

Regrettably, the hastily assembled Martial Artists Alliance could only fight when conditions were favorable. Upon encountering setbacks and severe losses, they quickly lost confidence and spirit, choosing to run for their lives, and no one could gather them back together.

Although Wu Tongtian was a Universe Level Expert unafraid of the Spirit Beasts' attacks, he was helpless alone and unable to change the outcome of the battle. He could only sigh, escaping from a group of attacking Spirit Beasts and temporarily hiding at a concealed location outside the battlefield, preparing to observe the situation and plan his next move.

As for Rou Fu and her three sisters, though naive, they were not foolish. Seeing the chaotic battleground where friend and foe were indistinguishable, they too decided to momentarily hide nearby like Wu Tongtian, waiting to see how the situation unfolded.

As for Golden Crow Manor, the collapse of the tens of thousands of martial artists from the Martial Artists Alliance should have been a cause for celebration. However, the reality was that the losses Golden Crow Manor suffered in this battle were hardly negligible.

Of the twenty thousand elite disciples of Golden Crow Manor, only a scant four to five thousand managed to retreat back to the fortress, and nearly half of them were injured.

After this battle, the strength of Golden Crow Manor was reduced to less than a quarter of what it was before the battle, resulting in substantial losses.

"Who is controlling the Spirit Beast to attack?"

Shi Cheng's chest was full of intense hatred, his eyes bloodshot, and his gaze turned towards the direction of the summit from where the howling originated. In the thin morning mist, he could see nothing clearly.

Although Shi Cheng wanted to rush towards the source of the howling to see who was behind the attack, he dared not easily leave the fortress, fearing a sudden assault by the enemy and losing the last defensive line of the Essence Stone Vein.

Just then, the howling abruptly ceased, and the Spirit Beasts, recovering from their frenzied state, began to devour the bodies of their fellows in brief confusion, only dispersing after having their fill.

"Someone is coming! Disciples of Golden Crow Manor, brace yourselves, and prepare for battle!"

As the morning wind dispersed the mist, Shi Cheng looked in shock to find over ten thousand Martial Artists forming neat arrays, swiftly advancing towards the fortress.

Seeing the attire of these ten thousand Martial Artists and the bursts of Golden Essence Energy they emitted, Shi Cheng's eyes widened as he exclaimed, "Tianji Sect!"

The senior executives of Golden Crow Manor beside Shi Cheng also saw the ever-approaching ten thousand Martial Artists clearly, causing a stir among them, everyone furiously indignant.

"So it's Tianji Sect causing trouble!"

"They must surely be here for the Essence Stone Vein!"

"Taking advantage of our vulnerability, what despicable cowards!"

"If we survive today's peril, we shall flatten Tianji Sect another day!"

...

By now, every disciple of Golden Crow Manor understood that the sudden appearance of Tianji Sect disciples here was no accident, but something premeditated.

The staggering reserves of the Essence Stone Vein beneath Eternal Death Zone were what attracted Tianji Sect disciples to mobilize here en masse.

If Tianji Sect had come openly to seize the mine, the disciples of Golden Crow Manor wouldn't be so enraged; they could have just fought a grand battle, leaving life and death to fate.

But Tianji Sect first used Spirit Beasts to attack them, thereby weakening Golden Crow Manor's strength, and then took advantage of Golden Crow Manor's weakest moment to launch a massive assault; this tactic was somewhat sinister.

Even some of the Golden Crow Manor disciples speculated that the attack by two hundred thousand Martial Artists on Golden Crow Manor this time might also involve Tianji Sect disciples scheming in the shadows.

"Why hasn't the disciple who went back to the manor for help returned yet?"

After intense anger, Shi Cheng forced himself to calm down. With a solemn expression, he ordered the disciples on the fortress to set up a defensive formation which could trigger the fortress's Defensive Array in a dire moment, while also asking Zhang Zhijing and Yang Yue who were with him.

The disciples of Tianji Sect pouring in from all directions were clearly elite; without reinforcements, they could not hold on for long, and the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein would soon change hands.

"Logically, they should have been back by now..."

The disciples sent back to the manor for help were dispatched by Zhang Zhijing and Yang Yue. Hearing Shi Cheng's inquiry, they too were anxious, worried that something unexpected might have occurred on the way.

The disciples of Golden Crow Manor atop the fortress all understood that the current situation was extremely unfavourable for them; only with the Manor Master's personal intervention could they possibly turn the tide, otherwise the consequences would be unimaginable.

"If Senior Fang were here, the situation might be much better..."

Shi Cheng turned his head to look towards the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein behind the fortress, fervently hoping that the elegant and handsome young man in white would suddenly emerge from it.

Chapter 1306: Despair

Shi Cheng did not wait for Fang Bai's arrival, but was instead met with a shocking and despairing piece of bad news:

Golden Crow Manor was besieged by nearly thirty thousand elite disciples of Tianji Sect, led by several Elders and Stewards of the Sect. Manor Master Huang Canghai, leading the manor's own disciples in resisting the attacks from Tianji Sect, had no opportunity to spare assistance.

The one who brought this bad news was one of the few disciples sent to rescue Golden Crow Manor. He returned heavily wounded and with his last ounce of strength conveyed the message before succumbing to his injuries, passing away with regret in his heart.

Shi Cheng stretched out his palms and closed the unyielding eyes of the disciple from Golden Crow Manor, took a deep breath with closed eyes, forcefully keeping his emotions from fluctuating too violently. Yet his slight trembling betrayed him.

"Ten thousand elite disciples here at the Essence Stone Vein, thirty thousand at Golden Crow Manor... The elite disciples of Tianji Sect have practically come out in full force... They want to exterminate Golden Crow Manor and then annex everything that belongs to the manor! Hah, such a big appetite, they're not afraid of bursting their bellies!"

Shi Cheng muttered to himself, his eyes flashing with a cold glint, fists cracking "krak krak" with tension, his face twisted into a fearsome grimace.

Though he spoke in such a way, his heart kept sinking incessantly, as if plunging into an eternal icy cavern, shivering with cold.

Putting together information from various sources, Shi Cheng knew that Tianji Sect had come prepared and with premeditation.

As a Prominent Clan, Golden Crow Manor's overall strength was not inferior to that of Tianji Sect, but having suffered heavy casualties defending the Essence Stone Mine's entrance during a recent battle, half of Golden Crow Manor's twenty thousand elite disciples were dead or injured, severely weakening their power. Facing an offensive from ten thousand elite disciples of the Tianji Sect, they simply could not contend.

If one were to liken the present Golden Crow Manor to a heavily burdened, extremely weakened camel, then Tianji Sect would undoubtedly be the final straw that breaks the camel's back.

"With the enemy before us and reinforcements hopeless, our only choice is to fight to the death to defend the manor's interests!"

Shi Cheng suddenly turned his head, his gaze sweeping over the thousands of Golden Crow Manor disciples gathered at the fortress, and he shouted sternly.

The elite disciples of Tianji Sect, ten thousand strong, surged from all around the fortress, completely cutting off all retreats, ready to totally annihilate the Golden Crow Manor disciples guarding the entrance to the Essence Stone Mine.

"Fight to the death!"

"Fight to the death!"

"Fight to the death!"

The thousands of Golden Crow Manor disciples, knowing that this battle was a matter of life and death, felt no fear; every single one of them, whether unharmed or wounded, stood tall and proud, roaring with all their might.

A plaintive air of resigned heroism enveloped every Golden Crow Manor disciple, some of them looking up at the rising sun, their expressions revealing a touch of reluctance, knowing that this might very well be the last time they saw the light.

"Attack!"

Seeing the disciples who rushed to the front already at the foot of the fortress, the Sect Master of Tianji Sect, Xuan Tianji, who was overseeing the battle from the rear, wore a cold smile as he gave the order to attack.

"Kill!"

The ten thousand elite disciples of Tianji Sect, upon hearing the command, brandished their Spiritual Artifacts and leaped forward, charging towards the Golden Crow Manor disciples guarding the fortress.

"Kill!"

Shi Cheng, with hair and beard bristling, his Killing Qi soaring to the skies, also let out a thunderous roar.

His voice, like muffled thunder, boomed in the ears of the thousands of Golden Crow Manor disciples.

"Kill!"

Thousands of disciples from Golden Crow Manor invigorated their spirits and, amidst thunderous roars, launched a fierce counterattack with sharp streams of essence energy, pouring out the rage and resentment in their hearts.

Though the disciples of Golden Crow Manor were few in number, each of them fought with the determination to stake their lives in a do-or-die battle. They managed to perform beyond their capabilities, and with the advantage of higher ground, they momentarily caused the complacent disciples of Tianji Sect to suffer greatly, with many casualties.

Thousands of blades and sword beams, condensed from golden essence energy, cleaved through the air with a resounding whoosh of metal, aimed at the disciples of Tianji Sect who had leapt into the sky for combat, causing the space around the fortress to undulate faintly.

Golden Crow Manor had just been dealt a heavy blow, besieged on all sides, and the disciples of Tianji Sect assumed that the disciples of the Golden Crow Manor had surely fallen into a state of pessimism and despair, expecting to easily cause their collapse with a single charge.

Yet it was precisely this arrogant and disdainful attitude that led to the bitter defeat of the disciples of Tianji Sect, who paid a significant price.

Although the thousands of elite disciples of Tianji Sect who had taken to the sky had formed defense qi shields around themselves, they hadn't anticipated that the counterattack from the disciples of Golden Crow Manor would be so fierce and powerful.

Thousands of sword beams shaped from fire primordial qi wove together into life-claiming nets, with the unstoppable momentum to smash and pierce all obstacles, enveloping the Tianji Sect disciples who had leapt to a position parallel to the fortress.

Some of the stronger Tianji Sect disciples managed to resist the first, second, and even third waves of the sword net attacks, but they couldn't withstand even more.

The continuously conjured sword nets tore through the defense qi shields of the Tianji Sect disciples again and again, eventually shattering them, and the resulting blades and sword beams struck down the unprotected disciples of Tianji Sect whether by slicing or piercing.

"Ah!"

"Ouch!"

"Help!"

"My leg has been chopped off!"

"Lost my left arm!"

...

Screams and cries of distress echoed around the fortress, with hundreds of Tianji Sect disciples either dead or injured under the cover of the sword nets, plummeting down and leaving a mist of blood spreading in the air.

The casualties among the hundreds of comrades dealt a significant blow to the morale of the other Tianji Sect disciples, who, for a moment, ceased their attack.

"A bunch of fools! Do not stop the assault, continue forward! Take the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein in one swift effort!"

Xuan Tianji, the Sect Master of Tianji Sect, commanding the rear of the twenty thousand elite disciples, cursed furiously as he saw the sect's disciples falter and shrink back.

Under the command of Xuan Tianji and several high-ranking members of Tianji Sect, nearly ten thousand elite disciples reorganized their formation, discarding their contempt and launched an even more ferocious offensive without regard for the losses.

Although the disciples of Golden Crow Manor had initially gained the upper hand in the wave of counterattacks, it was only achieved through sheer bravery; it also immensely drained their essence energy, and thus their subsequent counterattacks lost the previous momentum.

However, those who were undaunted by death, each unleashed their potential, still staging a grand battle of attack and defense at the cost of one life for two.

But no amount of courage or fighting spirit could offset the vast disparity in strength and numbers.

Half a two-hour period later, the foundation of the fortress was piled with the bodies of Tianji Sect disciples, whereas the casualties of Golden Crow Manor's disciples on the fortress had once again exceeded half.

"It's over... We cannot hold the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein anymore..."

Shi Cheng looked at the fortress, with only two to three thousand disciples left able to fight, while the side of Tianji Sect had four to five times more than his own. His heart turned ice-cold to the extreme, as a feeling of despair rose within him.

Chapter 1307: Dongguo Zongheng

"The four core disciples of Ruoshui Palace, known by the name 'Fortune's Blessing', although lacking Innate Spiritual Roots, also possess extremely high aptitude. Using their delicate bodies as my Cultivation Furnace Cauldron, within a year, my Cultivation Level should be able to advance a minor realm, reaching the middle stage of the Innate Realm, thus enabling me to compete with the level of Elders from Innate Sects!"

Dongguo Zongheng stood atop a large tree that was thirty feet tall, with his right hand holding an orchid's finger pose, gently twirling a bright pink flower between his fingers, bringing it to his nose to smell the fragrance. His peach blossom eyes fixated on the four delicate figures amidst a clutter of rocks ahead, like a Hungry Wolf eyeing delicious prey, his gaze revealing a greedy and salivating luster.

Usually appearing in a white garment, with a fair face and red lips, and an unrestrained elegance, Dongguo Zongheng was a rare handsome man in this world.

However, this beautiful man was the most notorious womanizing thief in the True Martial Realm and a demon in the eyes of countless Female Martial Artists.

By chance in his youth, Dongguo Zongheng acquired an opportunity to advance to the Innate Realm by cultivating an extremely Yin and evil Martial Arts Technique, becoming an Innate Expert with strength that most Martial Artists in the world look up to.

The Evil Cultivation Technique practiced by Dongguo Zongheng primarily uses the bodies of Female Martial Artists as the Furnace Cauldron, supplemented by Essence Stones, Spiritual Medicine, and other Cultivation Resources, to enhance his own strength.

Having acquired the Evil Cultivation Technique, Dongguo Zongheng roamed the True Martial Realm for decades, specifically targeting Female Martial Artists with both outstanding looks and aptitude, indulging in his evil desires.

And the Female Martial Artists who caught his attention almost never escaped his clutches.

Especially after advancing to the Innate Realm, Dongguo Zongheng became even more brazen and audacious, daring to abduct female disciples from Innate Sects to use as his Cultivation Furnace Cauldron.

Loose Cultivator Female Martial Artists and ordinary Sect female disciples are one thing – after being harmed by Dongguo Zongheng, although they are filled with despair and hatred to the bone, they have no way to seek revenge against the much stronger Dongguo Zongheng and can only swallow the bitter pill in silence.

But the Innate Sects see this as a disgrace and refuse to let Dongguo Zongheng go, dispatching powerful members of the Sect to hunt him down, swearing to crush him completely.

However, Dongguo Zongheng is as elusive as a sly rabbit, without a fixed abode, unpredictable in his comings and goings, and since he also cultivates Wind System Martial Arts Techniques, with secretive movement techniques, even when encountering pursuers stronger than himself, he still manages to escape.

Dongguo Zongheng is narrow-minded and vengeful. Once he knows which Sect forces are hunting him, he will certainly retaliate fiercely after his escape.

He conceals his form, strikes from the shadows, comes and goes like the wind, and every now and then, he would kill one or two people. This cycle of violence not only causes a great headache for the Sect forces pursuing him, but their female disciples also live in constant fear and danger.

The Essence Stone Vein of the Eternal Death Zone has attracted the attention of Martial Artists from all directions, and although Dongguo Zongheng is an Innate Expert, he is also very interested in the astonishingly rich Essence Stone Vein.

Even though Wind System Martial Artists don't need Fire Elemental Stones, they can be exchanged for Wind System Cultivation Resources of equal value.

Furthermore, Dongguo Zongheng knows that the astonishingly rich Essence Stone Veins will surely attract a large number of Martial Artists to the peripheries of the Eternal Death Zone, among them many Female Martial Artists – this is also another important reason that draws him to this place.

To Dongguo Zongheng's delight, on his way to the Eternal Death Zone, he discovered the four sisters from Ruoshui Palace known as 'Fortune's Blessing'.

As a dedicated womanizing thief, Dongguo Zongheng has a very deep understanding of the outstanding female disciples from all the major Sects in the True Martial Realm, knowing that the 'Fortune's Blessing' sisters, although naïve in nature with very little experience, are quite formidable. Joined together, along with Sects' Offensive and Defensive Great Formation, conquering them would pose quite a difficulty.

Perhaps this is why the high-ranking members of Ruoshui Palace are willing to let these four sisters go out for experience.

However, the stronger the Female Martial Artist, the more interest Dongguo Zongheng cultivates in conquering her. He had been following the four sisters for several days, and since he had not yet found a suitable opportunity, he was not in a rush to make his move.

However, at this moment, the four sisters Rou Fu are right in front of him, and after the fierce battle with Shi Cheng and other high-level members of the Golden Crow Manor just now, the four sisters have expended more than half of their strength, which to Dongguo Zongheng presents an excellent opportunity to act.

"Four little beauties, you are mine now!"

Dongguo Zongheng's lips curled into a sinister smile as he silently stepped through the air, pouncing towards Rou Fu and her sisters.

Hidden among the scattered rocks, Rou Fu and her sisters watched the battle between Tianji Sect and Golden Crow Manor, planning to scavenge for spoils when both sides were weakened. Little did they know, a greedy Hungry Wolf was silently stalking behind them, ready to devour them.

"Boom!"

A loud explosion occurred as the stronghold that the Golden Crow Manor disciples had defended for so long finally collapsed under the combined assault of the Tianji Sect disciples.

Amid the dust and debris, the few remaining Golden Crow Manor disciples, led by Shi Cheng and other higher-ups, leaped backward in a hasty retreat, blocking the entrance to the Essence Stone Vein.

With the stronghold as their last line of defense breached by the Tianji Sect, they found themselves in a defenseless predicament.

"At this point, we have no choice but to fight to the death!"

Shi Cheng, who hadn't wielded a Spiritual Artifact in many years, tightly clutched his nine-ring giant saber, his body emanating a vengeful aura, battle intent surging, his face twisting with ferocious determination as he bellowed loudly.

However, the previous battle had drained much of Shi Cheng's Essence Energy, and now he looked like an old lion, somewhat decrepit and lacking his former majesty.

The same was true for the other Golden Crow Manor higher-ups.

The two to three thousand Golden Crow Manor disciples standing behind Shi Cheng and the others were almost all injured, with their combat strength reduced to less than half of their normal. Watching thousands of elite Tianji Sect disciples encircle them from all directions, they knew that even escape had become an unattainable luxury.

Fighting to this point, every one of them was exhausted. Their blood had long since cooled, their courage dispersed, leaving only endless despair.

At this moment, the number of Tianji Sect disciples was several times that of Golden Crow Manor's, and among them sat Xuan Tianji, an expert with a Cultivation Level at the Universe Level perfection realm — even the Master of Golden Crow Manor, Huang Canghai, couldn't turn the tide if he were to arrive in person.

"Elder Shi, you have reached a dead end!"

Xuan Tianji, confident of victory, stepped out from among the disciples, approaching close to Shi Cheng and the others, his gaze sweeping over the faces of the Golden Crow Manor high-ranking members, speaking with a smile, "I, Xuan Tianji, am not a brutal and murderous person. As long as you're willing to defect to the Tianji Sect and help us eradicate Golden Crow Manor, not only will I spare your lives, but once we secure the Essence Stone Vein, you'll also get a share..."

"Xuan the old thief, dreaming of buying off Golden Crow Manor's disciples, you're delusional!"

"Golden Crow Manor disciples do not have a spine made of jelly!"

"We'd rather die than surrender!"

"Let's fight them!"

...

Shi Cheng and the others broke into curses before Xuan Tianji could even finish his sentence.

Chapter 1308: All Are Ants Beneath the Innate

Under normal circumstances, if a disciple from a Sect's Prominent Clan surrenders to the enemy when the existence of the Sect's Prominent Clan is at stake, not only will they be cursed for life, but they will also be subjected to endless mockery and contempt unless they can become a generation's power, otherwise they will never be able to hold their head up high again.

Therefore, just like the current disciples of Golden Crow Manor, they all embrace the mentality of preferring to die in battle rather than surrender, wishing to live and die with the Manor.

"Fighting against us? Heh..."

Facing Shi Cheng and others' furious swearing, Xuan Tianji wasn't annoyed but sneered, "Why play the hero now? With just you people, even if you all fight to the death, what can you change? Surrender, and you can live; keep fighting, and you all will die! Choose between life and death yourselves!"

He paused, then added: "Perhaps it won't be long before we get good news from Golden Crow Manor... The destruction of Golden Crow Manor is imminent!"

"Impossible! You're dreaming!"

Shi Cheng's huge saber suddenly swung out, a saber light fiercely slashing towards Xuan Tianji across from him. Where the saber light passed, dust splattered, and the ground was plowed into a long, deep trench by the sharp unparalleled Golden Essence Energy.

As Shi Cheng swung his saber, he shouted loudly: "Golden Crow Manor is personally guarded by Manor Huang, fortified like gold, how could your Tianji Sect break through it?"

Between the high rank of Universe Level and the perfection of Universe Level, though only a small realm apart, the difference in strength was several times, facing the saber light slashed by Shi Cheng, Xuan Tianji just waved his hand casually, brushing out a gust of Wind Essence Qi, and dissolved the saber light into nothingness, then burst out laughing loudly: "I admit, Huang Canghai is very strong, but I have invited Zheng Wei to assist, how long do you think Golden Crow Manor can hold?"

"Zheng Wei? He's just a loose cultivator expert, why would he help you?"

Upon hearing "Zheng Wei", Shi Cheng was secretly shocked.

Xuan Tianji chuckled deviously and said: "After the deed is done, three-tenths of the treasures of Golden Crow Manor will be his remuneration. If you were in his shoes, wouldn't you be tempted?"

Shi Cheng didn't respond, but his complexion turned somewhat pale, and his hand gripping the saber also trembled imperceptibly.

Lei Hu, Yu Huang, and other high-level members of the Golden Crow Manor had similarly ashen faces.

The cultivation resources accumulated by Golden Crow Manor over thousands of years are naturally astounding; even just three-tenths of it would be enough to tempt any Universe Level Expert.

Although Zheng Wei is just a loose cultivator, he has a cultivation level equivalent to Xuan Tianji and Huang Canghai, and he is also a high-grade Array Master, highly renowned on Shenwu Continent, with many Defensive Arrays of prominent clans and Sects having been expensively established by him.

The Defensive Array of Golden Crow Manor, although installed by another high-grade Array Master, and as the so-called knowledge of all arts is interconnected, with Zheng Wei's ability, it may not be possible to break the Manor's Defensive Array in a short time, but given enough time, it's hard to say.

Tianji Sect is the closest first-rate major Sect to Golden Crow Manor, with quite a bit of competition between them. Therefore, each high-level member of Golden Crow Manor had some understanding of Xuan Tianji, the Sect Master of Tianji Sect, knowing that he is a deeply scheming person who always plans thoroughly before he acts and never fights an uncertain battle. This time, bringing tens of thousands of elite disciples from his Sect to attack Golden Crow Manor, he must have made ample preparations and had full confidence.

Therefore, regarding Xuan Tianji's claim of having enlisted Zheng Wei's help, Shi Cheng had no doubts; anxiety filled his heart, and a sense of despair once again enveloped him.

If without Zheng Wei's help, whether a few of Tianji Sect's Elders and Stewards along with tens of thousands of the Sect's elite disciples could take Golden Crow Manor, which is personally overseen by Huang Canghai, was still an unknown.

But with Zheng Wei's intervention, it would be extremely difficult for Golden Crow Manor to hold out for long.

Moreover, once Xuan Tianji has dealt with these people, he can rush to support the attack on Golden Crow Manor by the disciples of Tianji Sect.

By then, the Golden Crow Manor would truly be doomed.

"Elder Shi, I have given you a chance to live; it depends on how you choose!"

Seeing Shi Cheng and the others' faces changing and remaining silent, Xuan Tianji advised again.

Shi Cheng suddenly looked up, his Essence Energy surged around him, his fighting spirit soared to the extreme, and he said word by word: "Disciples of Golden Crow Manor would rather die than submit!"

"Good, since you want to die, then I will fulfill your wish!"

The smile on Xuan Tianji's face disappeared, and he issued the attack order to the surrounding Tianji Sect disciples in a cold tone: "Leave none alive! Kill!"

"Kill!"

Shi Cheng also let out a furious roar, charging forward and swinging his sword towards Xuan Tianji.

The disciples from both sides unfolded a decisive battle for survival at the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein.

Meanwhile, afar on a pile of rocks, Dongguo Zongheng's figure soared like Dapeng, plunging down and pounced behind Rou Fu and her three sisters, his right hand outstretched with fingers spread, grabbing towards the shoulders of Rou Ling, the smallest in stature among the four sisters.

"Be careful, Rou Ling!"

Rou Fu, the strongest among the four sisters and the most sensitive, sensed the terrifying fluctuation of Essence Energy and the faint sound of clothes rustling. Turning her head, she saw Dongguo Zongheng's hand coming down from the air, just feet away from Rou Ling's shoulder, her beautiful eyes widened in shock as she screamed out loud.

She was quick to react, swinging her longsword with full force, sending several sword lights toward Dongguo Zongheng as she screamed.

With a close bond among the Rou sisters, almost simultaneously as Rou Fu sensed the danger and screamed, Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, and Rou Ling also felt it. With a cry, they each swung their swords at Dongguo Zongheng.

"The four beauties are quite clever, ha! I like that! Tonight, you will all serve as my Furnace Cauldrons, accompanying me in cultivation!"

Dongguo Zongheng raised his eyebrows and smiled frivolously, shaking his body as he rushed into the formation arranged by the four sisters, intent on quickly subduing them and then taking them away from this bloody battlefield to revel in the pleasure of possessing all four beauties.

But the four Rou sisters, each possessing the strength of a high-ranked Universe Level warrior, were formidable alone and even more so when combining their strength in a formation, surpassing a perfect Universe Level fighter and could even challenge a half-day Innate. Although they were not enough in front of Dongguo Zongheng, an early-stage Innate Expert, it was still unlikely for him to subdue them in a very short time.

In the True Martial Realm, it is said that "Below Innate, all are ants," showcasing the power of Innate Experts.

The formation of the Rou sisters, though fierce, couldn't bridge the gap in strength with Dongguo Zongheng, and after merely tens of breaths, Rou Ling let out a cry as she was restrained by Dongguo Zongheng using a special technique that sealed the circulation of her True Yuan. Instantly, she lost all her strength, her sword fell to the ground, and she couldn't move. The formation of the four was instantly broken.

Without the aid of their formation, Rou Fu, Rou Zhi, and Rou Xin immediately became flustered, far from being Dongguo Zongheng's match, and in a blink of an eye, were subdued just like Rou Ling.

Chapter 1309: The Great Earthquake Trembles

"Who are you?"

"Let us go quickly!"

"Otherwise, you'll regret it!"

"Don't mess with the Fortune's Blessing sisters!"

Bound by Dongguo Zongheng, the four Rou Fu sisters were unable to move, yet they could speak, each shouting a phrase one after another.

Despite their efforts to appear fierce in an attempt to scare Dongguo Zongheng, their teenage delicate features and comically adorable expressions only highlighted their flushed delicate appearance. Far from being intimidating, it further aroused Dongguo Zongheng's wicked intentions.

"Oh my, I'm so scared!"

Excited, Dongguo Zongheng rubbed his hands together as he controlled the Rou Fu sisters, not in a hurry to take them away. He touched each of their faces and praised, "White, smooth, tender...such great texture on their skin, I like it! Ha ha, such pretty little beauties. Do you recognize me?"

"Pah pah pah... you shameless big villain, don't touch us!"

"Pah pah pah... you filthy scum, get away from us!"

"Pah pah pah... who would recognize you anyway!"

"Pah pah pah... Regardless, you're not a good person!"

Enraged, the Rou Fu sisters continuously spat in disgust.

Never before had the sisters been toyed with so brazenly by a strange man. Although the man could be considered handsome, his lecherous smile betrayed his malevolence.

"Not recognize me? Sigh, it seems my reputation is not quite illustrious enough!"

Dongguo Zongheng sighed with some disappointment, then pointed at his handsome face and pronounced each word carefully: "Listen well: My name is Dongguo Zongheng, the most handsome man in the True Martial Realm!"

"Ah? So you're that Dongguo the lecher!"

Rou Ling cried out in shock, her little face turning pale as she looked at Dongguo Zongheng with eyes filled with terror, as if she were staring at a devil.

Rou Fu, Rou Zhi, and Rou Xin, her three sisters, also wore looks of horror.

When they were in Ruoshui Palace, the sisters had heard fellow disciples discuss Dongguo Zongheng. They knew that he was an evil character at the beginner level of Innate Experts, who took pleasure in harming female martial artists.

As the sisters set out for their training expedition, the higher-ups in the sect had expressly warned them to be very cautious of him.

The sisters thought with their Sect's joint Offensive and Defensive Great Formation, they could withstand a beginner level Innate Expert, thus facing Dongguo Zongheng without fear. However, they never imagined that Dongguo Zongheng's cultivation level was far stronger than rumored, and he subdued them with ease.

Thinking of the numerous female martial artists over the years who had fallen into his hands, each suffering torment and ending up either dead or crippled, with none meeting a good fate, the Rou Fu sisters were finally afraid. If they had been able to move their bodies, they would have clung to each other by now.

Especially the youngest Rou Ling, her petite body trembling slightly, her large eyes brimming with tears, nearly spilling over, looking pitifully vulnerable.

"Indeed, I am the vile lecher you speak of!"

Dongguo Zongheng, dubbed "lecherous thief" by Rou Fu, was not angered. He extended his right index finger to lift Rou Fu's chin, looking into her big, clear eyes which radiated terror, her pearly white teeth biting tightly on her tender, cherry-like lower lip, stirring a great sensation in his heart.

"What's the matter, pretty girl? Scared? Don't be afraid, don't be afraid, I am very sympathetic and cherish beauty... come, come, let's have a kiss..."

With a frivolous laugh, Dongguo Zongheng, wearing a face full of mockery, bent down slowly moving towards Rou Fu's small mouth.

"Wah..."

Feeling extremely frightened, Rou Fu desperately turned her head to the side, her small mouth quivering pitifully a few times, and finally couldn't hold back and burst into loud crying.

As she cried, the other three women, as if infected by her tears, immediately began to cry aloud as well.

Dongguo Zongheng did not expect the four women to cry like children. He was momentarily startled, then burst into loud laughter. With a flick of his right hand, a thick and long rope flew out, making two circles around the four women, binding them tightly together.

"Now, I will take you to a secluded place, where we will use the sky as our cover and the earth as our bed, and have a really good time. Then, you can cry as much as you want... Ah, the harder you cry, the more excited I get! Haha... hahaha..."

Just at that moment, Dongguo Zongheng felt the ground beneath him tremble, and his body couldn't help but sway.

He turned his head in astonishment, instinctively looking towards the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein in the distance, and then, as if frozen by a binding spell, the laughter on his face solidified there.

Where the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein had once been fairly smooth, the ground now suddenly bulged upwards at an incredibly fast speed, as if something underground was striving to break through, fiercely challenging the hard surface.

When this bulging reached its limit, the hard ground finally lost its restraining power and was torn open by the subterranean force, creating a gaping hole tens of yards in diameter.

"Boom!"

Accompanied by a dull, thunderous sound, it was as if an irate Fire Dragon burst forth from the deep abyss beneath, carrying scorching red flames straight into the sky.

As the "Fire Dragon" appeared, the temperature within dozens of yards centered around the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein abruptly rose to a terrifying peak.

At least a hundred disciples from Tianji Sect and Golden Crow Manor, who were fiercely battling near the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein, were caught off-guard by the sudden spike in temperature, suffering severe burns, a horrific sight to behold.

The other disciples, like Dongguo Zongheng hidden among the distant scattered rocks, were so frightened by the enormous change unfolding before them that they involuntarily stopped fighting, staring in astonishment at the gigantic "Fire Dragon" that had burst forth from the ground.

The "Fire Dragon" was in fact a surge of Fire Primordial Qi erupting from beneath the ground, which, for a brief period of time, remained concentrated and undispersed, making it indeed resemble a massive fire dragon.

"What... what is that?"

Tens of breaths later, as the "Fire Dragon" slowly dispersed in all directions, three figures burst forth from the huge hole torn by the "Fire Dragon" and soared into the sky. Hovering in the air for a moment at several yards high, they finally descended gently to the ground.

"That man... he's actually an Innate Expert..."

Dongguo Zongheng, from his place among the scattered rocks in the distance, fixed his gaze on the oldest of the three men who had burst from the ground, murmuring to himself in shock.

The middle-aged man had emerged unscathed from the extremely hot depths, clearly confirming he was a Martial Artist. However, Dongguo Zongheng could not sense any Martial Artist Aura from him, was unable to determine his depth of strength, thus he surmised the middle-aged man's strength was at least no weaker than his own.

What Dongguo Zongheng couldn't understand was that most Innate Experts of the True Martial Realm chose to live in seclusion, deeply devoted to their Cultivation, aspiring to reach the pinnacle of Martial

Dao. Those like him, oft wandering the world, were few and far between. The middle-aged man's appearance here—could it be for the Essence Stone Vein?

While Dongguo Zongheng was shocked by the middle-aged man's Cultivation Level, Shi Cheng and the others, looking at the young man and woman standing beside the middle-aged man, were overjoyed.

Chapter 1310: A Trivial Matter

"Being alive is wonderful!"

This was the first sentence uttered by the middle-aged man after he burst out from the earth and landed, filled with emotion.

Immediately afterward, his gaze wandered around. When he saw the horrific scene of a Corpse Mountain Blood Sea Killing, his brows furrowed slightly, then he showed an understanding expression and muttered, "It's the Essence Stone Mine again causing trouble... In these ten-plus years, who knows how many martial artists have perished because of it... How sad! How lamentable!"

With a sympathetic sigh for the world, he turned to pat the shoulder of the young man beside him, a sincere smile on his face, and said, "Brother Fang, thank you for saving my life!"

The young man grinned, revealing a row of white, even teeth, and said, "I saved your life, and you helped me achieve Universe Level perfection, we just made use of each other, each getting what we needed. So, Brother Li, no need for thanks."

Hearing this, the young female martial artist beside the young man raised her fist and gently punched him, her voice tenderly complaining, "Fang Bai, you... talking about mutual use and getting what we need, it sounds terrible... Brother Li, Fang Bai isn't good with words, please forgive him!"

The three people who had emerged from the underground were none other than Fang Bai, Xia Chenyu, and that Innate Expert Li Chenzhou, who had been "brought back to life" by Fang Bai's magical hands.

Previously, Fang Bai, while in the deep pit of the underground Essence Stone Mine, expended a significant amount of Chaos Origin Energy to finally awaken Li Chenzhou. Afterwards, exploiting his own Innate perfection level and powerful Self-Healing abilities, along with Fang Bai's assistance, and the

astonishing reserves of the underground Essence Stone Mine for cultivation, not only did his body quickly recover, but his strength also returned to its peak.

Having healed and helped Li Chenzhou to regain his strength, Fang Bai had similarly taken advantage of the underground Essence Stone Mine and the nearly half a Spatial Ring full of rare Cultivation Resources given to him by Li Chenzhou, rapidly advancing his Cultivation Level from the initial Universe Level to the perfection of Universe Level.

Although Fang Bai had yet to enter the Innate Realm, with his ability to challenge beyond his level, he was fearless even against Innate perfection realm experts like Li Chenzhou.

In other words, Fang Bai, now with his Universe Level perfection cultivation, could roam the True Martial Realm with few opponents.

Li Chenzhou, who had been given a second lease on life by Fang Bai, naturally held boundless gratitude for Fang Bai. Knowing the deep connection between Xia Chenyu and Fang Bai, he took the time to instruct Xia Chenyu in cultivation while Fang Bai was focused on his own, gifting her a wealth of rare Cultivation Resources, bringing immense benefits to Xia Chenyu. She too had successive breakthroughs, reaching Cosmic Level perfection.

Although Xia Chenyu couldn't challenge opponents across a great realm like Fang Bai, comfortably taking on martial artists one or two minor realms higher than her own was still easy.

Therefore, with her Cosmic Level perfection cultivation, Xia Chenyu could now contend with early or even mid Universe Level experts, and was on par with the higher-ups of first-class Sects.

All three were genius martial artists with extraordinary talents. While cultivating, the speed at which they absorbed energy from the underground Essence Stone Mine was astonishing to the point that, when Fang Bai finished cultivating, the Fire Elemental Stones' Essence Energy within a ten-mile radius underground, centered on the three of them, had all been drained, turning into piles of dust.

After their cultivation ended, there was no point in staying underground. Li Chenzhou was eager to go out and see the world he had left nearly twenty years before, so he directly punched towards the ceiling above.

Above their heads was originally a thick layer of Fire Elemental Stone, but once that layer turned into falling dust, a several meters thick hard surface lay above.

The strength of an Innate perfection realm expert is something martial artists below the Innate Realm can hardly imagine. Although Li Chenzhou's punch was casual, the several meters thick ground couldn't withstand the force of that punch. The ground bulged upwards and exploded, creating a huge hole, and the three of them soared up through it, landing on the surface.

Hearing Xia Chenyu's rebuke, Li Chenzhou burst into hearty laughter and waved his hand, saying, "No worries, no worries, I actually appreciate Brother Fang's forthrightness!"

Fang Bai touched the Spatial Ring on his finger and reminded, "Brother Li, I'll gladly accept the cultivation resources you gave me! And don't forget about the promise you made to me too!"

Before awakening Li Chenzhou, Fang Bai thought he had perished and thus took his Spatial Ring, intending to keep it for himself. But after awakening Li Chenzhou, Fang Bai returned not only the Lover's Tears Jade Pendant but also the Spatial Ring to its rightful owner, under the condition that he could take half of the cultivation resources within.

He exhausted his own Chaos Origin Energy to awaken Li Chenzhou and even helped him return to his peak strength; this favor was tenfold or a hundredfold greater than the commonplace act of saving a life. Even if he took all the cultivation resources inside Li Chenzhou's Spatial Ring, he wouldn't have any psychological burden, and only taking half was, in Li Chenzhou's eyes, the embodiment of kindness and benevolence.

Hearing Fang Bai mentioning his own promise, Li Chenzhou said confidently, "Rest assured, it's a mere trifle!"

He took a step forward, his gaze sweeping around once again, with bright and sharp eyes like lightning bolts, appearing as if they could penetrate the thoughts and intentions of everyone present.

"All disciples from Golden Crow Manor, stand behind me now!"

Li Chenzhou cleared his throat and spoke in a deep voice.

His voice wasn't loud, yet his words clearly reached the ears of every martial artist present.

Shi Cheng and several other high-ranking members of Golden Crow Manor had descended through the entrance of the Essence Stone Vein to the bottom of the deep pit more than once, but had never seen Li Chenzhou in person. Seeing him standing with Fang Bai and Xia Chenyu, they were filled with confusion and couldn't figure out how this man came to be there.

However, during this critical moment, Shi Cheng and the others had no mood to ponder other matters. The appearance of the trio Fang Bai, Xia Chenyu, and Li Chenzhou delighted them to the extreme, presenting them with a hope for survival.

Shi Cheng, Lei Hu, and Yu Huang, the three elders of Golden Crow Manor, had been fighting the Sect Master of Tianji Sect, Xuan Tianji. Even though they were fighting three against one, the huge gap in strength not only prevented them from gaining the upper hand but also left them covered in wounds. The fact that they had managed to hold on till now was already a desperate struggle.

Hearing Li Chenzhou's shout, Shi Cheng and the others looked at each other with hesitation. However, as soon as they saw Fang Bai gesture to them, they immediately flew over without any further hesitation.

In their eyes, Fang Bai, who was equal in status to the Manor Master, merely making a gesture was much more effective than an unfamiliar Li Chenzhou's words.

"Senior, I ask you not to intervene in the grievances between Tianji Sect and Golden Crow Manor! I promise that the Tianji Sect will offer a generous amount of cultivation resources afterward!"

Xuan Tianji might not be as strong as Dongguo Zongheng, but he had an eye for detail. He knew that Li Chenzhou, who seemed to have no Essence Energy fluctuations around him as if just an ordinary person, was also unpredictable; no one could guess whether his cultivation level had already reached the Martial Dao's ultimate state of returning to simplicity and truth.

No matter whether Li Chenzhou was an Innate Expert or not, Xuan Tianji decided not to offend this person. With victory within reach, he did not want any mishaps to occur and cause unnecessary trouble.

