

Sect Master 241

Chapter 241: Mackerel shad

Hong Wei and Hong Feng were taken aback. Meng Zhang had already arrived not far from them. Liu Dajin, who was chasing after Meng Zhang, had a sudden change in his expression. Unexpectedly, he encountered someone familiar with Meng Zhang at this moment.

Assassinating Meng Zhang at this time was an unspeakable matter. Once exposed, it would bring significant trouble to himself, and even the Liu Family would suffer greatly. Though Liu Dajin had always been selfish and distant from the family, he wouldn't idly watch the family suffer because of him.

Liu Dajin's mind was filled with murderous intent. While attacking Meng Zhang, he silently expanded the range of his attacks. The icy true qi was already insidious and hidden, silently enveloping both Hong Wei and Hong Feng.

Before the two could react and clarify that Meng Zhang was talking nonsense, it was already too late. The decisive Liu Dajin had started to silence them.

Feeling the chilling aura descending upon them, Hong Wei and Hong Feng almost simultaneously shouted, "Misunderstanding, misunderstanding! We are not acquainted with this kid, Meng Zhang."

A sneer appeared on Liu Dajin's lips. At this point, what nonsense was there about not being acquainted? He truly regarded them as fools.

Even if these two were strangers, encountering them while chasing Meng Zhang meant they had to be silenced too. The opponent's attacks didn't pause. Feeling the firm killing intent from the enemies, Hong Feng and Hong Wei had no choice but to defend themselves.

Unlike Meng Zhang, who was caught off guard, they were facing the enemy head-on, giving them a chance to resist.

A flying sword soared into the sky, swirling and dancing, cutting towards Liu Dajin. Hong Feng was one of the top swordsmen of the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch, and his sword skills were almost on par with Meng Zhang. When Meng Zhang had sparred with him using his flying sword, he had been suppressed.

Hong Wei's hands formed seals, and a large earth-yellow hand rose from his back, directly grabbing at Liu Dajin.

With Hong Feng and Hong Wei sharing the pressure, Meng Zhang finally caught his breath and began to counterattack.

The Tangling Silk Soft Sword descended like a flexible python, aiming for Liu Dajin's head.

The difference between late-stage Foundation Building and early-stage Foundation Building was a gap that could not be crossed.

Facing three opponents, Liu Dajin didn't feel the slightest difficulty. As long as he seized the initiative and included all enemies within the attack range, they would not escape easily.

Moreover, Liu Dajin was not a loose cultivator without any inheritance. Although the Liu Family had only a few hundred years of history, they still possessed a complete Foundation Building period inheritance.

Hong Feng and Hong Wei came from the prestigious Primordial Spirit sect, Yellow Lotus Sect. Meng Zhang had received the inheritance from the flourishing era of Taiyi Sect. The three of them were extraordinary individuals with exceptional talents and profound knowledge.

Under unavoidable circumstances, the three were forced to join forces to face the enemy, revealing their true abilities.

Initially, Hong Feng and Hong Wei held some hope that they could explain the misunderstanding. Admittedly, they also had grievances against Meng Zhang and naturally wished to see him suffer. How could they stand on his side?

However, Liu Dajin gave them no chance to stop, and he ignored their explanations, believing none of it.

Meng Zhang was shouting loudly from the side, "Brothers, Liu Dajin is clearly trying to kill us to silence us. Whoever manages to escape must bring the news to Flying Swan Sect and Forest Spring Watch, and wipe out this old thief and his entire clan."

Now, everyone had no retreat; they had to fight to the bitter end. Hong Wei and Hong Feng hated Meng Zhang for putting them in this situation, but they had no choice but to help him resist the enemy. They felt frustrated and aggrieved.

Liu Dajin attacked with all his might, like a crazed tiger, vowing to capture all three of them. After a bitter struggle, Hong Wei, the weakest of the three, couldn't hold on any longer and was killed on the spot by Liu Dajin.

Hong Feng, although also in the initial stage of Foundation Building cultivation, was highly regarded within the Yellow Lotus Sect due to his exceptional sword skills and possessed several life-saving items bestowed by the sect's experts. Exhausting all his life-saving items, he finally managed to evade Liu Dajin's attacks. Despite suffering serious injuries, Hong Feng fled in the direction of the Golden Blade Sect.

The unexpected life-saving items on Hong Feng saved him from the immediate danger, much to Liu Dajin's surprise. Seizing the opportunity when Hong Feng and Hong Wei fled in different directions, the clever Meng Zhang managed to find a gap and risked getting hit by Liu Dajin to escape from the battlefield, heading towards the direction of the Taiyi Sect.

Seeing Hong Feng and Meng Zhang escape in different directions, Liu Dajin hesitated briefly but then decided to pursue Meng Zhang directly. After all, Meng Zhang was his archenemy, his primary target.

Despite gaining the upper hand and achieving a brilliant victory in the previous battle, Liu Dajin's suppressed cold aura started to stir again. He knew he should rush back to Liu Family at this moment and use the Warm Jade Bed to suppress the cold aura in his body. However, with things having reached this point, Liu Dajin couldn't bear to watch Meng Zhang escape. He was unwilling to give up.

Chasing after Meng Zhang relentlessly, Liu Dajin swore to kill him on the spot. He was even prepared to risk his own life; he would never let Meng Zhang go.

Liu Dajin's cultivation base far exceeded Meng Zhang's, and he was much faster. Even though Meng Zhang tried his best and got a head start, he was soon caught up by Liu Dajin.

In front of Liu Dajin, Meng Zhang didn't dare to use his Earth Escape Spell. While the spell excelled in concealment, it wasn't outstanding in terms of speed. Meng Zhang had secretly decided that if he survived this ordeal, he would find a way to cultivate a faster escape technique for critical situations.

Caught up by Liu Dajin and unable to continue fleeing, Meng Zhang had no choice but to turn around and face him. Liu Dajin charged at Meng Zhang madly, intent on killing his enemy in the shortest possible time.

Suddenly, a figure flew out from the ground behind Liu Dajin, wielding a large hammer and striking fiercely at his back.

It turned out to be Deep EarthSpirit General, who had returned to the flying boat of the Taiyi Sect and noticed that Meng Zhang hadn't returned. He decided to search for him. Following the traces left by the two combatants, he finally arrived near the battlefield just as Hong Wei was killed, Hong Feng fled with serious injuries, and Meng Zhang was trying to escape.

With his vast combat experience, Deep EarthSpirit General knew that Meng Zhang wouldn't get far before being caught by the enemy. Instead of confronting Liu Dajin directly, he used his talent for Earth Escape Spell to stealthily approach him from behind.

When Liu Dajin made his move to intercept Meng Zhang, Deep EarthSpirit General suddenly launched a surprise attack from behind.

Chapter 242: A Scheme that Boomerangs

Liu Dajin, whose entire focus was on Meng Zhang, was caught off guard and successfully ambushed by the Deep EarthSpirit General. After the Second Rank magic tool Stonebreaker Hammer was refined by the Deep EarthSpirit General, its power became formidable. With a single strike, it shattered Liu Dajin's protective true qi, causing him to feel a sweet sensation in his throat, and he couldn't help but cough up a mouthful of blood.

Although the injuries on his body were minor, the crucial issue was that the cold energy suppressed within him, which Liu Dajin had been keeping under control, suddenly surged. He felt an icy chill spreading through his body, leaving his limbs numb. He hastily circulated his true qi to forcefully dispel the cold and suppress the frigid energy within him.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Meng Zhang swiftly maneuvered his body, avoiding Liu Dajin's attacks. He retrieved a small jade bottle from his storage bag and drank all the stored stalactite fluid within it. Long ago, when Meng Zhang and Jue Ying explored the ancient cave of a senior from the Purple Gold Sect, they discovered stalactite fluid produced by the spiritual vein present in the cave's divine eye. Stalactite fluid was the best natural spiritual item for replenishing true qi. Over the years, Taiyi Sect had accumulated a considerable amount of stalactite fluid, and now it finally proved its great use.

With the stalactite fluid in his stomach, Meng Zhang's nearly depleted true qi rapidly recovered. At this moment, Liu Dajin suppressed the cold energy within him and turned around to launch a fierce attack on the Deep EarthSpirit General.

Meng Zhang took a brief moment to recover and then rushed forward, joining forces with the Deep EarthSpirit General to confront Liu Dajin together. Holding the Golden Crow Lantern, the might of the Solar True Flame significantly increased Meng Zhang's resistance to the icy attacks, enabling him to firmly withstand Liu Dajin's cold true qi.

The Tangling Silk Soft Sword danced in the air, displaying the essence of the flowing willow sword technique to its fullest extent. Although the Deep EarthSpirit General's cultivation base had temporarily only restored to the Foundation Building initial stage, he had once possessed the combat strength of the Gold Core level. His battle experience and various techniques far exceeded those of an ordinary Foundation Building cultivator.

With Meng Zhang and the Deep EarthSpirit General working together, they unexpectedly blocked Liu Dajin's attacks. Meng Zhang clearly sensed that Liu Dajin's cultivation base seemed to have weakened significantly, and occasionally, a trace of pain would appear on his face.

At this moment, Liu Dajin was not faring well; profound changes were occurring within his body. The cold energy accumulated within him had been entwined for many years, and now it was causing turmoil once again. To suppress the cold energy, Liu Dajin had exhausted a great deal of his energy, and now he couldn't even utilize most of his true qi.

Both Meng Zhang and the Deep EarthSpirit General were seasoned fighters and realized that Liu Dajin's actions were not a ruse; something was seriously affecting his cultivation base. After making this observation, their spirits rose, and their attacks became more potent, as if they were about to reverse the situation.

The battle continued fiercely. As time passed, the impact of the cold energy on Liu Dajin grew stronger, and he was on the verge of losing control. Constant waves of chilling aura assaulted his body, slowing down his movements, and he was almost frozen stiff.

Liu Dajin knew he was reaching his limit. The icy energy within him was becoming uncontrollable. Once it erupted completely, it would be the end of him. Originally, Liu Dajin had been pursuing Meng Zhang with a mindset of being prepared to die; he was willing to sacrifice his life for this cause. However, when faced with the actual situation, he started to hesitate.

In the face of life and death, Liu Dajin revealed his instinct to cling to life and fear death. The desire to survive emerged in his heart, and he no longer wished to entangle with Meng Zhang and the others but wanted to quickly withdraw from the battle and return to Liu Family. There, he could utilize the warmth of the jade bed to suppress the cold energy within him.

Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General keenly sensed the change in Liu Dajin and noticed the enemy's spirit gradually waning.

At this moment, it was Meng Zhang's turn not to spare Liu Dajin.

This time, if it weren't for the sudden warning in his heart, Meng Zhang would have met his end from Liu Dajin's ambush.

If they let Liu Dajin go this time, they would have to be on guard against the sneak attacks and assassinations of a Foundation Building late-stage expert in the future. It would be impossible to defend against such threats, and they could face danger at any moment.

Although they didn't know the exact problem with Liu Dajin, it was clear that something was amiss with him. Seizing the opportunity when he was weak and finishing him off was the correct choice. So, Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General exchanged a glance, and an unspoken agreement formed between them. They both made their moves almost simultaneously, firmly entangling Liu Dajin, not allowing him to escape easily.

The three engaged in a fierce battle for a long time, neither giving in to each other.

The situation shifted, with Liu Dajin now wanting to escape, while Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General refused to let him go.

Liu Dajin, after all, was a high-level expert in the Foundation Building late stage, and he managed to drive back the two, albeit at a cost, and set off on his escape route.

Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General were not willing to give up at this point, and they pursued him closely.

Liu Dajin desperately fled towards the Liu Family's mountain gate, but his flying speed gradually slowed down, and he couldn't shake off Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General.

Finally, the Liu Family's mountain gate appeared in Liu Dajin's eyes.

However, it was already too late for everything.

Liu Dajin merely took one last look at the family's mountain gate, his face full of unwillingness, before closing his eyes and falling stiffly from the sky.

Meng Zhang quickly moved forward, catching Liu Dajin's lifeless body as it fell. With swift movements, he took all the storage bags from Liu Dajin's body.

Inside the Liu Family's mountain gate, figures moved around, indicating that the people inside had noticed the commotion outside.

Meng Zhang and Deep EarthSpirit General floated quietly in the air, gazing at the Liu Family's mountain gate ahead.

If Liu Family didn't provide an explanation for this incident, Meng Zhang would not show any courtesy to them.

Liu Family's patriarch, Liu Dahai, arrived at the front of the mountain gate and noticed Liu Dajin's lifeless body being held by Meng Zhang.

Liu Dahai's face turned ashen, and he called for Liu Dajin's disciples.

After sternly interrogating them, Liu Dahai understood the hidden actions of Liu Dajin.

Liu Dajin had undoubtedly attempted to assassinate Meng Zhang covertly, but he was killed in retaliation by Meng Zhang, and his body fell into Meng Zhang's hands.

"Liu Dajin, that idiot, trying to assassinate a Foundation Building early-stage cultivator and ending up being killed instead," Liu Dahai fumed with anger, continuously cursing the deceased Liu Dajin.

Liu Dajin was dead, but he left behind a huge mess for Liu Family to deal with.

Seeing that no cultivator from Liu Family came forward, and with only himself and Deep Earth Spirit General, Meng Zhang realized they lacked the certainty to breach the Liu Family's mountain gate.

After some consideration, Meng Zhang used a messaging talisman to notify the other sects' high-level cultivators.

Guang Hong Daoist was the first to arrive, and upon receiving Meng Zhang's message, his face turned ashen with an overwhelming fury, far from his usual amiable demeanor.

Cultivators from Qiaoshou Sect and Forest Mountain School gradually arrived.

Aunt Jin, Xu Yishan, and the others were also filled with anger. The actions of Liu Family were a severe violation of the rules.

While everyone was dealing with the sand monsters, Liu Family stabbed them in the back, which would inevitably incur the wrath of the entire Endless Sea of Sand Cultivation World.

Golden Blade Sect's flying ship arrived, but Ruan Dadao was conspicuously absent.

Chapter 243: Sticks out suddenly launches an attack

As cultivators from several sects gathered at the entrance of the Liu Family's mountain gate, Ruan Dadao from the Golden Blade Sect was busy recovering from his injuries. After Hong Feng escaped from Liu Dajin's grasp, he fled in the direction of the Golden Blade Sect, without daring to stop even for a moment, nor sparing a glance backward.

After bidding farewell to Hong Feng and Hong Wei, Ruan Dadao couldn't calm his restless mind due to their threats. He left the flying boat and wandered outside to clear his thoughts. After strolling for quite some time, Ruan Dadao was about to return when he noticed a figure flying towards him from a distance.

Seeing Ruan Dadao ahead, Hong Feng felt relieved and could no longer suppress his injuries. He stumbled before Ruan Dadao, spewing mouthfuls of blood.

As a temporary ally, Ruan Dadao felt that he could trust Hong Feng and asked, "What happened to you?"

Hong Feng sat cross-legged, took out some pills from his storage bag, swallowed them, and meditated for a while to barely stabilize his injuries. Once his condition had stabilized, he sighed and began recounting the events to Ruan Dadao.

Upon hearing Hong Feng's account, Ruan Dadao was speechless. The Hong brothers had encountered an incredibly unfortunate situation, unexpectedly being entangled in someone else's grudges, which had brought them great danger.

Glancing nervously behind him, Hong Feng said, "It seems that the lunatic has gone to chase after Meng Zhang of the Taiyi Sect. He didn't follow me."

"Old Brother Ruan, I need your help with something. I can't travel far now, and I hope to hide among the ranks of your Golden Blade Sect for a few days."

"No problem, you can rest assured. My Golden Blade Sect is absolutely safe, and no one dares to cause trouble here."

Ruan Dadao readily agreed to Hong Feng's request, but secretly, he had sinister intentions. As he saw Hong Feng's severe injuries were genuine, Ruan Dadao finally made up his mind. Pretending to assist Hong Feng to stand up, he silently unleashed a golden blade qi, attempting to kill him.

Hong Feng was utterly caught off guard. How could a mere cultivator from a Foundation Building sect dare to secretly attack a disciple of the formidable Yellow Lotus Sect, which was a large Primordial Spirit sect? Previously, when Yellow Lotus Sect disciples infiltrated the Endless Sea of Sand, they were usually just expelled by the Flying Swan Sect unless they had crossed the Flying Swan Sect's bottom line.

It was unclear whether to describe Ruan Dadao as shamelessly audacious or simply ignorant of the consequences.

Threatened by the two Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators and unwilling to expose his collusion with them, Ruan Dadao made a desperate move to silence them. The two had only a small difference in Cultivation Base, and Hong Feng was seriously injured, not in a position to defend himself. Faced with Ruan Dadao's sneak attack, he could barely put up any resistance and was cleaved into two pieces.

Though Hong Feng perished, he didn't let Ruan Dadao off easily before his death. As a young expert in swordsmanship among the younger generation of the Yellow Lotus Sect, he had earned the favor of many seniors within the sect. One of them, a Gold Core senior from the East River Branch, had secretly imbued a sword qi within Hong Feng.

Though limited by Hong Feng's own Cultivation Base, he couldn't actively unleash this sword qi. However, at the critical moment of life and death, the sword qi was triggered. As Hong Feng was cleaved in half, a sharp sword qi burst out from his body, directly attacking Ruan Dadao.

Facing this life-threatening situation, Ruan Dadao brandished his natal blade and managed to block the incoming sword qi.

This Second Rank middle-grade magic tool, refined with painstaking effort by Ruan Dadao over many years, was indestructible. Faced with the slashing sword aura, it only managed to offer a brief resistance before shattering into pieces.

Seizing the sole opportunity, Ruan Dadao swiftly dodged to one side, narrowly avoiding the sword aura dangerously. After all, this powerful sword aura had no one controlling it; it was just an inanimate object.

Behind Ruan Dadao, the ground bore a bottomless chasm from where the magic tool had been destroyed. Though Ruan Dadao sustained considerable injuries and continuously coughed up blood, he felt immense relief in his heart.

Thank goodness he acted decisively; by swiftly killing Hong Feng with a single stroke, he was able to easily evade the uncontrolled sword aura. If Hong Feng were still alive and able to control the sword aura, Ruan Dadao would have been doomed.

Of course, if Hong Feng had possessed such a potent backup plan, Ruan Dadao would never have had the courage to act in the first place.

After clearing the battlefield, concealing the corpses, and tending to his wounds, Ruan Dadao became occupied.

Even when he received a communication talisman from Meng Zhang, he didn't rush to respond. Meanwhile, everyone else had arrived except for Ruan Dadao, and Guang HongDaoist called out to the Liu Family mountain gate, "Liu Family's leader, please open the great formation and come out to explain everything. This incident is too heinous, and you must be accountable to everyone."

Within the Liu Family mountain gate, there was a long silence before the voice of Liu Family's patriarch, Liu Dahai, reluctantly spoke, "Guang HongDaoist, I can assure you that Liu Dajin's actions were entirely his own doing and have nothing to do with Liu Family. No one within the family knew about it. Will you believe me?"

"Whether I believe it or not, you must come out and explain to everyone," Guang HongDaoist said angrily.

"I trust you, Guang HongDaoist, but the people around you have deep enmity with Liu Family. If I were to open the mountain gate's great formation, I'm afraid these people won't be courteous," Liu Dahai firmly replied, "Personal life and death are trivial matters, but the survival of the family is crucial. Forgive me, but I can't place the fate of the family in the hands of certain individuals who claim to be benevolent."

No matter how Guang HongDaoist tried to persuade him, Liu Dahai refused to open the protective formation or come out. Eventually, Liu Dahai ceased explaining and remained silent.

Meng Zhang, who had grown impatient, spoke up eagerly, "I've said it before; while we were dealing with the sand monsters, Liu Family launched a sneak attack from behind. Their actions are unforgivable and make them enemies of the Human Clan and the Cultivation World. In my opinion, our sects should join forces to break through the Liu Family mountain gate and completely eradicate this scourge, bringing a bright future to the Cultivation World."

Hearing Meng Zhang's words, Guang HongDaoist pondered for a long time before resolutely stating, "No, Liu Family is a vassal of Flying Swan Sect, and we cannot act rashly."

Though Forest Spring Watch had reconciled with Flying Swan Sect, the relationship between the two was still delicate, with both sides cautiously testing each other.

At this moment, if Forest Spring Watch were to act against Liu Family without authorization, it might lead to misunderstandings from Flying Swan Sect.

Using a secret method, Guang HongDaoist contacted Sect Master Guang HuiDaoist and relayed all the information to him. Then, the group kept watch over Liu Family's mountain gate while patiently waiting.

Meng Zhang was dissatisfied with Guang HongDaoist's weakness, but he knew he couldn't change his decision. Meng Zhang flew to the side and began examining the artifacts on Liu Dajin's body along with Deep EarthSpirit General.

Liu Dajin carried two storage bags that contained various items like spiritual stones, talismans, and elixirs. As he was affected by the cold energy within his body, he seldom left the Liu Family's mountain gate and had little expenses, resulting in him accumulating a substantial amount of wealth.

However, what interested Meng Zhang the most was not the wealth but a seemingly ordinary jade pendant. After being identified by the Deep EarthSpirit General, it turned out to be a pass talisman for Liu Dajin to enter and exit the protective mountain formation of the Liu Family. With this jade pendant, Liu Dajin could freely come and go even when the formation was activated.

Of course, now that Liu Dajin had passed away, the jade pendant's usefulness would be lost as the Liu Family would promptly adjust the permissions of the protective formation. But Deep EarthSpirit General was a skilled geomancer, and with enough time, he could exploit the jade pendant to find the weak points in the Liu Family's protective formation.

While everyone was waiting for a response from Guang HuiDaoist, Ruan Dadao from the Golden Blade Sect finally arrived at the scene. He casually offered an excuse for his tardiness.

After a long while, Guang HongDaoist finally received a response from Guang HuiDaoist. Guang HuiDaoist mentioned that he had already communicated with the Flying Swan Sect, and they were taking the matter seriously by sending an envoy to handle it.

The search for the sand monster nest by cultivators from several sects temporarily ceased as they kept an eye on the Liu Family's mountain gate, waiting for the arrival of the envoy from the Flying Swan Sect.

Without making the crowd wait for too long, the Flying Swan Sect's envoy arrived at the Liu Family's mountain gate the next day. To their surprise, the envoy was none other than Zhao Jiudou, a disciple of Flying Swan Sect's War Hall Master, Zhao LieFeng, whom everyone knew well.

After exchanging greetings with the group, Zhao Jiudou assured them that he would handle the matter fairly and provide a satisfactory response to everyone.

Zhao Jiudou then proceeded to the front of the Liu Family's protective formation. Liu Dahai, not daring to be negligent toward the Flying Swan Sect's envoy, promptly opened the entrance and invited Zhao Jiudou in.

Knowing that once the matter of Liu Dajin's attack on Meng Zhang was confirmed, the Liu Family would be implicated, Liu Dahai humbly pleaded with Zhao Jiudou, offering numerous benefits. Touched by the promises made by Liu Dahai and bearing a personal grudge against Meng Zhang, Zhao Jiudou was soon inclined to help them.

To smooth things over, they also needed to take care of the situation with Forest Spring Watch. Thus, Zhao Jiudou informed Guang HongDaoist, who then got involved in the Liu Family's affairs.

The Liu Family, being a family with a heritage of several hundred years of Foundation Building cultivation, still had considerable resources. After Liu Dahai spared no expense and made countless promises, Guang HongDaoist was finally persuaded to agree to let the matter go lightly.

As for Meng Zhang, well, since he wasn't harmed in the end, compensating him should make up for the incident. It was ironic that despite killing a member of the Liu Family, he would end up receiving compensation from them, taking advantage of the situation.

Once the three settled on the plan, Guang HongDaoist and Zhao Jiudou left the Liu Family's mountain gate and gathered the key figures from the other sects together. After a moment of preparation, Guang HongDaoist announced the conclusion of the matter.

Liu Dajin had already passed away, leaving no evidence behind. No one could determine for certain how the conflict between him and Meng Zhang arose or who was right and who was wrong. Meng Zhang claimed that Liu Dajin had attacked him, but it was only his word against Liu Family's. Considering the historical enmity between Taiyi Sect and Liu Family, Meng Zhang's credibility was low.

Nevertheless, to demonstrate their sincerity in resolving the matter, Liu Family was willing to apologize to Meng Zhang and offer him a sum of spiritual stones as compensation for his losses. Given that Liu Dajin has already passed away, this matter shall be dropped, and from now on, the Liu Family and Taiyi Sect must not continue to entangle each other.

After listening to Guang HongDaoist's announcement, Meng Zhang looked at him with disbelief.

Guang HongDaoist's words indicated that they had reached some sort of agreement in secret. As a victim of Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang was ignored by them.

A wave of desolation surged in Meng Zhang's heart. Did Forest Spring Watch treat him like this without any concern for his feelings? Was Taiyi Sect too weak, and was he himself not strong enough? Even if he felt cold and dissatisfied, could he dare to resist Forest Spring Watch?

Since Guang ZhiDaoist Master took over the core of Forest Spring Watch, the sect had changed, and so had Guang HongDaoist's character. The once ethereal and noble Guang HongDaoist had now turned opportunistic and ignoble.

Upon hearing Guang HongDaoist's announced conclusion, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu looked at Meng Zhang with sympathetic eyes. Lin Shenpo felt somewhat displeased and wanted to say something, but Xu Yishan next to him stopped him. Ruan Dadao, on the other hand, watched Meng Zhang with a gloating expression.

With Guang HongDaoist's announcement, no matter how dissatisfied Meng Zhang felt, he could only endure it forcefully. At this moment, neither Taiyi Sect nor Meng Zhang had the strength to confront Forest Spring Watch, and they couldn't even express their discontent.

After resolving this matter, the various sects dispersed and continued searching for the sand monster's lair.

Back in his designated area for the mission, Meng Zhang had no intention of continuing to search for the sand monster's lair. Instead, he pondered alone about the peculiar state he experienced when Liu Dajin ambushed him.

Deep EarthSpirit General called for Wen Qiansun to study the jade pendant they obtained from Liu Dajin. Wen Qiansun's Cultivation Base was far inferior to Deep EarthSpirit General, and he was still far behind in the way of formations. Deep EarthSpirit General called him over to study together, intending to offer some guidance. Occasionally, Wen Qiansun's unique and unconventional ideas could provide certain inspirations to Deep EarthSpirit General.

The other disciples of Taiyi Sect diligently continued searching for the sand monster's lair.

After much thought, Meng Zhang arrived at a conclusion. The condition that occurred to him at that time should be the legendary "inspiration from the heart" in the Cultivation World.

It was said that those great powers in the Cultivation World would have a sense of induction when certain events closely related to themselves were about to happen. This sense of induction was especially clear when facing impending calamities.

This sense of future induction was what they called "inspiration from the heart."

Generally, only Primordial Spirit True Monarchs or some exceptionally outstanding Gold Core Daoist Masters could possess the ability of "inspiration from the heart." How could Meng Zhang, a mere Foundation Building cultivator, have such an ability? Thinking it over, Meng Zhang realized that he had been studying the "Grand Evolving Fortune" all these years. Could it be that the "Grand Evolving Fortune" granted him this ability?

Legend had it that Diviners, regardless of their Cultivation Base, might also possess the ability of "inspiration from the heart."

However, after researching for so long, he had gained nothing. How could he inexplicably acquire the ability of "inspiration from the heart"?

Meng Zhang couldn't figure out this problem no matter how much he thought about it, so he had to temporarily set it aside.

Chapter 245: Sand Monster Surprise Attack

As a representative of the Flying Swan Sect, Zhao Jiudou came to handle the Liu Family's affairs and didn't leave afterward. Instead, he voluntarily stayed to assist Daoist Guang Hong. The team led by Daoist Guang Hui, which entered the Green Bamboo Mountain territory, failed to find any trace of the sand monster army there. Guang Hui also dispersed the team to carefully search for the whereabouts of the sand monster army.

In truth, the Green Bamboo Mountain territory is closely connected to the Liu Family territory, making it possible for the sand monster's nest to be located in the Green Bamboo Mountain territory. Consequently, Guang Hui didn't rush to meet up with Guang Hong but continued to stay in the Green Bamboo Mountain territory, conducting a thorough search.

On the Liu Family's side, they searched for a considerable amount of time, exploring almost the entire underground of their territory, but without any discoveries. It seemed highly unlikely that the sand monster nest was located underground in the Liu Family territory. There was one small area left unsearched. If nothing was found after searching there, Guang HongDaoist planned to lead the team to leave and join forces with Guang HuiDaoist to discuss their next actions.

Even though Meng Zhang showed signs of slackening, the other members of the Taiyi Sect continued their efforts in searching diligently, wholeheartedly fulfilling their mission. Thanks to their dedication, Taiyi Sect's progress in the search was surprisingly not far behind that of other sects, and they could soon complete the entire search operation.

One day, while Meng Zhang was studying the "Grand Evolving Fortune" on the flying boat, a distress signal suddenly arrived from the direction of the Golden Blade Sect. Could it be that the Golden Blade Sect had already discovered the location of the sand monster's nest?

Meng Zhang wasted no time and immediately summoned the Deep Earth Spirit General, who was studying the jade pendant with Wen Qiansun, as well as all the Taiyi Sect disciples spread out nearby, quickly assembling them. Soon after all the Taiyi Sect disciples gathered near the flying boat, a fierce gale swept in from the distant horizon, bringing with it a massive sandstorm.

Using the Deception Breaking Eye technique, Meng Zhang carefully observed countless figures within the sandstorm. It was a group of sand monsters charging straight towards them. Meng Zhang, who was about to reinforce the Golden Blade Sect, had to put that on hold and deal with the sand monsters in front of him first.

The Taiyi Sect disciples left the flying boat one after another, forming their battle formation ahead.

Under the cover of the sandstorm, the sand monster group quickly approached the vicinity.

Finally, Meng Zhang breathed a sigh of relief. At this distance, he could thoroughly assess the reality of the opposing sand monster horde. There were hundreds of sand monsters, but nearly half of them were small sand monsters, which could be considered at the Qi Refining level. Even ordinary armed mortals could handle them in battle.

The other half were mostly First Rank sand monsters, equivalent to Cultivators in the Qi Refining stage of human cultivators. Only one sand monster in the group could match a Foundation Building stage Cultivator—the Second Rank sand monster.

A giant head made entirely of yellow sand flew in from the sky. With a light puff, it created a massive storm. Meng Zhang and the Deep Earth Spirit General shot up into the air, flying directly toward the Second Rank sand monster in the sky.

On the ground, the prepared Taiyi Sect disciples clashed head-on with the incoming sand monster horde, plunging into a fierce battle.

Under Meng Zhang's control, the Tangling Silk Soft Sword transformed into a nimble ribbon, slashing at the opposing sand monsters. The Deep Earth Spirit General also swung the Stonebreaker Hammer, ferociously smashing the giant head.

The two Foundation Building stage cultivators engaged in a life-and-death battle with the Second Rank sand monster in the air.

The sand monster group rushing from the ground exerted enormous pressure on the Taiyi Sect cultivators. Under Yang Xueyi's control, the flying sword "Soft Around The Finger" danced and cut down sand monsters while hovering within the group. Wen Qiansun used a few formation flags to set up a small Formation in front of himself, unexpectedly blocking the fiercely approaching sand monsters.

Tian Li activated the Fire Seal in his hand, causing numerous agile fire serpents to appear on the ground and rush into the sand monster group. Hu Jing and several tamed spirit beasts guarded a position together. The valiant Zheng Chao summoned the Second Rank puppet bestowed by Meng Zhang—a lion puppet, which charged back and forth within the sand monster group, creating a significant gap. Surprisingly, Zheng Chao led a group of War Hall disciples through this gap, actively rushing into the sand monster group to disrupt their formation.

Other Taiyi Sect disciples also displayed their skills, using various techniques to attack the incoming sand monsters. After years of hard work and rigorous training, the Taiyi Sect disciples,

carefully selected by Meng Zhang, finally showed some momentum. These elite disciples demonstrated exceptional performance, forming formations and cooperating with each other, dealing significant damage to the sand monster group. After a fierce battle in the sky, the outcome was finally determined. The massive head of one of the sand monsters had been smashed off by the Stonebreaker Hammer, and the remaining half was covered in gashes caused by the flying sword. The Second Rank sand monsters, now smarter than before, did not fight to the death as they used to. After suffering heavy injuries, they actually turned around and fled. The Deep Earth Spirit General chased closely behind them, and Meng Zhang glanced downward to see that the Taiyi Sect disciples had stabilized their positions and were gradually gaining the upper hand.

Meng Zhang looked towards the direction of the Golden Blade Sect. Despite his longstanding conflicts with Ruan Dadao of the Golden Blade Sect, when facing the sand monsters, they were both Human Clan cultivators, and he still had to lend a helping hand when necessary. Using his flying sword, Meng Zhang swept through the sand monster group below, annihilating a large number of them. Then he retracted his flying sword and flew towards the Golden Blade Sect's direction.

As he hurried on, Meng Zhang noticed that the sky ahead was pitch-black, with fierce winds and countless sand particles swirling around. He activated his Deception Breaking Eye to take a closer look. The situation here was not good at all. The sand monster group attacking the Golden Blade Sect was evidently stronger than the one Taiyi Sect encountered.

The sand monster group flooded over, completely surrounding the cultivator team of the Golden Blade Sect. Their flying ship had been shot down and crashed to the ground. A large group of Golden Blade Sect cultivators surrounded the wreckage, resisting desperately. However, sand monsters did not take prisoners; they only knew merciless slaughter. When faced with the encirclement of sand monsters, Human Clan cultivators had only one path—fight to the death.

In the sky, Ruan Dadao was fighting three Second Rank sand monsters single-handedly. Although he was a mid-stage Foundation Building cultivator, his combat power had significantly declined since his natal knife was destroyed not long ago. After a strenuous battle, he was clearly struggling to hold on. A whip made entirely of yellow sand lashed at Ruan Dadao mercilessly. His body was sent flying, and he spat out blood uncontrollably.

Having finally stabilized his body, Ruan Dadao's fighting spirit was gone. With unwilling eyes, he glanced at the Golden Blade Sect disciples besieged around him, then turned around in pain and escaped toward the battlefield's outskirts. However, the three Second Rank sand monsters wouldn't let their prey escape so easily and pursued him closely.

Meng Zhang was about to fly over to support when Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu flew in from the side, rapidly approaching Ruan Dadao.

Chapter 246: Came to Understand

The Qiaoshou Sect was originally farther away from the Golden Blade Sect compared to the Taiyi Sect, but Meng Zhang had delayed his journey by engaging in a battle with a group of sand monsters. As a result, he fell behind.

Witnessing Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu rushing ahead to reinforce the situation, and about to join forces with Ruan Dadao, Meng Zhang didn't hurry to follow them. Instead, he continued to observe his surroundings, searching for any hidden sand monsters.

Ruan Dadao had been fleeing from three Second Rank sand monsters, but upon seeing Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu flying to his aid, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. The Golden Blade Sect and the Qiaoshou Sect had been long-time allies, and he trusted them.

As the two groups were about to converge, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu suddenly made their move, launching a fierce attack. Several golden needles shot forth directly towards Ruan Dadao.

Caught off guard, Ruan Dadao was struck directly, his face displaying disbelief. He fell from the sky, and the pursuing Second Rank sand monsters pounced on him, enveloping his body in sand and dust.

After ambushing Ruan Dadao, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu didn't linger and immediately turned to fly away. The three Second Rank sand monsters pursued them relentlessly.

Having witnessed everything that had just transpired from a distance, Meng Zhang was left dumbfounded, finding it difficult to process.

The Golden Blade Sect and the Qiaoshou Sect had a close relationship during their time in Twin Success Valley, and they advanced and retreated together. After the fall of Twin Success Valley, the two sects formed a direct alliance, expanding their territories by seizing many regions.

Even after becoming vassals to the Forest Spring Watch, their intimate relationship remained unaffected.

If there was any reason for Ruan Dadao to have reservations about the Qiaoshou Sect, they certainly had no grounds to act against him.

Previously, Meng Zhang had considered dismantling the alliance between the Qiaoshou Sect and the Golden Blade Sect, but he could never have imagined events unfolding in this manner.

Countless thoughts swirled in Meng Zhang's mind, leaving him stunned.

He had been too young and naive, easily swayed by propaganda and slogans. The rhetoric claimed that sand monsters were humanity's enemies and that eradicating them was the righteous cause of the Human Clan. Every Human Clan Cultivator should unite to face the sand monsters together.

However, reality had shown otherwise. First, he was ambushed by Liu Dajin, and the matter was left unresolved. Now, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu had utilized the sand monsters to launch a sneak attack on Ruan Dadao.

What about the so-called righteousness of the Human Clan? Did any of these people truly uphold it?

They spouted endless rhetoric about the righteousness of the Human Clan, crafting slogans that sounded pleasing to the ear. But when it came to action, they pursued their self-interests without any moral boundaries.

To be honest, if it were not for the inability to communicate with sand monsters and their natural hostility towards Human Clan Cultivators, there might have been individuals willing to collude with the sand monsters.

The events that had unfolded recently, coupled with the actions of Aunt Jin and the others, had served as a profound lesson for Meng Zhang.

To hell with their so-called righteousness of the Human Clan! No matter how beautifully Cultivators spoke with their mouths, their actions should prioritize their own interests, resorting to any means necessary.

The Cultivation World was a cutthroat realm, and the lower one's moral threshold, the greater the advantage.

In this moment, Meng Zhang finally awakened to the truth and understood the reality of the Cultivation World.

By the time Meng Zhang had snapped out of his stupor, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu had been chased by the sand monsters to his location, standing before him.

Upon seeing Meng Zhang, both Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu appeared startled.

If they plotted against Ruan Dadao and Meng Zhang found out and spread the news, it would be big trouble. Meng Zhang quickly realized the situation and shouted loudly, "The sand monster horde is powerful, and the entire Golden Blade Sect has been annihilated. Ruan Dadao fell at the hands of the sand monsters."

"We are too late; the situation is irreparable. Let's leave quickly."

Before the words had even settled, Meng Zhang turned around and flew away at full speed, heading towards the rear. He was genuinely afraid that Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu might silence him. Seeing Meng Zhang's fading figure, the Second Rank sand monster continued to chase him closely.

Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu exchanged a glance and flew towards the direction of the Qiaoshou Sect. With their departure, Meng Zhang and the others completely abandoned the disciples of the Golden Blade Sect.

The group of Qi Refining stage disciples fell into the encirclement of the sand monster army, with only one outcome awaiting them. From Ruan Dadao downwards, the entire expedition of the Golden Blade Sect was annihilated, with no one spared.

Meng Zhang was fortunate that the three Second Rank sand monsters were chasing Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu. He successfully returned to where the Taiyi Sect disciples were stationed.

Deep EarthSpirit General returned after chasing the Second Rank sand monster. Despite inflicting severe injuries on its target, the sand monster managed to escape Deep EarthSpirit General's pursuit and returned to the sand monster army.

Deep EarthSpirit General did not dare to venture deep into enemy territory alone and could only temporarily retreat. After returning, it helped the Taiyi Sect disciples completely eliminate the small group of sand monsters.

When Meng Zhang returned, the Taiyi Sect disciples were meditating and healing their injuries. There were over ten injured disciples from Taiyi Sect, and unfortunately, one disciple from the War Hall perished, surrounded and killed by sand monsters when charging into their ranks too slowly.

Upon Meng Zhang's order, all the disciples returned to the flying boat. The disciples who were riding flying mounts had been vigilant and did not participate in the battle. With their protection, the flying boat quickly flew away from the sand monster horde.

Meng Zhang had also learned to conserve his strength. Engaging in a war against sand monsters offered no rewards, so why should Taiyi Sect risk their lives and gain nothing in return?

During the retreat, Meng Zhang received a message talisman from Guang Hong Daoist, instructing him to lead the team to a designated location for a gathering.

By the time the Taiyi Sect's team arrived at the location, the Forest Mountain School and Qiaoshou Sect's teams had already gathered and were waiting in the air for Taiyi Sect's arrival.

As the Taiyi Sect's flying boat approached the other team not too far away, Meng Zhang could clearly see that the Forest Mountain School's team was missing two First Rank flying boats. The remaining boats were riddled with scars, and many cultivators were injured, some even with missing limbs.

Meng Zhang's heart stirred, and he immediately activated a secret technique of Taiyi Sect to adjust his aura. Originally unharmed, he now appeared pale and had an unstable aura, as if he were seriously injured.

Meng Zhang left the Taiyi Sect's flying boat and flew towards the other team. On the leading flying boat, several Foundation Building stage cultivators gathered together, their faces grim.

As Meng Zhang flew into the flying boat, he immediately reversed his true qi and spewed out a mouthful of blood.

"Sect Master Meng, are you alright?" Jin Qigu asked with concern.

"I'm not seriously injured, just a minor injury while being chased by the sand monsters," Meng Zhang said nonchalantly, but his aura revealed that his injuries were far from insignificant.

Chapter 247: Refusing Battle

Aunt Jin glanced at Meng Zhang and said, "Sect Master Meng, you have suffered serious injuries. The three of us received distress signals and went to reinforce the Golden Blade Sect, but we arrived a step too late."

"The Golden Blade Sect's entire force was annihilated under the siege of the sand monster army, and even Brother Ruan didn't manage to escape; unfortunately, he got trapped within the sand monster horde."

"We engaged in a fierce battle against the sand monster army, but we were vastly outnumbered and unable to hold our ground."

"We managed to break free after great difficulty, but got separated from Sect Master Meng."

"Now that we see Sect Master Meng safe and sound, we can finally breathe a sigh of relief."

Upon hearing Aunt Jin's words, Daoist Guang Hong responded sharply, "Who would have expected such a ferocious attack from the sand monster army this time?"

Zhao Jiudou interjected sarcastically, "Your Forest Spring Watch's Sect Master Guang Hui Daoist personally led the army to pursue the sand monster group. I wonder where he chased them to; unexpectedly, such a large group of sand monsters appeared here."

Guang Hong Daoist's expression turned gloomy upon hearing Zhao Jiudou's words, but he remained silent.

Seeing Meng Zhang's puzzled expression, Jin Qigu explained to him:

"After receiving the distress signal from the Golden Blade Sect, Aunt Jin and I went to provide assistance. As for whether the Golden Blade Sect was ambushed by the roaming sand monsters or if they discovered the sand monster nest, leading to the attack, we are unsure."

"The area where the Golden Blade Sect was located was completely occupied by the sand monster army, making it impossible for us to get close."

"After the Golden Blade Sect sent out the distress signal, the Forest Mountain School also suffered a surprise attack from the sand monsters."

"Two Second Rank sand monsters proficient in the Earth Escape Spell sneaked into the vicinity of the Forest Mountain School's camp from underground and launched a sudden assault, targeting Xu Yishan, a Foundation Building stage cultivator."

"Following that, a large group of sand monsters rushed towards the Forest Mountain School's camp."

"If it weren't for the timely reinforcements from Guang Hong Daoist and Zhao Jiudou, the Forest Mountain School would likely have been completely destroyed."

"After a bloody battle, Xu Yishan was severely injured, and Lin Shenpo's injuries were not light either. The Refining Qi stage disciples of the Forest Mountain School suffered heavy casualties."

"After hearing Jin Qigu's account, Meng Zhang recounted the sand monster group's attack on Taiyi Sect."

"Meng Zhang greatly exaggerated the strength of the sand monster group that raided Taiyi Sect. Taiyi Sect also suffered considerable losses, and the Deep Earth Spirit General was critically injured and now immobilized."

Originally, Guang Hong Daoist had planned to rally cultivators from the three sects and launch a counterattack against the sand monsters. However, after hearing Meng Zhang's account, he realized that both Taiyi Sect and Forest Mountain School were severely damaged, and a counterattack was out of the question.

Looking at the gloomy sky and the raging sandstorms from the flying vessel, which indicated the marauding sand monster army, Guang Hong Daoist could only order everyone to retreat together, temporarily avoiding the full force of the sand monster army. At the same time, he used a secret method to contact Forest Spring Watch's Sect Master Guang Hui Daoist, requesting reinforcements.

Guang Hong Daoist, leading the army alone, felt quite frustrated with this situation.

With the joint forces of the three sects retreating, Liu Family's mountain gate was left completely exposed to the sand monster army. The sand monsters besieged Liu Family's mountain gate and began launching probing attacks.

The three sects were preoccupied and naturally had no strength left to support Liu Family.

Guang Hong Daoist and Zhao Jiudou could only hope that Liu Family's mountain protection great formation could hold on a bit longer, allowing them to endure until Guang Hui Daoist's reinforcements arrived.

Considering Liu Family's attitude, Aunt Jin and the others certainly didn't care much about Liu Family's fate. As for Meng Zhang, he even hoped that the sand monster army would take Liu Family's mountain gate and exterminate Liu Family entirely.

After discussing the next strategic plan, everyone dispersed. Meng Zhang left the flying boat and returned to his own team. The flying boats of the three sects dispersed to avoid being surrounded by the sand monster army together. However, they remained relatively close, maintaining a distance that allowed them to assist each other if needed.

Not long after Meng Zhang returned to the Taiyi Sect's flying boat, Jin Qigu came to visit. Jin Qigu claimed to discuss coordinated operations and stood with Meng Zhang at the bow of the flying boat to chat.

After some small talk, Jin Qigu began to probe whether Meng Zhang had seen the circumstances of Ruan Dadao's death. Meng Zhang pretended to be confused at this moment, stating that when Ruan Dadao was surrounded by sand monsters, he was too far away to rescue him in time and could only watch as Ruan Dadao was besieged and killed by the sand monsters.

Listening to Meng Zhang's words, Jin Qigu stared at him for a while and then revealed some private information. He mentioned that Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect were closely related, and some Qiaoshou Sect female disciples had married into the Golden Blade Sect. Over the years, Qiaoshou Sect had established reliable sources of information within the Golden Blade Sect.

It was revealed that Ruan Dadao colluded with the demonic beings from the Yellow Lotus Sect and leaked Jin Qiao'er's whereabouts, leading to the ambush near Firewell Market. Jin Qigu then specifically urged Meng Zhang not to disclose this information. Ruan Dadao was already dead, and it was best to preserve his reputation for the sake of the Golden Blade Sect.

With the mid-Foundation Building stage leader Ruan Dadao gone, the Golden Blade Sect could not solely rely on the Refining Qi stage disciples to defend its foundation. The decline of the Golden Blade Sect was now inevitable. Their territories, as well as the territories they had seized during expansion, had become attractive targets.

While Forest Spring Watch would likely claim the largest and most valuable piece, if Qiaoshou Sect and Taiyi Sect joined forces, they could still secure a smaller portion. The alliance between Qiaoshou Sect and the Taiyi Sect could not be maintained with the weakened Golden Blade Sect as an ally. They should support each other and share both prosperity and adversity in the future.

In terms of benefits, Qiaoshou Sect would follow Taiyi Sect's lead. Meng Zhang looked at Jin Qigu, remaining silent for a long time. Many years ago, he deliberately befriended Qiaoshou Sect to alleviate the pressure they and the Golden Blade Sect posed to Taiyi Sect. He had never anticipated that things would develop to this extent.

Even if the Golden Blade Sect were not to be destroyed this time, it could no longer retain its former status and interests. Fate had brought Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect together to become

allies. Regardless of the reliability of Jin Qigu's promises or the trustworthiness of Qiaoshou Sect as an ally, Taiyi Sect undeniably needed an ally.

Originally a small and inconspicuous sect, Taiyi Sect gradually rose after Meng Zhang became the Sect Master. With insufficient overall accumulation and a lack of connections, they were easily isolated. Having Qiaoshou Sect, even if not entirely reliable, as an ally would help Taiyi Sect make up for its shortcomings. Both sects had complementary strengths, and Taiyi Sect genuinely needed Qiaoshou Sect as an ally.

With determination, Meng Zhang agreed to form an alliance with Qiaoshou Sect. However, this alliance was only verbal; no formal agreement or detailed arrangements were made. Both sects were vassals of Forest Spring Watch, so it was best not to arouse suspicion and let them get too close, though a closer relationship was acceptable as long as Forest Spring Watch didn't discover their alliance.

Chapter 248: Sinking

After Jin Qigu left, Meng Zhang also understood the situation. Firstly, after the decline of the Golden Blade Sect, the Qiaoshou Sect indeed needed to seek new allies. Secondly, Jin Qigu and her companions were probably worried about the possibility of their involvement in plotting against Ruan Dadao being exposed.

In the Cultivation World, many things can be done but not spoken of. If this matter were to be known, not only would the Qiaoshou Sect gain a bad reputation for scheming against an ally, but they would also face blame from the Forest Spring Watch and pay a hefty price. Meng Zhang had no intention of revealing this matter, as Ruan Dadao had no personal connection to him, so why should he engage in actions that harm others but not himself?

Now, the best outcome had come to pass: the Golden Blade Sect was on the verge of destruction, and the Qiaoshou Sect and Taiyi Sect had finally come together. Having decided to preserve their strength during this war, Meng Zhang did not actively engage the sand monsters.

Not only Meng Zhang and the Deep Earth Spirit General, but also many elite disciples of the Taiyi Sect, feigned serious injuries and hid inside the flying boats, not going out to confront the sand monsters.

Under the leadership of Guang Hong Daoist, the joint forces of the three sects neither actively attacked the sand monsters nor left the area. They kept a distant watch on the movements of the sand monster army.

While the Liu Family's mountain gate was surrounded by the sand monster army, most of the sand monster's forces were focused on monitoring the three sects. Only a small part of the sand monsters could be spared to attempt an attack on Liu Family's mountain gate.

Liu Family's Patriarch, Liu Dahai, fought with all his might, personally leading the family to support and defend the mountain's great formation. The protective formation that Liu Family had painstakingly cultivated for hundreds of years was as solid as Mount Tai and remained unshaken during the sand monster attacks.

At the same time, Liu Dahai sent urgent messages for help to Guang HongDaoist's side, but he received no response. In desperation, he even directly sent a plea for assistance to the Flying Swan Sect.

Guang HongDaoist wasn't really ignoring Liu Dahai's pleas; he simply didn't want to engage in a battle with the sand monsters until the reinforcements arrived, to avoid another defeat. Furthermore, Liu Family's mountain gate seemed to be holding up well, so there was no need to rush.

However, from the Taiyi Sect's side, after a period of research, the Deep EarthSpirit General and Wen Qiansun finally understood the jade pendant on Liu Dajin's body completely. Deep EarthSpirit General modified a low-level charm on the jade pendant. Even if Liu Family revoked the pendant's access, he could still open the entrance to Liu Family's mountain gate's protective formation.

After learning about this, Meng Zhang called Deep EarthSpirit General aside for a secret discussion. Later that night, Deep EarthSpirit General quietly left the Taiyi Sect's group and sneaked towards Liu Family's mountain gate.

During this time, Deep EarthSpirit General had been pretending to be seriously injured and had not shown himself. Now that Liu Family's mountain gate was surrounded by the sand monster army, which included individuals skilled in the Earth Escape Spell, not even Meng Zhang was confident enough to sneak into the vicinity of Liu Family's mountain gate without alerting the sand monsters.

Deep EarthSpirit General had a unique talent in earth-based spells and had a special connection with the earth. With his wealth of experience, he volunteered to approach Meng Zhang and assured him that he had enough confidence to sneak near the target.

As Deep EarthSpirit General set off, Meng Zhang couldn't help but feel worried. He occasionally walked to the front of the flying boat and gazed in the direction of Liu Family's mountain gate.

In the darkness, the glow emitted by Liu Family's mountain gate's protective formation was particularly eye-catching. On the vast desert, the distant Liu Family's mountain gate appeared like a candle in the dark.

No one knew how much time had passed when the glow outside Liu Family's mountain gate suddenly flickered rapidly and then completely extinguished.

Guang HongDaoist had arranged for people to take turns on watch, constantly monitoring the movements of the sand monsters. The abnormal situation at the Liu Family's mountain gate was quickly reported to Guang HongDaoist. He promptly stopped his cultivation in the cabin and hurriedly came out, gazing in the direction of the Liu Family's mountain gate with a worried expression on his face.

He urgently summoned the leaders of three other sects to discuss how to respond to the situation. When everyone had gathered, the changes at the Liu Family's mountain gate became even more apparent. As Foundation Building cultivators, they could all use some long-range observation spells, allowing them to discern some details even in the darkness of the night.

Countless sand monsters were crazily surging toward the Liu Family's mountain gate, easily bypassing the protective formation and rushing up the mountain. Whether it was due to a problem with Liu Family's protective formation or some secret technique employed by the sand monsters, the mountain gate's protection didn't seem to offer much resistance.

Helplessly, they watched as the sand monsters rampaged and completely overwhelmed the Liu Family's mountain gate, causing the faces of everyone present to pale.

Guang HongDaoist felt uneasy. First, he had been attacked by sand monsters during the expedition, leading to the complete annihilation of the Golden Blade Sect team. And now, the Liu Family's mountain gate was falling right before his eyes. How would he explain this to his Senior Brother, the Sect Master? How could he maintain his prestige within the sect in the future?

The thought of Liu Family being wiped out while he stood by made Guang HongDaoist anxious. He looked around and cautiously suggested, "Everyone, the Liu Family is under siege by the sand monsters. We can't just stand idly by."

"Why don't we try to rush out together and see if we can disperse the sand monsters and save Liu Family?"

Hearing his proposal, everyone's faces showed hesitation. Xu Yishan and Deep Earth Spirit General were seriously injured and could hardly move. Lin Shenpo and Meng Zhang had not fully recovered from their injuries. Even if they reluctantly joined the fight, they probably couldn't exert their full combat strength.

Only Zhao Jiudou, Guang HongDaoist, Aunt Jin, and Jin Qigu remained uninjured at the Foundation Building level. But charging into such a massive army of sand monsters would be akin to throwing themselves into a tiger's den.

Among the sand monsters on the other side, there were at least six or seven known Second Rank sand monsters, not to mention the numerous First Rank sand monsters.

While Foundation Building cultivators could easily defeat most Second Rank magical beasts, facing the fearless and ferocious Second Rank sand monsters might not guarantee victory.

Nobody present wanted to risk their lives to rescue the unrelated Liu Family. However, they refrained from voicing their opposition to Guang HongDaoist due to his position and influence within the affiliated sects.

Meng Zhang, who had secretly caused trouble, felt particularly uneasy.

Seeing the awkward silence, Zhao Jiudou lightly coughed and spoke, "The enemy's situation is unclear. If we act rashly and suffer another defeat, it may harm the overall situation."

"Moreover, we are too far from the Liu Family's mountain gate. By the time we get there, the sand monsters will have already annihilated Liu Family and will turn their attention to us."

Chapter 249: Rushing

Zhao Jiudou was the first to speak, and Aunt Jin quickly chimed in, with everyone joining in to persuade Daoist Guang Hong to change his decision to launch an attack. Daoist Guang Hong appeared to be responsive to their suggestions, but skillfully avoided making any commitment to attack.

Zhao Jiudou from the Flying Swan Sect was the first to propose the idea of not rescuing Liu Family, and everyone else concurred. In the future, when this matter was mentioned, Daoist Guang Hong could use this as an excuse to evade responsibility.

Subsequently, everyone remained vigilant and kept watch towards the direction of the Liu Family's mountain gate. Fortunately, after the sand monster army engulfed the Liu Family's mountain gate, they did not continue their assault towards the three sects' locations, allowing everyone to breathe a sigh of relief.

At daybreak, everyone returned to their respective sects. The teams of the three sects remained on high alert, keeping a close eye on the movements of the sand monster army.

When Meng Zhang returned to the flying boat of the Taiyi Sect, the Deep EarthSpirit General had already arrived much earlier. The Deep EarthSpirit General then detailed his actions from the previous night.

Under the cover of darkness, the Deep EarthSpirit General stealthily infiltrated the vicinity of Liu Family's mountain gate. Taking advantage of the Liu Family cultivators' attention being drawn by the sand monsters, he used the jade pendant that granted passage and opened a breach in the protective mountain formation of Liu Family's mountain gate. The sand monsters patrolling nearby immediately noticed the breach and swarmed inside.

By the time the Liu Family cultivators noticed the breach and attempted to close it, it was already too late. The influx of sand monsters had already damaged various nodes of the protective formation, rendering it completely ineffective in stopping the sand monsters.

Given the strength of the Liu Family cultivators, with the protective formation breached and facing the swarming sand monsters, there was only one outcome.

When the Deep EarthSpirit General left, the entire Liu Family's mountain gate had been occupied by the sand monsters, and there was no one left inside who could escape. Liu Family had been wiped out, and Meng Zhang had taken his revenge for his fallen comrades.

In the alliance of the three sects, tension spread after the fall of Liu Family. Aunt Jin even suggested to Daoist Guang Hong whether they should retreat first and disengage from the sand monster army.

While Daoist Guang Hong hesitated, reinforcements finally arrived. Led by Daoist Guang Hui, the combined forces of Forest Spring Watch and Shi Family were supposed to arrive much earlier but were delayed by a group of sand monsters' interception on the way.

Once Daoist Guang Hui arrived, without any delay, he immediately gathered all the Foundation Building cultivators in the team. After a period of recuperation, both Meng Zhang and the Deep EarthSpirit General should have recovered from their injuries.

When the two of them arrived at the command flying boat of Forest Spring Watch, they found that all Foundation Building cultivators were already present. Even Xu Yishan, who was seriously injured, attended despite his condition.

Daoist Guang Hui didn't dwell on the failures of the past; he went straight to the point and began organizing the battle plan. Forest Spring Watch's team stood in the center, while the teams of the other three sects and the Shi Family were arranged on the left and right flanks.

All teams advanced in unison, forming a solid wall pushing towards the sand monster army. The battle plan was simple but practical, perfectly suited to the situation at hand.

When all forces' teams are mixed together, it will actually affect their coordination, hindering them from fully exerting their combat power.

Guang HuiDaoist is a decisive figure. After making the arrangements, he sends everyone back to prepare for battle. Once he gives the order, they will immediately take action.

Before leaving, Guang HuiDaoist, with a fierce aura, says, "Any sect's team that performs poorly in battle and retreats without fighting, do not blame me for being merciless."

At this moment, Guang HuiDaoist's killing intent is evident, displaying the imposing manner of a Sect Master. Including Meng Zhang, everyone obeys without the slightest hesitation.

Shortly after Meng Zhang returns to the team of the sect, he starts to mobilize the troops and prepares for the upcoming battle.

After about half an hour, Guang HuiDaoist takes the lead and flies ahead with most of the Foundation Building stage cultivators from Forest Spring Watch. The other forces' Foundation Building stage cultivators fly near Guang HuiDaoist, all gathered together.

Behind Sect Master Guang HuiDaoist are Guang QuanDaoist, Guang DeDaoist, Guang RuiDaoist, and Guang HongDaoist. Following them are Gu Tanghai, Shi Weida, Shi Changqing, Zhao Jiudou, Lin Shenpo, Aunt Jin, Jin Qigu, Meng Zhang, and Deep Earth Spirit General.

In total, there are fourteen Foundation Building stage cultivators. In the entire Endless Sea of Sand, except for the Flying Swan Sect, no other sect can display such a scene.

Guang HuiDaoist leads everyone, flying fearlessly towards the sand monster army ahead. The flying teams of several forces follow behind.

The sand monster army must have already noticed the human side's movement. This time, they don't retreat but directly confront the humans.

An array of eight Second Rank sand monsters, with swirling sandstorms, charges toward the fourteen human Foundation Building stage cultivators.

The two sides, advancing at high speeds, soon collide. The point of impact is like a volcanic eruption, with hurricane-like winds and violent shockwaves spreading in all directions, raising clouds of dust.

In a battle against the sand monsters, no one dares to hold back their strength. Everyone goes all out. Second Rank sand monsters not only possess combat power on par with ordinary Foundation Building stage cultivators but are also insanely fierce, not caring about their own lives.

Scenes of them self-destructing along with human cultivators or dying together with humans are not uncommon.

Flying swords dart around, magic tools go haywire, and spells bombard the sky, turning it into chaos.

Soldiers against soldiers, generals against generals, after the human Foundation Building stage cultivators clash with the Second Rank sand monsters, the flying teams of the allied forces also arrive near the battlefield and are about to engage with the sand monster army.

The flying ships lower their altitude, and Refining Qi stage cultivators leap down from the ships, forming formations to face the enemy.

As soon as the allied forces finish arranging their formations, the sand monster army launches an offensive charge.

Waves of sand monsters crash upon the formation of human cultivators like violent waves in the sea.

A fierce and bloody battle erupts immediately.

Xu Yishan's injuries have not healed, making him unable to participate in the Foundation Building level battle. At this moment, he commands his Refining Qi stage subordinates to face the enemy, enduring his injuries and occasionally launching an attack to help relieve the pressure on his disciples.

In the high sky, Lin Bailin patrols around, monitoring the situation below to prevent any unexpected circumstances.

Being at the Foundation Building stage not long ago, he serves as a reserve force, not directly participating in the two major battles, but responsible for monitoring the battlefield.

Chapter 250: Entrance

The fierce battle raged on the battlefield, and both sides, the sand monsters and human cultivators, suffered heavy casualties. However, the sand monsters lacked intelligence, acting solely on instinct, showing no fear or concern for their losses. On the other hand, due to strict orders before the battle, the human cultivators gritted their teeth and pressed forward without anyone daring to retreat.

After a bitter struggle, the balance in the sky slowly began to tilt in favor of the human cultivators. The number of Second Rank sand monsters was far fewer than that of the human side, and as time passed, they gradually fell behind.

At the cost of two lightly injured individuals, the human cultivators managed to eliminate two sand monsters. Just at this moment, Lin Bailin, who was monitoring the battlefield from the sky, noticed that another Second Rank sand monster had flown out from the entrance of the Liu Family's mountain gate.

Worried that this new Second Rank sand monster might impact the situation on both battlefields, Lin Bailin took the initiative to meet it. Before engaging in the battle, Lin Bailin sensed that the opponent's Second Rank sand monster had an unstable aura, as if it had recently advanced.

Suddenly, Lin Bailin remembered a rumor he had heard before. Within the Endless Sea of Sand, whenever a spirit vein occupied by sand monsters was depleted, it would quickly wither and become desolate. Human cultivators speculated that sand monsters possessed a special ability to forcibly extract the essence from spirit veins, using it to elevate their own levels and strength, ultimately rendering the spirit vein useless.

Lin Bailin transmitted his speculation through a messaging flying talisman and then confronted the Second Rank sand monster.

Meanwhile, Guang Hui Daoist, who was currently in a disadvantageous position, received Lin Bailin's message via the talisman. He took a moment to read it carefully. Glancing around, he saw that Meng Zhang and Deep Earth Spirit General had just dealt a heavy blow to a Second Rank sand monster before Aunt Jin seized the opportunity to kill it.

The human cultivators now held an absolute advantage and could spare some manpower.

"Sect Master Meng, please go with your Deep Earth to Liu Family's mountain gate and investigate whether there are sand monsters extracting the essence of the spirit veins for their advancement," Guang HuiDaoist commanded.

Meng Zhang wasted no time and immediately set off with Deep Earth Spirit General.

Leaving the battlefield behind, they flew towards the direction of Liu Family's mountain gate. Not long after, another Second Rank sand monster was killed, making the human side's advantage even more apparent.

The remaining Second Rank sand monsters, instead of fighting to the end as before, began to retreat. Guang HuiDaoist led the others in pursuit and ordered, "Aunt Jin, go and support Sect Master Meng and prevent any unexpected incidents."

Following his orders, Aunt Jin flew towards Liu Family's mountain gate.

Meng Zhang and Deep Earth Spirit General flew swiftly and soon arrived below the tall mountain where Liu Family's mountain gate was located. The vicinity of the mountain was now devoid of life except for the sand monsters, mainly First Rank ones, trying to stop their approach. With casual gestures, the duo easily eliminated these sand monsters.

Inside and outside Liu Family's mountain gate, there were scattered and incomplete corpses. Unlike human cultivators who collected various spoils of war, the sand monsters did not gather any treasures. Around the corpses, there were numerous storage bags. Upon seeing them, Meng Zhang and Deep Earth would pick them up and, after a quick inspection, place valuable items into their own storage magic tools without delaying their progress.

After they cleared the sand monsters they encountered along the way, they arrived at the Spirit Vein. Without detailed examination, they could judge from the aura that the Liu Family's original Second Rank Spirit Vein had degraded to a First Rank Spirit Vein. Meng Zhang and the Deep Earth Spirit General utilized the Earth Escape Spell to travel underground and reached the location of the Liu Family's Spirit Vein's spiritual eye.

At this location, several sand monsters were in the process of advancing in rank. Of course, even with the extraction of the essence of the Spirit Vein, the sand monsters' promotion was not guaranteed. If Meng Zhang and the Deep Earth Spirit General arrived a little later, it might have led to the appearance of two more Second Rank sand monsters.

Without hesitation, the two immediately took action and eradicated all the sand monsters in the midst of promotion. With the most significant threat eliminated, Meng Zhang felt considerably relieved. He tossed his storage ring to the Deep Earth Spirit General, instructing him to search for the Liu Family's treasury and the Hidden Scripture Pavilion.

Then, they split up, with the Deep Earth Spirit General heading straight for Liu Family's treasury while Meng Zhang sought out sand monsters near the Spirit Vein and eliminated them one by one. Many sand monsters were parasitically attached to the Liu Family's Spirit Vein, recklessly drawing its essence to enhance their own power. As Meng Zhang progressed, these sand monsters, which were absorbing the Spirit Vein's essence, offered little resistance and were easily slain.

Even if some sand monsters attempted to counterattack in time, they were powerless against Meng Zhang as long as there were no Second Rank sand monsters present. Before Meng Zhang could

finish eliminating the surrounding sand monsters, Aunt Jin also arrived at the scene. The two searched carefully and expended considerable effort to locate and kill all the sand monsters.

After exterminating all the sand monsters, they returned to the surface. Due to their timely intervention, they halted the sand monsters' actions, resulting in Liu Family's Second Rank Spirit Vein only degrading to a First Rank Spirit Vein instead of being completely destroyed. Shortly after Meng Zhang and Aunt Jin's return to the surface, Guang Hong Daoist arrived flying from a distance.

According to Guang Hong Daoist, Guang Hui Daoist was leading others to pursue and exterminate the remaining Second Rank sand monsters. Guang Hong Daoist came to support Meng Zhang and his companions. Meng Zhang informed Guang Hong Daoist that all the sand monsters near the Spirit Vein had already been eradicated. Guang Hong Daoist praised Meng Zhang before proceeding into the interior of Liu Family.

Guang Hong Daoist had an unspoken task, which was to take over everything in Liu Family. Since Liu Family had been annihilated by the sand monsters, the inheritance left behind should naturally belong to Forest Spring Watch, who had recaptured Liu Family's mountain gate. To prevent any objections from the Flying Swan Sect, Guang Hui Daoist was pursuing the sand monsters with Zhao Jiudou while Guang Hong Daoist came here first to search for valuable items.

Guang Hong Daoist first arrived at Liu Family's treasury. The entrance to the treasury was in ruins, with broken bodies lying all over the ground. It seemed that the Liu Family cultivators had defended this place, hoping to withstand the sand monsters' attacks with the prohibition and sturdy architecture. However, they were unsuccessful and perished here. The treasury was filled with scattered and disorderly items.

Without Guang Hong Daoist saying a word, Meng Zhang and Aunt Jin found an excuse to leave, leaving Guang Hong Daoist alone in the treasury. After working hard to clear the sand monsters from this place, Guang Hong Daoist was now eager to pick the fruits of his labor. The treasury was filled with numerous items and was in disarray, requiring Guang Hong Daoist to spend a lot of time cleaning it up.