

Sect Master 311

Chapter 311: Continuous Consumption

At this point, Guang HuiDaoist regretted it all, but it was meaningless. The spiritual energy of the spirit vein was about to completely cut off, and in order to maintain the operation of the mountain protection great formation, they had to start consuming spirit stones. The vast storage of spirit stones in Forest Spring Watch's treasury was opened, and all the stored spirit stones were taken out.

As a Gold Core sect, Forest Spring Watch should have been wealthy with its extensive territory. However, in reality, despite their vast holdings, Forest Spring Watch had significant expenses. In this Endless Sea of Sand, resources were scarce, and the purchasing power of spirit stones was limited. Sects like Forest Spring Watch would seize any opportunity to convert spirit stones into various cultivation resources. The stored spirit stones in the sect were not many, just enough to maintain the normal functioning of the sect.

After urgent counting, there were less than thirty thousand low-grade spirit stones and about a hundred middle-grade spirit stones in the treasury. With the support of the spirit vein lost, just maintaining the mountain protection great formation would require consuming over a thousand low-grade spirit stones every day. If the enemy attacked the great formation at this time, the consumption of spirit stones would be even faster.

Furthermore, without the spiritual energy provided by the spirit vein, all cultivators in Forest Spring Watch needed to consume spirit stones to absorb enough spiritual energy to maintain their combat power.

With Forest Spring Watch's reserves of spirit stones, they could support themselves for a maximum of one month. After that, not only would the mountain protection great formation be unable to continue, but the cultivation bases of the sect's cultivators would also be affected.

As for issues like the collapse of the spirit field within the mountain gate and the depletion of spiritual springs due to the spirit vein's collapse, people had long abandoned any thoughts of addressing them.

Under Guang HuiDaoist's orders, the use of spirit stones in the sect was prioritized to ensure the operation of the mountain protection great formation. He summoned the Foundation Building stage cultivators of the sect to discuss the next course of action.

Azure Bamboo proposed a plan for everyone to scatter and escape, taking as many people as possible to safety. However, he was met with strong opposition from other cultivators in Forest Spring Watch. With Green Bamboo Mountain already extinct and only a few cultivators left within Forest Spring Watch's mountain gate, they knew that escaping was not a feasible option. With hundreds of Refining Qi stage cultivators and their mortal relatives in the sect, it was nearly impossible to escape from the enemy's pursuit.

Azure Bamboo, being an outsider and lacking support, did not dare to argue with them and had to keep quiet. In his heart, he deeply regretted everything. If it wasn't for his betrayal of Flying Swan Sect, not only would they have avoided this catastrophe, they might have already become victors, sharing the inheritance of Forest Spring Watch.

However, there was no turning back now. It was not the right time to treat Azure Bamboo too harshly since he still had value as a Foundation Building stage cultivator.

After some apparent reprimands from Guang HuiDaoist towards his fellow sect members, he comforted Azure Bamboo.

The youngest among them, Lin Bailin, suggested making a full-scale attack while the news of the spirit vein's collapse hadn't spread widely among the Refining Qi stage disciples. He proposed confronting the enemy head-on and engaging in a decisive battle. Guang RuiDaoist supported this radical idea, while the conservative Guang YuanDaoist strongly opposed it.

Guang YuanDaoist believed in delaying as much as possible, hoping that Guang ZhiDaoist Master would return soon. With his return, all the problems would be resolved.

The disagreement escalated into a heated debate, with other members of the sect taking sides and joining the argument.

Guang HuiDaoist, watching the ongoing dispute, felt conflicted. After several failed calculations during the conflicts with Meng Zhang and others, he had lost confidence in his own strategies and hesitated to make any decision.

Meanwhile, outside the great formation, Meng Zhang and his group were sharp enough to notice the changes. After successfully severing the earth veins and destroying the spirit vein, Deep EarthSpirit General and Wen Qiansun joined forces outside Forest Spring Watch's mountain gate.

All eight Foundation Building stage cultivators gathered, flying into the air to attack the mountain protection great formation from a distance. Meng Zhang wielded the Golden Crow Lantern, releasing the Sun's true fire. Each spark of Mars sprinkled onto the outer water curtain of the Azure Wood Torrent Great Formation, burning large holes. Though the flowing water immediately repaired these holes, a significant amount of spiritual energy was consumed.

At this time, Shocking Thunder had healed his injuries by refining the Thunder Essence continuously. Not only did he mend his severed arm, but he also fully recovered from his wounds.

In his playful nature, he soared into the sky, holding a bundle of thunder and hurling it downward. Lightning sparkled as it struck the mountain protection great formation, creating a massive gap. The great formation quickly operated, and the water curtain flowed swiftly to repair the breach.

Each Foundation Building stage cultivator displayed their abilities, launching various attacks on the mountain protection great formation, causing ripples and creating even more breaches. The cultivators responsible for the great formation were somewhat flustered, swiftly using its power to repair the damage.

Meng Zhang and the others were wise enough not to get too close to the great formation but attacked from a distance, consuming the great formation's power as much as possible.

Both Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect had made ample preparations, with an abundant supply of true qi-restoring pills and spirit stones. Their endurance was strong, and any true qi consumed could be promptly replenished. Over the course of a few days, Meng Zhang and his group attacked and retreated repeatedly, continually depleting the great formation's power. To maintain the mountain protection great formation's normal operation, Forest Spring Watch consumed far more spirit stones than they had anticipated.

At this rate of consumption, Forest Spring Watch would not last even a month. The Foundation Building stage cultivators of the sect were embroiled in intense debates, unable to reach a unified decision, leaving Guang HuiDaoist unable to make a decision either.

Chapter 312: Forced to Attack

Guang HuiDaoist received the news from Azure Bamboo too late, leaving him with hardly any time for adequate preparation. The preparations were severely insufficient, and Forest Spring Watch was not ready for a major battle at all. Now, the difference between being prepared for war and unprepared is becoming evident. After hesitating for many days, and seeing the rapid depletion of spiritual stones in the mountain protection great formation, Guang HuiDaoist finally made the ultimate decision.

He decided to adopt Lin Bailin's suggestion and leave the mountain protection great formation voluntarily before the spiritual stones were completely depleted. He would engage the enemy in a life-and-death battle. In his view, the strength gap between the two sides was not significant, and they had the power to fight.

The disciples of Forest Spring Watch secretly mobilized and began assembling. When Meng Zhang and others completed an attack and returned to recover their true qi, the mountain protection great formation suddenly closed. Seven Foundation Building stage cultivators from Forest Spring Watch actively flew out, followed by seven hundred Refining Qi stage disciples who formed a simple formation and rushed down from the mountain.

Seeing this scene, Meng Zhang and others stopped their actions and turned to face the disciples of Forest Spring Watch. During the attack on the mountain protection great formation, both sides had held back their strength, consuming only a small portion of their true qi, preserving most of their combat power.

Realizing the enemy's move, they immediately knew that Forest Spring Watch was risking everything and launching a counterattack. Everyone quickly swallowed pills to recover their true qi and mobilized their true qi while making use of the medicinal power.

Wen Qiansun left the group of eight people and flew towards the group of Refining Qi stage cultivators from the other two sects. After completing their excavation tasks, the Refining Qi stage cultivators from the two sects had not been idle and were continuously practicing how to coordinate in battle. When Meng Zhang and the Foundation Building stage cultivators attacked the mountain gate of Forest Spring Watch, the Refining Qi stage cultivators from the two sects were already prepared for battle.

Wen Qiansun returned to the group of Taiyi Sect disciples and personally commanded them, setting up a Qiankun Revolving Formation. Among the crowd of Qiaoshou Sect disciples, under the command of a few Refining Qi late-stage disciples, they set up the Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers Formation. The two formations were not far apart and were positioned to support and complement each other.

In the sky, the Foundation Building stage cultivators from both sides flew towards each other, beginning their individual duels. On the ground, all the Refining Qi stage disciples of Forest Spring Watch formed a simple formation and charged relentlessly towards the enemy.

Just before they were about to engage with the enemy, Forest Spring Watch made its move. By gathering the power of many cultivators into the formation, they released twelve powerful talismans simultaneously.

Twelve huge figures descended from the sky, landing in the middle of both formations. These were combat puppets summoned through Second Rank talismans, possessing formidable strength.

The First Rank puppet summoning talismans could only produce low combat strength puppets with brute force and agility, suitable for basic tasks. However, the Second Rank combat puppet summoning talismans produced giants around ten zhang tall, possessing immense strength and being highly resistant to low-level spells. In a large-scale battle involving Refining Qi stage cultivators, these combat puppets served as a sturdy backbone, charging recklessly and dealing powerful blows that were difficult to withstand.

A total of twelve Second Rank combat puppets were summoned, in addition to seven Second Rank combat puppets that rushed out from among the disciples of Forest Spring Watch, swiftly pouncing on the opposing enemy.

As a sect with a heritage of several hundred years, Forest Spring Watch had accumulated a considerable amount of resources, especially after becoming the dominant force in this region. Despite not being fully prepared for war, they still managed to bring out some powerful trump cards from their treasury.

Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect had made thorough war preparations in advance and had full support from Flying Swan Sect, enabling them to also bring out many powerful trump cards. Similar Second Rank combat puppet summoning talismans were released, and ten combat puppets appeared in front of the disciples of the two sects, rushing toward the disciples of Forest Spring Watch.

Five Second Rank puppets emerged and stood in front of the disciples of the two sects, blocking the charge of the seven Second Rank puppets from Forest Spring Watch. Forest Spring Watch, as a Gold Core sect, had indeed gathered quite a few powerful resources. In contrast, Taiyi Sect's Refining Qi stage disciples were outnumbered and were considered the weaker link by Forest Spring Watch.

However, it should not be forgotten that among Taiyi Sect's Refining Qi stage disciples, there was Wen Qiansun, a Foundation Building stage cultivator, commanding them. The Qiankun Revolving Formation began to operate, and its power infused into Wen Qiansun.

Wen Qiansun wielded his armor-piercing blade and lightly slashed at one of the Second Rank puppets resembling a tiger. Though the Second Rank puppet had the killing power of a Foundation Building stage cultivator, it was no match for a cultivator with intelligence in actual combat. Especially when Wen Qiansun had the support of the formation's power.

With a single flash of the blade, the tiger-like Second Rank puppet was cut into two and fell motionless on the ground. Another bear-like Second Rank puppet charged toward the formation of Taiyi Sect's disciples.

A purple-gold shield descended from the sky, precisely blocking the path of the puppet's charge. The bear puppet crashed into the shield and sent it flying, halting its advance.

At this moment, Wen Qiansun had restored his qi and continued to wield the armor-piercing blade, slashing towards the bear puppet.

On the side of Qiaoshou Sect cultivators, although there was no Foundation Building stage cultivator leading them, they had plenty of good resources. Several Refining Qi late-stage disciples worked together to unleash a scroll, from which a golden needle shadow flew out. Wherever the golden needle shadow passed, both Second Rank puppets and Second Rank combat puppets were easily pierced, causing the puppets to break down and the combat puppets to disappear.

Both Forest Spring Watch and the allied forces of the two sects were using all means at their disposal, bringing out many powerful trump cards. Some of these methods even posed a threat to Foundation Building stage cultivators. If a few Foundation Building stage cultivators were surrounded by this group of Refining Qi stage cultivators and were not careful, they could truly face deadly danger.

In the sky, both sides had seven Foundation Building stage cultivators each, seemingly fair, but the difference in strength was too significant. Forest Spring Watch only had Guang HuiDaoist and Guang RuiDaoist, both at the middle stage of Foundation Building, while Meng Zhang's side had a total of four middle-stage Foundation Building cultivators. A middle-stage Foundation Building cultivator held overwhelming advantages against an early-stage Foundation Building cultivator.

Moreover, Meng Zhang himself was a renowned genius cultivator, having inherited the legacy of Taiyi Sect during its prime. Deep Earth Spirit General and Shocking Thunder Spirit General had previously possessed the power of Gold Core stage.

Chapter 313: Third-order Talisman

Of course, Guang HuiDaoist dares to take the initiative in the battle because he has his own trump cards. Originally, Guang ZhiDaoist Master consumed a large amount of precious materials to refine three Third Rank symbols. During the previous battle, Guang HuiDaoist thought victory was assured, so as a precaution, he only brought two of them, keeping the most powerful Third Rank symbol safely stored in the treasury.

Now, it is a life-and-death battle that will determine the fate of Forest Spring Watch. Guang HuiDaoist has no reservations and brings out this Third Rank symbol. He fully activates the true qi in his body, preparing to release the power of the talisman. However, a scene caught his eye that almost made him lose control of his true qi.

Azure Bamboo, a Foundation Building stage cultivator, who was flying at the back of the team, unexpectedly didn't confront the enemy but turned and fled towards the distance. Little did Azure Bamboo know that Guang HuiDaoist had a hidden Third Rank symbol as his trump card. After careful consideration and analysis, Azure Bamboo believed that the power gap between the two sides was too significant, and they were bound to lose. After hearing about the destruction of Green Bamboo Mountain by the Flying Swan Sect, Azure Bamboo initially felt extreme grief and regret. He wanted to rush to the Flying Swan Sect and engage in a life-and-death battle with their cultivators.

However, as time passed, his pain gradually lessened, and his thoughts began to change. With the destruction of Green Bamboo Mountain, he, as the Sect Master who had been devoted to the sect for half of his life, strangely felt a sense of liberation. No longer burdened with the worries of Green Bamboo Mountain's legacy and the painstaking management of the sect, he felt relieved and inexplicably light. Green Bamboo Mountain was gone, but Azure Bamboo was still alive. From that

moment on, he decided to live for himself. Why should he invest himself in a battle where defeat was certain? This was not his fight, and he had no reason to be involved.

Azure Bamboo believed he wasn't the primary target of the enemy's pursuit, and if he escaped promptly, he had a good chance of survival. So, without hesitation, he chose to flee at this critical moment, inadvertently ruining Forest Spring Watch's last faint chance of victory.

Seeing Azure Bamboo fleeing, Guang HuiDaoist was infuriated, but he managed to suppress his murderous intent with the last shred of reason. If it weren't for that remaining sanity, he might have immediately chased after Azure Bamboo.

With his focus back on the formidable opponent in front of him, Guang HuiDaoist released a massive amount of true qi to activate the power of the Third Rank symbol. He even used several drops of his own blood to stimulate the talisman further. Cultivators' blood wasn't ordinary; it was a concentration of their life force. Even Foundation Building stage cultivators with strong life force usually possessed only about ten drops of blood. Each drop consumed required a long time to replenish.

Almost sacrificing his life force, Guang HuiDaoist finally managed to unleash most of the power within the talisman. The symbol flew into the air and transformed into a humanoid shadow. This humanoid shadow contained part of Guang ZhiDaoist Master's power and a trace of Divine Sense. After taking form, it possessed about half of Guang ZhiDaoist Master's combat strength. While half strength might not seem like much, Guang ZhiDaoist Master was a Gold Core Daoist Master. Even half of his strength would be difficult for ordinary Foundation Building late-stage cultivators to contend with. This Third Rank symbol was the most potent among the three left behind by Guang ZhiDaoist Master, and it was not meant to be used unless facing the threat of annihilation.

Once the Third Rank symbol was unleashed, Guang HuiDaoist suffered significant depletion, and his combat strength plummeted. Shocking ThunderSpirit General, who was keenly aware, noticed a tremendous power being released by Guang HuiDaoist.

To maximize the power of this Third Rank symbol, Guang HuiDaoist had almost poured all his true qi into it and even expelled several streams of refined blood to stimulate it. Refined blood was not ordinary blood but a concentration of a cultivator's vital energy, condensed and gathered over time. It was a precious resource, and using it in such large quantities had severe consequences.

Guang HuiDaoist's tactic had caught the attention of Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General. They exchanged glances, being old comrades who understood each other well. They tacitly cooperated, one attacking from the left and the other from the right, charging towards the humanoid shadow.

Shocking ThunderSpirit General knew that the key to today's battle lay in this humanoid shadow. If it broke into their ranks and initiated a killing spree, the situation would become extremely dangerous. The humanoid shadow not only contained about half of Guang ZhiDaoist Master's power but also a trace of his Divine Sense. Thus, it possessed formidable combat instincts and was not an ordinary puppet with power but no understanding of how to use it.

Facing the formidable Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General charging at it, the humanoid shadow took the initiative to meet them and engaged in a fierce battle. Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General, with their extensive combat experience, were even more familiar with the techniques of a Gold Core Daoist Master than Guang ZhiDaoist Master

himself. Although they were at a disadvantage in terms of strength, they cooperated seamlessly, preferring to engage in entangling fights to prolong the time.

The sky immediately turned chaotic with the battle scenes happening all around. Guang HuiDaoist, heavily wounded, actively confronted Meng Zhang, and Lin Bailin flew over to assist Guang HuiDaoist in the fight against their opponents.

Meng Zhang's expression became complex as he looked at Lin Bailin. They had a long-standing friendship and understood each other very well. But now, due to their opposing positions, they had to engage in a life-and-death battle. For this old friend whom Meng Zhang greatly admired, the best he could do was to send him on his way as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Meng Zhang wielded the Tangling Silk Soft Sword and summoned the Golden Crow Lantern, going all out without showing any mercy. Similarly, Lin Bailin didn't hold back against Meng Zhang's attacks. He suppressed his complex emotions and unleashed his most potent abilities.

Aunt Jin confronted Guang RuiDaoist, Jin Qigu fought Guang QuanDaoist, Yang Xueyi faced Guang YuanDaoist, and Jin Wengbo battled Lin Shenpo. Each pair engaged in intense and brutal combat in different parts of the battlefield.

In the sky, a chaotic battle ensued, with Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General using their abundant combat experience to hold off the humanoid shadow. Their opponents had more power, but they relied on coordination and entanglement to prolong the time the humanoid shadow could remain active. Guang ZhiDaoist Master's power stored within the talisman was limited, and once it was exhausted, the humanoid shadow would naturally dissipate.

Chapter 314: All Extinguished

When Guang HuiDaoist released that Third Rank talisman, he felt a bit uneasy, thinking that Aunt Jin would bring out some hidden card like last time to offset the advantage brought by the Third Rank talisman.

As it turned out, Aunt Jin was clearly running out of tricks and couldn't produce any new hidden cards. Items that could withstand the power of a Third Rank talisman were extremely rare for Foundation Building stage cultivators. Just having one such item already showed the profound heritage of the Qiaoshou Sect. They couldn't bring out such items continuously.

If it weren't for Deep EarthSpirit General and Shocking ThunderSpirit General taking the initiative to defend against the humanoid shadow formed by the Third Rank talisman, it's likely that both sides' Foundation Building stage cultivators would have suffered casualties.

The current situation looked very favorable. However, that darned Azure Bamboo guy actually escaped at this critical moment, which annoyed Guang HuiDaoist greatly. If Azure Bamboo had stayed to fight, the odds of Forest Spring Watch winning would undoubtedly be higher. But in this world, there were no shortage of "ifs," and with Azure Bamboo fleeing, Forest Spring Watch lost one of its important commanders, tipping the balance of victory and defeat.

After a bitter battle, Meng Zhang was the first to determine the outcome of his battle. He endured Guang HuiDaoist's attack and used the small Divine Ability Twin Forms Towards Heaven Sword to behead Lin Bailin. Although Lin Bailin's head was separated from his body, his face still showed extreme shock and disbelief, which made Meng Zhang feel a bit gloomy.

Now was not the time for sentimentality. Meng Zhang continued to muster his remaining strength, using a self-damaging secret technique to unleash his full potential and wield the Golden Crow Lantern to refine Guang HuiDaoist alive. Killing two Foundation Building stage opponents in succession took a toll on Meng Zhang as well. He couldn't sustain flight and had to land temporarily to recover.

Meng Zhang knew that even if he won this battle, his injuries were severe, and without three to five years of recuperation, it would be difficult to fully recover. The fight was not over, and it was not the time to rest. Meng Zhang swallowed two supplementing pills to forcibly restore some of his energy before flying back into the sky to continue the battle.

Meng Zhang flew towards the battle group of Yang Xueyi and Guang YuanDaoist. Guang YuanDaoist, being the alchemist of Forest Spring Watch, usually stayed in the sect and managed alchemy-related affairs. He had little experience fighting outsiders, and after reaching the Foundation Building stage, his only combat experience came from sparring with fellow sect members.

Yang Xueyi was even younger than Guang YuanDaoist and had only been at the Foundation Building stage for a few years. However, she firmly suppressed Guang YuanDaoist with her formidable combat strength. Her ever-changing and endless Five Elements spells relentlessly bombarded Guang YuanDaoist, leaving him no room to counterattack.

Guang YuanDaoist was already at a disadvantage, and with the mid-Foundation Building stage cultivator, Meng Zhang, joining the fight, he became visibly panicky. Once panic sets in during battle, mistakes are bound to happen. Before Meng Zhang even made a move, Guang YuanDaoist made a crucial error, which Yang Xueyi promptly seized upon. She released two Second Rank talismans she had personally refined—one fiery dragon spun around Guang YuanDaoist's body, while a wooden spear thrust at him from behind. As Guang YuanDaoist's attention was divided between the two talismans, the soundless Biyun Lanyard flew up from under his feet, entwining around his body and strangling him.

In his state of panic, Guang YuanDaoist repeatedly made mistakes and was strangled to death by Biyun Lanyard, summoned by Yang Xueyi. Witnessing the Sect Master and fellow sect members die in succession, Guang RuiDaoist was filled with grief and anger. He roared like a wounded beast and ferociously rushed at Aunt Jin, forcing her to retreat repeatedly.

After driving off Aunt Jin, Guang RuiDaoist continued his furious assault towards Meng Zhang's direction. Meng Zhang and Yang Xueyi did not back down but actively confronted him. As for Aunt Jin, she felt a bit embarrassed by her previous retreat and followed closely behind Guang RuiDaoist, constantly launching attacks.

In the end, with the joint efforts of the three, Guang RuiDaoist met his death on the battlefield. His last counterattack, besides causing Meng Zhang's injuries to worsen, also left both Aunt Jin and Yang Xueyi with some injuries.

Witnessing the deaths of their fellow sect members, Guang QunDaoist was heartbroken and lost all fighting spirit. Lin Shenpo, too, had already lost hope for victory, and with Forest Mountain School already in ruins, he held a death wish.

After a prolonged battle, everyone suffered more or less injuries, and the Foundation Building stage cultivators from Forest Spring Watch were completely wiped out on the spot. Shocking

ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General, the two crafty old hands, successfully drew the humanoid shadow away, delaying its power until it dissipated completely.

During the battle, Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General were in great danger and covered in wounds. They barely achieved their objective.

After some rest, Meng Zhang and the others suppressed their injuries and descended from the sky to join the Refining Qi stage disciples' battle on the ground.

Originally, with an absolute numerical advantage, Forest Spring Watch held the upper hand. Even with Wen Qiansun, a Foundation Building stage cultivator, presiding over the situation, they could only barely maintain an undefeated position.

However, with so many Foundation Building stage cultivators joining the battle against Forest Spring Watch's side, the Refining Qi stage disciples had no chance of withstanding them, even with their utmost efforts.

Foundation Building stage cultivators flew through the sky, continuously unleashing various spells upon the ground.

Meanwhile, the Refining Qi stage disciples below struggled to find effective ways to harm the flying opponents.

After several attacks and defenses, the morale of Forest Spring Watch's disciples began to crumble. The Foundation Building stage elders in the sect must have been severely outnumbered and couldn't withstand the enemy's versatile tactics.

As the morale collapsed, the formation of Forest Spring Watch's disciples couldn't be maintained any longer. Many of them left the formation and scattered in all directions to escape.

With the formation broken, the Refining Qi stage cultivators had no effective means to fight against the Foundation Building stage cultivators in the sky. They became lambs waiting to be slaughtered.

Seizing the opportunity, the joint forces of the two sects, under the command of Wen Qiansun, counterattacked and charged at the enemy's forces.

By nightfall, Forest Spring Watch's forces were completely defeated. Countless bodies littered the ground, and more Refining Qi stage disciples were desperately fleeing.

As they say, if you don't eliminate the roots, new shoots will grow in the spring. Everyone understood this principle. Not only did the Refining Qi stage disciples of both sects pursue relentlessly, even the Foundation Building stage cultivators set aside their pride and joined the pursuit.

After a night of chasing and killing, the disciples of the Forest Spring Watch were almost wiped out. The disciples of the Forest Mountain School and a few disciples of the Green Bamboo Mountain also suffered the same fate.

Chapter 315: The New Overlord

After this bloody battle, the Forest Spring Watch faction was completely wiped out, and even their mountain gate was occupied. The Second Rank spirit vein of Forest Spring Watch had already

collapsed, and spiritual fields and springs would gradually become barren and depleted. Before going to battle, most of the items in the sect's treasury were distributed among all disciples.

Among the spoils of war, there were few cultivation resources. The most valuable gain was the Hidden Scripture Pavilion of Forest Spring Watch. Due to the collapse of the spirit vein and the hurried attack by Daoist Guang Hui, they did not have time to evacuate the Hidden Scripture Pavilion. Thus, it fell intact into the hands of the enemy.

Forest Spring Watch had a heritage of several hundred years and had been in a standoff with Twin Success Valley for many years. It even cultivated a Gold Core Daoist Master named Daoist Guang Zhi. The sect's heritage and scriptures were still very valuable.

Both Foundation Building cultivators from Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect had more or less suffered injuries and were now busy recovering. The Refining Qi stage disciples were organizing to assess casualties and gather spoils of war.

In this grand battle, both Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect lost many Refining Qi stage disciples. Especially Qiaoshou Sect, without a Foundation Building cultivator like Wen Qiansun overseeing the situation, suffered more casualties than Taiyi Sect.

Of course, despite the sacrifices of the disciples, the great victory was worth the cost. Their sacrifices were not in vain.

After the victory, there were many things to handle. The disciples of both sects were busy with post-war tasks. As the victors, they had not yet enjoyed the fruits of victory and were immersed in various complicated affairs.

Meanwhile, in Firewell Market, at Earthfire Sect, Shangguan Longyan received the news of Forest Spring Watch's precarious situation only after Daoist Guang Hui took the initiative to attack.

Although Shangguan Longyan was somewhat indecisive, he was still clear-headed. He knew that Earthfire Sect and Forest Spring Watch were natural allies against Flying Swan Sect. They couldn't let Forest Spring Watch be defeated and annihilated like this.

This time, Shangguan Longyan didn't consult the elders but made a rare decisive move, fully exerting the authority of the Sect Master and exercising his powers. He began to mobilize cultivators from the sect to form an expeditionary force to support Forest Spring Watch.

As Earthfire Sect prepared to set out, bad news kept coming from Forest Spring Watch, which annoyed Shangguan Longyan and left him puzzled. From his perspective, with the protection of the carefully cultivated mountain defense formation of Forest Spring Watch over the centuries, and with so many cultivators assisting in the defense, they should be able to hold out for at least three to five years, if not longer.

Who would have thought that the people of Forest Spring Watch would be so useless? Facing the former vassals Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect, they not only suffered repeated defeats but even their mountain gate was about to fall.

Despite his complaints and disdain for Forest Spring Watch, Shangguan Longyan had no choice but to dispatch troops for rescue.

However, just as Earthfire Sect began its mobilization, Land Walk Sect also started massive mobilization, whether coincidentally or intentionally.

Due to Land Walk Sect's actions, Earthfire Sect was delayed for a lot of time, finally breaking free from Land Walk Sect's entanglement and sending a relatively strong force to reinforce Forest Spring Watch.

By the time Earthfire Sect's cultivators flew on their flying boats and arrived above Forest Spring Watch, the battle had long since ended. Forest Spring Watch had been completely annihilated, and their mountain gate had fallen. The cultivators from Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect, upon discovering Earthfire Sect's fleet, immediately stood prepared in battle formation.

Although the major battle had recently taken place and the vitality of both sects had not fully recovered, Earthfire Sect was equally pressed for time in their mobilization, so their forces couldn't overpower the other side.

Moreover, Forest Spring Watch had already been utterly defeated. There was no longer a need for Earthfire Sect to insist on fighting against the joint forces of Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect. Even if Earthfire Sect won, Forest Spring Watch could not be resurrected. Furthermore, the strength of the two sects that could wipe out Forest Spring Watch must be formidable, and Earthfire Sect might not have a guarantee of victory.

Thinking about the confrontation with Land Walk Sect and especially the Flying Swan Sect, which had been manipulating everything from behind the scenes, Shangguan Longyan decided to retreat and extinguished the intention of going to war.

As a result, the fleet of flying boats from Earthfire Sect seemed to have come specifically to witness the annihilation of Forest Spring Watch and returned dejectedly.

Seeing Earthfire Sect retreat without a fight, everyone, including Meng Zhang, finally breathed a sigh of relief. If Earthfire Sect had launched a surprise attack at this moment, everyone's situation wouldn't have been good. Even if they managed to repel the enemy successfully, they would likely have paid a hefty price in casualties.

Earthfire Sect's voluntary withdrawal was the best outcome. Having fought hard and emerged victorious, it was now time for everyone to enjoy the fruits of their triumph. After this battle, Taiyi Sect had no rivals in this region. They were no longer a vassal of anyone but had attained an independent status.

The former regional powerhouse, Twin Success Valley, had long been destroyed, and the forces of Liu Family, Green Bamboo Mountain, and Forest Spring Watch had all perished. Now, it was Taiyi Sect's turn to become the overlord of this region and reign supreme.

If they wished, Taiyi Sect could even annihilate Qiaoshou Sect and rule the entire area. Of course, Meng Zhang would not let this victory cloud his judgment or harbor such irrational thoughts. Not only did they have a longstanding friendship with Qiaoshou Sect, but they were also allies at the moment. Additionally, the mysterious background of Qiaoshou Sect and its tenuous connection with Flying Swan Sect made Meng Zhang wary.

After the victory, Meng Zhang did not break his promise; he shared the spoils of war with Qiaoshou Sect as agreed upon earlier. The captured cultivation resources were distributed proportionally, leaving everyone satisfied. Qiaoshou Sect received a small share while Taiyi Sect, being the major contributor and possessing greater strength, naturally received the lion's share.

The territory of Golden Blade Sect, which had been occupied by Forest Spring Watch, now belonged entirely to Qiaoshou Sect. Similarly, the territories of Twin Success Valley and Liu Family, along with Forest Spring Watch's own land and that of Forest Mountain School, were now all part of the spoils shared between Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect.

Taiyi Sect gained control of Singing Sand City, and the interests of Shi Family and Qiaoshou Sect were both ensured. Additionally, Meng Zhang gave away some barren peripheral areas as a gift to Shi Family, Taiyi Sect's first vassal family, to win them over.

Green Bamboo Mountain had been destroyed by Flying Swan Sect, and its territory and mountain gate were now under the control of Flying Swan Sect, so there was no need to discuss it further.

Indeed, the current territory controlled by Taiyi Sect far exceeded that of the former regional powerhouse, Twin Success Valley. In this region, there had never been such a behemoth as Taiyi Sect before.

While Meng Zhang was delighted with the vast territory they now held, he also had hidden worries. Taiyi Sect would undoubtedly face numerous challenges in the future with such an expansive domain.

Chapter 316: Lesser Foundation Building Pill

Forest Spring Watch was in ruins, and there was still no news from Daoist Master Guang Zhi despite Meng Zhang's concerns. Since Guang Zhi Daoist Master, along with Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, set off to Demon Wind Gobi with Fei Tian Daoist Master, there had been no communication, and no information had leaked out.

Meng Zhang dared to join Flying Swan Sect's plan to take action against Forest Spring Watch because Sect Master Fei Hongzi personally assured him that Guang Zhi Daoist Master would never obstruct the downfall of Forest Spring Watch by Taiyi Sect or any other sect. Moreover, Guang Zhi Daoist Master wouldn't have the capability to retaliate against Taiyi Sect and others.

Fei Hongzi's assurance wasn't mere empty talk; he made a solemn oath, staking his life, when creating a ghost oath with a sworn pledge regarding these matters. If Fei Hongzi failed to fulfill his promises, Netherworld's Ghost Deity would take his life. Meng Zhang believed that Fei Hongzi, a Sect Master with integrity, wouldn't risk his own life to deceive Taiyi Sect and others.

However, the lack of specific information about Guang Zhi Daoist Master remained a hidden danger. When Fei Tian Daoist Master invited Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze to accompany him, he had also made a ghost oath not to harm them. Meng Zhang couldn't help but speculate that Fei Tian Daoist Master had intentionally left some loopholes in the oath to trap the two opponents.

Of course, all of this was mere speculation on Meng Zhang's part, as he had no concrete information.

As a Gold Core Daoist Master, the power struggles were far beyond Meng Zhang's current reach, and he was unable to intervene. His only focus now was to continuously strengthen his own power and develop and expand Taiyi Sect.

Taiyi Sect's expansion had been too rapid, and it was becoming a bit overwhelming. With the current manpower, it was challenging to effectively manage such vast territories.

There were hundreds of thousands of mortals residing in Taiyi Sect's territories. Almost every year, many of them awakened their spiritual roots. Given enough time, the number of Taiyi Sect disciples would experience significant growth.

As an interim measure, Meng Zhang had to recruit a large number of loose cultivators. However, instead of directly absorbing them into the sect, he established an external organization called the Co-operative Society.

The name "Co-operative Society" had two meanings: first, to unite everyone's efforts in loyalty to Taiyi Sect, and second, to foster cooperation and mutual support among its members.

As news of the Co-operative Society recruiting numerous cultivators spread, countless loose cultivators and even some descendants of small clans flocked to join, as Taiyi Sect was the regional overlord.

Meng Zhang painstakingly met with each of these loose cultivators, using Mind Reading to understand their intentions. After careful screening and eliminating those who were unsuitable, he managed to select over a hundred cultivators.

The Co-operative Society served as an external organization of Taiyi Sect, where members could receive tasks and rewards from the sect.

In Meng Zhang's vision, as Taiyi Sect continued to grow, it would undoubtedly attract vassal families and hired sects in the future. The Co-operative Society could then be used to manage these vassal forces, uniting their strengths to serve Taiyi Sect.

Moreover, Meng Zhang had another long-term plan in mind. Taiyi Sect was no longer the small and struggling Refining Qi sect it once was. To improve the overall quality of its disciples, the entry requirements would gradually be raised. Taiyi Sect would no longer accept anyone without discernment.

In the future, when awakened spiritual roots among the common people on Taiyi Sect's territories showed poor aptitude, they wouldn't be able to directly join Taiyi Sect. However, they wouldn't be left without a path of cultivation or become loose cultivators either.

Meng Zhang's approach was to have such individuals join the Co-operative Society first. If they performed well and passed various tests, they might still have a chance to be accepted into Taiyi Sect.

While these plans were for the future, the Co-operative Society's current main function was to help Taiyi Sect manage its vast territories.

Meng Zhang carefully selected a disciple named Tian Kang'an from Taiyi Sect to be the head of the Co-operative Society. Tian Kang'an, hailing from Sweetwater Oasis, came from a respectable background and was considered a true Taiyi Sect descendant. He was even a distant cousin of the current Hall Master, Tian Li.

Tian Kang'an had good aptitude, having reached the Refining Qi late stage within less than twenty years since joining Taiyi Sect. To empower him further, Meng Zhang bestowed him with two

excellent First Rank magic tools and an array of symbols, enhancing his combat capabilities enough to suppress the newly joined loose cultivators.

In addition, Meng Zhang selected two disciples with a loose cultivator background to serve as vice presidents, assisting Tian Kang'an in managing the Co-operative Society.

With the establishment of the Co-operative Society, Taiyi Sect's control over its territories gradually strengthened.

After Shi Family became a vassal of Taiyi Sect, and with the passing of some time, Shi Changqing showed no signs of disloyalty. Taiyi Sect disciples with alchemy talent, including Pill Hall Master Zhang Yingying, sought advice from Shi Changqing multiple times, and he generously shared his knowledge.

Having Shi Changqing, a Second Rank Alchemist, wholeheartedly helping Taiyi Sect cultivate alchemists, the progress greatly accelerated.

Meng Zhang entrusted the complete formula for the Lesser Foundation Building Pill to Shi Changqing, making him swear an oath never to divulge it. Even Shi Family members couldn't learn the secret without Meng Zhang's permission.

Since receiving the formula for the Lesser Foundation Building Pill, Shi Changqing had invested a lot of effort into researching and completing it. However, it had proven to be a challenging task, and after many years of hard work, the progress remained minimal.

Shi Changqing could hardly believe that something he had long desired was now within reach, yet kept hidden by Meng Zhang. With his alchemy skills, he could easily refine even the true Foundation Building Pill, let alone the Lesser Foundation Building Pill.

Though the materials required for the Lesser Foundation Building Pill were fewer than those for the Foundation Building Pill, gathering them all was still no simple task. Some of the special materials required unique secret methods for cultivation.

Shi Changqing estimated that, even if everything went smoothly, it would take at least twenty years to collect all the materials needed to refine a single batch of Lesser Foundation Building Pills.

As more and more Taiyi Sect disciples reached the Refining Qi stage, the urgency to address their Foundation Building problem grew. Since obtaining the Foundation Building Pill was currently not feasible, the Lesser Foundation Building Pill became the only option.

Meng Zhang spared no effort and invested a massive amount of resources, even channeling the entire Taiyi Sect's strength, to ensure the swift collection of materials so that Shi Changqing could start his alchemy process.

Chapter 317: Telling stories

Amidst the boundless and desolate Demon Wind Gobi, three foreign guests arrived. In this extremely desolate place, occasional glimpses of greenery could be seen, and small animals occasionally roamed about.

This location was the southernmost part of Demon Wind Gobi, already very close to the territory of Jiuqu League. As an outer region of Demon Wind Gobi, not only were there no demonic beasts, but even ordinary wild animals were seldom seen.

Three figures stood high in the sky, with fierce gusts of qi whistling past, rustling their bodies. Yet, these three individuals seemed completely unfazed by the forceful gusts and the freezing cold of the high altitude. They simply stood there, seemingly waiting for something.

After an unknown period, an elderly man with fiery red hair and an imposing demeanor finally spoke, a hint of impatience in his voice.

"Senior Fei Tian, may I ask why we've come to this place? There are no demonic beasts or any other abnormal situations here."

The elderly man was none other than Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, the Grand Elder of Earthfire Sect.

His question was directed at an elderly man with white hair, a small stature, and a face full of wrinkles. At first glance, one would think he was too old to move, with not much time left in this world. It was unimaginable that he was Fei Tian Daoist Master, the most respected and experienced Gold Core Daoist Master of Flying Swan Sect.

Fei Tian Daoist Master appeared nothing like a Gold Core Daoist Master, resembling an ordinary mortal elder instead. He didn't answer Daoist Master Roaring Blaze's question but gazed intently below.

A trace of displeasure flashed across Daoist Master Roaring Blaze's face. If anyone else had dared to disregard him like this, his irritable temperament would have erupted. However, facing Fei Tian Daoist Master, he had to hold back his anger.

This wasn't just because Fei Tian Daoist Master hailed from the ruling Flying Swan Sect in the Endless Sea of Sand, but also because Fei Tian Daoist Master had been renowned for over three hundred years in the Endless Sea of Sand. When he was making a name for himself in the desert, both Daoist Master Roaring Blaze and Guang Zhi Daoist Master hadn't been born yet.

Despite only a few years of cultivation, Daoist Master Roaring Blaze always felt an intangible pressure in the presence of Fei Tian Daoist Master, preventing him from acting recklessly.

Cultivators of Earthfire Sect, practicing the special fire attribute techniques of their sect, tended to be impulsive and difficult to control. However, after reaching the Foundation Building stage, their temperament would usually become more restrained and patient.

Due to significant flaws in Earthfire Sect's inherited techniques, Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, despite his exceptional talent, had been incapable of forming a core. Fortunately, he had caught the eye of a senior from Fire Cloud Sect, who gave him a clump of Third Fire Essence refined with great care. Additionally, he was taught a secret technique of Fire Cloud Sect. After years of hard cultivation, he barely managed to form a core.

After reaching the core formation stage, Daoist Master Roaring Blaze's character had changed, becoming somewhat gloomy.

He didn't press Fei Tian Daoist Master further and instead gestured to a middle-aged Taoist beside him.

This unremarkable-looking middle-aged Taoist was Guang Zhi Daoist Master of Forest Spring Watch. In the face of Fei Tian Daoist Master, he and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze were natural allies.

"Senior Fei Tian, we have been here for quite some time without accomplishing anything or detecting any abnormalities. Senior, weren't we supposed to head into the inner part of Demon Wind Gobi to investigate the movements of demonic beasts?"

"Are we spending too much time here, risking missing out on important matters?"

Guang Zhi Daoist Master spoke respectfully.

Finally, Fei Tian Daoist Master reacted upon hearing Guang Zhi Daoist Master's question.

He chuckled and said, "You young people lack patience. When you reach my age, you won't be so hasty."

"Can we not be in a hurry? We've been away from the sect for so long, and this old man is taking his sweet time," both Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze silently complained.

Ever since they set out with Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, Fei Tian Daoist Master had been dragging his feet. He first brought them to a quiet place in the territory of Flying Swan Sect and engaged in profound discussions on cultivation and Dao with them.

To be honest, Fei Tian Daoist Master truly lived up to his reputation as an experienced Gold Core Daoist Master. The knowledge he shared was substantial and greatly benefited both Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze.

The two of them were enthralled by Fei Tian Daoist Master's teachings, hoping to learn as much as they could from him. An opportunity to learn from such a high-level Gold Core Daoist Master was truly rare and might not come again for a hundred years.

They even forgot about their sect's affairs, staying with Fei Tian Daoist Master for quite a while.

Only a few days ago, Fei Tian Daoist Master finally stopped his teachings and brought them to Demon Wind Gobi.

Though Daoist Master Roaring Blaze and Guang Zhi Daoist Master were reluctant to leave, they had no choice. According to their agreement, they had to accompany Fei Tian Daoist Master to explore the Demon Wind Gobi.

However, unexpectedly, after Fei Tian Daoist Master led them into the Demon Wind Gobi, he kept circling around the periphery and showed no intention of going deeper inside. Initially, they were relieved not to exert themselves dealing with Third Rank demonic beasts. But Fei Tian Daoist Master suddenly became inexplicable, creating an uneasy feeling in both of them.

After indulging in some nonsense due to his seniority, Fei Tian Daoist Master finally got to the point.

"Do you two know what this place is?" Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze shook their heads, a little puzzled. They had carefully observed the area, but it seemed like an ordinary stretch of desert.

"Over a thousand years ago, Purple Gold Sect was the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand. Eight hundred years ago, the sect committed a grave mistake, leading to the downfall of the Primordial Spirit True Monarch and several Gold Core Daoist Masters."

"At that time, many sects, including ours, rose up against the rule of Purple Gold Sect. Qi Family, which had recently moved to the Endless Sea of Sand, also joined the opposition. Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch, outsiders to the region, took advantage of the situation and launched a large-scale invasion."

"After numerous bloody battles that spanned hundreds of years and resulted in countless sacrifices, our sect emerged victorious and became the new ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand."

Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze exchanged glances, wondering why Fei Tian Daoist Master suddenly brought up these worn-out stories. The rise of Flying Swan Sect was widely known throughout the Endless Sea of Sand, and they, as native cultivators of the region, had heard these tales enough times since childhood.

Nevertheless, considering Fei Tian Daoist Master's status, they could only patiently and obediently listen to him retell the story.

"During the process of unifying the Endless Sea of Sand, our sect resorted to many clever tactics. As a result, Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch have never accepted their defeat and have been constantly raiding our sect for years, even engaging in several major battles."

"Over three hundred years ago, it was in this very place that our Gold Core Daoist Master had a decisive battle with the Gold Core Daoist Masters of those two sects."

"Our Gold Core Daoist Master emerged victorious, forcing the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch to make a solemn oath never to set foot in the Endless Sea of Sand again."

As Fei Tian Daoist Master spoke, his enthusiasm seemed to reignite, making him appear much younger.

Chapter 318: The Descent of the Gold Core

"Our sect's dominance was hard-earned, and predecessors may not know how much sacrifice was made to achieve the current situation. Alas, we, the younger generation, are unworthy, inferior to our ancestors, and even the foundation left by our founder is at risk of being lost," sighed Fei Tian Daoist Master.

Daoist Master Roaring Blaze and Guang Zhi Daoist Master were becoming a little impatient, wondering why Fei Tian Daoist Master was delving into centuries-old stories with a purpose they couldn't fathom.

Fei Tian Daoist Master glanced at Daoist Master Roaring Blaze and Guang Zhi Daoist Master, and with a tone full of regret, he said, "Originally, I had no intention of taking your lives. I just wanted to trap you and deal with you later. However, recently, I received news from the Jiuqu League that a formidable enemy is about to invade. It would be unwise to have enemies on all fronts, and I can't afford to keep you here."

"Today is the time for both of you to die." Fei Tian Daoist Master's words, calmly spoken, sounded as if he was casually discussing a trivial matter. Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze stepped back, drawing closer to each other, watching Fei Tian Daoist Master as if facing a major threat.

"Senior, are you joking? We were just having a pleasant conversation earlier, and now you suddenly want to take our lives?" Guang Zhi Daoist Master forced a smile.

"Yeah, senior, this joke is not funny at all," followed Daoist Master Roaring Blaze.

They were both puzzled. Fei Tian Daoist Master shouldn't be so casually threatening their lives if he indeed intended to take them. Given Fei Tian Daoist Master's character, he didn't seem like the kind of person who would make such jokes lightly.

"Is that so? Do you really think I'm joking with you?" Fei Tian Daoist Master maintained his composed expression.

"By the way, Guang Zhi, how long has it been since you last contacted Forest Spring Watch? Several of their messages were intercepted by my secret technique."

"Perhaps you don't know yet, but Forest Spring Watch has been completely exterminated, wiped out," said Fei Tian Daoist Master, and Guang Zhi Daoist Master looked at him in shock.

"You..." He pointed at Fei Tian Daoist Master, struggling to find words.

"Though our sect orchestrated the destruction of Forest Spring Watch, it wasn't my intention. Guang Zhi, you only have yourself to blame. You shouldn't have allied yourself with the evil entity from Deadly Sea of Sand."

"So, you know everything?" Guang Zhi Daoist Master was astonished.

"Do you think your connection with that evil entity could be hidden from our senior? In the end, you were just a pawn for that entity."

"Today, it's your time to die. Let me be generous and tell you that the downfall of Forest Spring Watch was merely the result of a bet between two great powers."

A series of revelations left Guang Zhi Daoist Master in shock, not knowing what to say. Even Daoist Master Roaring Blaze looked at the two with a puzzled expression, unaware of the hidden secrets they had never heard of before.

"Enough of the chit-chat; it's time for you to leave. If there's anything unclear, you can be confused ghosts underground," said Fei Tian Daoist Master in a plain tone.

"Senior, we acknowledge your profound cultivation base, which we can't match. However, let's not forget that you have taken a Ghost Oath. You cannot harm us and are obligated to protect us when we are threatened," Daoist Master Roaring Blaze quickly interjected, trying to prevent Fei Tian Daoist Master from taking action.

"Going against the Ghost Oath has consequences, which you should be well aware of."

"I do know, but I don't care about my life anymore."

Before he finished speaking, Fei Tian Daoist Master had already made a move. Without using any spells or magic tools, he fully released the power of his Gold Core.

The power emanating from the Gold Core was incredibly potent and pure, firmly trapping the two, preventing them from escaping for the time being.

Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze couldn't believe that Fei Tian Daoist Master would resort to such a mutually destructive method to temporarily trap them. They knew that the Dan force of the Gold Core came from its source, and once completely depleted, the Gold Core's source would dissipate entirely, leading to the demise of the Gold Core Daoist Master.

Fei Tian Daoist Master's actions were akin to using his own life to ensnare his opponents.

Almost simultaneously, two figures emerged from the ground below, leaping up and flying straight to the three not far away.

These two individuals are the other two Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Flying Swan Sect, Fei Yu Daoist Master, and Fei Jiang Daoist Master. Without any hesitation, they immediately launched full-force attacks against Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze. Fei Tian Daoist Master's Dan force firmly immobilized them, greatly affecting their ability to defend themselves and making it impossible for them to escape in time. Without the chance to mobilize their Dan force, Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze couldn't even employ their ultimate self-destructive measures using their Gold Cores.

As Fei Tian Daoist Master's Dan force rapidly depleted, his face turned paler, and his body began to tremble uncontrollably. Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze struggled even harder to break free from Fei Tian Daoist Master's restraint, while Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master intensified their attacks.

Finally, before Fei Tian Daoist Master's Dan force was completely spent, Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master broke through the enemy's defenses and successfully killed both opponents. The pressure on Fei Tian Daoist Master diminished, but he did not feel the slightest relief.

He shouted, "Quick, leave! The Ghost Deity of the Netherworld is about to descend. The Ghost Deity is unpredictable, and you must not confront it."

Although they felt immense reluctance and sorrow, Fei Jiang Daoist Master and Fei Yu Daoist Master were decisive individuals and not ones to hesitate. They respectfully saluted Fei Tian Daoist Master and flew away into the distance without looking back, soon disappearing from sight.

Above Fei Tian Daoist Master, a huge vortex suddenly appeared. The vortex kept spinning, emitting a chilling aura, and a pitch-black giant hand emerged from it, directly grabbing Fei Tian Daoist Master, who had no power to resist, and forcibly dragging him into the vortex.

The vortex quickly dissipated, and the surroundings returned to normal. After a long time, Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master finally dared to fly back to their original location.

Seeing the emptiness around them and feeling the lingering chill, both of them knew Fei Tian Daoist Master's fate. Daring to violate the Ghost Oath meant only one outcome: being dragged alive into the Netherworld by the Ghost Deity.

Not to mention that Fei Tian Daoist Master had lost most of his Gold Core's essence, leaving him with minimal power. Even in his prime, he would have had no chance against the Netherworld Ghost Deity enforcing the Ghost Oath.

Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master fell into a silent contemplation. Fei Tian Daoist Master had dared to sacrifice his own life for the sake of the sect, eliminating the internal threat of the Endless Sea of Sand, allowing the Flying Swan Sect to fully focus on facing external enemies beyond the Endless Sea of Sand.

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When both parties' Cultivation Base reaches the level of Gold Core Daoist Master, it's easy to win but difficult to kill. Fei Tian Daoist Master, Fei Jiang Daoist Master, and Fei Yu Daoist Master could indeed defeat Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze if they joined forces. However, killing them would be very difficult. Even if they were driven to desperation, if given enough time, a Gold Core Daoist Master could directly self-destruct their Gold Core, causing severe damage to their opponent at the cost of their own life.

This time, Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master were able to successfully kill their opponents and prevent them from escaping or self-destructing, making Fei Tian Daoist Master the hero of the day. If Fei Tian Daoist Master hadn't exhausted their own Gold Core origin to trap the enemy suddenly, they would never have had such a good opportunity.

The reason why Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze were so easily defeated was because they trusted the ghost oath too much. They thought Fei Tian Daoist Master had already sworn a ghost oath, which not only prevented them from harming him but also required them to protect him when threatened. However, they could never have predicted that Fei Tian Daoist Master had already given up on their own life. Would someone who doesn't care about their own life care about a mere ghost oath? The reverence for the ghost oath among cultivators caused the two to subconsciously overlook many things. Before Fei Tian Daoist Master made a move, they thought that Fei Tian Daoist Master was only using words to threaten them, trying to achieve some goal. They never expected that Fei Tian Daoist Master would dare to risk being cursed and fight back fiercely.

With the death of Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, at least no one within the Endless Sea of Sand would dare to oppose the Flying Swan Sect. Shortly after Fei Tian Daoist Master was dragged into Netherworld, a Daoist master sitting cross-legged in the distant Demon Wind Gobi sighed helplessly. Fei Tian Senior Brother was gone, but unfortunately, they couldn't do anything about it. Thinking of this, the old Daoist master stood up suddenly, their tall figure appearing quite imposing.

"Fei Shi old man, do you really want to fight us to the death?" A deep and resonant voice came from the sky. A huge white vulture was staring down at the old Daoist front of the old Daoist master, a giant man with a lion's head was disdainfully looking at him. Behind him, a sand lizard the size of a small mountain was impatiently digging through the ground. This old Daoist master was Fei Shi Daoist Master from the Flying Swan Sect. They had been stationed in the Demon Wind Gobi for many years and had managed to keep many monsters in check with their own strength alone.

However, this situation changed not long ago. That male lion actually broke through the constraints of innate talent and became a Third Rank middle-grade monster, possessing the strength of a mid-Gold Core stage cultivator. The higher the level and rank of the monster, the smaller the gap between them and human cultivators. Second Rank monsters not only often cannot match

Foundation Building stage cultivators but are also often surrounded and killed by many Refining Qi stage cultivators.

However, Third Rank low-grade monsters can compete with human Gold Core stage cultivators. Even if they cannot win, they are difficult to kill on the spot. Third Rank middle-grade monsters not only have a strength level equivalent to a human Gold Core stage cultivator, but their combat power is also impressive.

Fei Shi Daoist Master, who had been suppressing the Demon Wind Gobi all along, was trapped in this place by this male lion and two Third Rank low-grade monsters. As a result, Fei Shi Daoist Master not only had no power to continue to suppress the Demon Wind Gobi but also couldn't divert their attention to matters outside of it. With their mid-Gold Core stage Cultivation Base, if they were not being restrained in the Demon Wind Gobi, they could have easily dealt with Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze on their own.

Fei Shi Daoist Master regretted a little in his heart. If he had swiftly left Demon Wind Gobi and joined the pursuit when Guang Zhi Daoist Master just formed his core, even with the protection of Northern Desert Qi Family, he would still be unable to escape death. Unfortunately, because he did not attach enough importance to Guang Zhi Daoist Master at the time, he focused mainly on Demon Wind Gobi and did not leave. When Daoist Master Roaring Blaze formed his core, he could not even temporarily leave Demon Wind Gobi.

Fei Shi Daoist Master's killing intent became even more intense, but he did not rush to take action. Each side had their own concerns in this three-way standoff, barely maintaining the current situation. If either side made the slightest mistake, they would immediately provoke a fatal attack.

The Flying Swan Sect appeared to be flourishing like a blooming flower and boiling oil, in its prime. But in reality, it faced internal and external troubles and was in a crisis.

Fei Shi Daoist Master was not afraid of death, but he could not afford to lose. If he lost here, the Flying Swan Sect would have no power to resist the monsters in Demon Wind Gobi.

Fei Tian Daoist Master knew that Fei Tian Daoist Master had already died through a special sensing ability but didn't know if the plan Fei Tian Daoist Master had set beforehand was successful.

The theoretical lifespan of a Foundation Building cultivator is four Jiazi, and their actual lifespan is around 200 years. However, as long as a cultivator forms a Gold Core, their lifespan is at least 500 years. As their Cultivation Base improves, the lifespan of a Gold Core cultivator will gradually extend. Breaking through from the early Gold Core stage to the mid-Gold Core stage, and from the mid-Gold Core stage to the late-Gold Core stage, will significantly increase their lifespan. It can increase by several decades or nearly a hundred years.

If fortunate enough to obtain Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects that can increase lifespan, or some lifespan-extending pills, their lifespan will be further extended. Gold Core late-stage cultivators, as long as no accidents occur, mostly have a lifespan of about 700 years. In rare cases, they can even have a lifespan of nearly 800 years.

Fei Tian Daoist Master was only a Gold Core early-stage cultivator. He had already exhausted his potential and had no hope of breaking through to the mid-Gold Core stage due to the hardships he endured to reach the Gold Core stage. In the Gold Core war more than 300 years ago, he was

seriously injured, damaging his foundation. In these over 300 years, his Cultivation Base had not made much progress.

Fei Tian Daoist Master was already over 400 years old. As he got older, his physical condition worsened, and he could hardly maintain his original Cultivation Base. This was probably one of the reasons why he took a desperate gamble before he died. He had no more years to live anyway, so he might as well take advantage of his still-functioning body and Cultivation Base to drag the two major enemies of the Flying Swan Sect down with him, making the last contribution to the sect.

After the elder Gold Core Daoist Master Yun Yan of the Fire Cloud Sect was defeated by the Flying Swan Sect over 300 years ago, he was forced to make a ghost oath, restraining all the Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Fire Cloud Sect from taking even half a step into the Endless Sea of Sand. This created a rough peace between the Fire Cloud Sect and the Flying Swan Sect, allowing the latter to continue to sit as the overlord of the Endless Sea of Sand.

However, not long ago, news came from the Fire Cloud Sect that Yun Yan Daoist Master had died during meditation. With Yun Yan Daoist Master's death, there was no longer anyone bound by the ghost oath, and no one could suppress the Fire Cloud Sect anymore. The Fire Cloud Sect had always been eyeing the Endless Sea of Sand and was filled with hatred toward the Flying Swan Sect.

It can be imagined that before long, the Fire Cloud Sect would once again invade the Endless Sea of Sand on a large scale, leading to a major war with the Flying Swan Sect.

Chapter 320: Died During Meditation

The current Meng Zhang was unaware of the grave danger that his close confidant, Guang Zhi Daoist Master, had already been ambushed and killed by Flying Swan Sect's Gold Core Daoist Master along with Daoist Master Roaring Blaze.

For some unknown reason, Flying Swan Sect not only concealed the news of Fei Tian Daoist Master's death but also strictly kept the fate of Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze a secret, without any leak of information.

Originally, after Earthfire Sect lost Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, Flying Swan Sect could have easily exterminated the sect. However, they chose to maintain the status quo and completely ignored Earthfire Sect.

Time passed slowly, and it had been two full years since Forest Spring Watch was annihilated.

During these two years, Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze seemed to have vanished without a trace, with no news about them.

Considering the significant event of Forest Spring Watch's annihilation, Guang Zhi Daoist Master's continued absence raised concerns about a possible accident.

Sect Master Shangguan Longyan of Earthfire Sect dared to dispatch an envoy to Flying Swan Sect to inquire about the whereabouts of Daoist Master Roaring Blaze.

Flying Swan Sect did not hide the truth and openly revealed the whereabouts of the three Gold Core Daoist Masters.

Fei Tian Daoist Master, along with Guang Zhi Daoist Master and Daoist Master Roaring Blaze, went to investigate the disturbances caused by demonic beasts in Demon Wind Gobi.

Unexpectedly, a Third Rank demonic beast in Demon Wind Gobi broke through its cultivation base and became much stronger, trapping the three human Gold Core Daoist Masters within, making it impossible for them to escape.

Currently, the other two Gold Core Daoist Masters of Flying Swan Sect, Fei Jiang Daoist Master and Fei Yu Daoist Master, are organizing a rescue team to enter Demon Wind Gobi. However, due to the complexities and unknown strength of the enemies there, they need some time for preparation and have not set out yet.

Flying Swan Sect issued a special warning to many cultivation forces in Endless Sea of Sand, as the demonic beasts in Demon Wind Gobi have grown in strength and are poised to invade the human world at any time.

Flying Swan Sect has begun mobilizing for a war against the demonic beasts and sent messages to all human cultivators in Endless Sea of Sand, cautioning everyone to be vigilant and beware of the demonic beasts breaking out from Demon Wind Gobi.

Upon receiving the news from Flying Swan Sect, Meng Zhang felt both relieved and concerned. He was glad that Guang Zhi Daoist Master was trapped in Demon Wind Gobi, which was beneficial for Taiyi Sect's safety as long as he remained trapped. On the other hand, he worried about the disturbances caused by the demonic beasts. If they were to invade on a large scale, Taiyi Sect, as a human cultivation force, would most likely be drawn into the war.

In reality, Taiyi Sect's territory was directly adjacent to Demon Wind Gobi, which used to be Golden Blade Sect's domain. Now it has become Qiaoshou Sect's territory and is closely connected to Taiyi Sect's territory. If the demonic beasts were to break out, Qiaoshou Sect would be the first target. Due to the principle of mutual support, Taiyi Sect, as Qiaoshou Sect's ally, would undoubtedly join the battle.

Over the past two years, Meng Zhang had put in a great deal of effort to barely eliminate the pill toxin inside his body. In the past, to quickly recover his strength, he had taken quite a few Elemental Restoration Pills within a short period, leading to complications that he has only recently managed to resolve.

During the great battle, Meng Zhang had used a secret technique to stimulate his body and unleash his potential, causing significant damage that had not yet healed.

Meng Zhang could only hope that the invasion of the demonic beasts would be delayed as much as possible, giving him enough time to fully recover his strength.

For Taiyi Sect, time was now the most crucial factor. The disciples needed time to grow, and the sect's strength required time to accumulate gradually. After gaining so much from the annihilation of Forest Spring Watch, both Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect needed sufficient time to digest the spoils. The territories of Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect had largely stabilized, with various spirit fields and mines slowly resuming production.

However, Singing Sand City could no longer regain its former prosperity. Initially, due to the chaos caused by the sand monsters, Singing Sand City experienced abnormal growth in its prosperity,

thanks to the war spoils. However, the subsequent conflicts with Taiyi Sect and Forest Spring Watch destabilized the situation, leading to a change in rulership, which had a negative impact.

Most importantly, the surrounding cultivation forces decreased over time, resulting in fewer customers. Relying solely on Taiyi Sect, Qiaoshou Sect, and the Shi Family to sustain a market front was indeed no easy task.

For Singing Sand City to restore its prosperity, it needed to continuously attract foreign merchants and more external cultivators to support the market. Taiyi Sect's Foreign Affairs Hall Master, Li Xuan, had been focusing on this aspect for the past two years.

Unfortunately, ever since Forest Spring Watch was annihilated, Land Walk Sect ceased its confrontation with Earthfire Sect. Especially after the news spread about the demonic beasts in Demon Wind Gobi, which could potentially invade on a large scale, both Land Walk Sect and Earthfire Sect withdrew their top experts back to their respective sects, putting an end to their stand-off.

Meng Zhang had hoped for a major clash between Earthfire Sect and Land Walk Sect, affecting the Firewell Market, which could have given Singing Sand City an advantage. But unfortunately, this hope was entirely shattered.

Taiyi Sect flourished, developed smoothly, and its disciples increased in number with a higher cultivation base. However, not all events over these two years were positive. Meng Zhang's senior, Daoist Clear Spirit, from Taiyi Sect's older generation of elders, finally passed away during meditation.

Before Meng Zhang became the Sect Master of Taiyi Sect, Daoist Clear Spirit, like an old ox, had dedicated himself diligently to the sect, wholeheartedly devoted to the spirit fields.

After Meng Zhang became the Sect Master, Daoist Clear Spirit had helped the sect through its most difficult period. When Taiyi Sect showed signs of rejuvenation, Daoist Clear Spirit continued his silent dedication, managing the spirit fields and cultivating Spirit Plants, becoming the most reliable support for the sect.

Daoist Clear Spirit died during meditation at almost ninety years old, which was considered a long life for a Qi Refining stage cultivator. His passing marked the end of the older generation of cultivators in Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang grieved deeply for the loss of the last elder in the sect, shedding tears in sorrow. Under Meng Zhang's personal supervision, Taiyi Sect held a grand funeral. Not only did all the members of the sect wear mourning attire, mourning Daoist Clear Spirit solemnly, but even the ally Qiaoshou Sect and the vassal Shi Family sent envoys to participate in the funeral.

After various complex rituals, Daoist Clear Spirit received a grand burial in the old mountain gate of Taiyi Sect. Meng Zhang ordered the extensive propagation of Daoist Clear Spirit's life story, emphasizing his loyalty and dedication to the sect, ensuring his legacy would be widely known.

The passing of Daoist Clear Spirit weighed heavily on Meng Zhang's heart, and his emotions took a long time to settle. With the departure of Daoist Clear Spirit, a new era in Taiyi Sect had come to an end.