

Sect Master 141

Chapter 141: Knowing

Meng Zhang naturally wouldn't reveal Jue Ying's true identity and only stated that she was one of his friends. Xu Chengxian also called over the middle-aged man and introduced him to Meng Zhang. This middle-aged man was named Lin Bailin, a Cultivator from Forest Spring Watch. Interestingly, he was related to Forest Mountain School's Foundation Building Cultivator, Lin Shenpo, as they were from the same clan.

Meng Zhang's mind stirred slightly. Last time during Lin Shenpo's Foundation Building Dharma Meeting, Forest Mountain School had been punished by Twin Success Valley. Unexpectedly, Forest Mountain School had dared to maintain a close relationship with Forest Spring Watch.

Xu Chengxian expressed gratitude to Meng Zhang and praised his formidable cultivation base for extending help. They exchanged some customary flattering remarks before getting into the main topic.

According to Xu Chengxian, this caravan belonged to Forest Mountain School, and he was responsible for escorting it. They coincidentally met Lin Bailin on the way and decided to travel together.

Unexpectedly, they encountered a siege from demonic beasts while passing through here. If it weren't for the assistance of Meng Zhang and Jue Ying, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Meng Zhang knew that Xu Chengxian was exaggerating his and Jue Ying's role. Even if they hadn't intervened, the group of demonic beasts might not have posed a serious threat to the caravan. With Xu Chengxian and Lin Bailin's hidden abilities, at most, the caravan would have incurred some additional costs to repel the poisonous sand lizards.

In the midst of the chaotic battle, Meng Zhang used his Deception Breaking Eye to observe the cargo being transported by the caravan. Although the tightly wrapped goods on the backs of the ten humped sand lizard beasts couldn't escape his divine ability, Meng Zhang could tell that the cargo consisted of a substantial amount of white hidden earth.

What secrets lay behind the white hidden earth? Flying Swan Sect had been purchasing large quantities of it, and Twin Success Valley had secretly hoarded it through Taiyi Sect while keeping it hidden from Flying Swan Sect. Now, Meng Zhang stumbled upon a Forest Mountain School caravan secretly transporting white hidden earth, suggesting that the owners of this batch were likely from Forest Spring Watch.

Aware of having uncovered this secret, Meng Zhang didn't want to linger any longer. After all, his main purpose in intervening was to repay Xu Chengxian's favor.

Meng Zhang exchanged a few words with Xu Chengxian and stated that he had urgent matters to attend to and needed to leave. Xu Chengxian tried to persuade Meng Zhang, offering compensation for his loss of a magic tool during the battle and a share of the spoils obtained from killing the poisonous sand lizards. Especially for killing the Second Rank poisonous sand lizard, Meng Zhang and Jue Ying had contributed greatly.

Meng Zhang repeatedly declined, claiming his strength was insignificant and he didn't possess a storage magic tool large enough to hold the corpses of the poisonous sand lizards.

Seeing that Meng Zhang was determined to leave, Xu Chengxian regretfully accepted his decision and promised to visit him personally in the future to express gratitude for his assistance. As for the corpses of the poisonous sand lizards, Xu Chengxian assured Meng Zhang that he wouldn't forget him and Jue Ying.

After bidding farewell, Meng Zhang and Jue Ying mounted the black crane and hurriedly left the area.

As they watched the figure of the black crane disappear into the distance, Xu Chengxian's previous smile vanished from his face, replaced by a somewhat gloomy expression.

"Bailin, did they discover the cargo of the caravan?" Xu Chengxian asked.

Lin Bailin shook his head, "I don't know. Even if they did, with their insights, they wouldn't understand the purpose and secret of white hidden earth."

"For safety's sake, we should have kept them here forever. But I'm getting old, and my heart has softened," Xu Chengxian sighed.

"It's not that you've become soft-hearted but rather that you weren't sure you could keep them here," Lin Bailin joked.

"That Taiyi Sect Master named Meng Zhang is quite capable, and he definitely has hidden cards up his sleeve. As for that girl named Jue Ying, I can't see through her either," Lin Bailin said with some frustration.

"Whether it's soft-heartedness or uncertainty, the fact remains that they helped us when we needed it. If we turn our backs on them and repay kindness with enmity, I wouldn't be able to face myself," Xu Chengxian said with a bitter smile.

"So, you're just this mediocre, barely managing to be the Sect Master of Forest Mountain School. You lack ambition and the qualities of a leader," Lin Bailin teased.

"A mediocre old man like me doesn't have the qualifications to be a leader, let alone a great conqueror," Xu Chengxian retorted with a laugh.

As Xu Chengxian and Lin Bailin bantered back and forth, they brushed aside the matter.

Once Meng Zhang and Jue Ying had flown far away on the black crane, Meng Zhang felt a sense of relief.

During his conversation with Xu Chengxian, he instinctively used his talent, Divine Ability Mind Reading. Although Xu Chengxian and Lin Bailin's cultivation bases were above his, he couldn't read their minds. However, he sensed a sudden malevolence directed at him from Xu Chengxian's mind.

The malevolence came swiftly and disappeared just as quickly, as if Xu Chengxian had reconsidered his intention.

Meng Zhang couldn't afford to be complacent. He knew that once he uncovered Xu Chengxian and his group's secret of smuggling white hidden earth, they probably considered killing them to silence the witnesses.

For some unknown reason, maybe due to a pang of conscience or maybe due to not being certain of dealing with Meng Zhang and Jue Ying, Xu Chengxian later abandoned the idea of killing them.

Meng Zhang didn't dare linger there any longer, nor did he dare challenge Xu Chengxian and his companions' moral boundaries. Therefore, he hastily said his goodbyes and left with Jue Ying.

Of course, if they were to engage in a full confrontation, Xu Chengxian's side didn't have much confidence in keeping Meng Zhang and Jue Ying behind. With nearly all the cultivators in the caravan injured, especially some who were poisoned by the venom of the poisonous sand lizards, they needed immediate treatment to avoid any lasting effects.

With so many injured people, even if their numbers were greater, provoking Meng Zhang to create a scene of carnage wouldn't be difficult.

After flying far away on the black crane, Meng Zhang asked Jue Ying, "Jue Ying, you're well-informed about the black market and know many secrets. Do you know why Flying Swan Sect has been purchasing large amounts of white hidden earth? It can't just be for refining purposes; they shouldn't need so much for that."

Jue Ying shook her head, "Flying Swan Sect, as the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, holds many secrets that are unknown to outsiders. As well-informed as the black market may be, they can't penetrate the upper echelons of Flying Swan Sect."

"The exact reason behind Flying Swan Sect's continuous purchase of white hidden earth is unknown to outsiders. Some cultivators speculate that it might be for some Dual Cultivation techniques practiced in Flying Swan Sect, which require white hidden earth. But whether this is true or not remains unclear," Jue Ying replied.

Meng Zhang felt somewhat disappointed by her answer. If Jue Ying didn't know the secret behind white hidden earth, then he had no way of knowing either.

Meng Zhang decided to keep the secret of Xu Chengxian's smuggling of white hidden earth deep within his heart, refraining from revealing it to anyone.

He knew that Taiyi Sect couldn't afford to provoke powerful enemies like Forest Mountain School and Forest Spring Watch.

Chapter 142: Flying Boat

As for dealing with the Zhao Family, spreading rumors about the Forest Spring Watch and Forest Mountain School in secret, Meng Zhang wouldn't even dare to consider such a thing. People were not fools; as long as similar rumors circulated, it wouldn't require any evidence for Foundation Building cultivators to show up at Taiyi Sect's doorstep and wipe them out directly.

Since both sides hadn't torn their faces yet, things weren't too bad. Meng Zhang put this matter aside for the time being and chatted with Jue Ying.

Black Crane flew all the way, taking more than half a day to bring Meng Zhang and Jue Ying to Firewell Market. Upon arrival, the two bid farewell and went about their own business.

Meng Zhang directly sought out Nangong Wen, an attendant of Earthfire Sect. After several trades between Taiyi Sect and Earthfire Sect, they had some acquaintance. Nangong Wen was in charge of handling exchanges with Taiyi Sect on Earthfire Sect's side.

Nangong Wen was quite different from most cultivators in Earthfire Sect. He appeared refined and gentlemanly, well-known for his integrity and the commitment to his words. Though he seemed out of place among the fiercely valiant cultivators of Earthfire Sect, Jue Ying mentioned that Nangong Wen held significant authority within the sect. Especially in external affairs and transactions, Foundation Building cultivators from Earthfire Sect often followed the opinions of this Refining Qi cultivator. After finding Nangong Wen, Meng Zhang received a warm reception. After some cordial exchanges, they got down to business. Meng Zhang presented the prepared blueprints for the Nine Palace Windfire Banner, a combined magic tool requiring the refinement of nine different large flags. Once completed, nine people would each hold one flag and stand in specific positions, driving them with a secret technique. The nine flags, when waved together, could produce numerous illusions to bewilder and trap enemies. What's more, when united, the nine flags could release an infinite amount of wind and fire, overwhelming the enemy completely.

Nangong Wen accepted Meng Zhang's blueprints but didn't immediately respond. Instead, he consulted with Earthfire Sect's tool refiners and then provided an answer regarding the possibility of refining it. Taiyi Sect could provide scarlet copper mined from the mines, along with associated materials like Flame Crystals and Profound Gold. Meng Zhang had already spent effort refining these materials.

As for the other materials, they needed to be purchased from Earthfire Sect. After some calculations, Nangong Wen offered a fair price, including the materials and labor cost. Meng Zhang didn't haggle and reached an agreement with Nangong Wen. Leaving behind the blueprints and a deposit, he bid farewell.

Having only the blueprints without the special methods to drive it, even if Earthfire Sect refined the Nine Palace Windfire Banner, they wouldn't be able to use it. Meng Zhang wandered around Firewell Market, even visiting the ghost market, but unfortunately, there were no unexpected treasures to be found.

Thanks to Jue Ying's recommendation, Meng Zhang had become a regular customer in the black market and had a status similar to Shi Weiming's. Over the years, he occasionally came to the black market for trading and acquiring rare items from outside. However, as the items in the black market had uncertain origins, unless he urgently needed something or found a highly practical use for it, he refrained from making casual purchases.

In the past, the cold poison and yin thunder he bought from the black market had helped him defeat a heavily injured Foundation Building elder from Twin Success Valley. However, he had been unsuccessful in finding similar treasures in subsequent visits.

During this visit to the black market, Meng Zhang purchased a First Rank high-grade furnace. After several years of training, Tian Li had lived up to expectations and become a tool refiner. Although he could only refine simple small magic tools for now, the resources invested by the sect hadn't been wasted. With his future progress in refining, Taiyi Sect wouldn't need to seek help from Earthfire Sect in the field of refining.

Meng Zhang bought the furnace as a reward for Tian Li, considering it would be used within the sect, so there was no need to worry about it being illicit goods.

With his business concluded, Meng Zhang left Firewell Market. There was no flying mount available for him to hitch a ride back, so he had to ride his Wind Chasing Horse and travel the conventional way.

After several months of returning to Taiyi Sect, Sect Master Xu Chengxian from Forest Mountain School and Lin Bailin from Forest Spring Watch visited together to express their gratitude for Meng Zhang's assistance last time. Although Meng Zhang felt cautious toward the two in his heart, he warmly received them on the surface.

Xu Chengxian adopted a senior's manner, showing concern and care for Meng Zhang. The conversation subtly hinted at the close relationship between Taiyi Sect and Twin Success Valley. The two brought a generous gift as a token of appreciation. Xu Chengxian presented a First Rank flying boat as a thank-you gift for Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang had long wanted to purchase a flying boat but had not come across a suitable one yet. Either he found the price too high, or the performance was unsatisfactory. The flying boat gifted by Xu Chengxian was outstanding among First Rank flying boats, with the ability to easily carry around ten cultivators, or more with some crowding.

Meng Zhang declined the gift multiple times, feeling unworthy of such a precious item. However, Xu Chengxian insisted, and it seemed that the gift was partly given as compensation for Meng Zhang's share of the spoils from the sale of the poisonous sand lizard's corpse. Since he had no way of refusing any further, Meng Zhang reluctantly accepted the gift.

During their conversation, Meng Zhang didn't neglect Lin Bailin. Lin Bailin had an imposing demeanor and eloquence, holding unique perspectives on many issues. Due to the time constraints during their last meeting, Meng Zhang hurriedly left without speaking much to him. Now, after talking at length with Lin Bailin, Meng Zhang felt an affinity for him, and they got along well.

Lin Bailin was also unexpectedly impressed by Meng Zhang, a seemingly insignificant Sect Master, and found him quite remarkable. The two bonded instantly and developed mutual respect and appreciation.

After spending a considerable amount of time at Taiyi Sect, Xu Chengxian and Lin Bailin took their leave under Meng Zhang's warm send-off. Once the two were gone, Meng Zhang carefully inspected the flying boat on the table.

The flying boat could be shrunk to the size of an arm for easy storage when not in use. It relied on spirit stones as the main power source and was controlled by the cultivator inputting true qi to manage flight altitude and direction.

The flying boat seemed flawless, making it a rare masterpiece. Meng Zhang wondered if Xu Chengxian's lavish gift was a genuine expression of gratitude or if there was an intention to buy his silence. Such thoughts crossed Meng Zhang's mind.

For a long period of time, nothing significant happened in the Taiyi Sect, and the surrounding areas remained calm. Meng Zhang finally had a rare time of undisturbed days, allowing him to wholeheartedly focus on cultivation. The principles of civil and martial arts involve alternating between relaxation and tension. After spending some time in seclusion for cultivation, Meng Zhang occasionally went out for a stroll. Apart from visiting Firewell Market twice, the farthest place he went to was Singing Sand City.

At present, Taiyi Sect had several territories, including the original mountain gate, Sweetwater Oasis, Morning Sun Hillside, and an oasis that formerly belonged to the Zhao Family. Every time Meng Zhang went out, he would visit a few places. However, most of his time was spent on Morning Sun Hillside.

As for the White Hidden Earth mine, Meng Zhang completely handed over its management to others and rarely went there. Fortunately, Li Xuan was competent and handled the mining and transportation matters efficiently.

To facilitate the covert transportation of White Hidden Earth ore, Taiyi Sect purchased several humped sand lizard beasts at a low price from Twin Success Valley. Hu Jing, an Inner-Sect Disciple of Taiyi Sect, displayed great talent in beast-taming and received special attention and training from Meng Zhang. Once she achieved a certain level of proficiency in beast-taming, she took charge of all the beast-related affairs in Taiyi Sect.

Hu Jing spent some time training over a dozen mortal beast handlers who could now ride the tamed humped sand lizard beasts. She also completely tamed the small Crimson Feather Eagles in the sect, which could serve as scouts, spies, and messengers. Currently, the communication between various strongholds of Taiyi Sect primarily relied on these Crimson Feather Eagles.

Even the three larger Crimson Feather Eagles were now able to be ridden.

After completing his seclusion, Meng Zhang visited Singing Sand City once again. He made a stop at the grocery store, chatted with Zhang Zhanlin for a while, and then headed to the Four Seas Building.

If we talk about a store with a comprehensive range of goods, the Four Seas Building surpassed the Flying Swan Building. Moreover, the You Family, who managed the Four Seas Building, was a purely merchant family and had a distinct business style. Unlike the Flying Swan Building, which appeared courteous on the surface but still exuded an air of arrogance.

Meng Zhang had been to the Four Seas Building several times before. The Four Seas Building provided intermediary services for loose cultivators, and Meng Zhang had recruited many loose cultivators here in the past.

This time, Meng Zhang didn't come to recruit more loose cultivators but to shop. Since Tian Li became an official tool refiner, his alchemy skills had improved rapidly, and he had already started crafting various magic tools.

Inside Taiyi Sect's Hidden Scripture Pavilion, there was no shortage of magic tool blueprints. This time, Tian Li asked Meng Zhang to help purchase some refining materials. Additionally, Meng Zhang bought several young pups of mountain patrol dogs.

Hu Jing needed enough training subjects for her beast-taming practice, and although the mountain patrol dogs were only First Rank lower-grade demonic beasts, they would become excellent guardians once properly tamed.

After completing a trade with a familiar acquaintance, Meng Zhang was about to leave the main hall when he noticed a young and handsome cultivator with a somewhat slick appearance engaging in an intense conversation with a beautiful girl who seemed to be around sixteen or seventeen years old. He inadvertently caught a few phrases as the male cultivator's voice was quite loud, and Meng Zhang's hearing was exceptionally keen.

"Young Miss Yang, our Liu Family is sincere. As long as you join us, we will never mistreat you."
"Master Liu, I have already said that my concern is not about my personal treatment. If you want me to join Liu Family, please help rescue the members of my Yang Family first."

"While Liu Family is not afraid of Green Bamboo Mountain, we cannot unnecessarily offend them."

"Young Miss Yang, rest assured, once you join Liu Family, Green Bamboo Mountain will not continue to trouble you."

"As for those so-called family members, they are just insignificant mortals. As a cultivator with a bright future, Young Miss Yang, there's no need to be delayed by mere mortals."

"Master Liu, we have different beliefs, and we are not on the same path. My decision is made, please do not continue to pester me."

"Young Miss Yang, you seem to be underestimating us. Liu Family has good intentions, yet you seem indifferent. Do you really look down on Liu Family?"

During the argument, the young male cultivator's voice grew louder, and he even attempted to pull the girl away. However, since this was the territory of the Four Seas Building, such disturbances were not tolerated. Guards quickly arrived to separate the two.

After leaving a few harsh words, the young male cultivator left in anger, and the young girl thanked the guards before departing as well. From her expression, Meng Zhang could sense that she couldn't completely hide her worries.

Observing the situation with interest, Meng Zhang was approached by a familiar acquaintance.

"Sect Master Meng, are you interested in those two?" the acquaintance asked.

"I wouldn't say interested, just a bit curious. What's their background, and why did they have a dispute here in the Four Seas Building?" Meng Zhang casually inquired.

"The male cultivator is Liu Fenglang from the Liu Family. He is the son of Liu Dachuan, an Elder of the Foundation Building stage in the Liu Family. The female cultivator is Yang Xueyi, who possesses outstanding cultivation talent and is skilled in talisman-making. At such a young age, she is already an exceptionally talented talisman master."

As the acquaintance slowly recounted the details, Meng Zhang began to understand the whole story. Yang Xueyi was originally from the Yang Family, a subordinate family of the Green Bamboo Mountain. Not too long ago, the Yang Family somehow offended the Green Bamboo Mountain and was directly wiped out by them under the accusation of colluding with bandits.

During the annihilation of the Yang Family, Yang Xueyi and a few Yang Family cultivators happened to be traveling outside and luckily escaped the massacre. After all the Yang Family cultivators were killed, many mortal family members were left behind. Since Green Bamboo Mountain was a righteous sect, they couldn't directly slaughter mortals on a large scale. Therefore, they exiled these mortals, leaving them to fend for themselves in the Endless Sea of Sand, which was tantamount to a death sentence.

The acquaintance maliciously speculated that Green Bamboo Mountain probably had another motive for not directly killing these mortals. They likely intended to use these mortal family members as bait to lure the remaining Yang Family cultivators out of hiding and conveniently eradicate them.

Yang Xueyi sought help from those forces that used to have good relations with the Yang Family, but everyone avoided her. Faced with no other choice, she came to Singing Sand City to hire loose cultivators to help rescue the mortal members of the Yang Family. However, despite visiting the Four Seas Building several times, no loose cultivator dared to take up her request.

In the Four Seas Building, Yang Xueyi somehow got entangled with Liu Fenglang from the Liu Family. Perhaps he was lured by Yang Xueyi's beauty or was genuinely interested in her talents and wanted to recruit her for the Liu Family. Liu Fenglang kept pestering Yang Xueyi, and the scene that just unfolded was not the first time such an incident occurred.

Chapter 144: Unyielding

From Zhi Ke's account and the conversation between Liu Fenglang and Yang Xueyi just now, Meng Zhang finally understood. Yang Xueyi doesn't reject joining other cultivation forces, but she insists on rescuing the mortals of the Yang Family first. She doesn't solely focus on her own future but is willing to walk a more difficult path for the sake of her mortal relatives. This girl is both affectionate and righteous, with good character, and her principles align well with Meng Zhang's intentions.

For once, Meng Zhang felt a moment of compassion, and if possible, he wanted to help this young lady. However, by doing so, he would come into conflict with Green Bamboo Mountain, which made him hesitate.

Though Twin Success Valley has always looked down upon Green Bamboo Mountain, they were only entitled to do so because they were on a par with them. Green Bamboo Mountain, after all, was a cultivation sect of comparable standing to Twin Success Valley, and Taiyi Sect's strength was far from matching that of Green Bamboo Mountain.

Helping others is a good deed, but if one overestimates their abilities and gets involved beyond their capacity, it would be foolish. While Meng Zhang pondered over this matter, he left Four Seas Building and arrived on the streets outside.

Meng Zhang entered a nearby alley, planning to cut through to the grocery store and have a chat with Zhang Zhanlin. But as he reached the entrance of the alley, a group of people blocked his way.

A bunch of cultivators dressed in Green Bamboo Mountain's uniforms had surrounded Yang Xueyi. Liu Fenglang, with two followers, was standing aside, watching the scene unfold.

"Yang Xueyi, be obedient and come back with us. If you cooperate, perhaps the elders might spare your life. But if you continue to be stubborn, no one will be able to save you," a Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator said menacingly.

Yang Xueyi looked at the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators in front of her, her face full of hatred and her eyes reddening with anger.

"Your Green Bamboo Mountain framed my Yang Family for unfathomable crimes, causing the massacre of my entire family. This deep-seated hatred will be etched in my heart forever, and I will never compromise with you."

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator's face turned grim. "At such a young age, you've fallen into the evil path and refuse to repent. Today, my Green Bamboo Mountain will uphold justice and eliminate the likes of you, the demonic and wicked."

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator was about to make a move when Liu Fenglang stopped him.

"Wait, don't be so hasty. Let me say something," Liu Fenglang, a mere Refining Qi stage cultivator, spoke, but his father was an elder in the Foundation Building stage of the Liu Family. The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator had to give him some face.

Seeing the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator pause, Liu Fenglang said to Yang Xueyi, "Miss Yang, this is your last chance. As long as you join our Liu Family, I promise to protect you today."

"But if you remain so obstinate, refusing to accept the goodwill of the Liu Family, then I can't help you anymore."

Yang Xueyi gave Liu Fenglang a cold glance. "These Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators are your doing, aren't they? You want to use them to force me into submission."

Liu Fenglang didn't show any embarrassment at having his schemes exposed. "The Liu Family is eager to recruit talents like Miss Yang, so it's only natural to use some methods."

"Miss Yang, it's time for you to make a decision. Will you join the Liu Family or not? Speak your mind."

Yang Xueyi's face remained resolute. "Even if I die in battle today, I will never let a despicable person like you have your way."

Yang Xueyi's unwavering words angered Liu Fenglang, and he completely gave up trying to win her over.

"Fine, fine. You are truly ignorant and don't know what's good for you, you stubborn woman. Today, you'll have bad luck."

"Brothers of Green Bamboo Mountain, you don't need to worry about my face anymore. You can handle this stubborn woman however you like."

Upon hearing Liu Fenglang's words, the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators took out talismans, activated their magic tools, and prepared to take action.

"Stop!" A loud shout came from behind. At some point, a group of Twin Success Valley patrolling cultivators had arrived nearby.

"Within the market, all grudges and killings are forbidden. If you want to fight, take it outside. If you dare to act here, don't blame me for being impolite." The leader of the Twin Success Valley patrolling cultivators spoke arrogantly, surveying the crowd.

Twin Success Valley had a history of being domineering, but inside Singing Sand City, physical confrontations were strictly prohibited, as ordained by the higher-ups of Twin Success Valley, and it was an absolute rule not to violate.

"This Liu young master, if your father were here, he might have some face. But as for you, become a Foundation Building stage cultivator first before speaking," said the Twin Success Valley cultivator disdainfully.

"The face of this young master is more significant than the buttocks of a Foundation Building stage cultivator," a sarcastic voice echoed from somewhere.

Liu Fenglang was completely enraged. No longer caring about the situation, he immediately attacked in the direction of the voice.

His fierce sword aura struck the dark corner, but to his surprise, there was no one there, only shattered bricks and stones flying around.

"Insolent!"

"How dare you take the initiative."

Several Twin Success Valley cultivators were both shocked and angry and tried to subdue Liu Fenglang and his followers. Liu Fenglang and his men refused to be captured without a fight and launched a counterattack.

A few Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, who had a good relationship with Liu Fenglang and had always disliked Twin Success Valley's cultivators, also joined the fray.

However, this was Singing Sand City, Twin Success Valley's most important territory. Before things escalated further, the news reached the market through a Formation.

Twin Success Valley's Foundation Building stage cultivators quickly arrived and easily suppressed the cultivators from Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain.

Meng Zhang, who had been hiding on the sidelines all this time, left quietly before the Twin Success Valley Foundation Building stage cultivator arrived. He had informed the Twin Success Valley patrolling cultivators about the situation and later provoked Liu Fenglang secretly, pushing him to act.

Meng Zhang concealed his actions, making sure not to reveal his involvement to the others. His purpose in doing all this was merely that he couldn't stand Liu Fenglang and the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, without any other ulterior motives for now.

Chapter 145: Probe

After arriving at the grocery store, Meng Zhang did not rush to leave. He sent Zhang Zhanlin out to gather relevant information. Zhang Zhanlin returned after a while with the latest news.

Both the Liu Family cultivators and the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators who acted in the market were detained. They had provoked the resident elder of Twin Success Valley in Singing

Sand City by attacking their patrolling cultivators. This elder threatened to teach them a lesson and give them a memorable experience.

It was said that the news about this incident had been sent back to their respective sects, Liu Family, and Green Bamboo Mountain. How this matter would develop further was uncertain.

Meng Zhang had an idea and decided not to rush back to Taiyi Sect for the time being. He asked Zhang Zhanlin to inquire carefully about the situation between the Yang Family and Green Bamboo Mountain.

Alone in a room, Meng Zhang took out the mirror given to him by Jue Ying. He infused true qi into the mirror and swiftly wrote on it. He asked Jue Ying to use the underground information channels to find out the details of how Yang Family was exterminated by Green Bamboo Mountain.

As Taiyi Sect's strength grew, Zhang Zhanlin also established more connections in Singing Sand City. Combined with his previous contacts, he was now well-informed.

After some effort, Zhang Zhanlin obtained a considerable amount of information. Yang Family, under Green Bamboo Mountain, was relatively well-known in the cultivation world. In terms of strength, they were not inferior to the Zhao Family in the past.

The reason for Yang Family's annihilation by Green Bamboo Mountain was said to be the exposure of an ancestral treasure, which triggered Green Bamboo Mountain's greed. They killed the Yang Family and took the treasure for themselves.

Although Green Bamboo Mountain was considered part of the righteous path, they had behaved crudely in this matter, causing criticism from many cultivation forces. Twin Success Valley had also engaged in similar activities before, but they knew how to cover up their actions and save face. In contrast, Green Bamboo Mountain's actions were clumsy and had brought them public ridicule.

Surprisingly, Green Bamboo Mountain had not completely exterminated the Yang Family and left some survivors, including Yang Xueyi and several Yang Family cultivators who had been hiding in Singing Sand City. Twin Success Valley, out of spite against Green Bamboo Mountain, had intentionally or unintentionally protected the Yang Family members. As long as the Yang Family cultivators stayed in Singing Sand City, Green Bamboo Mountain couldn't touch them. Twin Success Valley had established the rule against vendettas in the market for hundreds of years and was committed to maintaining order.

The information Zhang Zhanlin brought back was much more detailed than what Meng Zhang had heard at Four Seas Building. Especially concerning the relationship between Green Bamboo Mountain and Twin Success Valley, the information was vivid.

The only thing unknown was what specific treasure Green Bamboo Mountain had taken from Yang Family.

Not long after the conversation with Zhang Zhanlin, the small mirror Meng Zhang carried with him began to emit a faint warmth. He took it out, infused it with true qi, and saw lines of text appearing on the surface.

The content of the text was similar to the news Zhang Zhanlin had gathered. There was still no detailed information about the treasure taken from the Yang Family, confirming that the incident was indeed true.

Meng Zhang decided to stay in Singing Sand City and continue monitoring the situation.

After a few days, Elder Liu Dachuan of the Liu Family and Elder Old Man Bamboo Stick of Green Bamboo Mountain arrived in Singing Sand City, both with aggressive demeanor.

When the two elders met with Twin Success Valley's Foundation Building cultivators, they immediately began a loud argument. If it weren't for Daoist Guang Hong of Forest Spring Watch intervening and advising them, they might have already started fighting. Shan Ying, Twin Success Valley's enforcement elder, threatened to send these troublemakers to forced labor for causing trouble in Singing Sand City.

The furious Old Man Bamboo Stick and Liu Dachuan were on the verge of erupting. It was Guang Hong Daoist's efforts that calmed them down. Later, it was unclear how the factions negotiated. It was said that even the Flying Swan Building came forward to mediate.

In the end, the cultivators from the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain were detained for a few days, and then Liu Dachuan and Old Man Bamboo Stick took them away, seemingly as a gesture of punishment.

Rumors spread in the market that Shan Ying, Twin Success Valley's Elder, was very angry about this and instructed Twin Success Valley's patrolling cultivators to take ruthless action against Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators if they dared to cause trouble in the market, showing no mercy.

Hearing this news, Meng Zhang thought to himself, "This is indeed a fortunate turn of events for me."

Meng Zhang prepared himself and proactively visited his old friend, Zhou Shengkao.

Upon meeting, Meng Zhang noticed that Zhou Shengkao's mood was clearly not good. He secretly used his innate Divine Ability, Mind Reading, to read Zhou Shengkao's thoughts. After exchanging a few pleasantries, Meng Zhang got to the point.

"I've heard, Elder Shan seems a bit unhappy these days," Meng Zhang cautiously asked.

"It seems good news travels far, even you've heard about it. Flying Swan Building seems neutral this time, but in reality, they are siding with Green Bamboo Mountain," Zhou Shengkao replied.

"With the relationship between Green Bamboo Mountain and Flying Swan Sect, this isn't the first time they've done such a thing," Meng Zhang nodded in agreement.

"Senior Shan is quite angry about this, and rightfully so," Zhou Shengkao said indignantly. He was close to Shan Ying and shared in his glory and frustration.

"In the end, this incident was caused by Green Bamboo Mountain and the Liu Family acting unjustly," Meng Zhang concurred.

"Especially Green Bamboo Mountain, relying on their relationship with Flying Swan Sect, has always been unreasonable, tyrannical, and full of evil deeds."

Zhou Shengkao was a clever fellow and could sense others' thoughts even without reading their minds. With just a few words, he could understand their intentions.

"Meng, my brother, you didn't come here just to talk about these matters for no reason. What's your plan? Tell me," Zhou Shengkao said.

"Of course, my plan will benefit you too and help Elder Shan vent his anger and feel more at ease," Meng Zhang replied with a smile.

After carefully testing the waters, Meng Zhang brought up the matter of the Yang Family. Before he could finish speaking, Zhou Shengkao understood his intention.

"You want to recruit the Yang Family cultivators, right? However, that girl from the Yang Family is very clever. She won't join another cultivation force unless you save the mortal members of the Yang Family," Zhou Shengkao, well-informed, understood the situation's ins and outs.

"I alone can't accomplish this. I'll need your help," Meng Zhang said, knowing the importance of Zhou Shengkao's assistance.

Chapter 146: The Preparation Begins

As Meng Zhang was about to finish speaking, Zhou Shengkao shook his head repeatedly, "No, absolutely not. Although Single Bo might have been offended a little, he wouldn't resort to open confrontation with Twin Success Valley and Green Bamboo Mountain."

"I didn't ask you to get involved directly, nor did I ask Twin Success Valley and Green Bamboo Mountain to take action. I want Taiyi Sect to step in and recruit Yang Family cultivators to help rescue the people of Yang Family. Big brother, you just need to provide some assistance secretly," Meng Zhang explained quickly.

"Furthermore, if Green Bamboo Mountain troubles Taiyi Sect in the future, I'll request Twin Success Valley to offer more protection," Meng Zhang added.

Zhou Shengkao listened to Meng Zhang's words and asked, "How certain are you that you can successfully save the mortal members of Yang Family?"

"At least 80% certain," Meng Zhang replied confidently, patting his chest.

Zhou Shengkao pondered for a while but remained silent. Meng Zhang read his thoughts and knew that he was persuaded but still couldn't make up his mind.

Eventually, Zhou Shengkao decided to leave Meng Zhang waiting and departed on his own. Meng Zhang patiently waited for about an hour before Zhou Shengkao returned. Even without reading Zhou Shengkao's thoughts, Meng Zhang could tell from his expression that the matter was likely settled. "Brother Meng, go ahead and do this, but you must handle it well. After rescuing the mortal members of Yang Family, bring all of them back to Taiyi Sect. If Green Bamboo Mountain seeks revenge on you in the future, Twin Success Valley will never stand idly by," Zhou Shengkao said firmly.

With Zhou Shengkao's promise, Meng Zhang finally felt relieved. The matter was now stable.

After leaving Zhou Shengkao's place, Meng Zhang followed the information provided by him and went directly to the residence of Yang Family cultivators in Singing Sand City.

Six Yang Family cultivators were still alive, hiding in a secluded courtyard in Singing Sand City. As the masters of Singing Sand City, Twin Success Valley was aware of this. When Green Bamboo Mountain sent cultivators to investigate, they were deliberately hindered by Twin Success Valley.

Yang Xueyi, in particular, took the initiative to go to Four Seas Building to hire loose cultivators, which exposed their location and led to the entanglement with Liu Fenglang. As long as the Yang Family cultivators remained in this small courtyard, Green Bamboo Mountain couldn't do much to them. Especially after the recent events, Twin Success Valley would not allow Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators to cause trouble in Singing Sand City.

Upon finding Meng Zhang at their doorstep, the Yang Family cultivators were very cautious. Among them, Yang Xueyi, despite only being at the Refining Qi Sixth Layer of cultivation, was the one in charge.

"Miss Yang, I am Meng Zhang, the Sect Master of Taiyi Sect," Meng Zhang introduced himself.

"I remember you; I saw you in Four Seas Building. You were there when Liu Fenglang was bothering me," Yang Xueyi said, keenly recognizing Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang started discussing their situation and a possible solution with Yang Xueyi. After a lengthy conversation, they reached an agreement. If Meng Zhang could rescue the mortal members of Yang Family from Green Bamboo Mountain, Yang Xueyi would lead all of them to join Taiyi Sect.

Before finalizing the deal, Meng Zhang secretly used Mind Reading to gauge the thoughts of Yang Family cultivators. He found them to be good-hearted individuals, especially Yang Xueyi, who showed strong determination, exceptional talent in talisman craft, and was a rare talent. Taking some risks to recruit her was definitely worth it.

With the agreement in place, Meng Zhang left Singing Sand City and returned to Taiyi Sect. The Nine Palace Windfire Banner, commissioned from Earthfire Sect, had already been successfully refined and brought back to the sect by Meng Zhang.

He selected nine mid-stage Refining Qi disciples within the sect and had them practice and familiarize themselves with the combined magic tool following a secret technique. After some time, they became proficient in using it.

Wen Qiansun, one of the disciples, reported to Meng Zhang that they were ready for real combat. Meng Zhang instructed them to continue practicing until they mastered the use of the combined magic tool because they would soon need to use it.

Meng Zhang also contacted Jue Ying and arranged to meet near Firewell Market. After arriving, he explained his detailed plan to her. Then, the two of them headed to the black market.

As a recommended client of Jue Ying, Meng Zhang had higher privileges within the black market. They approached a person in charge and made their requests.

Meng Zhang first entrusted the black market to investigate relevant information about Green Bamboo Mountain. They didn't need core information, only peripheral details, which the black market easily accepted.

While waiting for the investigation results, Meng Zhang stayed in Firewell Market with Jue Ying. After a few days, they received the report from the black market. Fortunately, it didn't contain any unexpected surprises, and Meng Zhang felt prepared for the upcoming events.

He made a series of requests to the black market, with the most important one being to hire two Foundation Building stage cultivators. They didn't need to fight Green Bamboo Mountain's Foundation Building stage cultivators head-on, just to engage and hold them at critical moments.

With the vast resources and divine ability of the black market, Meng Zhang's client status, and Jue Ying's influence, meeting Meng Zhang's requirements wasn't a problem, though it cost him a significant amount of spirit stones.

After paying the deposit, Meng Zhang was left with empty pockets, and the rest of the spirit stones were lent to him by Jue Ying. Unexpectedly, she turned out to be quite wealthy.

Once the plan's details were thoroughly discussed and deemed suitable, Meng Zhang gathered his followers, preparing to take action.

Chapter 147: Life-saving (First Part)

When Green Bamboo Mountain massacred the Yang Family, not only did they exterminate the Yang Family's cultivators on the spot, but they also intentionally or unintentionally "accidentally" harmed many mortal members of the Yang Family.

After the battle, several hundred mortal members of the Yang Family lost their lives instantly. Only those who were far away from the battlefield managed to barely escape the calamity.

Later, Green Bamboo Mountain conducted a thorough search within the oasis where the Yang Family resided, clearing out all mortal members of the Yang Family. In this process, a large number of people were killed.

In the end, around 600-700 mortal members of the Yang Family remained, and Green Bamboo Mountain exiled them all. The place of exile was not too far from Singing Sand City. It took some effort for Green Bamboo Mountain to transport these mortals to that location.

It was a desolate place at the foot of a small mountain, with an unobstructed view and no shelter in sight. The 600-700 mortals temporarily settled in a makeshift camp. On the top of a small hill near the camp, several Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators kept a vigilant watch on the surroundings day and night.

The exiled mortals only had a small amount of food and water with them. In the vast desert, they endured scorching sunlight, extreme heat, and a lack of food and water. Within a short period, nearly half of the mortals perished. If it weren't for Green Bamboo Mountain's intention to use these mortals as bait to attract the remaining Yang Family cultivators, these mortals would have probably died out long ago.

The cultivators from Green Bamboo Mountain responsible for monitoring occasionally provided some food and water to barely sustain the lives of these people. Even so, mortals continued to die one after another.

If the situation did not improve, it wouldn't take long before all these mortals perished.

One morning, a caravan passed nearby. Over a dozen humped sand lizard beasts formed a long queue. The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator in charge of monitoring the camp casually glanced at the caravan and then shifted their gaze.

This was a caravan belonging to Forest Spring Watch, which passed by the area regularly. The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators had encountered this caravan two or three times before.

On one of the humped sand lizard beasts in the caravan, Meng Zhang was expressing his gratitude to Lin Bailin, "Brother Bailin, I'm really grateful for your help this time."

"Brother Meng, there's no need to be polite. We're like-minded friends, and this is just a small matter; there's nothing to worry about. You're just hitching a ride with the caravan," Lin Bailin replied.

"Moreover, Green Bamboo Mountain, despite being a reputable sect, acts with such malicious methods, which is truly despicable."

"Brother Meng, you're doing a righteous and benevolent deed. Unfortunately, as a disciple of Forest Spring Watch, I must prioritize the interests of my sect and cannot do much more. I hope you'll succeed in your endeavors and promote justice," Lin Bailin sincerely said.

Meng Zhang found Lin Bailin's character and temperament to be very much to his liking. Lin Bailin possessed both righteousness and compassion, and he had a clear understanding of reality without acting impulsively.

When Meng Zhang sought Lin Bailin's help, he had unexpectedly received a favorable response, with Lin Bailin personally finding the leader of Forest Spring Watch's caravan. Lin Bailin not only hid Meng Zhang and his people within the caravan but also accompanied them in person.

"In that case, I'll take Brother Bailin's good wishes," Meng Zhang replied. Shortly afterward, with the cover of the crowd, Meng Zhang and the others cast the Earth Escape Spell and stealthily burrowed underground.

This was the only way since they were all Refining Qi stage cultivators; even with the help of the Earth Escape Spell, they couldn't travel too far underground. After a while, they had to resurface and recover their energy.

Surrounded by an endless desert with no shelter in sight, Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators kept a close watch on their surroundings. Every time they surfaced, there was a possibility of being discovered by the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators.

By using Forest Spring Watch's caravan, Meng Zhang and his group could secretly approach the area and then use the Earth Escape Spell to stealthily get close to their target.

Not long after they took their positions, a First Rank flying boat appeared from afar and quickly approached the camp of the Yang Family mortals.

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators on watch immediately became alert, closely monitoring the flying boat's movements.

The flying boat did not stop at the Yang Family mortals' camp but flew directly over it.

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators did not let their guard down and continued to watch the flying boat's actions.

Sure enough, the flying boat rapidly descended and hovered over the top of the small hill next to the camp.

A group of Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators stood there, keeping watch on their surroundings.

Without stopping, Yang Xueyi, accompanied by several Yang Family cultivators, leaped down from the flying boat and rushed towards the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators responsible for monitoring.

In fear of scaring off the remaining Yang Family cultivators, there were not many Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators stationed on the small hilltop, and their cultivation bases were not particularly strong.

Seeing that the Yang Family cultivators took the bait, the leading Green Bamboo Mountain cultivator had a pleased expression and casually activated the signal for reinforcements.

Immediately, two groups of cultivators rushed toward each other, engaging in a fierce battle.

After sending the signal, a Second Rank flying boat rushed over from a distance.

This Second Rank flying boat carried the ambush prepared by Green Bamboo Mountain. Inside were dozens of cultivators, some of them even at the Refining Qi stage.

As the flying boat was getting close to the battlefield, it began to lower its altitude.

Suddenly, a series of figures sprang out from the empty desert in front of them.

Meng Zhang and Jue Ying were the first to emerge from the ground, jointly casting a Second Rank talisman, forming a golden giant sword above their heads.

Although they could not fully exert the power of the Second Rank talisman, the power they unleashed was enough for now.

The golden giant sword fiercely slashed toward the head of the Second Rank flying boat.

This was just an ordinary transport flying boat, not a specially designed vessel for aerial combat. Moreover, the attack came suddenly, catching the cultivators on the flying boat off guard.

After the slash, the golden giant sword disappeared into thin air. The flying boat was heavily damaged and began to sway before gradually descending toward the ground.

Fortunately, the flying boat was carrying cultivators, and its flying altitude was not too high at the time.

Dozens of Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators jumped down from the flying boat one after another, landing on the ground.

Nine Taiyi Sect cultivators, who had been hiding underground with the help of the Earth Escape Spell, surfaced and formed a formation under Wen Qiansun's lead.

Although there were only nine of them, they were the elite force of Taiyi Sect. Wen Qiansun, Tian Li, Zheng Chao, Hu Jing, and others were among them, each holding a large flag with one half fiery red and the other dark blue.

Without the need for Meng Zhang's order, Wen Qiansun commanded them to launch their attack.

The nine large flags fluttered, and a whirlwind suddenly swept across the ground.

The whirlwind, carrying countless yellow sands, roared and enveloped almost all of the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators.

Hidden within the raging whirlwind, blazing flames surged forth, madly engulfing the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators.

Chapter 148: Life-saving (Middle Part)

The Nine Palace Windfire Banner, this combination magic tool, made its first public appearance. Wen Qiansun and the others manipulated this combination magic tool as if they were controlling a formation. With only nine mid-level Refining Qi cultivators, they managed to temporarily trap dozens of Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators.

The wind borrowed the momentum of the fire, and the fire borrowed the momentum of the wind. They complemented and supported each other, creating a fierce storm of wind and a blazing inferno. The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, already struggling to maintain their footing in the strong wind, now had to defend against the sudden onslaught of flames, causing them to be somewhat overwhelmed.

Seizing the opportunity, Meng Zhang and Jue Ying took advantage of the chaos and launched an attack on the trapped Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators. The sound of the startle bell continued to ring, confusing everyone. Flying swords danced in the air, constantly inflicting wounds on the enemies. Fire Seals continuously spewed out flames, transforming into fire serpents pouncing on their opponents.

In the midst of the raging wind, the shadows beneath the feet of the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators kept distorting. Jue Ying intermittently appeared among them, launching surprise attacks. In just a short time, they achieved fruitful results.

Before the action, Zhou Shengkao had warned Meng Zhang not to kill a large number of Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators while saving others. Twin Success Valley assumed that Meng Zhang's rescue mission was merely to give Green Bamboo Mountain some face and trouble. Elder Shan Ying pushed for this, seeking some relief for his grievances. However, neither Shan Ying nor other high-ranking members of Twin Success Valley intended to escalate conflicts with Green Bamboo Mountain.

Twin Success Valley and Green Bamboo Mountain had been in hidden rivalry for many years, and they rarely engaged in direct confrontations between sects. Therefore, Meng Zhang and the others had to maintain some limits in their actions.

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators injured by Meng Zhang and Jue Ying were mostly temporarily disabled but not in life-threatening situations.

On the other side of the battlefield between Yang Family and Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, as long as Yang Xueyi refrained from lethal attacks, both sides remained evenly matched. Yang Xueyi suppressed the urge to tear apart the enemies, instead collaborating with his comrades to keep the opposition entangled.

Both battlefields, not far from each other, were temporarily at a stalemate. In the sky not far from the battlefields, two old men observed with unfriendly gazes.

"A bunch of trash, they've been trapped so easily. When we get back to the mountain, I'll personally train them," said one of the elders, Old Man Bamboo Stick, with a cold tone.

"Bamboo Spear junior, what's the background of those cultivators who are helping Yang Family?" asked Old Man Bamboo Stick, the oldest and most experienced elder of Green Bamboo Mountain.

"I haven't seen them before, so I can't recognize their origins," replied Bamboo Spear, another elder.

"However, a group of Refining Qi cultivators suddenly appeared using Earth Escape Spell to ambush. With their strength, they couldn't have started burrowing from a distance. Most likely, they were hiding in the Forest Spring Watch caravan and sneaked closer before going underground," explained Bamboo Spear. His conjecture revealed the process of Meng Zhang and the others' actions.

"Why would Forest Spring Watch get involved in this mess? Has that old Guang Hui lost his mind to go against our Green Bamboo Mountain?" Old Man Bamboo Stick wondered aloud.

Bamboo Spear shook his head. "It's unlikely that the higher-ups of Forest Spring Watch intended this. It's probably those junior cultivators below who bribed the Forest Spring Watch caravan."

"These young cultivators dare to meddle in our affairs, likely related to Twin Success Valley," Bamboo Spear added.

"These youngsters have a decent Cultivation Base and cunning minds. They're quite adept at scheming and arranging tactics," Old Man Bamboo Stick sneered. "But they're just a bunch of Refining Qi cultivators; that's all they've got."

"Wait and see, I'll teach them a lesson and show them that their little cleverness means nothing against absolute strength. All their conspiracies and tactics are nothing but nonsense," he declared, ready to take action.

Just as Old Man Bamboo Stick was about to act, he suddenly stopped and looked to his left with a cold gaze. "Who are these sneaky thieves, trying to do something underhanded?"

From behind a white cloud in the sky not far from Old Man Bamboo Stick, two figures emerged. One person wore a wolf head mask, completely concealing their face, while the other wore an eagle head mask, similarly hiding their identity. These two were Lone Wolf and Bald Eagle, two Foundation Building cultivators hired at great cost by Meng Zhang from the black market.

The two had been using stealth spells to hide in the nearby air. Only when Old Man Bamboo Stick was about to make a move did they intentionally reveal their presence.

"You two had better stay here and watch the show," said Lone Wolf in a disguised voice, reaching the ears of the two elders. Foundation Building cultivators were more skilled at disguising their identities compared to Refining Qi cultivators.

"You sneaky brats, hiding your faces like that," Old Man Bamboo Stick sneered a few times before taking the initiative to attack.

His bamboo stick danced, creating countless shadows, attacking the two from all sides. Bamboo Spear also had no choice but to join in. Though he was not keen on starting a random battle with unfamiliar Foundation Building cultivators, his fiery temper got the better of him. He was already agitated due to being prevented from acting earlier, and as an elder with an explosive temper, he immediately engaged without hesitation.

Old Man Bamboo Stick and Bamboo Spear teamed up against Bald Eagle and Lone Wolf, resulting in a fierce clash in the sky. The spiritual energy and true qi collided violently, almost creating a hurricane out of thin air.

The four Foundation Building cultivators engaged in a fierce battle, causing a significant commotion that could be sensed from quite a distance.

All four of them had a Cultivation Base in the early Foundation Building stage, making it difficult for any side to gain the upper hand within a short time. And due to Lone Wolf and Bald Eagle's intent to entangle their opponents, Old Man Bamboo Stick and Bamboo Spear found it challenging to escape easily.

Green Bamboo Mountain had assigned two Foundation Building cultivators specifically to wait for Yang Family cultivators to fall into their trap. This was using a sledgehammer to kill a chicken, a massive waste of resources. They believed their forces were sufficient to handle any contingencies, expecting no surprises.

But the consecutive events had caused Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators to be tied down by their respective opponents.

Two Second Rank flying boats approached from a distance, meeting no resistance on their way.

Chapter 149: Life-saving (Last Part)

These two Second Rank flying boats were rented temporarily by Meng Zhang at a high price through the black market channels. The various cultivators of Green Bamboo Mountain were entangled, leaving no one to intercept the flying boats.

The flying boats were very fast and arrived in the blink of an eye, landing next to the mortal camp of the Yang Family. After days of torment, the surviving mortals of the Yang Family numbered no more than three hundred. Most of them were so badly tortured that they could barely move, lying helplessly on the ground. Many were on the brink of death, awaiting their fate.

The flying boats had not come to a complete stop when the Taiyi Sect cultivators jumped down from them one after another. If these mortals had to rely on themselves, they wouldn't even have the strength to move, making it difficult to board the flying boats in a timely manner. Fortunately, these Taiyi Sect cultivators were well-prepared. Though their cultivation bases weren't high, each of them had a role to play.

These Taiyi Sect cultivators took out a large number of talismans and used them on the crowd in the camp. Rain charms, healing spells, and rejuvenation techniques continuously fell upon the mortals. Those mortals who were on the verge of death began to regain their spirits one by one.

Cultivators were naturally stronger than ordinary people, and after the Taiyi Sect cultivators cast spells like divine strengthening and body enhancement on themselves, their strength increased significantly. They carried, supported, hugged, and backed up each mortal, sending them onto the flying boats.

Some mortals who were in relatively better condition and could move on their own didn't need assistance and voluntarily rushed towards the flying boats.

The operation proceeded smoothly, taking much less time than expected. When all the mortals were safely aboard the flying boats, the two Second Rank flying boats immediately took off and flew toward Singing Sand City.

Second Rank flying boats had a much larger capacity and were faster than First Rank flying boats. In the blink of an eye, the two flying boats disappeared without a trace.

Having successfully rescued all the mortals, Meng Zhang and the others had achieved their objective and had no need to continue the fight. On Yang Family's side, Yang Xueyi had intentionally held back and hadn't used her full strength.

Deciding to retreat was relatively easy now. Although Yang Xueyi was young, she held considerable authority among the Yang Family cultivators. Under her strict orders, even if they were unwilling, the Yang Family cultivators had to abandon the fight and begin to withdraw.

After driving away the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, Yang Xueyi and her group boarded the First Rank flying boat. The flying boat had been hovering in the air and easily changed direction to fly away.

The Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators on the mountaintop were all Foundation Building stage cultivators and naturally couldn't fly. They could only watch helplessly as the enemy's flying boats departed.

Seeing the flying boats approaching their direction, Meng Zhang knew it was time to retreat. They already had the upper hand, so leaving was not difficult.

Wen Qiansun and the others vigorously waved their Nine Palace Windfire Banners, cooperating with Meng Zhang and Jue Ying to force the enemies back. Then, one by one, they orderly and quickly boarded the flying boat.

Under normal circumstances, the First Rank flying boat could accommodate about ten cultivators. In this urgent situation, they had to squeeze together to fit everyone on board.

After everyone was aboard, the flying boat immediately flew toward Singing Sand City. This First Rank flying boat was originally a high-quality gift sent by Forest Mountain School Sect Master Xu Chengxian, so its speed was impressive. It vanished into the horizon while the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators watched with unwilling gazes.

The Second Rank flying boat couldn't be used for the time being, and the people present were all Refining Qi stage cultivators. Even if some of them had talismans for wind control or levitation, they could only move awkwardly in the air and couldn't catch up with the flying boats' speed.

In the sky, the two elders of Green Bamboo Mountain watched in frustration as the enemies escaped and successfully rescued all the mortals. Old Man Bamboo Stick was furious with this humiliation.

Lone Wolf and Bald Eagle had no intention of fighting to the death with the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators. They were just doing a job for money and were satisfied with fulfilling their employer's request. As long as the Green Bamboo Mountain elders didn't intend to interfere with their mission, they would act carelessly, seemingly indifferent to the battle.

But if the Green Bamboo Mountain elders intended to meddle with the situation below, Lone Wolf and Bald Eagle would take it seriously and use their full strength to trap the enemy firmly. They

each had their own trump cards, and if Old Man Bamboo Stick or the bamboo spear elder got distracted for even a moment, they would suffer a great loss.

Several times before, Old Man Bamboo Stick and the bamboo spear elder could only face their opponents honestly without any chance to distract or deal with them.

When Meng Zhang and the others successfully escaped, Old Man Bamboo Stick could no longer hold back his anger.

"You Twin Success Valley scoundrels, I'll fight you to the death!"

Before he finished speaking, Old Man Bamboo Stick raised his bamboo stick and pounced on Bald Eagle. In Old Man Bamboo Stick's eyes, only Twin Success Valley, with whom Green Bamboo Mountain had a long-standing feud, would dare to interfere in their affairs.

The Foundation Building stage cultivators in the surrounding area had different backgrounds, so it was normal that they couldn't recognize each other. These two individuals were obviously hiding their true identities to avoid being recognized.

Facing Old Man Bamboo Stick, Bald Eagle exclaimed, "What do you mean, old man? Why are you going all out against us? We have no grievances or enmities between us."

While uttering these strange words, Bald Eagle also displayed his true strength. His body moved agilely in the air, even more flexible than a real eagle or falcon.

Of course, Bald Eagle had no intention of fighting Old Man Bamboo Stick to the death. He was just using his nimble body movements to lead him on a wild goose chase in the sky.

Lone Wolf, who was facing the bamboo spear elder, sensed his opponent's attitude and knew that there was no real intent to fight. So, the two of them tacitly exchanged punches without the intention to engage in a serious battle.

Chapter 150: Yang crosses the threshold

Intentionally leading Old Man Bamboo Stick in a large circle in the sky, Bald Eagle estimated that the other party could no longer catch up as he watched the flying boat go far away.

Feeling accomplished after completing the mission, he didn't even say goodbye to Lone Wolf and quickly left Old Man Bamboo Stick, flying towards the distance.

In the end, Bald Eagle revealed his true flying speed and disappeared from Old Man Bamboo Stick's sight within a few breaths.

Seeing Bald Eagle fly away, Lone Wolf also stopped engaging with bamboo spear Elder and directly left the battlefield.

Bamboo spear Elder had no intention of pursuing either and watched the other party leave.

Fuming, Old Man Bamboo Stick flew over to bamboo spear Elder's side.

"Twin Success Valley is too despicable; this matter cannot be left like this," said bamboo spear Elder half-heartedly, thinking to himself, "Green Bamboo Mountain and Twin Success Valley have been at odds for years, neither giving face to the other. Today's matter will probably end like this."

On the other side, the two Second Rank flying boats carrying the mortals of the Yang Family, without encountering any obstacles, rushed all the way back to Taiyi Sect, bypassing Singing Sand City.

The flying boat that Meng Zhang rode in also safely returned to Taiyi Sect without any hindrance.

The mortal members of the Yang Family who were rescued were all in poor physical condition. However, with the various methods of the Cultivators, as long as they hadn't died on the spot, they could mostly be healed.

After all the mortals were healed, they were mostly settled in the Sweetwater Oasis.

Following the agreement with Meng Zhang, Yang Xueyi led the remaining Cultivators of the Yang Family and all of them formally joined Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang pondered for a long time about whether to have these Yang Family Cultivators leave their names on the soul register. As long as a Cultivator willingly left their name on the register, their life and death would be completely controlled by the owner of the register.

In the end, Meng Zhang abandoned the idea. He believed that ensuring disciples' loyalty through such means was not a proper practice; it belonged to the methods of a sect in the wrong direction. Even if the Yang Family Cultivators agreed at that time, they would likely harbor resentment in secret and distance themselves from the sect.

When Meng Zhang had Li Xuan leave his name on the soul register in the past, it was also a makeshift measure. At that time, Taiyi Sect was too weak and couldn't afford any setbacks. Moreover, Li Xuan came from the Li family, an old fox who had experienced many hardships in the Cultivation World, and he might have picked up some bad habits from there, which made it difficult for Meng Zhang to fully trust him.

The Cultivators of the Yang Family, on the other hand, were young and had good moral character, unaffected by some of the bad habits prevalent in the Cultivation World.

Having made up his mind, Meng Zhang soon held a grand initiation ceremony in the sect to formally accept these Yang Family Cultivators as disciples.

Among all the Yang Family Cultivators, Yang Xueyi truly surprised Meng Zhang.

She voluntarily informed Meng Zhang that she possessed a middle-grade high-quality spiritual root with attributes of the five elements. With such talent, as long as she had the assistance of Foundation Building Pills, she could likely achieve Foundation Building successfully. Even without the pills, there was still a high chance of success.

Given Yang Xueyi's potential, it was strange that the Yang Family elders hadn't arranged for her to join a larger sect like Green Bamboo Mountain or Flying Swan Sect.

At only sixteen years old, Yang Xueyi was already an outstanding talisman maker. Talisman-making seemed like an entry-level skill among the myriad arts of cultivation, but in reality, it required natural talent. Cultivators with insufficient talent could only grasp the basics, and if they pursued it as a side occupation, they would probably end up at a disadvantage.

Talisman-making involved vast knowledge and required both talent and effort to advance to higher levels. Yang Xueyi happened to possess all the necessary qualities.

In addition, apart from being a Cultivator, few knew that Yang Xueyi was also a skilled spirit chef, capable of preparing various spiritual dishes.

Spirit chefs, who prepared spiritual dishes, had their benefits compared to medicinal pills. The dishes had numerous advantages for Cultivators and didn't carry the risk of leaving pill toxins like medicinal pills did.

One of the main sources of income for Forest Spring Watch, the sect, was running a restaurant in the market where spirit chefs provided various spiritual dishes for the disciples.

Meng Zhang had come across several recipes in the Trial Ground's inheritance. However, since Taiyi Sect didn't have a spirit chef previously, those recipes had been collecting dust. Now, with Yang Xueyi's arrival, they could finally be put to good use.

For example, there was a recipe for a Yuan-Nourishing Soup. Although its ingredients were simple and easy to obtain, it was beneficial for newly-awakened Cultivators, helping them regulate their vitality and strengthen their physical bodies.

Another recipe was for a Fiery Hot Soup, which could help Refining Qi Late Stage Cultivators purify their true qi and save time in refining it.

The most valuable was a Five-Flavor Soup, which could help Refining Qi Completion Cultivators adjust their mental and physical state, increasing their chances of successful Foundation Building by a tiny bit.

If Yang Xueyi could master these recipes, it would be of immense benefit to Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang felt like he had stumbled upon a treasure. For such outstanding talent as Yang Xueyi, he believed it was worth taking even greater risks.

As news of the Yang Family members joining Taiyi Sect reached Green Bamboo Mountain, the tension between the two sects escalated.

Information couldn't be kept hidden, especially when Taiyi Sect deployed so many disciples and didn't deliberately conceal their identities. With the conclusion of the Yang Family's fate, it was not difficult for Green Bamboo Mountain to learn of Taiyi Sect's actions.

Taiyi Sect was a vassal of Twin Success Valley, so it must have had the support of Twin Success Valley to dare stand up to Green Bamboo Mountain.

In response, Green Bamboo Mountain followed protocol and didn't directly confront Taiyi Sect. Instead, they dispatched envoys to inform Twin Success Valley and demand that Taiyi Sect hand over all those involved in rescuing the Yang Family members.

Twin Success Valley, accustomed to being dominant, wouldn't let others dictate to them. Green Bamboo Mountain wasn't Flying Swan Sect, so they had no right to order Twin Success Valley around.

In a display of arrogance, Twin Success Valley refused Green Bamboo Mountain's demand, and their enforcement elder, Shan Ying, even taunted Green Bamboo Mountain's envoys publicly. After a heated verbal dispute, the two factions almost came to blows.

For a while, the tension between Twin Success Valley and Green Bamboo Mountain heightened. The previously repeated drama between the two sects was being replayed, with both sides constantly exchanging verbal spars.

With Twin Success Valley shielding Taiyi Sect, at least outwardly, Green Bamboo Mountain couldn't do much to Taiyi Sect for the time being. As for whether they would engage in some covert actions, it was hard to say.

For the short term, Meng Zhang didn't have to worry too much about trouble from Green Bamboo Mountain.

After this major incident, Meng Zhang became much more discreet. For a long period afterward, he stayed inside the sect, focusing on cultivation.