

Sect Master 391

Chapter 391: Migration

Just like the hides of demonic beasts, one can create more blank paper talismans. The talismans made from the hides of Third Rank demonic beasts can even be used to refine Third Rank talismans.

Although Taiyi Sect currently lacks a Third Rank Talisman Master, this precious strategic resource will be carefully stored and won't be wasted.

With Yang Xueyi's talent, if she accepts the inheritance of the Purple Gold Sect's Third Rank Talisman Master, it is highly likely that she will grow into a Third Rank Talisman Master in the future.

Under Yang Xueyi's leadership, the Talisman Hall has produced many excellent Talisman Masters. With these high-quality talisman papers, more talismans can be crafted.

As a Second Rank Talisman Master, Yang Xueyi's Second Rank talismans are highly sought after even by Foundation Building stage cultivators.

Within the sect, they are quickly snatched up by Foundation Building cultivators, and occasionally a few of them are sold at high prices outside.

Countless demonic beast blood and flesh have allowed Taiyi Sect's Dining Hall to produce a large variety of spiritual dishes.

Compared to medicinal pills, the effects of consuming spiritual dishes are better and have fewer side effects.

Previously, Taiyi Sect acquired a recipe for brewing spirit wine from the Hidden Scripture Pavilion at Forest Spring Watch. It requires a large amount of fresh demonic beast blood as a material.

The higher the rank of the demonic beast, the better the effect of the brewed spirit wine.

In the past, Forest Spring Watch mostly used First Rank demonic beast blood to brew their wine.

The spirit wine produced is in high demand on the market.

Now, Taiyi Sect has used secret methods to preserve a vast amount of fresh demonic beast blood and meat. Not only First Rank but even Second Rank and Third Rank demonic beast blood is abundant.

After a long time without brewing spirit wine personally, Yang Xueyi couldn't resist and made a considerable amount of precious spirit wine.

Various materials like claws and fangs from demonic beasts have piled up in the Tool Refinery's warehouse, keeping the sect's tool refiners extremely busy.

With Taiyi Sect's current number of tool refiners, even if they spend decades, it's uncertain they can refine all these materials into magic tools.

In short, this failed invasion by the demonic beast army has left a mountain of demonic beast corpses, which has allowed Taiyi Sect to accumulate a massive amount of materials that can sustain the entire sect for many years.

Seeing that the Flying Swan Sect has shown no interest in the former Earthfire Sect's territory and hasn't troubled Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang and the elders silently moved Taiyi Sect's mountain gate to the original location of Earthfire Sect's mountain gate.

The original Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, Fuzhao Valley, like the old mountain gate, became an important branch base of Taiyi Sect.

Within Earthfire Sect's mountain gate lies a rare Second Rank high-grade spirit vein, providing abundant spiritual energy and excellent surroundings.

Since the cultivators inside the mountain gate surrendered willingly, the various buildings within the mountain gate remained mostly intact.

The spirit medicine garden and spirit fields, among other things, go without saying. The tool refining rooms established by the former Earthfire Sect cultivators are especially precious.

Those former Earthfire Sect cultivators risked much to venture deep into the underground, pulling the ground fire to the surface and using secret methods to control it as a tool refining fire.

Earthfire Sect's tool refining rooms may not be the best in the entire Endless Sea of Sand, but they are at least among the top three.

Apart from Flying Swan Sect and Firewell Market, there are no other places that can boast better tool refining rooms.

Firewell Market originally belonged to Earthfire Sect and is now under Taiyi Sect's control.

After Taiyi Sect gained control of Firewell Market, they adopted the same approach as with Earthfire Sect.

They opened the tool refining rooms in Firewell Market to all cultivators in the Endless Sea of Sand. Anyone who can afford the rent, regardless of their identity, can lease them.

This approach not only brings in a large income for the sect but also attracts many tool refiners to Firewell Market. Thanks to this, Firewell Market has become a renowned tool refining center in the Endless Sea of Sand.

When multiple tool refiners work inside Firewell Market, flames soar into the sky, and thick smoke obscures the sun. Such a spectacular scene cannot even be seen in Flying Swan City.

Meng Zhang, not wanting to draw the attention of the Flying Swan Sect, quietly completed the relocation of Taiyi Sect's mountain gate.

Even the joy of moving was not celebrated grandly.

In reality, Taiyi Sect's control over such a large area, maintaining its peace, has unknowingly affected Flying Swan Sect.

Many people in Flying Swan City personally witnessed when Fire Cloud Sect's Gold Core Daoist Master destroyed the Flying Swan Sect's mountain gate, which was close by.

Later, the battle between the six Gold Core Daoist Masters, though Fei Shi Daoist Master tried to stop it, still caused significant damage to the nearby Flying Swan City.

The battles among Primordial Spirit True Monarchs are said to cause scenes of sky and earth tearing apart, known as the "Disaster of Heaven's Tilt," one of the most terrifying natural disasters in the Cultivation World.

Though not as fearsome as the battles of Gold Core Daoist Masters, it still has a great impact on the surrounding areas.

Apart from the Flying Swan Sect cultivators and affiliated families' cultivators, Flying Swan City also houses many outsiders, loose cultivators, various Shang Families, and other small cultivation forces from different places.

These cultivators, not closely related to Flying Swan Sect, naturally didn't want to continue staying here and facing risks.

The last Gold Core battle caused significant damage to the city and claimed the lives of many unfortunate individuals.

If it were to happen again, the entire city might be destroyed.

Flying Swan City sits atop a Second Rank high-grade spirit vein, but its city protection great formation is only Second Rank, unable to withstand rampaging Gold Core Daoist Masters.

As a result, many capable cultivators have moved away, leaving this increasingly unsafe city.

In the Endless Sea of Sand, besides Flying Swan City, Taiyi Sect's territory, especially Firewell Market and Singing Sand City, is the safest.

Though Taiyi Sect experienced the invasion of the demonic beast army, their cultivators successfully defeated the beasts and prevented them from wreaking havoc within their territory.

At least for now, Taiyi Sect's territory remains relatively safe, a place where one can temporarily find refuge. At the very least, there are no large-scale battles among Gold Core Daoist Masters here.

The gradual outflow of cultivators from Flying Swan Sect to Taiyi Sect has started. Flying Swan City is gradually becoming desolate, while Taiyi Sect's territory is prospering.

As for why these cultivators do not move to safer territories under Jiuqu League, such as Great Wind City, the reason is simple. Flying Swan City is a small town compared to Great Wind City, which is a large city.

Not everyone in the small town has the qualifications to live in the city of An Family.

Living in a big city is not easy, and it's challenging to make a living there.

On the other hand, Taiyi Sect's territory in the Endless Sea of Sand is more suitable for these cultivators in terms of environment and other factors.

Of course, the migration of cultivators from Flying Swan City to Taiyi Sect is a slow process, and it has not yet attracted the attention of the Flying Swan Sect's high-ranking members, who are currently busy with other matters.

Chapter 392: The Pill's Transformation

After the demon army was repelled by the Flying Swan Sect and retreated to the Demon Wind Gobi, they didn't launch another large-scale attack. However, during this time, small groups of demons began assaulting the outposts near the Demon Wind Gobi, close to the Flying Swan Sect.

The Flying Swan Sect had to increase their patrol efforts and sent out teams day and night to guard the border with the Demon Wind Gobi, preventing surprise attacks from the demons.

The real trouble, though, came from the Fire Cloud Sect. After three Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Fire Cloud Sect returned, they learned of the plight of the Fire Cloud Sect cultivator army. After some discussion, Daoist Master Scarlet Flame went out alone.

Upon his return to the Fire Cloud Sect, Daoist Master Scarlet Flame told the cultivators about the events that happened to the Fire Cloud Sect cultivator army and assured them that it wouldn't happen again. There wouldn't be any mysterious Gold Core Daoist Masters coming to help the Flying Swan Sect this time.

So, the three Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Fire Cloud Sect once again led their cultivator army and headed towards the Endless Sea of Sand.

The Fire Cloud Sect cultivator army didn't hide its tracks but marched openly towards the Endless Sea of Sand. However, upon entering the Endless Sea of Sand, they were confronted by a large force led by the Flying Swan Sect's Daoist Master Fei Shi and two Gold Core Daoist Masters from the Northern Desert Qi Family, blocking their path.

In response to the Fire Cloud Sect's attack, the Flying Swan Sect had pulled the majority of its forces defending against the Demon Wind Gobi. Except for Daoist Master Fei Yu, who led a small group of cultivators to hold the line, most of the cultivators were taken away by Daoist Master Fei Shi.

Meanwhile, Daoist Master Fei Jiang, who was heavily injured in the previous battle, remained in seclusion to recover.

The Northern Desert Qi Family's cultivators mobilized to join forces with the Flying Swan Sect, making their coalition imposing.

The three Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Fire Cloud Sect didn't launch a reckless attack this time but engaged in a standoff with the enemy. Although there were no large-scale battles, small conflicts and covert actions, such as infiltration and assassination attempts between small groups of cultivators, occurred continuously, resulting in significant casualties for both sides.

Neither side wanted to initiate an all-out war and preferred to maintain the current situation. The Fire Cloud Sect awaited the opportunity for the Demon Wind Gobi's demon army to attack first. On the other hand, the Flying Swan Sect and the Northern Desert Qi Family were not confident in defeating the Fire Cloud Sect cultivator army before them. They could only silently wait and find ways to delay time until new variables emerged.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master of the Flying Swan Sect, also needed ample time to heal his injuries and recover his cultivation base.

Regarding the Demon Wind Gobi's demon army, it was unlikely that they would launch another large-scale invasion. At most, there might be minor harassments from a few demons. Therefore, there was no great need to summon cultivators from all the forces in the Endless Sea of Sand as they had done before.

Summoning cultivators from various forces involved considerable effort and costs for the Flying Swan Sect. Furthermore, it required providing various supplies and rewards for their assistance during the battles.

Handling the pressure from both the Fire Cloud Sect and the Demon Wind Gobi's demon army, the Flying Swan Sect could only focus primarily on appeasing the other cultivation forces in the Endless Sea of Sand.

As for the Taiyi Sect, this situation provided them with a golden period of development. The Firewell Market and Singing Sand City within Taiyi Sect's territory became increasingly prosperous, attracting a large number of people and flourishing businesses, bringing tremendous benefits to the Taiyi Sect. Even after allocating some benefits to the Qiaoshou Sect, Taiyi Sect still made substantial profits.

Taiyi Sect grew stronger day by day, with a rising number of disciples apart from Niu Dawei, the Foundation Building cultivator.

In contrast, the Qiaoshou Sect suffered losses in the previous battle, losing two Foundation Building cultivators, including Aunt Jin, who was a mainstay of the sect. This widened the gap in strength between Qiaoshou Sect and Taiyi Sect. When facing Taiyi Sect, Qiaoshou Sect couldn't stand firm.

Though Qiaoshou Sect was not entirely subservient to Taiyi Sect, in most matters, they looked up to Taiyi Sect as their leader.

With the full support of Qiaoshou Sect, Meng Zhang's confidence in consolidating the surrounding cultivation forces grew stronger.

Recent good fortune smiled upon Taiyi Sect, not limited to just one incident. After a prolonged seclusion, Shi Changqing successfully expelled the pill toxin from his body and emerged from seclusion, finally recovering from his injuries.

Meng Zhang had carefully preserved the Third Rank demon pill from the Giant Lizard Demon General and gathered all the necessary auxiliary medicinal materials. Among the two commonly used recipes for Foundation Building Pills, the one that utilized a Third Rank demon pill as the main ingredient required relatively lower-grade auxiliary herbs.

Once Shi Changqing adjusted his state, he immediately started the alchemy process. This time, luck was on his side as he successfully refined a pill furnace and remarkably increased the success rate compared to the last time. He managed to produce five Foundation Building Pills.

Following his promise, Meng Zhang distributed two Foundation Building Pills to the Qiaoshou Sect as compensation. Without Aunt Jin's sacrifice and Jin Qiao'er's Yin Thunder, it would have been difficult to kill the Giant Lizard Demon General on the spot.

After the battle, apart from the Third Rank demon pill, most of the Giant Lizard's remains fell into Taiyi Sect's hands. Meng Zhang was fair when dealing with allies.

Additionally, he rewarded Shi Changqing with a Foundation Building Pill as payment for his hard work. The final two Foundation Building Pills were placed in Taiyi Sect's treasury.

Feeling that his condition was optimal, Shi Changqing decided to strike while the iron was hot and continue refining Lesser Foundation Building Pills.

The medicinal materials for Lesser Foundation Building Pills had been collected long ago, and Shi Changqing was fully prepared to start the alchemy process.

Learning from the previous experience, Shi Changqing successfully refined the Lesser Foundation Building Pills this time. However, the success rate was not very high, and he obtained only four pills. Moreover, during the alchemy process, Shi Changqing was once again contaminated by the pill toxin. Though the situation was not as severe as last time, it still required some time to expel the pill toxin.

The difficulty of refining Lesser Foundation Building Pills wasn't necessarily lower than that of Foundation Building Pills, and it was unavoidable to be contaminated by the pill toxin during the process. Without sufficient incentive, many Second Rank Alchemists would probably be unwilling to refine this type of pill.

Chapter 393: Completion of the Foundation Building

Although the Shi Family is a vassal of the Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang cannot simply order Shi Changqing around. According to the customs of the Cultivation World, the Alchemist must be rewarded.

This time, after refining four Lesser Foundation Building Pills, one of them was set aside as Shi Changqing's reward. Shi Changqing is an honest person and has not engaged in any deceitful actions, such as withholding finished pills or greedily hoarding alchemical materials. He only takes what he rightfully deserves as his reward and would never overindulge or misuse his identity as an Alchemist.

In reality, the reward Meng Zhang gave Shi Changqing wasn't high. Out of consideration for Shi Family's status as the main family within the Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang only charged him a token price of three Lesser Foundation Building Pills, which he also released into the sect's treasury.

The flaws of the Lesser Foundation Building Pills are not a secret within the Taiyi Sect. Once Meng Zhang learned of them, he proactively disclosed the information to the disciples within the sect. As a result, he established a rule that only cultivators with low-grade spiritual roots could freely exchange for the Lesser Foundation Building Pills. Given their qualifications, the chances of them successfully reaching the Gold Core stage were exceedingly slim.

For those with middle-grade spiritual roots who completed Refining Qi cultivation, they were granted priority to exchange for the true Foundation Building Pills. The ingredients needed to refine these pills were difficult to collect, despite Meng Zhang's best efforts to gather them. Consequently, these two Foundation Building Pills held significant importance to him.

It was uncertain when the Taiyi Sect would acquire more Foundation Building Pills. As for the Lesser Foundation Building Pills, Meng Zhang was more lenient. If Shi Changqing successfully

refined alchemy next time, he could distribute them to affiliated families or even sell them in exchange for other spiritual items.

Speaking of affiliated families, as the prestige of the Taiyi Sect grew with each passing year, an increasing number of small clans sought to become affiliated with the sect. Given the vast territory under Taiyi Sect's control, managing it solely with the sect's own power was impossible. To address this, Meng Zhang allocated some remote or less valuable territories to these small families. As a result, seven or eight small clans became affiliated with the Taiyi Sect in a short period.

Furthermore, the Co-operative Society that Meng Zhang established back then had grown and developed over time. Some outstanding disciples within the Co-operative Society earned the opportunity to join the Taiyi Sect. Several cultivators from the Co-operative Society who had performed well during the previous expedition alongside the Taiyi Sect's army caught Meng Zhang's attention. They not only successfully entered the Taiyi Sect but were also given special attention by Meng Zhang.

Amidst handling various sect matters, Meng Zhang didn't forget to continue refining the Sunstone and Moonjade Liquid. Although he only obtained some scraps from the Earthfire Sect's treasury, the refinement process was still extremely challenging. Fortunately, the cultivation method he practiced, the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra," possessed some unique techniques for refining both the sun and moon attribute spiritual items.

Seven years after defeating the army of monsters, Meng Zhang had finally completed the refinement of two Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects, and his Cultivation Base successfully reached the Foundation Building completion stage. Now, in the entire Endless Sea of Sand, besides a few Gold Core Daoist Masters, Meng Zhang was practically invincible.

His next step was to strive for a breakthrough to the Gold Core stage and become a Gold Core Daoist Master. For all cultivators at the Foundation Building completion stage, breaking through to the Gold Core stage was an extremely difficult task. Even those so-called Gold Core seeds carefully cultivated by major sects couldn't guarantee a hundred percent success in forming the core.

Meng Zhang, possessing top-grade spiritual roots and exceptional character, was also uncertain of his success in Foundation Building. Overcoming the difficulties to reach the Gold Core stage was a daunting task for him.

Putting aside the preparations he had made, just considering the external requirements, Foundation Building cultivators attempting to break through to Gold Core usually needed to do so above a Third Rank spirit vein. After forming the core, they still required a Third Rank spirit vein to help stabilize their Cultivation Base.

Meng Zhang had no interest in using unconventional methods to achieve this breakthrough and lacked the rare Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects needed. For him, the safest approach was to break through honestly on a Third Rank spirit vein.

Most of the Third Rank spirit veins in the Endless Sea of Sand were controlled by the Flying Swan Sect. Perhaps the Northern Desert Qi Family also had one. However, Meng Zhang couldn't trust either of them.

He was aware of the methods Flying Swan Sect used to deal with those attempting to break through to the Gold Core stage in the Endless Sea of Sand. Even though Taiyi Sect's relationship with Flying

Swan Sect was amicable, Meng Zhang couldn't risk revealing his intention to break through to the Gold Core stage to them.

As for the records of previous Sect Masters' experiences that Meng Zhang possessed in the Sect Master's chronicle, it had been compiled after Taiyi Sect's reconstruction and only covered the Gold Core stage or lower. There was little detailed information about breaking through to the Gold Core stage or the cultivation after that.

Fortunately, the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" that Meng Zhang cultivated was relatively complete. It included content about cultivation after the Gold Core stage and provided some insights on breaking through to Gold Core. However, this alone was far from enough to ensure a successful breakthrough.

Meng Zhang still needed to make various preparations after reaching the Foundation Building completion stage. He carefully studied various scriptures in the Hidden Scripture Pavilion, enriching his knowledge and drawing from their merits.

Chapter 394: Pill Master Guild

Meng Zhang spent a considerable amount of time reciting the scriptures and comprehending the Dao teachings. In the eyes of most cultivators in the Cultivation World, these scriptures that couldn't directly enhance one's Cultivation Base were considered useless decorations. However, as Meng Zhang's comprehension deepened, he gained more and more benefits from these scriptures. He felt his Dao heart becoming increasingly clear and tranquil, experiencing a peace he had never known before.

The Dao heart was intangible, and many cultivators might appear resolute on the surface, but when faced with critical moments or significant changes, their Dao hearts would waver, and their minds would be in turmoil. However, after years of comprehending the Dao teachings, Meng Zhang could sense the issues within his own Dao heart and make targeted adjustments to remedy them.

With his Dao heart becoming purer, Meng Zhang became more composed when using the Grand Evolving Fortune. He no longer needed to spend significant amounts of time calming his mind and focusing before casting the Calculated spells, as he used to do. The rewards he gained from studying the Dao teachings also directly influenced his Heavenly Mechanism Technique.

His cultivation of the Grand Evolving Fortune made significant progress, reaching a new level. He went from merely scratching the surface and gaining some insights to achieving substantial accomplishments and fully grasping the technique.

Previously, every time Meng Zhang used the Grand Evolving Fortune, he needed to consume calculation tallies. He had to spend a lot of time meditating daily to accumulate enough tallies for the spells. Additionally, more complex Calculated spells required a large number of calculation tallies, often depleting the ones he had accumulated over several years after only a few uses.

Now, all the previously accumulated calculation tallies had vanished, replaced by a new, more durable type of calculation tally. One of these new calculation tallies was almost equivalent to 50-60

of the old ones. Moreover, Meng Zhang no longer needed to meditate daily. Instead, he only had to do it once a month to gather one of these new calculation tallies.

Of course, he could only obtain one of these new calculation tallies each month. Nevertheless, this significant change saved Meng Zhang a considerable amount of time that he could now use for other matters.

While Meng Zhang focused on his cultivation, his senior disciple Niu Dawei, with his support, accomplished a significant undertaking. In the Cultivation World, there were various organizations in each region, such as the Pill Master Guild.

Initially, these organizations had good intentions, aiming to control the quality of alchemical pills in the market and prevent inferior or tampered pills from entering the Cultivation World. However, over time, those who controlled these guilds exploited their power to monopolize the supply of spirit medicines, raise the prices of pills, and manipulate the alchemical market.

In the past, when Taiyi Sect was an insignificant sect, Meng Zhang collaborated with independent alchemists, which allowed him to obtain affordable pills. However, now that Taiyi Sect had become a dominant force in the region, they needed to control the flow of spirit medicines, monopolize the alchemical market, and oversee various alchemists.

Meng Zhang had this idea for a long time, but the timing wasn't right, and Taiyi Sect's influence in the surrounding areas was insufficient. However, with Flying Swan Sect being held back and Taiyi Sect being readily supported in the nearby region, there was no one daring to openly confront them.

Besides Shi Changqing, an outstanding Second Rank Alchemist, Taiyi Sect had also trained numerous First Rank Alchemists. Zhang Yingying, the Hall Master of the Taiyi Sect Pill Hall, had made significant progress in alchemy techniques under Shi Changqing's careful guidance.

The only thing preventing her from advancing to become a Second Rank Alchemist was that her Cultivation Base had not reached the Foundation Building stage. However, she was preparing to break through to Foundation Building soon, as her cultivation had already reached the Refining Qi completion stage, and Taiyi Sect had an ample supply of Foundation Building Pills and Lesser Foundation Building Pills.

Now that the time was ripe for establishing the Pill Master Guild, Meng Zhang immediately set the plan in motion. He entrusted Niu Dawei to oversee the matter, not only to train him but also to help him gain prestige. Due to the sufficient preparation beforehand, the difficulties they encountered were minimal, and everything was completed effortlessly.

The newly established Pill Master Guild was led by Taiyi Sect and included other cultivation forces such as Qiaoshou Sect and Land Walk Sect in the surrounding area. In the future, members of the guild would have priority in acquiring spirit medicines that could be used for alchemy within the surrounding region. All pills sold in the market had to undergo inspection and approval by the Pill Master Guild. Any pills found to be sold without this procedure would be confiscated, and the parties involved would be severely punished.

With the Pill Master Guild in place, Meng Zhang practically controlled both the upstream and downstream aspects of the alchemy trade in the surrounding region. However, his goal in establishing the guild wasn't solely to profit from the lucrative alchemy business like Twin Success Valley did in the past, exploiting cultivators through exorbitant prices for pills.

Meng Zhang set strict rules for the Pill Master Guild and increased supervision. The guild allowed for the optimization of resource allocation and the centralized cultivation of a large number of excellent Alchemists, resulting in the production of more high-quality pills. Furthermore, pills approved and sold through the guild provided a level of quality and safety assurance. They would not be secretly tampered with or contain harmful restrictions.

Although these approved pills might be slightly more expensive, the benefits and security they provided outweighed the costs. The entire process of establishing the Pill Master Guild was carried out by Niu Dawei alone. As a Foundation Building cultivator and the top disciple of Taiyi Sect's Sect Master, Niu Dawei carried some weight and had put in a lot of effort to persuade all the surrounding cultivation forces to cooperate.

Through this endeavor, Niu Dawei had passed Meng Zhang's initial test. If circumstances permitted, Meng Zhang planned to gradually hand over many of his responsibilities and grant Niu Dawei more significant authority. As a Sect Master and a cultivator dedicated to the Grand Dao, Meng Zhang needed to spend more time on his cultivation.

With Niu Dawei's assistance, Meng Zhang could indeed focus on his own cultivation, especially as he approached the crucial moment of advancing from Foundation Building to Gold Core. However, before he could attempt this breakthrough, he first needed to solve the issue of obtaining a Third Rank Spirit Vein.

Other supplementary spiritual materials and pills might be dispensable, but a Third Rank Spirit Vein was absolutely essential.

Chapter 395: Choice

Actually, Deep Earth Spirit General had mentioned to Meng Zhang before that as a Geomancer, he had a way to cultivate a Third Rank spirit vein. One method is to select a high-quality Second Rank spirit vein, invest a considerable amount of time, and consume numerous precious spiritual materials to slowly nurture it, waiting for the spirit vein to naturally advance. However, this approach takes too long, and it's unlikely to yield significant results within a hundred years.

To shorten the time required, one needs to utilize some rare heavenly materials. For instance, the spiritual source pearl they obtained in the sand monster's lair is a treasure that can rapidly enhance the quality of a spirit vein. Unfortunately, Meng Zhang neither has enough time to wait nor possesses such a rare treasure as the spiritual source pearl. Therefore, this cultivation method seems impractical for now.

The second method involves employing a secret technique to extract essence from multiple spirit veins and forcibly condensing it into a Third Rank spirit vein. Not to mention the tremendous waste and destruction caused by this approach, it also requires at least a Third Rank Geomancer to execute. However, becoming a Third Rank Geomancer requires a Cultivation Base of at least Gold Core level.

For the Deep Earth Spirit General in his prime, this might not have been an issue. But now, even if he used to be powerful, he only possesses a Cultivation Base at the Foundation Building level, and the prospect of restoring his former glory seems remote. After falling to the Foundation Building

level, the former Third Rank Geomancer can no longer execute the techniques of a Third Rank Geomancer and is left with theoretical knowledge.

Both methods proposed by Deep Earth Spirit General are not useful. If Meng Zhang wants to break through to the Gold Core level, it would be better to find an existing Third Rank spirit vein. If he can't find one within the Endless Sea of Sand, then he must look beyond its borders.

For the sake of his goal to form the core, Meng Zhang decides to leave the Endless Sea of Sand and embark on a journey. Before departing, he arranges all the sect's affairs.

On a regular day, the sect's daily operations are managed by various departments. When Meng Zhang is absent, the senior disciple Niu Dawei oversees the overall situation and handles the sect's daily affairs. For significant matters that are difficult to decide, the elders collectively discuss and resolve them. Thus, Meng Zhang established the Elder Council within the sect.

All the elders at the Foundation Building level are members of the Elder Council. They assist the Sect Master in managing the sect and its disciples. Important affairs within the sect must be presented to the Elder Council for deliberation and approval before implementation. Meng Zhang created the Elder Council, recognizing that he isn't the type of person who possesses limitless strategies and intelligence. With the elders helping to complement his weaknesses, the sect's operations can be more stable.

After arranging the sect's affairs, Meng Zhang prepares to leave Taiyi Sect and the Endless Sea of Sand. Naturally, he cannot openly state that he's searching for an opportunity to form the core. Whether Flying Swan Sect would welcome Meng Zhang forming the core is uncertain. He is not willing to leave his fate and future in the hands of others.

When Meng Zhang departs from Taiyi Sect, the public statement given by Taiyi Sect to the outside world is that Sect Master Meng Zhang received an invitation from a cultivator of the Gu Yue Family in Great Wind City to attend a dharma meeting and exchange ideas with Gu Yue Family's cultivators.

Meng Zhang's first destination after leaving the Endless Sea of Sand is Great Wind City. He takes a Second Rank flying ship of Taiyi Sect and arrives smoothly in Great Wind City.

He visits Gu Yue Youlan, a fellow disciple from Taiyi Sect, and explains his purpose to request the use of Gu Yue Family's Third Rank spirit vein for secluded cultivation to form the core.

Gu Yue Youlan cannot make such a significant decision and asks Meng Zhang to wait for Gu Yue Huaidie, who will have the final say.

Understanding the urgency of the matter and being in a position of seeking assistance, Meng Zhang patiently waits for over half a month until Gu Yue Huaidie, who was in closed-door cultivation, comes out.

Meng Zhang meets Gu Yue Huaidie and expresses his request. He also offers to pay enough spiritual stones to express his gratitude to Gu Yue Family if they help him.

Gu Yue Huaidie hesitates before informing Meng Zhang that Gu Yue Family has a precedent for handling such matters. Since forming the core on a Third Rank spirit vein causes significant damage to the vein, only close associates of Gu Yue Family who pay a considerable price can get the

opportunity to use it. With Gu Yue Huaidie's relationship with Meng Zhang, they can trust him and treat him as an intimate member of the family.

However, the price must be paid, and even with Gu Yue Huaidie's influence, it cannot be waived. Gu Yue Huaidie presents two options for Meng Zhang to choose from.

The first option is that after borrowing Gu Yue Family's Third Rank spirit vein to form the core, Meng Zhang must serve Gu Yue Family personally for sixty years, equivalent to one jiazi. During this time, he will be treated with the status befitting a Gold Core cultivator. In return, he must wholeheartedly serve Gu Yue Family and obey their commands.

The second option is that after forming the core, the entire Taiyi Sect becomes a vassal of Gu Yue Family. In the future, everyone in Taiyi Sect, including Meng Zhang as the Sect Master, must act according to Gu Yue Family's orders.

Gu Yue Huaidie emphasizes that borrowing the Third Rank spirit vein is a matter of utmost importance, as it concerns the family's foundation. Even with her position in Gu Yue Family, she cannot make the final decision; it depends on the arrangements made by the family's elders.

She assures Meng Zhang that the two choices she offered are the best conditions she could secure for him. If he doubts it, he can inquire everywhere within the Jiuqu League and won't find more sincere terms. Furthermore, in Great Wind City, there are other families with Third Rank spirit veins, but if Meng Zhang seeks help from them, they will impose even more demanding conditions.

Lastly, Gu Yue Huaidie doesn't hide her appreciation and fondness for Meng Zhang. She represents Gu Yue Family in expressing her intention to draw Meng Zhang closer to their family. She hopes that Meng Zhang will become a Dao companion to a female cultivator from Gu Yue Family and become part of their family. Meng Zhang can choose a suitable female cultivator from Gu Yue Family, and there is no need for him to give up his surname.

Despite Gu Yue Huaidie's high regard and kindness, Meng Zhang isn't entirely satisfied with the two choices and is reluctant to accept either of them.

Chapter 396: Faith Token

Whether it was serving the Gu Yue Family for sixty years on his own or allowing Taiyi Sect to become a vassal of the Gu Yue Family, Meng Zhang wasn't very interested. Of course, he could feel Gu Yue Huaidie's goodwill and believed that it was indeed the best offer she could provide.

Unfortunately, Meng Zhang didn't wish to become a member of a cultivation family, so he could only politely refuse Gu Yue Huaidie's kind intentions. He didn't speak decisively and left some room for negotiation. However, if he couldn't find any other options and was left with no choice, he might have to reluctantly accept Gu Yue Huaidie's offer.

Gu Yue Huaidie didn't insist on Meng Zhang accepting her conditions. She said the doors of the Gu Yue Family would always be open for him. If Meng Zhang changed his mind, he could come back anytime, and the Gu Yue Family would always welcome him.

After bidding farewell to Gu Yue Huaidie, Meng Zhang didn't rush to leave Great Wind City. Through various neutral commercial organizations like the Four Seas Building, he inquired about the conditions for borrowing a Third Rank spirit vein from powers that possessed one. Eventually, he gathered enough information. It turned out that Gu Yue Huaidie wasn't lying. The conditions offered by the Gu Yue Family were indeed the most generous. Even those who had always been close to the Gu Yue Family might not get such favorable terms. For instance, the Lu Family, another prominent Gold Core family in Great Wind City, demanded its borrowers of Third Rank spirit veins to serve them like slaves for almost their entire lives to repay the favor.

Other forces like Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect had even stricter conditions.

After learning all this, Meng Zhang gave up the idea of borrowing a Third Rank spirit vein from other powers. During his investigation, he also heard another piece of intriguing news. Ye Feifan, a somewhat infamous figure from the declining Ye Family in Great Wind City, had stolen a treasure from the Huang Family, killed several Huang Family cultivators, and fled the city with the help of some allies, possibly related to the Ghost Path cultivators.

People discussing this matter were astonished, as they had never expected Ye Feifan, a supposed waste, to have such abilities to cause such a huge loss to the Huang Family. It seemed that everyone had underestimated him, as he had hidden his true strength and acted inconspicuously.

This incident even caught the attention of the Lu Family, who managed Great Wind City. They sent cultivators to investigate the matter. The Huang Family, which suffered the most humiliation and loss, wouldn't let it rest. They dispatched elite cultivators to pursue Ye Feifan outside the city.

Meng Zhang felt relieved that he hadn't been fooled by Ye Feifan. Otherwise, if he had been entangled in this conflict, he might not only suffer personally but also involve Taiyi Sect.

Ye Feifan had claimed that everyone from the Ye Family had been marked with a restriction. Meng Zhang couldn't recall if Ye Feifan was lying or if there was a way to remove those restrictions. The Ye Family members left behind in Great Wind City were in dire straits. Regardless of their lineage or blood relations, those with any association with the Ye Family were captured by the Huang Family. If capable cultivators didn't intervene, their fate would be bleak.

The Huang Family provided the explanation that these people were colluding with Ghost Path cultivators. In the Cultivation World, Ghost Path cultivators were seen as a scourge, and hunting down their followers could convince many people. At least on the surface, the Huang Family didn't violate the rules of Great Wind City.

Meng Zhang carefully recalled all the details of his encounter with Ye Feifan and realized that he had never exposed his true identity. Throughout their interaction, Ye Feifan had assumed Meng Zhang was a member of some cultivation family in Great Wind City.

After learning about Ye Feifan's situation, Meng Zhang temporarily set this matter aside and focused on his main objective. He exerted considerable effort to find the location of the black market in Great Wind City.

The black market in Jiuqu League had a close connection with the black market in the Endless Sea of Sand, resembling different branches of the same organization. Although Meng Zhang had maintained a close relationship with the black market before, certain incidents had soured their relations, creating a rift between them.

Before leaving the Endless Sea of Sand, Luo Ye and her disciple had promised to guide Meng Zhang to an opportunity to form the core as a gesture of gratitude for his help. When Meng Zhang achieved Foundation Building completion, he could come to the Jiuqu League to seek her out.

Meng Zhang had some pride, and if he could form the core without relying on Luo Ye's help, he wouldn't have sought her assistance. However, now, if he didn't want to accept the conditions offered by the Gu Yue Family, seeking Luo Ye's aid seemed to be the only option.

Luo Ye had a close relationship with the black market, and with its vast influence, they should possess a Third Rank spirit vein.

Upon arriving at the black market in Great Wind City, Meng Zhang showed a small mirror about the size of a palm. This mirror was given to him by Jue Ying and used to maintain contact with her when they were in the Endless Sea of Sand. However, after Jue Ying left the Endless Sea of Sand, the distance became too great, and the communication function of the mirror was lost. Nevertheless, it remained a token of Jue Ying. In the Jiuqu League's territory, showing the mirror to the black market would enable them to contact Jue Ying.

Seeing the mirror, the subleader recognized its origin and became more respectful towards Meng Zhang. He asked Meng Zhang to wait for a moment and brought a senior executive from the black market to meet him.

The executive warmly received Meng Zhang and inquired about his relationship with Jue Ying. Meng Zhang casually brushed off the question and expressed his desire to contact Jue Ying. The executive's attitude was accommodating, and he didn't make Meng Zhang wait long before arranging the matter.

He informed Meng Zhang that Jue Ying was not currently in the vicinity of Great Wind City. However, he had relayed Meng Zhang's request to her. He asked Meng Zhang to wait in Great Wind City for about a month, and he would receive a response.

Understanding that patience was necessary, Meng Zhang agreed to wait and promised to return to the black market after a month to visit again.

While at the black market, Meng Zhang also took the opportunity to browse around and see if there was anything worth purchasing. With his current vision and strength, not many things caught his eye. Occasionally, there were one or two items that interested him, but their unclear origins most likely indicated that they were stolen goods. Meng Zhang didn't dare to rashly buy anything of dubious origin.

The executive was perceptive and realized the close relationship between Meng Zhang and Jue Ying. As a result, he offered some conveniences to Meng Zhang.

Chapter 397: Reunion

With the help of the senior steward, Meng Zhang spent a large sum of spirit stones to buy two fake Third Rank talismans refined by a Gold Core Daoist Master. While these talismans wouldn't have a significant impact in Gold Core level battles, they could still be decisive in fights between cultivators at the Foundation Building stage.

In addition to the talismans, Meng Zhang also purchased a large pile of miscellaneous items. He was carrying plenty of spirit stones with him this time, considering renting a Third Rank spirit vein. He packed all his belongings in high-capacity storage rings and bracelets, with a few storage bags as well.

Fully loaded with his purchases, Meng Zhang returned to the inn where he was staying. Over the following days, he enjoyed exploring Great Wind City and even visited the Gu Yue Family, where he met Gu Yue Youlan a few times. He participated in several dharma meetings held by Gu Yue Family's Foundation Building cultivators, engaging in discussions on cultivation and Dao.

Thanks to his relationship with Gu Yue Huaidie, the cultivators from Gu Yue Family treated Meng Zhang fairly well and didn't see him as an outsider. During their interactions, they willingly shared useful knowledge and experiences. Meng Zhang, as a cultivator who had completed the Foundation Building stage, had received some inheritances from Taiyi Sect's prime era. Whenever he casually revealed something, it astonished the cultivators from Gu Yue Family, leaving them greatly enlightened.

Of course, cultivators from Gold Core families like Gu Yue Family were not just renowned in name; they could also present many useful items. The exchanges during this period were mutually beneficial, and no one felt that their time had been wasted.

Unbeknownst to them, half a month had passed.

That evening, as Meng Zhang returned to his rented room, he saw Yue Jing, whom he hadn't seen in a long time, waiting at his courtyard gate.

Over the years, Yue Jing had become even more graceful and elegant. She covered her face with a thin veil, obscuring most of her stunning features. When they were in the Endless Sea of Sand, Meng Zhang had seen Yue Jing's true appearance. Now, she exuded an extraordinary aura.

During these years, Meng Zhang had become a Foundation Building cultivator, while Yue Jing had not been idle either. She had honed her skills in concealing her aura and hiding her strength to the point where even Meng Zhang's Deception Breaking Eye couldn't discern her true Cultivation Base. He could only roughly estimate that she was at least at the mid-stage of Foundation Building.

Meeting after such a long time, both of them felt a bit excited. However, Meng Zhang had served as the Taiyi Sect Sect Master for many years and had become quite composed, able to keep his emotions in check. On the other hand, Yue Jing was naturally cold and reserved, seldom revealing her emotions voluntarily. The fact that she could show some excitement was already a sign of her deep emotions.

Meng Zhang led Yue Jing into his rented courtyard, and after they both settled down, they began sharing their experiences since their parting.

After Luo Ye had her demonic energy expelled from her body and recovered her strength, she brought Yue Jing to the Jiuqu League. After some twists and turns, Luo Ye succeeded in forming her Gold Core and became a Gold Core Daoist Master. During Luo Ye's Gold Core breakthrough, Yue Jing also successfully completed her Foundation Building stage and became a Foundation Building cultivator.

Since then, Luo Ye had been with Yue Jing in the Jiuqu League for many years.

As Yue Jing narrated her experiences over the years to Meng Zhang, she was deliberately vague in many places. She didn't hide this fact and straightforwardly explained that some matters were related to confidential information from the black market, which couldn't be disclosed to outsiders.

From Yue Jing's account, Meng Zhang gained some understanding of the black market. In many parts of the Cultivation World, there existed black markets, and most of them were under the control of an organization called the Dark Alliance. Similar to the Jiuqu League, the Dark Alliance was an alliance formed by numerous cultivation forces. However, the overall strength of the Dark Alliance was much stronger, surpassing the Jiuqu League by countless times. Its internal affairs were even more complex and baffling.

Luo Ye and Yue Jing came from a sect within the Dark Alliance called the Hidden Shadow Sect. As for more information about the Dark Alliance and Hidden Shadow Sect, Yue Jing chose not to reveal anything.

In recent years, Yue Jing had been serving the black market of the Jiuqu League. Within the black market, she had gained a certain status.

Meng Zhang believed that the position Yue Jing mentioned was probably an understatement. She should have a relatively high standing within the black market.

Regarding Luo Ye, her master, well, she should address her as Luo Ye Daoist Master now. Many years ago, Luo Ye had left for the Middle-Earth Continent. Yue Jing didn't know when she would return.

As for Meng Zhang, he briefly shared some of his experiences over the years with Yue Jing. His cultivation had made great strides, and Taiyi Sect had thrived, becoming a dominant force in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Yue Jing praised Meng Zhang endlessly for his achievements. When she heard about the conflicts with the black market, she first felt angry and then helpless. Luo Ye had been away from the Endless Sea of Sand for a long time, and her influence there had gradually waned. If others refused to give her face or recognize her status, there was little Yue Jing could do about it.

Although the Endless Sea of Sand and the Jiuqu League were close neighbors, the black markets on both sides were entirely separate systems within the Dark Alliance, and it was challenging for them to interfere with each other.

Meng Zhang, however, paid no attention to it. He didn't rely on the power of Yue Jing and her master to deal with the black market of the Endless Sea of Sand.

Taiyi Sect was not something that could be easily provoked by a mere black market. If they wanted, they could gather their forces and easily wipe out that place beneath Firewell Market.

In fact, after Taiyi Sect took control of Firewell Market, the black market side had frequently shown goodwill, hoping to mend their relationship with Taiyi Sect. They were temporarily forced to bow down. Apart from the black market in Flying Swan City, the black market beneath Firewell Market was the most important base of the Dark Alliance in the Endless Sea of Sand. They couldn't easily abandon it unless they had no other choice.

For the black market to continue to exist as it did, it needed Taiyi Sect's tolerance and acceptance.

Meng Zhang, however, maintained an indifferent attitude and kept a sufficient distance from the black market. He believed that in future negotiations with the black market, maintaining this position would be advantageous.

Before Meng Zhang left the Endless Sea of Sand for Great Wind City, he hadn't had a chance to directly contact the black market side.

Chapter 398: Jade Sword Sect

Meng Zhang didn't waste much time on disputes with the black market but instead spoke of his main purpose for coming to the Jiuqu League – to borrow a Third Rank spirit vein to aid in breaking through to the Gold Core realm.

After listening to Meng Zhang, Jue Ying remained silent for a moment before saying, "Brother Meng, you've been here in the Jiuqu League for a while now. You should know that borrowing a Third Rank spirit vein is not an easy task."

Meng Zhang nodded, as he had gathered information indicating that borrowing a Third Rank spirit vein was indeed challenging.

He revealed the conditions offered to him by the Gu Yue Family.

Jue Ying looked at Meng Zhang with mixed emotions and said, "Brother Meng, it seems that Senior Gu Yue Huaidie truly holds you in high regard to offer such lenient conditions."

Even someone as well-informed as Jue Ying thought that the Gu Yue Family's conditions were generous, showing their sincerity towards Meng Zhang. Meng Zhang couldn't help but feel indebted to the Gu Yue Family.

"The Dark Alliance's conditions are extremely harsh. Even if my master intervenes, it won't have much effect. Moreover, once you have a close relationship with the Dark Alliance, it will be difficult to break free from them."

"The most frightening consequence is that the Dark Alliance will fully control you, turning you into their puppet and slave."

"The entanglements and conflicts within the Dark Alliance are too complex. Neither you, Brother Meng, nor Taiyi Sect should get involved."

Initially, Meng Zhang had some thoughts about using Jue Ying's connections to borrow the Third Rank spirit vein from the black market.

Based on Jue Ying's response, it seemed that the black market indeed possessed a Third Rank spirit vein, but Jue Ying was not willing to let Meng Zhang borrow it.

Having known Jue Ying and her master for some time, they had been helpful to Meng Zhang, and he believed Jue Ying wouldn't deceive him. Since she advised against borrowing the black market's spirit vein, Meng Zhang decided to heed her advice.

With borrowing from the black market ruled out, Meng Zhang only had one option left.

He took out the jade pendant Luo Ye had given him.

Back when Luo Ye handed the pendant to Meng Zhang, Jue Ying had been present and was aware of its significance.

She said to Meng Zhang, "Brother Meng, this isn't the place for discussion. Come with me. We'll be gone for a considerable time. If you have anything to arrange, do it quickly."

Meng Zhang's purpose in coming to the Jiuqu League was to find an opportunity to form the core. Matters within the sect had already been adequately arranged.

He had informed the Gu Yue Family in Great Wind City about his departure.

Then, with Jue Ying, he boarded a flying boat traveling from Great Wind City, leaving behind the Great Wind City.

Jue Ying didn't reveal the exact destination of their journey, and Meng Zhang didn't inquire further, simply following her lead.

Jiuqu League's territory was much vaster than the boundless Endless Sea of Sand, and it was also wealthier and more prosperous.

Standing on the flying boat, Meng Zhang looked down at the villages and towns, occasionally spotting cities resembling a chessboard below, which made him sigh in admiration.

In the Endless Sea of Sand, apart from the vast expanse of yellow sand, greenery was a rare sight. However, in the Jiuqu League, it was more like a normal worldly place.

This place not only had abundant cultivation resources but could also support more mortals. A larger population of mortals meant more potential cultivators.

In terms of absolute area, Jiuqu League could accommodate ten times more than the Endless Sea of Sand. But in terms of cultivation strength, Jiuqu League surpassed the Endless Sea of Sand by a thousandfold.

The conditions in the Endless Sea of Sand were too harsh and unsuitable for mortal survival. Due to the limited growth of the mortal population, it had also affected the number of cultivators.

Currently, Taiyi Sect held vast territory, but the number of mortals in the territory was merely a few million. If it were in the Jiuqu League, such a large area could easily accommodate tens of millions of mortals.

Meng Zhang couldn't help but envy the favorable conditions of the Jiuqu League.

Throughout the journey, Jue Ying acted as an excellent guide, introducing Meng Zhang to the local customs, various cultivation forces within the Jiuqu League, and even some lesser-known secrets of the region. The origins of different cultivation forces and their relationships were all familiar to her.

Listening to Jue Ying's explanations, Meng Zhang's horizon expanded, and he gained valuable information that was difficult to obtain even with a considerable amount of spirit stones.

In the long-term development plan he had outlined for Taiyi Sect, once he successfully formed the core, the sect needed to gradually break free from the constraints of the Endless Sea of Sand and start establishing connections in the Jiuqu League.

With the information provided by Jue Ying, Meng Zhang's vision became clearer, and he had new arrangements for Taiyi Sect's future.

Of course, all of this was contingent upon Meng Zhang successfully forming the core. If he had bad luck and failed to form the core this time, everything would have to be reconsidered. Taiyi Sect would remain in the Endless Sea of Sand as before.

After wandering around within the Jiuqu League with Jue Ying for nearly a month, they finally arrived at their destination, a small town not far from the Jade Sword Sect's mountain gate.

The name "Jiuqu League" came from the Jiuqu River, which stretched for tens of thousands of miles, winding and meandering with numerous tributaries. At nine distinct bends along the river, nine vast rivers were formed.

The Jiuqu River and its surroundings were home to numerous cultivation forces, big and small. Approximately two to three thousand years ago, some major sects came together to organize these cultivation forces, leading to the establishment of the loose alliance known as the Jiuqu League.

Among the sects that initially established the Jiuqu League was the Jade Sword Sect, a mighty cultivation sect with numerous Gold Core Daoist Masters and even a Primordial Spirit True Monarch called Jade Sword True Monarch.

With such powerful strength and prestigious reputation, the Jade Sword Sect overshadowed sects like Flying Swan Sect, the so-called ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, which was not even worthy of comparing their shoes to the Jade Sword Sect.

Fortunately, most of the cultivation forces within the Jiuqu League had no interest in the Endless Sea of Sand. Otherwise, these Primordial Spirit-level sects could effortlessly crush the entire Cultivation World of the Endless Sea of Sand, just like crushing a small bug.

Chapter 399: Startled Day Secret

The Jade Sword Sect is located upstream of the Jiuqu River, possessing a Fourth Rank spirit vein and having an extensive mountain gate area. This small town is just an inconspicuous town near the Jade Sword Sect, seemingly unremarkable. The Sword Cultivators have always dominated the Jade Sword Sect, which has remained secluded and had minimal interaction with the outside world. In terms of prosperity and liveliness, it can't compare to Great Wind City, let alone many other sects that are far superior to the Jade Sword Sect.

Not only does it connect with the Endless Sea of Sand, but it also reaches the great grasslands, thriving as a major trading city with the support of the Jiuqu League. Sects like the Fire Cloud Sect are relatively marginalized within the Jiuqu League.

Meng Zhang has long wanted to witness the bustling scene on both sides of the Jiuqu River. However, the mountain gate of the Jade Sword Sect is one of the rare quiet places in the core region of the Jiuqu League. The majority of the inhabitants in this town are ordinary people, with few cultivators passing through.

Upon arriving in the town, Jue Ying rented a mortal's small courtyard and brought Meng Zhang there. She closed the courtyard door and set up a simple restriction outside to isolate the place from the outside world.

"Among the several Primordial Spirit True Monarchs of the Jiuqu League, the one from the Jade Sword Sect has been staying within the mountain gate for these recent years. That's why I brought

you here, to make use of the Primordial Spirit True Monarch's domain," Jue Ying said, taking out a jade pendant identical to Meng Zhang's.

"Although there seem to be no strong figures in the Endless Sea of Sand, the entire region is under the scrutiny of several Primordial Spirit True Monarchs."

"The information I'm about to share with you involves a Fifth Rank great power. If we casually discuss matters related to this great power in the Endless Sea of Sand and its surrounding areas, we might be detected by that great power."

Hearing Jue Ying's words, Meng Zhang became somewhat nervous. According to the general classification in the Cultivation World, Primordial Spirit True Monarchs are only Fourth Rank cultivators. A Fifth Rank great power surpasses the Primordial Spirit True Monarch and enters the Return to Emptiness realm if they are a cultivator. Even in Taiyi Sect's heyday, with numerous Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, there seemed to be no experts in the Return to Emptiness realm.

Since Jue Ying only mentioned a Fifth Rank great power without specifying a cultivator in the Return to Emptiness realm, it is likely that this Fifth Rank great power is not a human cultivator. The Endless Sea of Sand has always been known for its remote and desolate nature, and it has never had any notable figures. Gold Core Daoist Masters could dominate and tyrannize there, unopposed.

However, Jue Ying claimed that the Endless Sea of Sand is not only observed by Primordial Spirit True Monarchs but also involves a Fifth Rank great power, which indeed shocked Meng Zhang.

After pausing for a moment, Jue Ying continued, "As for the specific details of this Fifth Rank existence, my master is not entirely sure. We only know that this existence is not a human cultivator, but whether it's a ghost, demon, monster, or something else remains unknown."

"It seems this existence is in a troubled state, trapped within the Deadly Sea of Sand."

"Several Primordial Spirit True Monarchs are eyeing him."

If it were a normal Fifth Rank existence in its prime, it could easily overwhelm Fourth Rank Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, who wouldn't dare provoke it lightly. The fact that Primordial Spirit True Monarchs are considering making a move indicates that something must be wrong with this Fifth Rank existence.

Meng Zhang understood Jue Ying's implications. Although these matters are far beyond his reach as a Foundation Building cultivator, even if he successfully forms the core, he wouldn't have the qualifications to get involved.

But due to his intense curiosity, Meng Zhang found Jue Ying's words highly intriguing, almost forgetting the main purpose of their conversation.

"For hundreds of years, these Primordial Spirit True Monarchs have been secretly influencing the situation in the Endless Sea of Sand. From the annihilation of Purple Gold Sect to the rise of the Flying Swan Sect, becoming the rulers of the Endless Sea of Sand. In between, the invasions of Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect, and the appearance of the Northern Desert Qi Family. The changes in the Endless Sea of Sand over the centuries have all been influenced by these Primordial Spirit True Monarchs' hands."

"The recent actions of the Fire Cloud Sect are just a continuation of these manipulations. Regardless of the Flying Swan Sect, Northern Desert Qi Family, or Fire Cloud Sect, they are all helpless pawns in the hands of these Primordial Spirit True Monarchs."

Jue Ying's words made Meng Zhang feel uneasy. For hundreds of years, the winds of change in the Endless Sea of Sand were actually orchestrated by Primordial Spirit True Monarchs behind the scenes.

The Flying Swan Sect was considered the dominant force in the Endless Sea of Sand, an insurmountable mountain in the eyes of Taiyi Sect and other sects. However, they were merely pawns in the hands of Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

Primordial Spirit True Monarchs were truly remarkable great powers, capable of manipulating events with ease, stirring up storms, and causing awe in people's hearts. "Within the domain of the Primordial Spirit True Monarch, they can easily perceive everything that happens inside. However, the True Monarch of the Jade Sword Sect is usually aloof and indifferent, not caring about what we little insects say."

"With the isolation of the Primordial Spirit True Monarch's domain in the Jade Sword Sect, other experts, even a Fifth Rank great power, would find it difficult to sense what's happening inside."

"Of course, even in other places, if that Fifth Rank great power were to sense what we're discussing, being so high above us, they probably wouldn't bother with us little cultivators."

"However, my master has instructed us to be cautious and avoid casually mentioning matters related to that Fifth Rank great power in other locations."

"Such great powers often have unpredictable tempers, and nobody knows what they might do."

Meng Zhang fully agreed with Jue Ying's caution. Not all great powers would possess a noble temperament and overlook minor cultivators.

Meng Zhang had seen many children and even adults, having idle fun by flooding ant nests, burning ants with fire, and stepping on various insects.

In the eyes of such great powers, Meng Zhang, Jue Ying, and even Luo Ye Daoist Master were nothing more than bigger insects. If they took an interest, they could easily trample a few insects for amusement. Who would dare to stop them?

"Moreover, our actions this time will harm the interests of this great power. If we reveal our intentions beforehand, the consequences would be unimaginable."

Jue Ying stated that discussing matters related to the Fifth Rank great power in the Endless Sea of Sand and its surrounding areas might be detected by the great power.

Meng Zhang was deeply aware of such abilities. As a Diviner, he sometimes experienced insights when facing life-threatening situations. With the vast Divine Ability of a Fifth Rank great power, if it weren't for the protection of the Primordial Spirit True Monarch of the Jade Sword Sect blocking their sensing, Jue Ying would never casually discuss actions that could harm the great power's interests.

Chapter 400

Jue Ying's attitude was very serious as she slowly narrated some past events of the Fifth Rank great power to Meng Zhang. No one knew when this Fifth Rank great power appeared in the Deadly Sea of Sand. Of course, back then, the Deadly Sea of Sand wasn't called by that name, nor was it a forbidden area for living beings, and it certainly didn't have the barren landscape it has now.

After the arrival of the Fifth Rank great power, it extracted a large number of spirit veins from the surrounding area, causing devastating destruction to the environment.

The neighboring Endless Sea of Sand became even more desolate, with harsher living conditions. The Purple Gold Sect, which once ruled over the Endless Sea of Sand, seemed to have fallen due to this great power, losing its Primordial Spirit True Monarch and several Gold Core Daoist Masters.

The Fire Cloud Sect and the Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch invaded the Endless Sea of Sand, only to be expelled by the Flying Swan Sect. The Middle-Earth Continent cultivation clans, like the Qi Family, also had several Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. One of their branches, because of a grave mistake, was sent near the Jiuqu League.

This branch of the Qi Family later moved into the Endless Sea of Sand and became the renowned Northern Desert Qi Family.

Hearing this, Meng Zhang couldn't help but be amazed.

However, one was sent there, and the other sought refuge. After the situation in the Endless Sea of Sand's Cultivation World stabilized, sand monster disasters would occasionally erupt.

According to Jue Ying, the so-called sand monster disaster was entirely caused by the hand of that Fifth Rank great power. As for why the great power created the sand monster disaster in the Endless Sea of Sand, the reason remains unknown.

Meng Zhang had speculated about the cause of the sand monster disaster before. Especially since he had witnessed the nests of sand monsters and saw heavy traces of human intervention.

Now, confirmation from Jue Ying revealed that the sand monster disaster was indeed caused by the great power. This left Meng Zhang feeling somewhat despondent.

The sand monster disaster had been a nightmare for the Human Clan in the Endless Sea of Sand for hundreds of years. Countless cultivators lost their lives to sand monsters, and the creatures had destroyed numerous oases and slaughtered countless living beings.

Even the Taiyi Sect, which was rebuilt once, fell due to the sand monster disaster. Meng Zhang's own small cultivation clan, the Meng Family, was also destroyed by sand monsters. He had personally experienced many battles with them.

A great power was truly great, able to create such a species as the sand monsters. Meng Zhang's heart was filled with hatred for this great power.

He regretted his currently low Cultivation Base; otherwise, he would have rushed into the Deadly Sea of Sand and confronted this great power.

Luo Ye had mentioned the opportunity to form the core that she would point out to Meng Zhang. It was related to the sand monsters.

Luo Ye had spent a considerable amount of time in the Endless Sea of Sand and was very familiar with the situation there. She anticipated that when Meng Zhang reached the Foundation Building

stage and was ready to form the core, he would face the problem of needing a Third Rank spirit vein.

With the conditions of Taiyi Sect and the situation in the Endless Sea of Sand, it was impossible for Meng Zhang to obtain a chance to use a Third Rank spirit vein.

Furthermore, finding another Third Rank spirit vein outside of the Endless Sea of Sand would also be extremely difficult.

Without a Third Rank spirit vein, he would need to find another solution, an alternative method. The alternative method that Luo Ye pointed out was to search for Spirit Cores.

Spirit Cores were a very rare Heaven and Earth Spiritual Object containing extremely pure and special spiritual energy.

Meng Zhang only needed a small piece of Spirit Core, and he wouldn't need a Third Rank spirit vein. Instead, he could directly absorb the spiritual energy within the Spirit Core to assist him in forming the core.

Normally, Spirit Cores were hard to come by. Obtaining them was even more difficult than borrowing a Third Rank spirit vein.

However, Luo Ye had shown Meng Zhang a clear path. There were Spirit Cores in the Deadly Sea of Sand.

No one knew exactly how that Fifth Rank great power created sand monsters or what specific process was involved. However, during that process, it was clear that a considerable amount of Spirit Cores was consumed. In certain special locations within the Deadly Sea of Sand, the Spirit Cores were stimulated in a unique way, giving birth to seeds that grew into sand monster nests.

Once these seeds matured, they would cross the Deadly Sea of Sand and enter the Endless Sea of Sand, seeking hidden places to settle.

After a long period of growth, these seeds would become complete sand monster nests, constantly producing various grades of sand monsters.

Luo Ye somehow acquired information about some of these special locations. As long as Meng Zhang went to these specific places, he might obtain Spirit Cores.

Hearing that he needed to go to the Deadly Sea of Sand, Meng Zhang showed a wry smile as he realized that he would have to seize the Spirit Cores right under the eyes of that Fifth Rank great power.

No wonder the Cultivators of the Endless Sea of Sand considered the Deadly Sea of Sand a forbidden area, and even Gold Core Daoist Masters didn't dare to enter.

Seeing Meng Zhang's expression, Jue Ying understood his concerns. She quickly explained that it was impossible for her and Meng Zhang's relationship to let him go and court death.

The Deadly Sea of Sand seemed extremely dangerous, but as long as one grasped the tricks, it was possible to enter and leave safely.

Firstly, the Fifth Rank great power was not in a good state and was often restrained by the Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, making it difficult for them to personally take action.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Endless Sea of Sand didn't dare to enter because they were too conspicuous targets. The Fifth Rank great power would prioritize dealing with them.

However, if Foundation Building stage cultivators entered the Deadly Sea of Sand, even if the Fifth Rank great power noticed, they would probably not bother with them.

It was like a mouse entering a tiger's territorythe tiger would generally ignore it. But if a wolf intruded, the tiger wouldn't sit idly by.

Of course, this didn't mean that Foundation Building stage cultivators were completely safe when entering the Deadly Sea of Sand. In fact, they faced great dangers all the time.

The environment in the Deadly Sea of Sand was harsh, and even cultivators found it difficult to survive there. Many natural traps could even kill Foundation Building stage cultivators.

The most frightening part was the countless sand monsters roaming around. Once they detected human cultivators, they would swarm over and never relent.

Moreover, there were occasionally Ghost Path cultivators and even demonic cultivators lurking in the Deadly Sea of Sand.

These demonic cultivators and evildoers who were unwelcome in the Cultivation World entered that area for various reasons. If they found cultivators like Meng Zhang from the righteous path, they would never let them go easily.

Ghost Path cultivators and demonic cultivators were treacherous and possessed many unpredictable and sinister methods. Except for the talented cultivators from major sects and clans, ordinary cultivators from the righteous path were often no match for them.