

## Sect Master 591

Chapter 591: Goes for 9 days

Meng Zhang followed behind Jin LiTrue Monarch, soaring into the sky and flying directly towards the high altitude. It has been twenty-three years since Demon Wind Gobi restored peace. During these years, Jin LiTrue Monarch had not encountered any external disturbances and had been cultivating in seclusion in the small world of Purple Gold Sect.

Having mastered the general methods of Primordial SpiritTrue Monarch, she also wielded the Fourth Rank magic tool, the Yellow Sand Ten Thousand Li Chart, making her combat prowess not weaker than an average Primordial Spirit early-stage cultivator. With the outside world in peace, Taiyi Sect had been prospering and developing exceptionally well.

As the Sect Master, Meng Zhang also had sufficient time to focus on his own cultivation. Having broken through to the Gold Corelate stage, he was now qualified to ascend to the Nine Heavens and collect the Nine Heavens Refined Essence.

For Gold Corelate stage cultivators, especially those with ambitions to advance to the Primordial Spirit realm, the Nine Heavens Refined Essence was an essential spiritual item. Apart from containing extremely pure spiritual energy, it also held mysterious and extraordinary components.

After absorbing the Nine Heavens Refined Essence, a Gold Corelate stage cultivator could not only fulfill their daily cultivation needs but also strengthen their essence, energy, and spirit. They might even sense a trace of the lingering Grand Dao essence within, laying a solid foundation for future breakthroughs to the Primordial Spirit realm.

Since breaking through to the Gold Corelate stage, Meng Zhang had already digested the inheritance obtained from the heritage site. To progress further, he needed to acquire more of Taiyi Sect's inheritances.

On several occasions, he had obtained numerous inheritance books from Purple Gold Sect and Layered Mystery Sect. While these could serve as references, they were not directly usable for cultivation.

At this point, Meng Zhang began to feel the inconvenience of lacking suitable inheritances. Not to mention, he knew that a Gold Corelate stage cultivator needed to go to the Nine Heavens to collect the Nine Heavens Refined Essence for cultivation purposes. However, he had no knowledge of the specific process.

The most senior Extreme Sword Spirit General in the sect, before becoming the Guardian Spirit General, was a master who was close to completing the Gold Core stage and had experience going to the Nine Heavens. Shortly after Meng Zhang broke through to the Gold Core stage, he proactively sought advice from the General and learned the method of collecting the Nine Heavens Refined Essence, gaining valuable insights.

However, the Extreme Sword Spirit General warned Meng Zhang that the Nine Heavens was not a smooth path; it was filled with numerous dangers. Even a Gold Core Daoist Master could suffer greatly if they were not careful, let alone an average Primordial SpiritTrue Monarch.

For a Gold Core Daoist Master's first journey to the Nine Heavens, it was best to have experienced seniors from the sect accompanying them to provide assistance whenever needed. After all, true understanding comes from personal experience, and hearing about experiences and lessons from others cannot replace firsthand experience.

Meng Zhang kept the advice of Extreme Sword Spirit General in mind, knowing that he was an experienced senior who wouldn't deceive him without reason. However, the highest cultivation base in Taiyi Sect at present was Meng Zhang himself, and Extreme Sword Spirit General hadn't even restored his Gold Core cultivation base, so he couldn't provide much help.

Meng Zhang waited for several years until Jin LiTrue Monarch emerged from seclusion. According to the agreement between Jin LiTrue Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist, after she emerged from seclusion, True Monarch Azure Mist would arrange everything and hold a grand ceremony to welcome her into the Jiuqu League.

Jin LiTrue Monarch sent a message to Great Wind City, notifying True Monarch Azure Mist. Soon, True Monarch Azure Mist replied, saying that organizing such a grand ceremony required substantial work and couldn't be completed in a short time. Especially when notifying various Primordial SpiritTrue Monarchs scattered in different places, it would take considerable time.

Around the middle of next year, all the preparations for the grand ceremony are expected to be completed. At that time, they will send people to notify Jin LiTrue Monarch in advance.

It's only the beginning of the year now, and there is still about a year and a half before the ceremony takes place.

After coming out of seclusion, Jin LiTrue Monarch had rare leisure time and plenty of free time. She first called Jin Qiao'er to her side and gave her guidance on cultivation.

Then, she took a stroll to the Deadly Sea of Sand and retrieved the legacy left by True Monarch Tian Zhu. Before sacrificing himself alongside the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit, True Monarch Tian Zhu entrusted his postmortem affairs to Jin LiTrue Monarch and handed over some of his legacy to her for disposal.

Having inherited True Monarch Tian Zhu's legacy, Jin LiTrue Monarch, though newly promoted to Primordial Spirit, now possessed many powerful methods. Among the Primordial SpiritTrue Monarchs, she was no longer considered weak.

After handling these matters, Meng Zhang noticed that Jin LiTrue Monarch was in a good mood, so he boldly approached her and made a request. He wanted her to take him to the Nine Heavens to gain some experience.

Jin LiTrue Monarch had already intended to help Meng Zhang, and with Jin Qiao'er's support, she agreed to his request. For her, who had been to the Nine Heavens multiple times during the Gold Corelate stage, it wasn't a difficult task.

Interestingly, Jin LiTrue Monarch had not been to the Nine Heavens since achieving Primordial Spirit cultivation. She had selected a date, and together with Meng Zhang, they set off.

Flying straight up, whether using a flying magic tool or regular cultivation flying, cultivators generally didn't go higher than a thousand zhang (about 3,000 meters) in the Cultivation World. The higher one flew, the higher the demands on their Cultivation Base.

At over three thousand zhang, the astral winds became fierce, even a Gold Core Daoist Master needed to allocate some strength to defend against the astral winds.

Jin LiTrue Monarch continued to fly higher with Meng Zhang, never stopping until they reached ten thousand zhang (about 30,000 meters).

At this altitude, the formidable astral winds were like unstoppable sharp blades that could easily shred any cultivator with a cultivation base less than Gold Core.

Jin LiTrue Monarch seemed unbothered by the intense astral winds and kept ascending, while Meng Zhang had to allocate some strength to withstand the relentless force of the astral winds.

After flying for a long distance, Meng Zhang started to feel a bit strained. At this moment, Jin LiTrue Monarch pointed to the grayish area above their heads and said, "We are almost there; that is the legendary Nine Heavens."

Meng Zhang had already learned from various scriptures that the so-called Nine Heavens did not actually mean nine layers of heaven but referred to a special region at the world's highest level.

This vast and boundless region had numerous layers, making the situation inside it incredibly complex. The number nine represented the extreme, illustrating the multitude of levels within the Nine Heavens.

Seeing that they were about to enter the Nine Heavens, Jin LiTrue Monarch, who had been nonchalant before, now became serious. In the past, her master had taken her into the Nine Heavens, and after arriving in the Deadly Sea of Sand, she had ventured in and out multiple times alone. However, every time she entered the Nine Heavens, she never dared to be the slightest bit careless.

A Gold Corelate stage cultivation base was insufficient in the Nine Heavens. It was a place filled with too many dangers, and countless cultivators had been buried there.

Even after breaking through to the Primordial Spirit stage, the lessons and personal experiences of previous cultivators had taught Jin LiTrue Monarch that the Nine Heavens was not a place where Primordial Spirit cultivators could act recklessly.

Before setting off, Jin LiTrue Monarch had already given the necessary instructions. She didn't waste any words now and, with Meng Zhang in tow, shot upward, diving directly into the Nine Heavens.

Chapter 592: Initially ascends for 9 days

From the ground to this height, there are already tens of thousands of zhang in distance. At this height, even a Gold Core initial stage cultivator would find it strenuous and difficult to move freely.

As Meng Zhang followed Jin Li True Monarch and rushed into the Nine Heavens, he immediately felt as if he had entered another world. He felt as if he was carrying a huge mountain on his back, and the pressure of the mountain caused his body to tremble slightly, making it extremely difficult for him.

The circulation of True Essence within his body also began to slow down. Even if he tried his best to activate it, True Essence still flowed sluggishly and laboriously like a snail crawling within him. Meng Zhang also felt a bit dizzy and his mind was foggy, making it hard to focus.

Whether it was Jin Li True Monarch's reminder earlier or the knowledge he gained from Extreme Sword Spirit General, Meng Zhang immediately understood his situation. Nine Heavens is the outermost layer of this world, like a membrane that tightly wraps the entire world, isolating most influences from the void.

Extreme Sword Spirit General, who originated from the glorious era of the Taiyi Sect, was well aware of various secrets and knowledge in the Cultivation World. Many times, his insights surpassed those of loose cultivators like Jin Li True Monarch.

How Nine Heavens was formed and why this world had such a membrane, even the oldest artifacts in the Cultivation World couldn't explain. The generally accepted view in the Cultivation World is that Nine Heavens is a spontaneous defense mechanism formed by this world, a manifestation of the will of the heavens.

The void contains many worlds and countless races. It is not peaceful but filled with bloodshed and slaughter. Fierce inter-racial wars and world wars have almost never ceased.

Although the Cultivation World in the Grand Dust World is also a place of survival of the fittest with constant struggles, the intensity, cruelty, and scope of wars are far less than those in the void. If it were not for the protection of Nine Heavens, Grand Dust World might have been invaded and turned into a battlefield of world wars.

Of course, Nine Heavens' spontaneous defense system is not enough to resist the invasion of extraterritorial great powers. The true protectors of this world are the top-tier great powers in the Cultivation World, including the formidable experts from the Holy Land Sects.

Cultivators who break through the Primordial Spirit stage and enter the Return to Emptiness stage are at the top level of power in this world. Cultivation bases at the Return to Emptiness stage are generally referred to as Void Immortals or half-immortals.

However, due to some pretentious mortals claiming to be half-immortals, the term has lost its value. So, in the Cultivation World, more and more cultivators call the great powers at the Return to Emptiness stage "Void Immortals."

Most of the Void Immortal great powers in the Grand Dust World spend most of their time above Nine Heavens, defending against extraterritorial invaders. According to Jin Li True Monarch, the external situation in Grand Dust World has been relatively stable in recent years, giving them the strategic initiative. These Void Immortal great powers can not only rely on Nine Heavens for defense but also charge out of Nine Heavens to repel invaders beyond the country's borders.

The surrounding void in a large area around Grand Dust World is controlled by these Void Immortal great powers, forming the outer defense line of Grand Dust World. It is difficult for powerful extraterritorial invaders or large groups of them to break into the Nine Heavens and enter the Grand Dust World.

Of course, the number of Void Immortal great powers in Grand Dust World is limited, while both Nine Heavens and the void beyond it are vast and boundless. Occasionally, there are some Extraterritorial Invaders who manage to break through the defense and enter Grand Dust World, and there have been several such cases known to Jin Li True Monarch.

The closest incident to the Endless Sea of Sand involved a Fifth Rank Earth Spirit who suffered severe injuries to enter the Deadly Sea of Sand. Another instance was when a Barbarian Clan army from the extraterritorial regions bypassed the defenses of the Void Immortal great powers and arrived at the Yuantu Great Prairie. There seem to be hidden details in these incidents, but Jin Li True Monarch's knowledge is limited due to his level.

The Void Immortal great powers of Grand Dust World generally don't bother dealing with these intruding Extraterritorial Invaders; instead, various forces within the Cultivation World handle such matters. These invaders often land in remote and desolate areas on the fringes of the Cultivation World, like the edge of the Middle-Earth Continent. If they had landed in more central areas, they would have been easily wiped out.

However, these matters are still tens of thousands of miles away from Jin Li True Monarch and Meng Zhang, and they have no need to worry about them. In fact, apart from the Holy Land Sects and a few top-tier sects, many other forces in the Cultivation World are indifferent to these things. They focus on their own internal struggles and are still ready to fight and engage in battles when needed.

Meng Zhang shares a similar mindset. He remembers that Taiyi Sect faced the threat of annihilation a few years ago, and the struggle for survival was intense throughout the entire sect. Although the situation has improved slightly in recent years, they cannot rest easy.

Meng Zhang has many things to worry about, such as the future of his sect and his own cultivation. While thinking about various matters related to Nine Heavens, he gradually adjusts his state to adapt to this new place.

As Nine Heavens is located on the outermost layer of Grand Dust World and influenced by the void, the rules of the land differ significantly from the Grand Dust World. The native creatures of Grand Dust World would feel uncomfortable when they first enter this place and experience many areas of discomfort. At this time, the combat strength of cultivators is greatly reduced, leaving them in a very weakened state.

Depending on various factors such as individual constitution and cultivation base, cultivators need to actively adjust and spend varying amounts of time to adapt and recover their state. Some cultivators may recover in a few hours, while others might take several days to catch their breath.

Encountering any danger during this weak period could be disastrous. Nine Heavens is not a peaceful place, and cultivators can face various enemies at any time. Therefore, for cultivators entering Nine Heavens for the first time, it is best to have experienced seniors accompanying them. These experienced seniors can help the cultivators get through the initial adaptation period, which is also the most dangerous time.

Meng Zhang swiftly restores his combat strength following the experiences passed down by Extreme Sword Spirit General and Jin Li True Monarch. Once he passes this weak period, even without Jin Li True Monarch by his side, he will have the ability to survive on his own. Interestingly, he finds that he adapts very quickly, needing little time to adjust to the rules of this place. His mind becomes clearer, the pressure on his body gradually lightens, and the circulation of True Essence within him becomes smoother.

At this rate, Meng Zhang will recover his combat strength faster than planned.

#### Chapter 593: 9 Days of Succinctness

While Meng Zhang was adapting to the environment and recovering his strength, Jin Li True Monarch did not stay far away; instead, she earnestly guarded by her side. The Nine Heavens above were divided into numerous levels with vast regions. Their current location was relatively on the outskirts, and the level of danger was not high. However, exceptions existed, and even in such seemingly safe places, unforeseen dangers could arise.

As Jin Li True Monarch was casually surveying her surroundings with some boredom, behind her and Meng Zhang, a faint shadow appeared and slowly approached them, making no sound at all. Without even turning her head, Jin Li True Monarch struck out with her hand, releasing a sharp

force that split the shadow in two. The two eerie bodies floated in the air, gently swaying up and down. Many gases spewed out from the bodies, quickly blending into the surroundings.

In the Nine Heavens, many of the rules of nature were different from the outside world. Though it was just a small difference, it felt like an entirely different realm. In this unique environment, many beings lived, including the common creatures known as Cloud Beasts.

Cloud Beasts were formed from special condensed clouds and naturally possessed various mystical abilities. Even the weakest Cloud Beasts were capable of combat strength surpassing a Foundation Building cultivator. Ordinary Cloud Beasts could rival a Gold Core cultivator, and the most powerful ones could even pose a threat to a Primordial Spirit cultivator.

Most Cloud Beasts, once killed, would quickly dissipate into clouds, leaving behind only a few useful materials. Jin LiTrue Monarch had encountered Cloud Beasts many times during her visits to the Nine Heavens. The one she casually killed earlier was a Cloud Beast with the strength of a Gold Core cultivator. In the past, it might have taken some effort to deal with such an opponent, but since advancing to the Primordial Spirit stage, she could end the battle with a wave of her hand.

Knowing that Cloud Beasts rarely carried any valuable loot, Jin LiTrue Monarch paid no attention to the creature's remains. Meanwhile, Meng Zhang was focused on recovering her strength, as it wouldn't matter if they encountered enemies even Jin LiTrue Monarch couldn't resist.

After adapting to the environment, Meng Zhang informed Jin LiTrue Monarch, who looked at her with some surprise. Jin LiTrue Monarch remembered that when she first came to the Nine Heavens, she appeared half-dead and weak. It took her two full days, with her master's company, to gradually recover. She believed that Meng Zhang, with his temperament, wouldn't pretend to be fine at this critical moment.

Impressed with Meng Zhang's adaptability, Jin LiTrue Monarch decided not to linger here any longer. She led Meng Zhang deeper into the Nine Heavens. From the outside, Nine Heavens appeared hazy and obscure, but inside, the terrain was just as complex and changeable. Cloud clusters of various sizes formed peculiar and maze-like shapes that constantly shifted, making the landscape ever-changing.

Due to the influence of the special rules of the Nine Heavens, these clouds were not as light and ethereal as they seemed from the outside. Some were as heavy as mountains, some as solid as rocks, and some were even special transformations of Cloud Beasts. Divine Sense of Gold Core Daoist Masters in the Nine Heavens would be greatly suppressed, making it difficult to extend their range. Their senses were also heavily obscured.



Meng Zhang tried multiple times, using her abilities like Deception Breaking Eye, to probe the surroundings but couldn't detect anything at a great distance. In the complex and ever-changing terrain, encountering danger without enough reaction time was a real concern.

Jin LiTrue Monarch had learned this lesson the hard way before, so she proceeded cautiously, reminding Meng Zhang from time to time. As a Primordial SpiritTrue Monarch, she could utilize the power of the Grand Dao to directly interact with the rules of heaven and earth. It was Jin LiTrue Monarch's first time coming here since achieving Primordial SpiritTrue Monarch status, so she also needed to familiarize herself with her new abilities and sense the surrounding rules of heaven and earth.

Finally, after trying various methods, Meng Zhang discovered that her own Spiritual Awareness still had some effect in this place. Spiritual Awareness was a mysterious sense that surpassed the five senses and Divine Sense. Powerful cultivators with strong Spiritual Awareness could sense opportunities and dangers in advance, and sometimes even foresee events.

In the Cultivation World, only Diviners usually trained their Spiritual Awareness and utilized its methods. Even someone like True Monarch Tian Zhu, who had a naturally strong Spiritual Awareness, found it difficult to fully unleash its potential due to the lack of training in Diviner heritage.

Until just before falling, he suddenly awakened and saw many future scenes. Although Meng Zhang wouldn't easily use the "Heavenly Insight" technique for divination, his own Spiritual Awareness allowed him to sense some dangers ahead. Meng Zhang's ability to perceive danger was almost on par with Jin LiTrue Monarch. If he hadn't deliberately concealed it, Jin LiTrue Monarch would probably have guessed his identity as a Diviner.

Jin LiTrue Monarch led Meng Zhang forward, avoiding various troubles while searching for the whereabouts of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence. Cultivation seniors in the Cultivation World had long summarized many experiences, such as which environments were suitable for the growth of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence and where it might appear. Although these experiences were not 100% accurate, they provided cultivators with a direction for their search. Without such experiences, cultivators would be wandering blindly and relying solely on luck in this place.

Although Jin LiTrue Monarch did not deliberately pass on her experiences to Meng Zhang, she didn't hide her actions either. Meng Zhang carefully observed Jin LiTrue Monarch's behavior while comparing it with what he had learned from Extreme Sword Spirit General.

The two of them were fortunate to make a gain shortly after entering the Nine Heavens. Jin LiTrue Monarch flew onto a cloud cluster like a mountain, beneath which was a large depression where a group of Cloud Beasts had made their nest. Over a dozen Cloud Beasts of various sizes lived there.

The variety of Cloud Beasts within the Nine Heavens was vast, and it was impossible for anyone to recognize the origin and species of each one. The group of Cloud Beasts before Jin LiTrue Monarch happened to be a species she recognized.

She directly made her move, releasing her Primordial SpiritTrue Monarch's imposing aura without reservation. A thunderball descended from the sky, landing in the midst of the Cloud Beasts. The group was thrown into chaos as they scattered in all directions, sensing that Jin LiTrue Monarch was not to be trifled with.

Jin LiTrue Monarch didn't bother with the fleeing Cloud Beasts. Instead, she flew to the mountain wall in front of the Cloud Beast nest and gently slashed her palm forward. The seemingly impenetrable mountain wall was easily cut open, and a colored light cluster the size of a chicken egg appeared amid the chaotic clouds. This was the goal of Meng Zhang's search in the Nine Heavens—the Nine Heavens Refined Essence.

The Nine Heavens Refined Essence existed between reality and illusion, almost imperceptible. Without sufficient cultivation base, one could only watch without being able to collect it. Jin LiTrue Monarch had used up a considerable amount of Nine Heavens Refined Essence during her breakthrough to the Primordial Spirit stage and the subsequent cultivation of Divine Abilities. The Nine Heavens Refined Essence she collected personally was not nearly enough, but fortunately, her master and True Monarch Tian Zhu had left her plenty.

For Jin LiTrue Monarch, the Nine Heavens Refined Essence was still the main resource she needed to collect with all her effort. She had many flaws and shortcomings, but one advantage was her generosity and lack of calculation. As an elder and Meng Zhang as a junior, she didn't want to monopolize the gains made today in front of him.

After hesitating for a moment, she casually waved her hand, and half of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence flew towards Meng Zhang's direction. Meng Zhang quickly took out a specially prepared jade bottle and carefully used the methods taught by Extreme Sword Spirit General to collect the Nine Heavens Refined Essence into the bottle. Although the cluster was only palm-sized, it was enough for Meng Zhang to use for half a month.

Jin LiTrue Monarch knew that Meng Zhang had the heritage of Taiyi Sect and mastered the method of absorbing and refining the Nine Heavens Refined Essence, so she didn't say much.

With today's successful start, both of their moods improved. Jin LiTrue Monarch and Meng Zhang continued forward, searching for the whereabouts of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence. Along the way, they encountered several groups of Cloud Beasts. If a group of Cloud Beasts didn't carry any valuable items, Jin LiTrue Monarch would usually disperse them directly.

The number of Cloud Beasts in the Nine Heavens was quite substantial, and their reproduction rate was not slow. Even with many cultivators entering here regularly, it was impossible to exterminate all the Cloud Beasts. Occasionally, they encountered a few Cloud Beasts that had value, and Jin LiTrue Monarch would kill them on the spot and collect their remains.

As a Gold Corelate stage cultivator, Meng Zhang was not entirely useless. He could assist Jin LiTrue Monarch in the battles, block the Cloud Beasts' escape routes, chase down the remnants, and finish them off.

Jin LiTrue Monarch did not mistreat Meng Zhang. She was always fair in her actions and occasionally would distribute some minor gains to him, so he wouldn't feel like he was doing all the work for nothing.

As they flew for half a day, they occasionally encountered Cloud Beasts with Primordial Spirit stage combat strength. At such times, Jin LiTrue Monarch became extremely cautious, carefully comparing the strengths of both sides and weighing the benefits of the battle. Most of the time, Jin LiTrue Monarch chose to avoid the fight altogether, leading Meng Zhang around the opponents and moving forward from different directions.

Jin LiTrue Monarch rarely made a move herself and was unable to successfully subdue her opponents on several occasions. After a fierce battle, either the Cloud Beasts would escape, or Jin LiTrue Monarch would realize that she had underestimated the opponent's strength and would have to retreat with Meng Zhang.

#### Chapter 594: Return

Jin LiTrue Monarch led Meng Zhang on a journey, driving away and killing cloud beasts, and collecting Nine Heavens Refined Essence along the way. Due to Meng Zhang's limited Cultivation Base, his contributions were limited. Even if Jin LiTrue Monarch was generous, he couldn't give him too much advantage.

Meng Zhang calculated that he had been in Nine Heavens for almost half a month, and his gains were not substantial. If he had entered this place alone, the situation might have been even worse. It seemed that collecting Nine Heavens Refined Essence was indeed not an easy task.

Cultivators from prominent sects and families had strong elders to take care of them, which made things easier. However, for cultivators like Meng Zhang, who came from smaller sects or had a loose cultivator background, it was much more challenging.

Jin LiTrue Monarch couldn't bring Meng Zhang with him every time, so Meng Zhang would have to find new ways to proceed on his own. Generally, for Gold Core stage cultivators, it was best not to linger inside Nine Heavens too long during their first few visits. Staying for about half a month was enough before leaving.

The rules of heaven and earth within Nine Heavens were special and placed immense pressure on cultivators. Even with Meng Zhang's exceptional talent, he didn't want to stay here for too long.

Jin LiTrue Monarch understood this, but the gains this time were exceptional. It was a rare opportunity, and she didn't want to leave just yet, fearing that the next time might not be as fortunate.

Seeing Jin LiTrue Monarch's dilemma, Meng Zhang proactively suggested that he would return alone. Throughout the journey, Meng Zhang performed admirably, showcasing his strength and cleverness.

After hesitating for a moment, Jin LiTrue Monarch agreed. Before parting, she specifically warned Meng Zhang not to get into any trouble on the way back and to leave Nine Heavens directly, avoiding unnecessary complications.

Meng Zhang naturally accepted Jin LiTrue Monarch's goodwill and promised to follow the advice. After bidding farewell to Jin LiTrue Monarch, Meng Zhang felt that his condition was good enough, and he might be able to stay a few more days.

The terrain within Nine Heavens was incredibly complex and frequently changed. Cultivators' Divine Sense and exploration spells were suppressed, making it difficult to explore distant places. In such circumstances, even with an excellent memory, cultivators might get lost.

At this point, Meng Zhang decided to abandon the search for the route and directly followed the direction indicated by his Spiritual Awareness.

Meng Zhang's return route was not the same as the one he came from, but it was relatively safe. He encountered no dangers and even gained some rewards. He collected two clusters of Nine Heavens Refined Essence and captured several cloud beast cubs.

Within the Taiyi Sect, there was a specialized Beast Controlling Hall responsible for breeding and taming various spirit beasts for the sect's use. The elder in charge of the hall, Hu Jing, practiced a unique technique that allowed him to strengthen his combat power using the spirit pets he raised.

Cloud beasts within Nine Heavens generally had stronger combat capabilities than the demonic beasts in the Grand Dust World and showed more potential. Their intelligence was higher than that of ordinary beasts, making them likely candidates for taming.

The only concern was whether these cloud beasts could adapt to the new environment outside Nine Heavens and survive to continue growing.

Following the route guided by his Spiritual Awareness, Meng Zhang flew for about ten days before reaching the boundary of Nine Heavens.

Meng Zhang exerted force and leaped, jumping out of Nine Heavens and returning to the outside world. At first, he felt dizzy and disoriented, but quickly recovered and sensed a relieving relaxation throughout his body. The invisible pressure that had enveloped him inside Nine Heavens completely vanished.

Leaving Nine Heavens, any adverse effects on the body caused by Nine Heavens naturally dissipated rapidly. At that moment, Meng Zhang suddenly remembered the cloud beast cubs he had captured. He checked his spirit pet bag and found that the once lively cubs had become weak and listless. One of them was in a critical condition, barely hanging on.

Not daring to delay any further, Meng Zhang immediately accelerated his descent and swiftly flew towards the Hundred Grass Slope, the sect's mountain gate. He handed over the cloud beast cubs to Elder Hu Jing and briefly explained their origins.

At that time, the cub in the worst condition had already begun to transform into clouds, about to disappear. Hu Jing was much more proficient in the art of beast taming than Meng Zhang. She took the cubs and started to figure out how to care for them.

Shortly after returning to the sect, many matters sought Meng Zhang's attention. First, the senior disciple Niu Dawei requested an audience to report various recent affairs in the sect. Although Meng Zhang had delegated most of the sect's affairs to Niu Dawei, he still periodically listened to his reports and provided guidance.

Since the return to peace, Taiyi Sect had rapidly regained its vitality. The extensive development of Demon Wind Gobi and the increasingly frequent business dealings with Great Wind City had brought the sect increasing wealth. The number of awakened spirit roots among the mortal disciples of Taiyi Sect was also growing, even with the raised entry threshold.

Meng Zhang sat in his seat with half-opened eyes, quietly listening to Niu Dawei's report on these trivial daily affairs, which Niu Dawei handled well.

After Jin LiTrue Monarch agreed to join the Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect naturally became one of the forces under Jin LiTrue Monarch's command and a member of the Jiuqu League. The relationship between Taiyi Sect and Great Wind City and Gu Yue Family became increasingly close as they integrated into the Jiuqu League.

Soon, Niu Dawei mentioned the issues with the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch and the Fire Cloud Sect. Meng Zhang and Taiyi Sect were currently unable to participate in the struggles between Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. Their current target was the forces under the True Monarch Mountain Peak.

Taiyi Sect was directly confronting the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch power. Meng Zhang naturally didn't want them to unite; instead, he sought to divide and weaken them. Taiyi Sect tempted the Fire Cloud Sect, which was not a direct subordinate of True Monarch Mountain Peak, with benefits to engage in smuggling with Taiyi Sect.

Driven by interests, Fire Cloud Sect readily took the bait. They even started stealing various unique resources produced in the Endless Sea of Sand, which were under the control of the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch. In truth, the higher-ups in the East River Branch were not oblivious to the Fire Cloud Sect's clandestine activities.

However, they were also unhappy with the exploitation by True Monarch Mountain Peak and pretended not to know about the Fire Cloud Sect's actions, allowing them to act as they pleased. In some cases, they intentionally or unintentionally sold more resources to the Fire Cloud Sect.

After all, according to True Monarch Mountain Peak's orders, all resources from the Endless Sea of Sand were sent to Mountain Branch for sale, causing significant harm to the interests of the East River Branch.

Taiyi Sect secretly orchestrated this matter, causing internal problems for the other party and gaining significant benefits for themselves. Fire Cloud Sect sold various resources to Taiyi Sect's territory. While Taiyi Sect kept a portion for its own use, it mostly sent the resources to Great Wind

City for sale, earning substantial profits. Taiyi Sect had been secretly maintaining this smuggling route not only for the benefits but also for a larger goal.

After listening to Niu Dawei's report for a while, Meng Zhang carefully provided guidance before allowing him to leave. Shortly after Niu Dawei's departure, Delicate Water Spirit General came to find him.

Despite appearing prosperous and having a large income, Taiyi Sect's increasing number of cultivators, especially those in the Gold Core stage, made it inevitable for them to expand and acquire more resources. Naturally, Taiyi Sect couldn't expand towards the Jiuqu League's direction, and Endless Sea of Sand had a new owner, making it inaccessible as well. The northern Deadly Sea of Sand was desolate, with no signs of life. While it produced some mineral resources and special spirit medicines, it was uninhabitable for ordinary humans, and its value was not high.

Taiyi Sect currently only arranged for some cultivators to go to Deadly Sea of Sand to obtain resources and did not have any plans for large-scale expansion there. The only possible direction for expansion was to the west, further into the Demon Wind Gobi.

In recent years, Taiyi Sect had strengthened its surveillance of the deep areas of Demon Wind Gobi. Delicate Water Spirit General had made multiple undercover investigations to explore the situation there. Unfortunately, she brought Meng Zhang bad news.

Facing the invasion of the Sea Clan, the demon beasts of Demon Wind Gobi were retreating and were on the verge of collapse. If these demon beasts couldn't withstand the Sea Clan's attack and were completely defeated, their only escape route would be towards Taiyi Sect's current territory.

By then, Taiyi Sect would be the first to face a large wave of demon beast army's assault. After that, if the Sea Clan continued to expand, Taiyi Sect would directly confront this formidable enemy.

Having just ended a major war about twenty years ago, Taiyi Sect had not fully recovered its elite forces and vitality. If another major war were to break out, it would not bode well for Taiyi Sect.

Although Taiyi Sect currently had the protection of Jin LiTrue Monarch, she wasn't Taiyi Sect's caretaker or enforcer. Taiyi Sect couldn't rely on Jin LiTrue Monarch to solve every problem. If a large-scale war happened, Taiyi Sect cultivators would still be the main force in combat.

After hearing Delicate Water Spirit General's report, Meng Zhang had no perfect solution. He could only order to strengthen the surveillance of Demon Wind Gobi and be prepared to respond at any time. Meanwhile, Taiyi Sect had to start slowly preparing for the next major war.

After dealing with numerous sect affairs, Meng Zhang began his cultivation. This time, he started trying to absorb Nine Heavens Refined Essence. After the first absorption, Meng Zhang finally understood why Nine Heavens Refined Essence was something that Gold Core stage cultivators diligently pursued. Compared to absorbing spiritual energy from a Third Rank spirit vein, Nine Heavens Refined Essence provided comprehensive enhancements to cultivators.

Each time he refined Nine Heavens Refined Essence, Meng Zhang entered a special state, feeling that his entire body and mind had been elevated, bringing him closer to the Grand Dao. Absorbing and refining Nine Heavens Refined Essence was also a test for Gold Core stage cultivators. Only those in the Gold Core stage could successfully absorb and refine it, and the stronger their foundation, the more benefits they gained from it.

#### Chapter 595: Leaving

After more than three months since Meng Zhang's return to Hundred Grass Slope, Jin LiTrue Monarch finally returned from Nine Heavens. During most of her time, Jin LiTrue Monarch resided in seclusion within the small world of Purple Gold Sect. Later, to facilitate communication with the outside world, she constructed a small Daoist temple near the center of the Deadly Sea of Sand.

When she wasn't in seclusion, she mostly stayed at this Daoist temple. Jin LiTrue Monarch disliked being disturbed and, besides her disciple Jin Qiao'er, only Meng Zhang could visit her willingly. Of course, there must have been ways for the Jiuqu League to contact her.

This time upon her return, instead of rushing into seclusion in the small world, Jin LiTrue Monarch went directly back to the Daoist temple. In a little over a year, she would attend a grand ceremony at the Jiuqu League. To avoid unnecessary back-and-forth traveling, she decided to stay in the Daoist temple during this period of time.

With ample free time on her hands, she sent a message to her disciple Jin Qiao'er, asking her to come and receive her guidance. Meng Zhang, who was often in contact with Jin Qiao'er, heard about Jin LiTrue Monarch's return from Nine Heavens and decided to visit her together with Jin Qiao'er.

At the center of the Deadly Sea of Sand, not far from the battlefield where True Monarch Tian Zhu and Fifth Rank Earth Spirit had fought many years ago, stood the Daoist temple where Jin LiTrue Monarch resided. Even after so many years, the remnants of the great battle were still evident, and traces of residual Grand Dao power lingered nearby.



With her Primordial Spirit True Monarch's Divine Ability, Jin LiTrue Monarch could easily gather sand into towers. She built a highly conspicuous Daoist temple on a hill, where she resided. Though there was no spirit vein here, Jin LiTrue Monarch deployed some simple prohibitions around to prevent unwanted individuals from approaching and to protect the temple from being buried by sandstorms.

Meng Zhang and Jin Qiao'er successfully entered the Daoist temple after arriving at the Deadly Sea of Sand. Upon meeting Meng Zhang, Jin LiTrue Monarch casually inquired about the events that occurred on his journey back. Meng Zhang briefly answered, and Jin LiTrue Monarch didn't press further since Meng Zhang had already arrived here safely, and there were likely no unexpected incidents on his return journey.

With plenty of time at hand, Jin LiTrue Monarch decided to give some guidance to Jin Qiao'er's cultivation. Meng Zhang cheekily took the opportunity to seek advice on some cultivation matters. As long as it didn't involve confidential cultivation secrets, Jin LiTrue Monarch willingly provided answers. If faced with questions she didn't want to answer directly, she would offer some broad suggestions.

With her current Cultivation Base and perspective, Jin LiTrue Monarch's casual pointers were enough to greatly benefit Meng Zhang. He was sensible enough not to inquire about Jin LiTrue Monarch's cultivation secrets, focusing on ordinary cultivation questions.

Jin LiTrue Monarch primarily devoted her energy to guiding Jin Qiao'er's cultivation. For Meng Zhang, she merely offered a few casual pointers during their conversation. At one point, Jin LiTrue Monarch mentioned that during her time in Nine Heavens, she had slain a Cloud Beast with Gold Core stage strength and obtained a thunder essence.

With her deep comprehension of the Thunder Grand Dao, she easily tamed the violent thunder power and refined the thunder essence into a Thunder Dan (Thunder Pill).

This Thunder Dan contains terrifying thunder power and has significant effects. It can be used to refine magic tools and more. Jin LiTrue Monarch herself doesn't need this Thunder Dan, and Jin Qiao'er doesn't currently require it either. She plans to exchange this Thunder Dan for some useful Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects at the Jiuqu League.

Upon hearing this, Meng Zhang's heart stirred, and he asked Jin LiTrue Monarch for the Thunder Dan. Of course, he wasn't asking for it for free; he intended to exchange it with spiritual stones or Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects.

Jin Qiao'er hasn't yet refined a natal magic tool after breaking through to the Gold Core stage. While Jin LiTrue Monarch is prepared, she still lacks some spiritual materials. Now, upon hearing Meng Zhang's request, she casually tossed the Thunder Dan to him but requested that Meng Zhang use the power of Taiyi Sect to collect the lacking spiritual materials.

Meng Zhang readily agreed and assured her that he would do his best. After receiving the list of required spiritual materials from Jin LiTrue Monarch, Meng Zhang bid farewell and returned to Hundred Grass Slope.

Once back at Hundred Grass Slope, he summoned Shocking ThunderSpirit General and handed him the Thunder Dan. As soon as Shocking ThunderSpirit General saw the Thunder Dan, his usually proud demeanor turned extremely eager. He thanked Meng Zhang profusely and, in front of him, carefully sensed the thunder power contained within the Thunder Dan. He then informed Meng Zhang that once he refined the thunder power within the Thunder Dan, he would have a chance to restore his strength to the Gold Core stage.

Without wanting to linger, Shocking ThunderSpirit General hastily left, returning to seclusion. Afterward, Meng Zhang called his senior disciple Niu Dawei and handed over the list of spiritual materials, instructing him to mobilize the entire Taiyi Sect's power and collect the materials as quickly as possible.

Even before receiving Jin LiTrue Monarch's rewards, this was the first task she entrusted to Meng Zhang. Regardless of the circumstances, Meng Zhang had to complete it neatly and satisfactorily.

Jin LiTrue Monarch chose to protect Taiyi Sect not just out of consideration for their past relationship but also because she hoped Taiyi Sect would serve her. Taiyi Sect had made significant progress over the years, becoming a force to be reckoned with among Gold Core sects. No one could ignore Taiyi Sect anymore.

After joining the Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect's connections deepened, and they gradually extended their influence within the league, establishing contact with more cultivation powers and gaining access to more channels of communication. As long as they were willing to pay the price, acquiring some Third Rank spiritual items and materials was no longer difficult for Taiyi Sect.

Although Meng Zhang believed in Taiyi Sect's current capabilities, just to be safe, he also contacted an old friend, Jue Ying. If Taiyi Sect's channels couldn't quickly obtain the required materials, he would ask her to help collect them through the Dark Alliance's channels.

After dealing with these matters, Meng Zhang could finally focus on his cultivation. Jin Qiao'er had recently formed his core and already started refining a natal magic tool. Meng Zhang had already reached the Gold Corelate stage, yet he had not begun preparing her natal magic tool.

This was because Meng Zhang had high standards and was quite picky. A cultivator's natal magic tool was intimately connected to them and required the cultivator to invest their efforts and nurture it slowly. If the natal magic tool were damaged or destroyed, the cultivator connected to it would also suffer severe consequences.

Meng Zhang had great confidence in his own cultivation and believed that the Gold Core stage was certainly not the end of his cultivation path. A natal magic tool should accompany a cultivator throughout their growth. If the material was of low quality, it might hinder his progress when his cultivation base advanced in the future.

In the inheritances that Meng Zhang obtained, there were methods for refining natal magic tools. Depending on the materials used, the power and potential of the natal magic tool varied. Meng Zhang, however, looked down on even Third Rank spiritual materials and believed that at least Fourth Rank spiritual materials were required to refine his own natal magic tool.

Fourth Rank spiritual materials were materials even Primordial Spirit True Monarchs would find useful. Taiyi Sect currently lacked the capability to snatch such materials from Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, nor did they have other means to acquire Fourth Rank spiritual materials. As a result, Meng Zhang's plans to refine his natal magic tool were delayed.

Despite having reached the Gold Corelate stage, Meng Zhang had not started refining his natal magic tool yet, making him quite exceptional among Gold Core cultivators. Seeing that Jin Qiao'er was about to start refining her natal magic tool, Meng Zhang began to reconsider his original thoughts.

There was still over a year left before he had to accompany Jin LiTrue Monarch to the Jiuqu League. Meng Zhang temporarily set aside this matter and decided to consider it later upon his return.

Not long after, Meng Zhang received another troublesome piece of news. Taiyi Sect's War Hall Hall Master, Zheng Chao, had successfully formed his core a few years ago. After obtaining Sect Master Meng Zhang's approval, he passed the position of War Hall Hall Master to a disciple at the Foundation Building stage. Now, as an elder, although Zheng Chao still supervised War Hall affairs, he no longer needed to handle the daily affairs, resulting in more free time.

This combative individual couldn't sit still in the sect. Under the pretext of traveling, he left a letter and departed Taiyi Sect, heading deep into the Demon Wind Gobi to seek battles with opponents. The situation in the depths of Demon Wind Gobi was so tense; would Zheng Chao's actions provoke new changes and conflicts between the warring factions?

Initially, Meng Zhang planned to summon Zheng Chao back to the sect as the Sect Master. However, upon second thought, Meng Zhang realized that although Zheng Chao was combative, he wasn't someone who disregarded the overall situation or acted recklessly. The situation in the depths of Demon Wind Gobi had already been conveyed to the sect's higher-ups. Zheng Chao persisted in going there, so he must have his own considerations.

Considering this, Meng Zhang chose to trust that Zheng Chao wouldn't cause trouble and let him act freely.

In reality, the situation around Taiyi Sect had been stable over the years, maintaining prolonged peace. Gold Core cultivators in the sect no longer needed to stay within the sect all the time. With enough free time, they could take turns traveling and gaining experience.

Once Taiyi Sect dedicated itself to a task, it could unleash a surprisingly powerful force that even astonished Meng Zhang. In less than half a year, without needing to trouble Jue Ying, Taiyi Sect's efforts alone collected all the various spiritual materials Jin LiTrue Monarch needed.

When Meng Zhang rushed to the Daoist temple and personally handed these spiritual materials to Jin LiTrue Monarch, she was very satisfied and praised Meng Zhang generously. Taking advantage of her good mood, Meng Zhang boldly sought advice from her and gained substantial insights.

At this time, True Monarch Azure Mist also entrusted a message via Great Wind City, bringing the latest news. All preparations for the grand ceremony were complete, and it was scheduled to take place on the fifteenth of March next year in the headquarters of the Jiuqu League, Jiuqu City. They welcomed Jin LiTrue Monarch to join the Jiuqu League.

Jin LiTrue Monarch spent the remaining time in the Deadly Sea of Sand and set off for Jiuqu City in early January of the coming year. As Jin LiTrue Monarch's protector and Taiyi Sect's Sect Master, Meng Zhang also set out with several high-ranking members of the sect.

## Chapter 596: 9 Cities

Jiuqu League is the largest river in the northern part of the Grand Dust World, with a total length of over 100,000 miles and numerous tributaries, flowing through several mortal kingdoms.

Jiuqu League, composed of various cultivation forces, firmly occupies the most vital area of the Jiuqu River and has established cities on both banks of the river.

Over a thousand years ago, the Azure Origin Sect, Jade Sword Sect, and other Primordial Spirit sects took the lead in establishing the Jiuqu League. Many cultivation forces came together and built a great city on the high and steep northern bank of the Jiuqu River, serving as the headquarters of the Jiuqu League. This is the origin of Jiuqu City.

During the city's establishment, the predecessors possessed an incredible Divine Ability, even though they lacked naming talent. In the Grand Dust World, there is no Fourth Rank spirit vein, and the Third Rank spirit vein is the highest grade available. However, even among Third Rank spirit veins, there are distinctions.

When building Jiuqu City, there was already a Third Rank spirit vein in the area. Later, with the help of skilled Geomancers and Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, they drew multiple spirit veins from nearby regions and merged them with the original Third Rank spirit vein.

With the combination of these spirit veins, Jiuqu City possesses an exceptional Third Rank spirit vein, making it one of the best in the northern part of the Grand Dust World, capable of accommodating multiple Gold Core Daoist Masters for cultivation.

In fact, Jiuqu City is home to over a hundred thousand resident cultivators, thanks to the support provided by this powerful spirit vein.

Jiuqu City, established jointly by various cultivation forces, surpasses even the conditions of the Azure Origin Sect and Jade Sword Sect, the two most potent forces in the Jiuqu League. It serves not only as the headquarters of the Jiuqu League but also as a symbol of its strength.

The city boasts a plethora of buildings and countless shops, bustling with cultivators coming and going. It truly is a prosperous place.

Although Meng Zhang had heard of the illustrious name of Jiuqu City before, it wasn't until he witnessed the magnificent city from the sky that he was profoundly awestruck.

Meng Zhang and his companions had left the Deadly Sea of Sand months ago, accompanying Jin Li True Monarch. Their first stop was Great Wind City, where they stayed for some time and had in-depth exchanges with the Lu Family and the Gu Yue Family.

While Jiuqu League appeared flourishing, internal conflicts were brewing. In recent years, changes in the surrounding situation have caused concern among many wise individuals, fearing internal and external threats.

Despite having their own supporters, the Lu Family and Gu Yue Family increasingly valued their alliance with Taiyi Sect and sought to befriend Jin Li True Monarch.

During a private conversation with Gu Yue Huaidie, Meng Zhang learned about the problems Jiuqu League had faced in recent years. The most powerful sects within the Jiuqu League, Azure Origin Sect, and Jade Sword Sect, had been increasingly at odds, leading to numerous conflicts and disputes.

Previously, the Yellow Lotus Sect played the role of mediator between the two sects, coordinating their relations and preventing major conflicts that could endanger the entire Jiuqu League. However, after the disappearance of the Yellow Lotus Sect's Cult Master several hundred years ago, the sect's internal turmoil caused its influence and power to decline significantly, making it unable to continue playing its original role.

Aside from the Yellow Lotus Sect, there was also the Four Seas Chamber of Commerce within the Jiuqu League, which had considerable strength and gained respect from Azure Origin Sect and Jade Sword Sect. However, as its leadership was composed of businessmen, they tended to be opportunistic and tried to appease both sides rather than take sides.

The other forces within the Jiuqu League kept their distance from the internal struggles of the high-ranking members unless the matter directly concerned them.

Due to the deepening conflicts between the two giants, Azure Origin Sect and Jade Sword Sect, many other forces within the Jiuqu League had started taking sides. Additionally, some scheming individuals within the League were instigating further discord, leading to growing unrest.

While internal issues could be temporarily managed due to the restraint of the high-ranking members of Azure Origin Sect and Jade Sword Sect, the real headache for the Jiuqu League was external problems.

On the northern edge of the Middle-Earth Continent, the Dali Dynasty was rapidly rising to power.

In the Cultivation World, the existence of cultivation forces primarily revolved around clans, sects, or alliances. Cultivation-based nations were not common, but the Dali Dynasty was indeed an exception.

Starting as an ordinary mortal dynasty, the Dali Dynasty gradually expanded its influence. After overthrowing the sects that controlled the mortal dynasty, they directly waged war against the surrounding cultivation forces.

According to some Primordial Spirit True Monarchs' assessments, the emperor of the Dali Dynasty cultivated a rare Grand Dao, possibly the Emperor Grand Dao, the Domination Grand Dao, or the Tyrant Grand Dao.

This emperor was invincible and had defeated numerous Primordial Spirit True Monarchs and slain countless powerful individuals. His generals were formidable cultivators, and their armies were led by various Dao soldiers.

The Dali Dynasty's military campaigns conquered many sects and caused immense pressure on nearby cultivation factions, although some Holy Land Sects in the Middle-Earth Continent might view these rumors as jokes.

However, the surrounding cultivation sects felt the tremendous pressure emanating from the Dali Dynasty.

The ruler of the Dali Dynasty seems to have some self-awareness and refrains from expanding directly towards the center of the Middle-Earth Continent. Instead, they are expanding northwards, away from the Middle-Earth Continent, by first occupying these peripheral areas.

In just over a thousand years since its establishment, the Dali Dynasty has become a formidable and terrifying force. Any cultivation faction that stands in its way is either forced to submit willingly or completely annihilated.

Within the territory of the Dali Dynasty, there are special rules for the Cultivation World. The Dali Dynasty is the supreme ruler of the Cultivation World. All cultivation forces must be subservient to the Dali Dynasty, pledge loyalty, and obey the government's orders. Only such cultivation forces recognized by the Dali Dynasty can survive within its territory.

Any cultivation faction that dares to defy the Dali Dynasty is considered a demonic faction, and all its members are to be exterminated.

The Crossing Severing Mountain Range used to separate the Dali Dynasty and the Jiuqu League. This mountain range, along with the Grand Crossing Mountain Range to the west, are the two giant mountain ranges in the northern part of the Grand Dust World. Many cultivation forces surround the Crossing Severing Mountain Range, and the most powerful three sects have formed a loose alliance known as the Three Sects Alliance. The relationship between the Three Sects Alliance and the Jiuqu League has always been good, and they are very active in various affairs of the Cultivation World.

The Dali Dynasty continues its expansion to the north, and the Crossing Severing Mountain Range blocks its path, making the Three Sects Alliance its next target.

The Three Sects Alliance is formidable, with each sect having a Primordial Spirit True Monarch in their ranks, and they are unwilling to submit to the Dali Dynasty. The conflict between the Three Sects Alliance and the Dali Dynasty began around a hundred years ago. Facing a strong enemy, the Three Sects Alliance needed to concentrate all its strength, so they recalled their cultivator troops sent to fight against the Barbarian Clan in the Yuantu Great Prairie, leaving the Jiuqu League and the local cultivation forces to confront the Barbarian Clan.

However, even with their full efforts and deployment of all their resources, the Three Sects Alliance couldn't resist the onslaught of the Dali Dynasty. After suffering defeats in several critical battles, they lost their initiative on the battlefield and were forced into a defensive retreat.

The leadership of the Three Sects Alliance knew that their complete defeat was only a matter of time unless external help intervened. So, they sent envoys to the Jiuqu League.

Their intention was two-fold: first, they hoped the Jiuqu League would lend them a helping hand based on their long-standing friendship. Second, they wanted to present the dire situation and instill a sense of urgency in the Jiuqu League's high-ranking members to take proactive actions against the Dali Dynasty.

Upon receiving the envoys from the Three Sects Alliance, there were two completely different opinions within the Jiuqu League.

One faction believed that the Dali Dynasty would inevitably target the Jiuqu League after dealing with the Three Sects Alliance. Led by the Jade Sword Sect, an sect of Sword Cultivators with a bold and aggressive spirit, they advocated launching a preemptive attack on the Dali Dynasty before it could strike at the Jiuqu League.



The other faction thought that, so far, the Dali Dynasty had not shown any hostility towards the Jiuqu League. It would be foolish to provoke such a formidable force based on unreliable speculation. Even if the Dali Dynasty intended to expand northwards, it might face many problems and need time to recuperate and consolidate its internal strength after defeating the Three Sects Alliance. The Jiuqu League had ample time to devise a plan and was not necessarily required to engage in war with the Dali Dynasty at present.

Furthermore, with the withdrawal of the Three Sects Alliance's cultivator troops, the Jiuqu League still had to face the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan as a formidable enemy in the Yuantu Great Prairie.

The Jiuqu League should prioritize resolving the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan on the Yuantu Great Prairie if they truly intend to go to war with the Dali Dynasty, trying to avoid fighting on two fronts. "Rangwai bi xian anni" means "to pacify the external, one must first secure the internal." For the Jiuqu League, the imminent threat lies in the nearby Yuantu Great Prairie.

Supporting the latter opinion is the powerful Azure Origin Sect, one of the two leading factions within the Jiuqu League, the other being the Jade Sword Sect. The current disagreement between them is a reflection of their long-standing rivalry and a clash of ideologies.

True Monarch Jin Li was invited to join the Jiuqu League by True Monarch Azure Mist, marking her as associated with the Azure Origin Sect. Taiyi Sect, as Jin Li True Monarch's protected sect, will inevitably be drawn into the internal conflicts of the Jiuqu League.

Many discerning individuals within the Jiuqu League have a sense that significant changes are imminent.

The powerful and influential Great Wind City chose to ally with Jin Li True Monarch, which is a prudent move to strengthen their own position regardless of any changes in the Jiuqu League.

Despite Azure Origin Sect's opposition to starting a war with the Dali Dynasty at present, they are also actively working to enhance their strength. True Monarch Azure Mist's enthusiastic invitation for Jin Li True Monarch to join the Jiuqu League is related to this. Within the entire Jiuqu League, there are no more than twenty Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. An additional one holds significant importance.

Gu Yue Huaidie wanted to inform Meng Zhang of these inside information so that he would be more aware of the situation once he arrived at the Jiuqu League's headquarters, Jiuqu City.

Although the situation within the Jiuqu League is complex, it's inevitable for Meng Zhang to learn about these internal affairs once he spends some time in Jiuqu City.

Gu Yue Huaidie's early disclosure was both a gesture of goodwill and a warning for Meng Zhang to stay alert. In the eyes of outsiders, Taiyi Sect and Great Wind City seem to be allied, so if Meng Zhang gets involved in any conflicts or violates any taboos due to ignorance, it may also bring trouble to Great Wind City.

Meng Zhang did not expect the situation within the Jiuqu League to be so complicated, and he wonders if joining the Jiuqu League with Jin Li True Monarch would ultimately bring good fortune or misfortune.

Accompanying Jin Li True Monarch, Meng Zhang and the other members of Taiyi Sect stayed in Great Wind City for a considerable amount of time. Jin Qiao'er, who was traveling with them this time, cherished the opportunity to visit such a bustling place as Great Wind City.

Years ago, when Jin Qiao'er was just a Refining Qi cultivator, she had an unpleasant experience in Great Wind City. Now, as a Gold Core cultivator, not to mention her master Jin Li True Monarch, her identity alone prevents her from acting recklessly and drawing unnecessary trouble.

Lu Family and Gu Yue Family attach great importance to participating in the grand ceremony at Jiuqu City. Each of them provided a large Cloud Boat for travel, which is a rare and hard-to-find transportation method on the market. Within the Jiuqu League, there are not many sects capable of crafting such a massive Cloud Boat due to the scarcity of materials and the lengthy refining process, often taking hundreds of years to complete.

Compared to the two giant Cloud Boats provided by the families, Taiyi Sect's Third Rank flying boat is of lower quality. Taiyi Sect's boat trails behind the two large Cloud Boats like a small attendant.

After leaving Great Wind City, instead of rushing to Jiuqu City, the group took their time, enjoying the scenery along the way, consuming a considerable amount of time. Jin Li True Monarch and Meng Zhang, aware of the current situation in the Jiuqu League, did not want to arrive in Jiuqu City too early, afraid of being entangled in internal conflicts.

Although Jin Li True Monarch was invited to join the Jiuqu League by True Monarch Azure Mist, she may not necessarily tie herself to the Azure Origin Sect entirely.

## Chapter 597: Enters the city

With Jin Li True Monarch's strength, many forces want to win her over. She could easily capitalize on this and strive for the greatest benefit. Though doing so might be a bit unscrupulous and even betray the True Monarch Azure Mist, who once helped her out of a predicament, such behavior is the norm in the Cultivation World.

No matter how high one's Cultivation Base is, to survive for long, they must learn to weigh the pros and cons and adapt to changing circumstances. Of course, no matter how long the road, there will be an end to it. Even if one intentionally delays, by early March, everyone still arrives at Jiuqu City.

Standing at the bow of the flying boat, looking at the forward Jiuqu City, the members of Taiyi Sect, who are here for the first time, are all shocked. Some of the lower-level disciples are even stunned. Jiuqu City appears like an endless mountain, towering on the northern bank of Jiuqu River.

The entire city rises and falls, with its highest point exceeding a thousand zhang. In the sky above the city, flying boats are almost constantly taking off or descending from high altitudes. Great Wind City, a bustling commercial city, is already prosperous enough. However, compared to Jiuqu City, it seems like a small rural town.

As they approach Jiuqu City, all flying boats must slow down and proceed carefully according to regulations. The Taiyi Sect's flying boat, following behind the Lu Family and Gu Yue Family Cloud Boat, approaches Jiuqu City slowly. The cultivators on the flying boat have enough time to admire the magnificent scenery surrounding Jiuqu City.

In the nearby sky of Jiuqu City, teams of patrol flying boats occasionally pass by, carefully inspecting the incoming and outgoing boats. Within Jiuqu City, there is a Primordial Spirit True Monarch who usually resides, and the city is also concentrated with the elite cultivators of the entire Jiuqu League.

For many years, there have been very few cultivators daring to cause trouble in the vicinity of Jiuqu City. These patrol cultivators mainly maintain order and security, and they don't intentionally trouble the normal incoming and outgoing flying boats.

Great Wind City is a well-known commercial city within the entire Jiuqu League, and the Lu Family and Gu Yue Family that hold power in Great Wind City are even more renowned. After all, there are only a limited number of Primordial Spirit True Monarchs in the Jiuqu League, and the Gold Core families and sects are the backbone of the league.

The patrol cultivators around recognize the banners of Great Wind City's Lu Family and Gu Yue Family, and they signal from afar without coming to inspect.

Such treatment is entirely normal for these long-established cultivation families.

The two Cloud Boats of Great Wind City, with Taiyi Sect's flying boats, slowly fly into Jiuqu City and land in a mansion within the city. This mansion serves as Great Wind City's residence in Jiuqu City, where official cultivators of Great Wind City usually stay when they come to Jiuqu City.

The mansion is vast, and from the sky, it looks like an enormous square. For Jin Li True Monarch, Great Wind City spares no effort to receive her hospitably, making her feel the warmth and thoughtfulness of Great Wind City.

The members of Taiyi Sect also receive a warm welcome, and cultivators from Gu Yue Family are specifically responsible for their reception. Meng Zhang and others are here for the first time in Jiuqu City, with no other place to go, so they naturally accept Gu Yue Family's kindness and hospitality.

After everyone settled down, Great Wind City arranged various activities. They planned to invite some guests and hold gatherings to take the opportunity to present Jin Li True Monarch to the outsiders and showcase the friendship with another Primordial Spirit True Monarch.

However, True Monarch Azure Mist had instructed his subordinates to keep a close eye on the movements at the residence in Great Wind City. Shortly after Jin Li True Monarch's arrival, he received the news. Although True Monarch Azure Mist didn't personally extend the invitation, he dispatched trusted disciples to invite Jin Li True Monarch to Azure Origin Sect's residence for a gathering.

Regardless of Jin Li True Monarch's intentions, she wouldn't refuse True Monarch Azure Mist's invitation. She readily accepted and bid farewell to the people from Great Wind City, then accompanied the envoys to Azure Origin Sect's residence.

As for the members of Taiyi Sect, True Monarch Azure Mist didn't pay much attention to them. In his eyes, Taiyi Sect was probably just an accessory to Jin Li True Monarch and lacked independence. Being underestimated by True Monarch Azure Mist wasn't necessarily a bad thing, as it meant the Taiyi Sect members had the freedom to act as they pleased.

Taiyi Sect brought a considerable number of cultivators with Sect Master Meng Zhang on their journey to Jiuqu City. The situation in Demon Wind Gobi had been peaceful for a long time, and the surrounding circumstances weren't as tense as before. With the high-ranking cultivators temporarily leaving the sect, it didn't have a significant impact.

In addition to bringing the esteemed Gold Core Daoist Master, Yang Xueyi, Meng Zhang also brought a group of low-level cultivators. Before setting off, Taiyi Sect had spent a considerable sum to purchase a Third Rank flying boat from Clever Machine Sect. Besides carrying the group, the flying boat was also loaded with many spirit materials.

This trip to attend Jin Li True Monarch's grand ceremony was not just for sightseeing; there were also important matters to attend to. With Jiuqu City being so bustling and with a rare opportunity to visit, it was inevitable to conduct some business.

Meng Zhang didn't expect Taiyi Sect, an outsider, to make a big impact in Jiuqu City. His plan was to secure a storefront to serve as a base for Taiyi Sect, which would be satisfactory.

The members of Taiyi Sect were well-received and arranged in a separate courtyard by Gu Yue Family. Additionally, Gu Yue Huaidie assigned some of the tribe members familiar with Jiuqu City to act as their guides.

Over a year ago, Azure Origin Sect had actively spread news of the upcoming grand ceremony and invited various influential forces to attend. To be qualified to participate in the Primordial Spirit True Monarch's grand ceremony, cultivators had to be either prominent figures within their factions or loose cultivators with formidable cultivation bases. These cultivators often lived scattered across different regions, and it wasn't always possible for them to gather together.

Jiuqu City was already a bustling metropolis, and this event brought together numerous visiting cultivators, including many high-ranking ones. The various Shang Families from Great Wind City seized this rare opportunity to conduct numerous commercial activities. Especially the Four Seas Chamber of Commerce, a top-notch business guild within the Jiuqu League, prepared many events, including high-level auctions.

Under the guidance of certain individuals, countless private trading events were held among the cultivators from different regions.

As a secluded sect in Demon Wind Gobi, Taiyi Sect would naturally not miss this opportunity. Before sending a message to Jin Li True Monarch in Great Wind City regarding the details of the

grand ceremony, Gu Yue Huaidie had also warned Meng Zhang about the upcoming trading extravaganza.

Meng Zhang had prepared a large number of spirit stones in advance for shopping in Great Wind City. On the flying boat, they had also loaded plenty of spirit materials, including some unique ones from Demon Wind Gobi and Endless Sea of Sand, to participate in the barter-based trading events.

Shortly after settling down, Meng Zhang and the other cultivators from Taiyi Sect left the mansion in Great Wind City and began strolling around Jiuqu City.

#### Chapter 598: Saintesses

The people of Taiyi Sect were unfamiliar with Jiuqu City, so they did not refuse the kind offer from Gu Yue Family and readily used the provided guides. The guides sent by Gu Yue Family were very qualified, not prying into the personal matters of the Taiyi Sect cultivators, nor being gossipy. They simply focused on doing their job and dutifully led the way. Whenever the Taiyi Sect cultivators inquired about something, they always provided satisfactory answers.

The grand ceremony was still more than ten days away, so the Taiyi Sect cultivators had plenty of time to explore the city. They participated in numerous trading events and hardly missed any of the high-profile auctions hosted by the Four Seas Commercial Firm.

Taiyi Sect was now a member of the Jiuqu League, and the cultivators were often accompanied by their peers from Great Wind City. Not to mention that Jin Li, the True Monarch, was also taking care of them. In the Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect was receiving decent treatment.

Many places that were not open to the public opened their doors to the Taiyi Sect cultivators. They began to gain access to various new trading channels and made significant gains in each transaction.

Meng Zhang even managed to spend a lot of effort at one of the Four Seas Commercial Firm auctions and successfully acquired a precious spiritual item called "Gold Core Jade." This item could help the Extreme Sword Spirit General recover its Cultivation Base, and Taiyi Sect had previously searched for it tirelessly but in vain. Jiuqu City indeed was a place abundant with valuable resources.

During the auction, there were no dramatic incidents. Meng Zhang simply took out a large amount of spiritual stones and effortlessly forced several competitors to retreat. Gold Core Jade was relatively obscure, and though it had a high grade, its applications were limited. Only a few specialized uses were known in the Cultivation World.

With the introduction from Gu Yue Huaidie, Meng Zhang and other Taiyi Sect cultivators also made significant gains in some private trading events. Being a Gold Core Daoist Master and a lord of a sect, Meng Zhang had some status and was well received in these gatherings.

Meanwhile, Jin Li, the True Monarch, went alone to meet True Monarch Azure Mist as arranged. Jin Qiao'er followed Meng Zhang and also enjoyed her time exploring Jiuqu City. Apart from attending various trading events, she seized the opportunity to have some fun.

Qiaoshou Sect obtained the place called Dustfall Mound as its new base. In recent years, following closely behind Taiyi Sect, Qiaoshou Sect had gained many benefits, and their income had significantly increased. Supporting a Gold Core Daoist Master was not easy, but they managed to do it, even if it required some effort.

Jin Qiao'er was well aware of the situation within her sect, so she did not take advantage of it excessively. She only accepted a small portion of the sect's offerings, primarily relying on her own ventures outside and the rewards bestowed by Jin Li, the True Monarch.

Jin Li, the True Monarch, was very fond of her only disciple and was especially generous to Jin Qiao'er after she formed her core. She had become Jin Li's true successor.

Jin Li, the True Monarch, was quite generous with Jin Qiao'er and readily invested resources in her. Jin Qiao'er lived a comfortable life, not only meeting her own cultivation needs but also having the ability to take care of the younger generation in Qiaoshou Sect.

This rare visit to Jiuqu City allowed Jin Qiao'er to let loose and indulge in shopping, buying all the way without restraint.

While Meng Zhang and the others were busy participating in trading, Jin Li, the True Monarch, was taken to the residence of the Azure Origin Sect and had a lengthy conversation with True Monarch Azure Mist. During their last encounter in the Endless Sea of Sand, when True Monarch Azure Mist mediated the grievances among three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, Jin Li, the True Monarch, expressed her willingness to join the Jiuqu League. With True Monarch Azure Mist's identity, he accepted Jin Li, the True Monarch, into the league, making her a member of the Jiuqu League.

However, many details had not been thoroughly discussed by both parties. Even within the Jiuqu League, there were factions, and the same applied to the Azure Origin Sect.

Since True Monarch Azure Mist actively recruited Jin Li, the True Monarch, he naturally hoped she would become a member of his faction. Now that Jin Li, the True Monarch, had arrived at the Jiuqu

League, her joining should be straightforward. True Monarch Azure Mist could now freely discuss and consult with her on various details.

It was unclear whether it was due to the urgent need for enhanced top-tier combat power within the Jiuqu League or if True Monarch Azure Mist wanted to strengthen his own faction. He was eager to win over Jin Li, the True Monarch, almost without any disguise.

Originally, Jin Li, the True Monarch, had some intentions of bargaining, but since no other forces approached her, and True Monarch Azure Mist was so sincere, her inclination naturally leaned toward him. True Monarch Azure Mist was well aware of the mindset of loose cultivators, or one could say it was a common trait among the majority of cultivators in the Cultivation World. He generously offered generous conditions to win over Jin Li, the True Monarch.

Although Jin Li, the True Monarch, was already very tempted, she did not immediately accept but rather tactfully postponed her response. True Monarch Azure Mist, though eager, maintained the demeanor of a cultivator from a major sect and did not press Jin Li, the True Monarch, to decide immediately.

The atmosphere between the two was harmonious, and their conversation was very pleasant. True Monarch Azure Mist did not continue to dwell on the previous topic but instead shared the details of the grand ceremony and provided instructions on various matters.

After leaving the residence of the Azure Origin Sect, Jin Li, the True Monarch, spent the next few days enjoying herself in Jiuqu City. During this time, she imagined that various forces would be trying to win her over, but that scene did not appear. Especially Jade Sword Sect, which had been in conflict with the Azure Origin Sect recently, completely ignored Jin Li, the True Monarch, without even a courteous greeting.

As a newly joined Primordial Spirit True Monarch within the alliance, and with Jade Sword Sect being one of the two giants of the Jiuqu League, they should have sent someone to greet her out of courtesy. But Jade Sword Sect adopted an indifferent attitude, which surprised Jin Li, the True Monarch.

After several days of consideration and careful consideration, during which Jin Li, the True Monarch, also discussed with Meng Zhang and listened to the opinions of the Taiyi Sect members, she finally accepted the invitation from True Monarch Azure Mist before the grand ceremony. She became a member of the faction where True Monarch Azure Mist belonged.



True Monarch Azure Mist needed a Primordial Spirit combatant like Jin Li, the True Monarch, and Jin Li, the True Monarch, who had no backing, also required a strong support. With the favorable conditions offered by True Monarch Azure Mist, they naturally reached an agreement.

Both parties achieved what they wanted, and it was a win-win situation.

During this time, besides attending various trading events, Meng Zhang also received an unexpected invitation. It came from the Saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect, who conveyed her desire to meet Taiyi Sect's Sect Master, Meng Zhang, in private through Gu Yue Family's people. Since Gu Yue Family vouched for them, and this was Jiuqu City, Meng Zhang readily accepted the invitation and agreed to the meeting.

#### Chapter 599: Meeting

There was a great battle between Taiyi Sect and the East River Branch of the Yellow Lotus Sect, and the True Monarch Mountain Peak of the Mountain Branch of Yellow Lotus Sect nearly wiped out Taiyi Sect. Taiyi Sect spared no effort in gathering various information about the Yellow Lotus Sect. Especially after Taiyi Sect and Great Wind City formed a close alliance, the Jiuqu League's leader in Great Wind City provided significant assistance to Taiyi Sect.

As the Sect Master of Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang paid close attention to all kinds of intelligence about the Yellow Lotus Sect and was familiar with it. The Yellow Lotus Sect was originally one of the top Primordial Spirit sects in the Jiuqu League, and its strength ranked among the top three, just behind the Azure Origin Sect, which could surpass it, and the Four Seas Chamber of Commerce, which could be seen as on par with Yellow Lotus Sect.

However, despite being powerful, the Yellow Lotus Sect underwent a significant upheaval about seven hundred years ago. The Cult Master, one of the strongest in the Jiuqu League, mysteriously disappeared. After his disappearance, the leaderless Yellow Lotus Sect was influenced by external forces, and ambitious individuals within the sect began to break away and assert their own authority.

Soon, although the Yellow Lotus Sect maintained its nominal unity, it was, in fact, divided. The Main Altar and various sub-altars were in constant conflict. The Main Altar could no longer command the sub-altars, and the sub-altars were only interested in undermining the Main Altar and gaining power from it. Internally, the sub-altars were also at odds with each other, unable to coexist peacefully and verging on open confrontation.

Initially, the Main Altar still had a Primordial Spirit True Monarch in command, who could have suppressed any dissent forcefully. However, this Primordial Spirit True Monarch suffered a severe injury during an expedition and had to hide within the Main Altar for healing. By the time he

recovered, the division within the Yellow Lotus Sect had become irreparable. Even if he wanted to use his cultivation base to take control forcibly, the opposing forces that didn't want to see the Yellow Lotus Sect unified again would not sit idly.

Under such circumstances, the Main Altar of the Yellow Lotus Sect had to accept the status quo. Over the next few hundred years, the Main Altar made attempts to consolidate the entire sect's power, but each move was obstructed by various internal and external forces, leading to futile outcomes.

While the sub-altars' unrest did not shake the Main Altar's position significantly, the situation changed after the True Monarch Mountain Peak of the Mountain Branch achieved the level of Primordial Spirit. True Monarch Mountain Peak was young, talented, and had a profound cultivation base, making him highly respected within the Yellow Lotus Sect.

He first took control of the Mountain Branch and then the East River Branch, expanding his influence significantly, becoming a significant threat to the Main Altar. Moreover, True Monarch Mountain Peak was not content with the current situation; he wanted to go even further.

His ambitions were evident, as he aimed to make the Main Altar and all sub-altars submit to him and reunify the entire Yellow Lotus Sect. In the eyes of the Main Altar of the Yellow Lotus Sect, True Monarch Mountain Peak had become the most dangerous enemy.

Meng Zhang, upon learning this information, had considered the possibility of contacting the Yellow Lotus Sect Main Altar to join forces and confront True Monarch Mountain Peak. However, after consulting with the senior members of his sect, Meng Zhang abandoned the idea. One reason was that the current situation between the two sides was relatively stable, and if he took such action, it might be seen as provoking True Monarch Mountain Peak. Taiyi Sect didn't have much power to resist True Monarch Mountain Peak directly; they relied heavily on the protection of Jin Li True Monarch. Causing unnecessary trouble for Jin Li True Monarch might not be well-received.

The second reason was that Meng Zhang didn't trust the Yellow Lotus Sect Main Altar enough. Despite the internal discord within the Yellow Lotus Sect, they were still a family with a common origin. If there were any collusions or traps set by them against Taiyi Sect, the consequences could be disastrous.

Now, in Jiuqu City, the saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect Main Altar actively sought a meeting with Meng Zhang. Gu Yue Huaidie, acting as an intermediary, revealed the truth to Meng Zhang. Gu Yue Huaidie had a certain level of connection with the saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect due to past interactions. True Monarch Mountain Peak's monopoly over the resources in the Endless Sea of Sand significantly affected Great Wind City's interests, and naturally, they sought ways to

counteract it. Although Great Wind City wouldn't openly oppose True Monarch Mountain Peak, they made covert efforts to promote contact and cooperation.

The Gu Yue Family had already established contact with the Yellow Lotus Sect Main Altar and reached some understanding with the key figures, building mutual trust. This meeting between Meng Zhang and the Yellow Lotus Sect saintess was significantly facilitated by the Gu Yue Family. Both sides could meet in Jiuqu City with assurance and ensure everyone's safety. Both Great Wind City and the Gu Yue Family were trustworthy in their opposition to True Monarch Mountain Peak.

On the appointed day, Meng Zhang discreetly arrived at the meeting place alone. The location was carefully arranged by the Gu Yue Family - a small, exquisite courtyard at the end of a secluded alley. From the other end of the alley and after a few circles, one would reach the headquarters of the Jiuqu League. The courtyard was not too far from the Jiuqu League's headquarters, and the surrounding areas were highly monitored by the Jiuqu League's cultivators.

Meeting at this location would quickly attract the attention of patrolling cultivators if any major disturbances occurred. Meng Zhang arrived half an hour early and expected to wait for a while. Unexpectedly, as soon as he entered the courtyard, he found a graceful and charming female cultivator already standing there silently. Her face was veiled, covering almost the entire face, with only a pair of spirited eyes visible. Cascading green hair fell straight behind her, adding a touch of ethereal aura to her appearance.

The Gu Yue Family arranged the meeting between Meng Zhang and the Yellow Lotus Sect saintess, and their own cultivators would not be present. This was a cautious approach, bordering on being timid and fearful. There was no need for formal introductions; as soon as the two saw each other, they recognized their identities. Meng Zhang, as the Taiyi Sect Master, had a widely known reputation, and his appearance and features were well-known. The Yellow Lotus Sect saintess had a unique temperament that could not be imitated by others. Though Meng Zhang had never seen her before, based on Gu Yue Huaidie's description, he immediately confirmed her identity. Both of them trusted the capabilities of the Gu Yue Family and believed that there would be no mistakes in the arranged meeting. The fact that they were here meant that both parties had agreed to meet.

#### Chapter 600: Conversation

After meeting, Meng Zhang took the initiative to greet each other on equal terms.

"Greetings, Saintess."

Before coming here, Gu Yue Huaidie had introduced Meng Zhang to the Saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect. The Yellow Lotus Sect has always had a Saintess position, and the most outstanding female disciples in the sect serve in this role. The Saintess holds a high and influential position

within the Yellow Lotus Sect, with special heritage and status. Apart from the Yellow Lotus Sect Cult Master, she hardly needs to obey anyone else's orders.

Throughout history, the Yellow Lotus Sect's Saintesses have been mysterious, acting covertly, and rarely appearing in the outside world. Gu Yue Huaidie and the current Saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect had developed a relationship due to a fortuitous encounter in the past.

According to Gu Yue Huaidie, this generation's Saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect possesses profound cultivation, remarkable skills, keen insight into people, and an unconventional style of action, often doing the unexpected.

Upon seeing the Saintess for the first time, Meng Zhang instinctively used his "Deception Breaking Eye" technique, hoping to see through the veil and reveal her true appearance. However, that veil seemed to be made of some extraordinary treasure, preventing even the "Deception Breaking Eye" from seeing through it. As for using Divine Sense to probe, it would be too obvious and impolite.

As a Gold Core stage cultivator, Meng Zhang was considered a rare expert among Gold Core cultivators due to his keen vision and broad experience. Nevertheless, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't discern the woman's cultivation base.

Meng Zhang could only be certain that she was not at the Primordial Spirit stage but most likely a Gold Core cultivator. Gu Yue Family possessed powerful intelligence and knew many undisclosed secrets within the Cultivation World.

Rumors had it that the Yellow Lotus Sect's Saintess carried a treasured heirloom of the sect, an item with the power to escape even when facing a Primordial Spirit True Monarch. With her profound and mysterious cultivation base and the possession of this treasure, Meng Zhang couldn't help but hold her in high regard.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have taken the initiative to greet her, as there was no tradition of respecting women in the Cultivation World.

"Sect Master Meng is too polite; it should be this young woman who pays respects to Sect Master Meng." The Saintess returned a greeting to Meng Zhang.

After speaking, the Saintess looked at Meng Zhang without uttering another word, sinking into silence. It was unclear whether she was not good at conversation or simply disdained formalities and small talk. Meng Zhang, too, remained silent, speculating inwardly.

Although he knew that he could hardly probe into her thoughts, Meng Zhang couldn't resist the temptation and instinctively activated his innate Divine Ability, "Mind Reading," attempting to sense her intentions. However, not long after Meng Zhang took action, the Saintess looked at him meaningfully, causing him to feel a bit uneasy.

At this moment, the Saintess spoke again.

"In the Cultivation World, there are many secret arts capable of peering into people's hearts. However, Sect Master Meng's Divine Ability is quite rare. If I am not mistaken, it must be the legendary Mind Reading," she said.

Meng Zhang had obtained this innate Divine Ability from the Trial Ground 100-200 years ago when he was still a mere Refining Qi stage cultivator.

Over the years, he has used this Divine Ability countless times. Although he can't claim that it has always been successful, he has never been exposed before now.

Being seen through by the other party face-to-face, Meng Zhang felt a bit embarrassed but also amazed by the other's abilities. After the Saintess made her point, she didn't say much more.

Meng Zhang originally wanted to explain a few words, but in the end, he gave up, lest he make a fool of himself.

"Many uninformed people may see Sect Master Meng and Taiyi Sect as followers of Jin Li True Monarch, underestimating Sect Master Meng."

"I have carefully studied Sect Master Meng's experiences and read about many of his deeds. Sect Master Meng is an extraordinary figure and will not always be subordinate to others."

"I can make a bold guess that whoever finally surpasses True Monarch Mountain Peak may not necessarily be Jin Li True Monarch but more likely Sect Master Meng."

The Saintess fell silent for a while, and for some reason, she praised Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang didn't know if the other person truly believed in him or was deliberately flattering him. Even if he had confidence in himself, he wouldn't dare claim that he could surpass a Primordial Spirit True Monarch at this moment.

Meng Zhang was about to be modest, but he didn't know how to begin. The Saintess continued speaking.

"Neither of us is fond of hypocrisy and formalities, so let's get straight to the point."

"In recent years, my position within the Yellow Lotus Sect has worsened, and I've lost control over many things."

"My master, who is advanced in age, has not been in good condition since suffering serious injuries years ago. Although he recovered from the injuries later, his state has never been good."

"Although my master hasn't explicitly said it, many within the sect know that he doesn't have much time left."

"Losing my master, the only Primordial Spirit True Monarch, would put Main Altar at an absolute disadvantage when facing True Monarch Mountain Peak."

"Though I still hold some cards passed down by senior members of the sect, at best, they can barely ensure my own safety. I'm powerless to continue the fight against him."

"Once True Monarch Mountain Peak consolidates all the sub-altars, the next target will be Main Altar."

"Many within Main Altar have seen this situation clearly. They believe the best option is to stop resisting and let True Monarch Mountain Peak take control of Main Altar."

"Even some propose that I marry into True Monarch Mountain Peak, eliminating any internal conflicts within the Yellow Lotus Sect and returning to unity."

The Saintess calmly described the situation within the Yellow Lotus Sect and her predicament, even mentioning the possibility of her marriage without any change in her tone.

"The outcome of True Monarch Mountain Peak becoming the new Cult Master of the Yellow Lotus Sect and the sect being reunified may seem happy, but I am unwilling to accept it."

"As long as I am alive, Yue Feng can never take control of Main Altar, and he will never become the Cult Master of the Yellow Lotus Sect."

At this point, the Saintess's tone finally changed, becoming resolute and forceful, to the extent that she no longer even referred to Yue Feng as "True Monarch."

From the simple words of the Saintess, Meng Zhang sensed her firm determination to resist True Monarch Mountain Peak.

He didn't care about any grudges between them or why the Saintess held such hostility towards True Monarch Mountain Peak. All he needed to know was whether the Saintess could be of help when facing True Monarch Mountain Peak.

Of course, Meng Zhang wouldn't easily trust this Saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect. Under precautionary measures, he didn't mind cooperating with her. Since the Saintess seemed sincere, Meng Zhang wouldn't miss this opportunity.

Meng Zhang already knew that Taiyi Sect and True Monarch Mountain Peak could never become friends. Sooner or later, they would clash again.

Whether it was the enmity of disciples dying in battle or conflicts of interest, Meng Zhang would not let True Monarch Mountain Peak go.