

## Sect Master 681

### Chapter 681: Bends down to kill

After being enveloped by the golden giant net, the Third Rank flying boat, called Third Rank, lost its mobility as if struck by lightning. The cultivators on the flying boat, including seven Gold Core Daoist Masters on the deck and a group of Foundation Building cultivators waiting in the cabin, also suffered greatly.

Various strange forces continuously impacted their bodies, constantly reducing their combat effectiveness. Several days ago, Wen Qiansun and Deep Earth Spirit General worked together, using many materials brought from Taiyi Sect to set up a Third Rank great formation here, perfectly concealing it. Although there was no Third Rank spirit vein on the ground to utilize, they managed to ensure the great formation could exert most of its power by directly consuming a large number of spirit stones.

On the sides of the valley, the Gold Core Daoist Masters who had concealed their presence with the power of the great formation began to reveal themselves one by one. Extreme Sword Spirit General, Delicate Water Spirit General, Deep Earth Spirit General, Shocking Thunder Spirit General, Yang Xueyi, Niu Dawei, Zheng Chao, Wen Qiansun, Hu Jing, and others appeared before the crowd.

Seeing so many Gold Core Daoist Masters appear, not only Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others trapped within the great formation changed their expressions drastically, but even Xu Mengying, who was supposed to be an ally, was also greatly shocked. She could never have imagined that Meng Zhang had laid such a powerful ambush here. Even she, Xu Mengying, was kept in the dark; he hadn't revealed his full strength beforehand, clearly plotting for a long time. His claim that he only intended to use the great formation to trap Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others was undoubtedly a lie.

Setting up such a large formation, he was prepared to wipe out all the enemies present. Although Xu Mengying and Daoist Master Mountain Garden were enemies, they both came from Yellow Lotus Sect. Xu Mengying's true enmity was with True Monarch Mountain Peak and a few of its subordinates, not truly wishing to put so many fellow sect members to death.

As the Holy Maiden of Yellow Lotus Sect, most of the time, Xu Mengying prioritized the interests of the sect. If Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others were all lost here, it would be a blow to True Monarch Mountain Peak and a significant loss for Yellow Lotus Sect. Even though Yellow Lotus Sect was large and influential, losing so many Gold Core Daoist Masters at once would still be a substantial setback.

Xu Mengying hesitated a bit; she was not very willing to take action. Seeing that the Taiyi Sect members had already used the power of the great formation to launch a fierce attack on the enemies trapped within, and Meng Zhang, holding the Spiritsnake Spear, was showing a blatant killing intent with faint Divine Sense lingering around him, Xu Mengying knew that Meng Zhang was guarding against her. By trapping Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others within the great formation, Meng Zhang had already fulfilled the requirements of their ghost oath.

If Xu Mengying dared to retreat at this critical moment, Meng Zhang would have a reason to kill her. After all, the ghost oath between the two of them demanded mutual cooperation and forbade fleeing from the battle. Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others were doomed from the moment they fell into the trap set by Meng Zhang. Xu Mengying had no intention of sacrificing herself for these people. With a helpless sigh, she reluctantly began to attack Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others, who were trapped by the great formation.

Though Xu Mengying's attacks lacked power and were feeble, as long as she showed her determination, Meng Zhang would be satisfied. He stopped watching and joined the battle with his Spiritsnake Spear in hand.

On Daoist Master Mountain Garden's side, there were seven Gold Core Daoist Masters, a team of Foundation Building cultivators, each with their unique strengths, and a Third Rank flying boat. In a fair fight or direct confrontation, even if they couldn't withstand the Taiyi Sect's forces, they could at least fight and retreat, preserving most of their strength. However, in a battle between two forces, nobody would be foolish enough to give the other side a chance; instead, they would aim to weaken the opponent and strengthen themselves.

The impromptu Third Rank great formation not only firmly trapped the enemies but also limited their power, preventing them from fighting at their full potential. Despite having the Mother - Child Transmission Disc for instant teleportation, Meng Zhang took a great risk by drawing away most of the elite combat force from Taiyi Sect. He was determined to annihilate Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others, not just to vent his anger.

Firstly, it served as a means to silence them. As long as Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others remained here, news of Meng Zhang's collusion with Xu Mengying wouldn't reach True Monarch Mountain Peak.

Secondly, if the team sent by True Monarch Mountain Peak to track Xu Mengying was wiped out and all communication was lost, True Monarch Mountain Peak would undoubtedly be infuriated. This would deepen the conflict between them and Xu Mengying and might even lead to a direct confrontation.

As for weakening True Monarch Mountain Peak's forces, that was just a side benefit. Xu Mengying saw through Meng Zhang's intentions and calculations clearly. Nevertheless, she lost the advantage because she didn't expect Meng Zhang to be so resolute and mobilize such a powerful force.

Being in a disadvantaged position, she had to reluctantly take action to preserve the alliance with Meng Zhang. Xu Mengying was not the kind of girl who harbored unrealistic fantasies; she could make decisive and timely choices.

Since the outcome of Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others being wiped out was inevitable, Xu Mengying would naturally prioritize her own safety and firmly stand with the victor. She wouldn't be foolish enough to sacrifice herself for the sake of so-called sect loyalty, burying herself along with them.

After Meng Zhang's reinforcements went all out, Daoist Master Mountain Garden's side couldn't hold on any longer. They also realized the enemy's sinister intentions, clearly intending to leave them all trapped here to die.

Daoist Master Mountain Garden and his companions fought with all their might and actively sought opportunities to break free, but Meng Zhang had planned for this for a long time and left them no chance.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect, aided by the power of the great formation, fully unleashed their formidable combat abilities. Especially the four Guardian Spirit Generals, who had experienced countless Gold Core-level battles, not only had an array of divine abilities and secret techniques but also had abundant experience, consistently outmaneuvering the enemy and leaving them with no room to counterattack.

Meng Zhang, wielding the Spiritsnake Spear, was like a reborn god of death, fierce and unstoppable. This was an extremely brutal battle, and after a long and bitter struggle, not a single member of Daoist Master Mountain Garden's group survived; they all perished within the confines of the great formation.

#### Chapter 682: Damage control

After this great battle, the forces of Daoist Master Mountain Garden were completely defeated, and as the victorious side, Taiyi Sect also suffered heavily and paid a significant price.

The carefully arranged Third Rank great formation was torn apart during the battle, and almost every Gold Core Daoist Master from the Taiyi Sect side was injured, with some even sustaining severe wounds.

When Gold Core Daoist Masters fight desperately, even with a huge gap in their Cultivation Base, they still possess considerable killing power. Especially when some of the enemy's Gold Core Daoist Masters saw no hope of escape, they resorted to a suicidal move, detonating their Gold Core. This not only completely shattered the teetering great formation but also severely wounded several cultivators from the Taiyi Sect side.

In the Cultivation World, Gold Core Daoist Masters hold a relatively independent status and cannot be easily ignored, as killing one of them requires a considerable price. Self-detonation of a Gold Core is a powerful killing move that takes the enemy down with them.

After the battle, most of the Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect rushed back to Maple Leaf Mountain City without even taking time to heal. They utilized the Mother-Child Transmission Disc there to return quickly. Both Hundred Grass Slope and Red Rock Valley of Taiyi Sect couldn't afford to be without Gold Core Daoist Masters for an extended period.

Since gaining full control of Maple Leaf Mountain City, the sub-disc of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc was placed there and guarded day and night by Taiyi Sect disciples. The function of this Mother-Child Transmission Disc was truly profound, as it extended Taiyi Sect's sphere of influence countless times. Whenever needed, reinforcements could be sent from Demon Wind Gobi to Maple Leaf Mountain City.

This allowed Taiyi Sect not only to firmly control Maple Leaf Mountain City but also covertly expand its influence to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle.

However, the expansion in Maple Leaf Mountain City is considered premature at the moment. Taiyi Sect first needs to consolidate its gains and then use Maple Leaf Mountain City as a stepping stone to establish a firmer presence in the area.

Overall, Meng Zhang is quite satisfied with the outcome of this battle, but the absence of Daoist Master Smiling Lotus from the team disappoints him. With this loophole, his plan to completely block information has failed.

Despite knowing that Meng Zhang and Xu Mengying have a connection, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus is unaware that Daoist Master Mountain Garden and his team were ambushed by Taiyi Sect cultivators. Although he suspects their involvement, he knows that it is not easy to eliminate a team like Daoist Master Mountain Garden's, even with the presence of Meng Zhang, Extreme Sword Spirit General, and Xu Mengying.

Nevertheless, Primordial Spirit True Monarch does not need concrete evidence to act. If Daoist Master Mountain Garden's team encounters an accident while chasing Xu Mengying, then in True Monarch Mountain Peak's logic, it is Xu Mengying who is responsible.

If Daoist Master Smiling Lotus reports the connection between Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General and Xu Mengying to True Monarch Mountain Peak, then the blame will fall on Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General as well. Although this would mean trouble for Meng Zhang, it wouldn't be insurmountable. While True Monarch Mountain Peak may not require evidence, Jin Li True Monarch, who protects Taiyi Sect, will not allow him to act recklessly. Without sufficient evidence linking them to the death of Daoist Master Mountain Garden, True Monarch Mountain Peak would not directly punish Meng Zhang. Even if Meng Zhang were a bit despicable, he could lower his dignity and go to Jin Li True Monarch to complain, twisting True Monarch Mountain Peak's actions as deliberate attempts to create trouble with Jin Li True Monarch. Knowing Jin Li True Monarch's temperament, she would not easily let go of the matter.

Currently holding significant power within Jiuqu League, Jin Li True Monarch has long been in a dominant position and carries an air of authority, leaving no room for True Monarch Mountain Peak's provocation.

Meng Zhang and his team carefully cleaned the battlefield, ensuring not to leave any useful traces. Although most of their magic tools were damaged during the battle, a small portion remained intact.

Meng Zhang had intended to share some spoils with Xu Mengying, but she flatly refused. The spoils seized from the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators, especially the magic tools, would require refining by the sect's tool refiner before they could be used directly by Taiyi Sect cultivators.

After clearing the battlefield, Meng Zhang and his team calmly left the area and returned to Maple Leaf Mountain City, which was now connected to Demon Wind Gobi through the Mother-Child Transmission Disc. This allowed Meng Zhang to reside peacefully in Maple Leaf Mountain City without the need to rush back.

As for exploring and rebuilding the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, this matter could be considered in due time. Maple Leaf Mountain City wasn't too far from the area where monsters roamed, and a round trip would take at most a little over ten days. With Meng Zhang stationed in Maple Leaf Mountain City, he could both heal his injuries and supervise the management of the disciples, deepening Taiyi Sect's control over the city.

According to the agreement between Meng Zhang and Xu Mengying, the status of the Jiang Family in Maple Leaf Mountain City remained unchanged, with some minor adjustments to the positions

they held. Xu Mengying assured Meng Zhang of Jiang Family's loyalty since she controlled the bloodline restrictions of the Jiang Family cultivators, having full control over their life and death.

As per Meng Zhang's plan, once the situation in Maple Leaf Mountain City stabilized completely, the matter of the Jiang Family would require a proper resolution. Keeping the Jiang Family cultivators in Maple Leaf Mountain City would be like having a time bomb. Meng Zhang would never trust them, and their presence there was merely a temporary measure. When the time was ripe, he could prepare a foundation for the Jiang Family, allowing them to exist as a vassal to Maple Leaf Mountain City.

As for the internal affairs of Maple Leaf Mountain City, it would have nothing to do with the Jiang Family. Given the current situation of the Yellow Lotus Sect, it was easy to imagine that for a long time to come, the higher-ups of Yellow Lotus Sect would not be able to spare any attention to this place, let alone divert their resources here.

In fact, the fact that Maple Leaf Mountain City originally belonged to the Yellow Lotus Sect was a big secret among the higher-ups of the sect. Even those with the status of True Monarch Mountain Peak, a branch sect, were not aware, let alone the main altar members of Yellow Lotus Sect. After the disappearance of Yellow Lotus Sect Cult Master Xu Huanshan, the number of people aware of this fact was even fewer, with only Xu Mengying, the saintess, being in the know. As long as Xu Mengying didn't reveal it voluntarily, these people would remain oblivious to the current situation in Maple Leaf Mountain City.

With the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle and Jiuqu League being too far away, separated by thousands of mountains and rivers, Meng Zhang had plenty of time to slowly integrate Maple Leaf Mountain City, cultivate its foundation, and solidify its control over the area.

#### Chapter 683: News

Taiyi Sect seems to have already taken control of the entire Maple Leaf Mountain City, but there are still many troubles to deal with. Through the Mother-Child Transmission Disc, several batches of cultivators have been sent from the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate to handle various affairs in Maple Leaf Mountain City. So far, the cultivators sent from the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate have mostly been in the Foundation Building stage.

The main gate of Maple Leaf Mountain City is now secure, but the surrounding territories still need to be thoroughly controlled as soon as possible. Additionally, there are some branches of Maple Leaf Mountain City outside, and many cultivators are wandering outside.

At the request of Meng Zhang, the Sect Master Zhao Yude is attempting to block the news as much as possible to keep the specific information about the internal turmoil in Maple Leaf Mountain City

from spreading for the time being. On the other hand, they are also contacting the cultivators who are wandering outside, urging them to return to the sect as soon as possible.

As for the fate of these cultivators upon their return to the sect, it will depend on various circumstances. Meng Zhang's takeover of Maple Leaf Mountain City is not just about seizing territory but also requires the intelligence system of the city to infiltrate the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle from within.

After Meng Zhang and the others left the region occupied by the demons, he is eager to know if there have been any new changes in that area. When the Taiyi Sect cultivators took over the existing intelligence system of Maple Leaf Mountain City, they encountered some difficulties but managed to restore the system gradually. However, it will take time for the intelligence system to fully operate again.

Maple Leaf Mountain City, together with several nearby Gold Core forces, jointly operates a market. According to the initial agreement, various forces need to take turns sending their Gold Core Daoist Masters to manage the market and ensure its normal operation. Soon, it will be Maple Leaf Mountain City's turn to send their Gold Core Daoist Master to preside over the market.

Xu Jiao has joined Maple Leaf Mountain City as an honorary elder for some time, and many cultivators in the vicinity already know her. Despite having many Gold Core Daoist Masters in Taiyi Sect, it is not appropriate for unfamiliar faces to appear at this time among the surrounding forces. Meng Zhang is relieved that he did not completely fall out with Xu Mengying, as this allowed Xu Jiao to represent Maple Leaf Mountain City at the market.

Due to this incident, Meng Zhang has decided to retain as many elders from Maple Leaf Mountain City as possible for future needs. In his new plan, Taiyi Sect intends to slowly erode Maple Leaf Mountain City from within, hoping to spend one or two generations to completely transform the internal structure of the sect while keeping Maple Leaf Mountain City as a reliable branch of Taiyi Sect.

During this time, Xu Mengying has also stayed in Maple Leaf Mountain City and refrained from wandering around. As time passes, intelligence about the area occupied by demons is gradually accumulating and reaching Meng Zhang and his group. The major forces of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle have sent a team led by Primordial Spirit True Monarch to investigate that area. They quickly executed the Demonize cultivators, completely eliminating the threat from the surrounding area. As for how the Demonize cultivators managed to deceive the monitoring Formation and infiltrate the market, they casually brushed it off as an isolated incident. The monitoring Formations in various markets are still effective and can promptly detect Demonize cultivators.

After handling the matter, this team does not intend to stay for long. They have already begun lifting the blockade, allowing cultivators from various factions to enter and exit the area freely. If there are no other unforeseen circumstances, they plan to leave and return to their respective sects.

Before departing, they took some measures to prevent similar incidents from happening. The entire area nearby was divided into three levels. The region originally occupied by demons was named Demonize, and cultivators are not allowed to enter at will. The buffer zone retains its original name, and cultivators can enter and exit with some restrictions if adequately prepared. The third level is the safe zone, encompassing various markets and their surrounding areas, where cultivators can move freely.

Although this division seems to reduce the risk of cultivators being attacked by Demonize, in reality, it is merely superficial and of little use. Without strict restriction measures and enhanced monitoring and defense in the surrounding areas, merely relying on empty promises won't deter brave and adventurous cultivators from all over.

The safe and buffer zones hardly hold any benefits for cultivators. The mountain gates of those extinct sects and families are mostly located within the Demonize area. To discover treasures, cultivators must venture deep into those dangerous places.

After a while, the teams sent by major factions began to withdraw, leaving only a small number of cultivators to perform simple monitoring tasks. Daoist Master Smiling Lotus, who didn't want to personally participate in the operation to capture Xu Mengying, used an excuse to stay behind and join the team that sealed off the area.

As the blockade was lifted and cultivators from various factions started returning to their own sects, he could no longer find any excuse to delay his departure. However, it had been so long, and there was still no news from Daoist Master Mountain Garden, which surprised him.

As one of the two appointed leaders by True Monarch Mountain Peak, regardless of the success or failure of the operation, Daoist Master Mountain Garden should have informed him about the situation. Daoist Master Mountain Garden and his team seemed to have vanished without a trace after embarking on the pursuit of Xu Mengying.

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus tried various means, such as using communication talismans and secret techniques for mutual contact, but there was no response or harvest.

At this point, he started to feel anxious. Could it be that Daoist Master Mountain Garden's team encountered some unexpected circumstances while tracking Xu Mengying?



When Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General left Cloud Boat, they deliberately created a conflict and engaged the cultivators who were following Xu Mengying. Despite suspecting that Meng Zhang and Xu Mengying were colluding, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus didn't have sufficient evidence and couldn't take action, especially under the watchful eyes of three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

It was only when they traced Xu Mengying to the Demonize area that they finally confirmed the collusion between her and Meng Zhang. However, even if Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General helped Xu Mengying, at most, they could escape from Daoist Master Mountain Garden's team, but they wouldn't have the power to make them vanish completely.

To take down Daoist Master Mountain Garden's team, Taiyi Sect would need to mobilize its main forces, and it would be a massive operation that couldn't be done silently without alerting others, especially given the distance between Jiuqu League and Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle.

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus was filled with doubt and began to speculate randomly.

#### Chapter 684

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus suspected that Xu Mengying might have some hidden powerful techniques, which led him to directly deal with the group of people from Daoist Master Mountain Garden. After all, in the hearts of the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators, the Holy Maiden holds a mysterious and elevated status, known for her profound skills and vast Divine Abilities. Similar rumors and stories about her abilities have been well-known among the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators since they were young, even when they were ordinary cultivators or children.

Even though Daoist Master Smiling Lotus has become the actual controller of the Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch, a formidable cultivator at the Gold Core stage, he still feels a bit uneasy when facing Xu Mengying due to the rumors he heard years ago. He initially took the order to track Xu Mengying from True Monarch Mountain Peak, but he never thought he would directly clash with her and take her down.

Upon arriving at the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, Daoist Master Mountain Garden informed him that their task was not only to track Xu Mengying but, if necessary, to capture her as well. Daoist Master Mountain Garden, being an intimate confidant of True Monarch Mountain Peak, was the one who decided when it was necessary.

When Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General deliberately caused conflicts to delay the cultivators tracking Xu Mengying, Daoist Master Mountain Garden concluded that Xu Mengying was colluding with outsiders and must be taken down immediately.

However, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus hesitated to confront Xu Mengying directly. On one hand, it was because, as a member of the Yellow Lotus Sect, he had a special respect for the Holy Maiden due to his experiences and education within the sect, making him reluctant to engage in combat with her. On the other hand, the rumors and stories he grew up hearing also instilled a subtle fear of the Yellow Lotus Sect Holy Maiden.

Now that Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others have gone missing, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus first thought was that they might have provoked the Holy Maiden and faced her attack. He speculated that the Holy Maiden might have used some hidden cards to defeat them all.

Of course, this was just a conjecture in his mind. He also considered other possibilities, such as whether Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others had offended some great power or caused some sort of calamity, which led to their disappearance. Such occurrences were not uncommon in the Cultivation World and happened from time to time.

Though he had various speculations in his mind, he lacked concrete evidence and couldn't be sure which one was correct. He had no useful clues about Daoist Master Mountain Garden's disappearance. How would he explain the situation to True Monarch Mountain Peak when he returned?

After True Monarch Mountain Peak forcefully took control of the East River Branch, they intended to weaken the branch's original power and turn it into their loyal subordinates. Daoist Master Smiling Lotus' return this time would be the perfect excuse for True Monarch Mountain Peak to decisively deal with him without attracting too much attention within the sect.

Thinking about this, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus felt an overwhelming headache. After much contemplation and hesitation, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus eventually decided to grit his teeth and start searching in the direction Daoist Master Mountain Garden and the others had left. Along the way, he slowly made his way to Maple Leaf Mountain City.

With the assistance of Zhao Yude and cultivators from the Jiang Family, Taiyi Sect had already gained full control of Maple Leaf Mountain City. They had also begun to collect information on the surrounding areas and resume routine surveillance.

As Daoist Master Smiling Lotus traveled, he diligently inquired about the whereabouts of Daoist Master Mountain Garden and his group at every stop. As a Gold Core stage cultivator in an area dominated by Gold Core sects, he was quite conspicuous. When he appeared in a market, his whereabouts were quickly reported back to Maple Leaf Mountain City.

Last time, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus narrowly escaped an ambush when he wasn't with the Yue Yuan Zhenrao team, leaving Meng Zhang regretful for a long time. Now, with Daoist Master Smiling Lotus foolishly coming to them again, Meng Zhang saw this as a golden opportunity to settle the score.

Alone, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus wouldn't require Taiyi Sect to mobilize too many forces. With just two helpers, Meng Zhang was ready to take him down.

At the same time, Xu Mengying received news of Daoist Master Smiling Lotus' presence nearby. She sought out Meng Zhang and made a request. She asked Meng Zhang not to kill Daoist Master Smiling Lotus and offered to join forces with him to capture him instead. After that, she wished to handle Daoist Master Smiling Lotus personally.

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus had led a large army of Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch cultivators to attack Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, causing significant damage. He was Meng Zhang's archenemy, and there was no way Meng Zhang would easily let him go.

However, Xu Mengying persisted and tried to persuade Meng Zhang. She offered various benefits in exchange for sparing Daoist Master Smiling Lotus' life. She even bluntly stated that Daoist Master Smiling Lotus was essential to her future plans to confront True Monarch Mountain Peak and that he couldn't die just yet.

Compared to the formidable enemy True Monarch Mountain Peak, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus was still not on the same level. If sparing his life could contribute to the fight against True Monarch Mountain Peak, Xu Mengying was willing to grant him temporary clemency.

Xu Mengying also had keen insight into what Meng Zhang and Taiyi Sect were lacking, and she offered to transcribe some of the cultivation insights left behind by Primordial Spirit True Monarchs from the Yellow Lotus Sect. These insights were precisely what Meng Zhang needed.

Although Extreme Sword Spirit General had informed Meng Zhang that there were intact copies of the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" and cultivation experiences from Taiyi Sect's predecessors in the rebuilt Taiyi Sect mountain gate, the uncertainty of accessing these resources made Xu Mengying's offer enticing. Taking Xu Mengying's benefits would provide Meng Zhang with an alternative route if he encountered difficulties in entering the rebuilt Taiyi Sect mountain gate.

Despite their different cultivation techniques and paths, the insights left behind by every Primordial Spirit predecessor were extremely valuable. Perhaps Meng Zhang could draw inspiration from them and find his own path to reach the Primordial Spirit stage.

To persuade Meng Zhang further, Xu Mengying also offered to provide some of the Yellow Lotus Sect's treasured scriptures, mainly focusing on cultivation hundred arts, which would greatly strengthen Taiyi Sect's foundation.

In the end, Meng Zhang was convinced by Xu Mengying's arguments and agreed to capture Daoist Master Smiling Lotus alive, handing him over to Xu Mengying for personal disposition.

#### Chapter 685: Taking

Since Meng Zhang and Xu Mengying reached an agreement, the fate of Daoist Master Smiling Lotus has naturally been determined. A few days later, just as Daoist Master Smiling Lotus left a bustling market and flew to a secluded place, Xu Mengying, who had been tracking him for half a day, appeared and intercepted him.

After a moment, Meng Zhang led two Gold Core Daoist Masters from the Taiyi Sect and chased after them from behind, surrounding him.

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus had become more cautious since the disappearance of them at the Daoist Master Mountain Garden. However, in order to find the whereabouts of the Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others, he had to take the risk of searching along the direction they disappeared. In the end, he fell into the ambush set up by Meng Zhang and his companions.

Daoist Master Smiling Lotus was at least a Gold Core late-stage cultivator. If it were other Gold Core Daoist Masters surrounding him, he might have a chance to escape even if he couldn't defeat them. However, Meng Zhang, as a renowned Gold Core Daoist Master, was not the only threat. Xu Mengying, being the saintess of the Yellow Lotus Sect, displayed remarkable abilities that seemed to have a subtle restraining effect on Daoist Master Smiling Lotus.

After a bitter battle, Daoist Master Smiling Lotus unfortunately lost and was captured.

Following the previous agreement, Meng Zhang handed Daoist Master Smiling Lotus over to Xu Mengying for disposition. The reward promised by Xu Mengying would only be given to Meng Zhang after they returned to the Yellow Lotus Sect.

Meng Zhang wasn't worried that Xu Mengying would go back on her word. She had previously made a solemn pledge that she wouldn't fare well if she violated her oath. Meng Zhang had set up a Mother-Child Transmission Disc sub-disc in Maple Leaf Mountain City, but the location was strictly confidential and heavily guarded. Not even recently joined cultivators from Maple Leaf Mountain City, let alone Jiang Family cultivators and Sect Master Zhao Yude, could approach it.

Taiyi Sect was able to quickly send a large group of cultivators for reinforcement, and Xu Mengying could probably guess that Taiyi Sect possessed either space-teleporting magic tools or methods to swiftly set up long-distance space transmission formations.

Of course, Meng Zhang didn't proactively mention this as he didn't fully trust Xu Mengying, and she was sensible enough not to bring it up herself.

After Xu Mengying took Daoist Master Smiling Lotus away, she quietly left Maple Leaf Mountain City. Meng Zhang didn't bother with her and had no reason to interfere with her actions. After recovering from his injuries, he left Maple Leaf Mountain City and personally went to investigate near the Demonize area.

The teams of cultivators sent by various major forces through the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle had long left, and the remaining few cultivators didn't pay much attention to their tasks. There was no strict control over the entry and exit of cultivators from all sides, and the monitoring was merely nominal.

The incident caused by Demonize cultivators last time was quickly forgotten by everyone. The markets in the surroundings returned to their lively state, and brave cultivators started heading to the Demonize area to dig for treasures.

Meng Zhang also entered the Demonize area and conducted a thorough investigation. Although he didn't go too deep, he circled around the rebuilt Taiyi Sect's mountain gate area.

Not all demons were foolish and unintelligent; high-level demons had some degree of wisdom. When Primordial Spirit True Monarch led a team to survey the area, these demons were greatly shocked and became much more subdued, no longer as arrogant.

The number of roaming demons decreased, and most of them went into hiding. This brought many conveniences to Meng Zhang's movements in and out of the area. If there were some speculations before, Meng Zhang is now almost certain that the major cultivation forces within the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle deliberately chose not to clear the area infested by demons. Although they publicly claim that there are too many and too powerful demons, and the environment is unsuitable, making it difficult to completely eradicate them, these are all excuses.

If a few Primordial Spirit True Monarchs were to take action, they could probably have completely eradicated this place, and all the demons would have been wiped out. The major cultivation forces may appear contradictory in their actions, but their true attitudes are unified in this matter.

Meng Zhang has no desire to inquire into the motives and calculations of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle in this matter, nor does he have the power to intervene. He only hopes that they don't make a big mess and cause trouble for all sides, becoming uncontrollable.

Of course, the decision of the major cultivation forces within the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle to preserve the Demonize area seems to have brought many inconveniences to Meng Zhang now, and it has made it difficult for him to enter the rebuilt Taiyi Sect's mountain gate. However, if the rebuilt Taiyi Sect's mountain gate were not occupied by demons, outsiders could easily infiltrate, and the place would probably have been turned upside down by various cultivators. Even if the treasures of Taiyi Sect were hidden well, accidents could happen.

After investigating the surroundings, Meng Zhang quickly returned to Maple Leaf Mountain City. At this time, the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect, who were injured in the ambush against Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others, had recovered their strength after this period of recuperation.

Time was of the essence, so Meng Zhang gave the order for the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect to assemble once again. This time, almost all of Taiyi Sect's Gold Core Daoist Masters came out and were transmitted to Maple Leaf Mountain City using the Mother-Child Transmission Disc.

Frequent use of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc rapidly depleted the Void Nether Stones stored in Taiyi Sect's treasury. If this situation didn't change, the future use of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc would have to be severely restricted. Without Void Nether Stones, this highly effective Mother-Child Transmission Disc would become useless.

Taiyi Sect had been continuously collecting Void Nether Stones, but the gains were meager.

Meng Zhang temporarily put aside these worries and, together with the assembled Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect, hurried towards the area infested by demons. He had been preparing for this action for some time.

Taiyi Sect had long prepared a Third Rank flying boat, which was directly transmitted to Maple Leaf Mountain City. This Third Rank flying boat was carefully collected by the sect and excelled in speed.

After the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect boarded this flying boat, they greatly saved on travel time. What would have originally taken more than ten days was completed in just seven or eight days.

This time, Meng Zhang was risking it all and going all out. With almost all the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect participating, the success or failure of this operation was crucial.

If they couldn't successfully enter the rebuilt Taiyi Sect's mountain gate and retrieve the sect's treasures, Meng Zhang would probably have to find another way to seize the opportunity to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect couldn't stay away from the sect's mountain gate for too long. Whether it was the Hundred Grass Slope, Red Rock Valley, or the recently acquired Maple Leaf Mountain City, they needed Gold Core Daoist Masters to hold the fort.

Such a gathering of almost all the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect posed an extremely high risk. After this operation, Meng Zhang would not attempt such a major action again.

In any case, Meng Zhang had made up his mind. If this attempt failed, he would not target this place again until he became a Primordial Spirit True Monarch. As tempting as the treasures in the rebuilt Taiyi Sect might be, he wouldn't let it jeopardize the greater interests of the sect.

#### Chapter 686: 10 Side Sure-Kill

In fact, before Meng Zhang departed, he had also carefully instructed all the Gold Core Daoist Masters. This journey must be taken with extra caution to prioritize the preservation of their own lives.

The treasures hidden in the rebuilt Taiyi Sect's mountain gate are important, but not as important as the lives of all the Gold Core Daoist Masters in the sect. If this group of Gold Core Daoist Masters suffers significant losses here, Taiyi Sect will be seriously weakened and difficult to recover.

The Third Rank flying boat journey went smoothly without encountering any accidents, and they flew near the rebuilt mountain gate of Taiyi Sect. Due to the intimidating presence of the Human Clan Primordial Spirit True Monarch, the surrounding demons were relatively well-behaved and did not roam freely. Even the lower-ranked demons had the instinct to survive, especially since there were many higher-ranked demons hidden in this area that could control these lower-ranked ones more effectively.

Meng Zhang stood at the bow of the flying boat and glanced at his fellow disciples around him. Extreme Sword Spirit General, Deep Earth Spirit General, Delicate Water Spirit General, Shocking Thunder Spirit General, Niu Dawei, Wen Qiansun, Yang Xueyi, Zheng Chao, Hu Jing, and all the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect, except for Fang Hanyu, who usually resided in Jiuqu League, had gathered here.

With such a powerful force concentrated, as long as there were no Fourth Rank demons present, Meng Zhang had no fear. This time, there was no need for sneaking and infiltration; they would break in directly with great strength and kill their way in openly and honestly.

Meng Zhang took the lead, leaping from the flying boat and leading the group of Gold Core Daoist Masters towards the front without any concealment, flying with great fanfare. The Taiyi Sect disciples who controlled the Third Rank flying boat steered it far away, avoiding being caught in the aftermath of the battle.

Before the group of Gold Core Daoist Masters even reached their destination, they began displaying their Divine Abilities and launching fierce attacks towards the front. The sky was filled with dense thunderclouds, and thunder roared while electric serpents darted between the clouds. Fire columns descended from the sky, violently striking the ground ahead.

The mountain peak where Taiyi Sect's gate was located suddenly trembled violently, as if experiencing a massive earthquake.

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The sudden commotion startled the demons lurking in the surroundings. Many demons hadn't even reacted before perishing amidst the various attacks. Numerous demons panicked and ran amok, causing chaos around the entire mountain peak.

The chaos didn't last for too long as terrifying and tragic screams echoed from the top of the mountain peak. The previously chaotic demons suddenly froze, then launched a frenzied and crazed attack against the incoming human cultivators.

A massive black skull flew up from the mountain peak, along with a constantly twisting black mist rising into the sky. A strange-looking monster, a fusion of various creatures, roared as it shot up into the air. This monster seemed to be formed by forcibly stitching together multiple animal species.

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One Third Rank demon after another appeared, taking the initiative to attack fearlessly the Gold Core Daoist Masters in the sky. Although they were vastly outnumbered, these Third Rank demons showed no signs of retreat and fiercely engaged in battle.

Including Meng Zhang, Taiyi Sect had a total of ten Gold Core Daoist Masters participating in this operation. Long ago, the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect had prepared a strategy for joint combat and how to coordinate their attacks. Under the guidance of Wen Qiansun and Deep Earth Spirit General, they had learned formations for coordinated combat and had experience from numerous drills. With the talent of Gold Core Daoist Masters, it only takes a little time to learn and proficiently use this not-too-difficult formation - the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation - which the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect have currently deployed.

Ten Gold Core Daoist Masters each take a position in one direction and simultaneously exert their power to activate the formation. Immediately, the sky becomes chaotic, with the converging forces of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, as well as the powers of ground, fire, wind, and water flowing endlessly.

The ten Gold Core Daoist Masters change their positions, and powerful forces, like millstones, rotate and surge towards the incoming demons. The lower-ranked demons need not be mentioned, as a mere touch of these forces instantly reduces their bodies to powder. Even the originally arrogant Third Rank demons hurriedly try to avoid the attacks, but some are still touched by the overwhelmingly strong forces, causing substantial damage.

Once the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation is formed by the ten Gold Core Daoist Masters, it becomes invincible and unstoppable, breaking through everything on its path and advancing swiftly towards the mountain peak where Taiyi Sect's gate is located.

Despite knowing that they are no match, countless demons still charge forward, one after another, towards the mountain peak. As they approach the formation's power, they are crushed to pieces.

The Third Rank demons, far from being foolish, disperse and surround the formation from all directions, attempting to test and break this formidable formation. Their sharp howls also serve as a signal for reinforcements.

The piercing cries spread far and wide, and the nearby area immediately erupts into chaos, as an immeasurable horde of demons rushes towards the mountain peak.

Before the lower-ranked demons even take action, several Third Rank demons fly in from afar, unexpectedly showing a connection between the monsters in this area.

Meng Zhang was unaware of this before the operation, but he is not afraid at all. With ten Gold Core Daoist Masters and the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation in place, their lineup is more than enough to annihilate most Gold Core sects and far surpasses the strength of an ordinary cultivator army.

The demons on the mountain peak fight to the death to obstruct Meng Zhang's group, clearly intending to delay their progress and hold them back. The plan is to wait for the reinforcements to arrive, and then they can surround and besiege Meng Zhang's group together.

However, Meng Zhang and his companions are experienced warriors with abundant battlefield experience, and they can easily see through such a simple calculation by the demons. No one knows how many demons are lurking in the Demonize area, let alone how many powerful Third Rank demons are present.

There are already four or five Third Rank demons and countless lower-ranked demons on this mountain peak alone. More demons will rush from afar as reinforcements. If this situation drags on, the entire area may be filled with demons converging here. By that time, the demons might truly have the power to annihilate Taiyi Sect.

#### Chapter 687: Advance

Meng Zhang quickly understood the current situation and knew that they absolutely could not delay for too long. They had to resolve the situation quickly. The other Gold Core Daoist Masters around also saw the situation clearly and had a similar idea to Meng Zhang's.

Though the Gold Core Daoist Master from Taiyi Sect was powerful, they couldn't stop the endless stream of demonic creatures. Moreover, battling with these creatures would yield no spoils of war; it would be a fruitless effort.

Without Meng Zhang needing to give any orders, the group acted on their own. Ten Gold Core Daoist Masters formed the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation and swiftly flew towards the top of the mountain.

According to the statements of the Extreme Sword Spirit General, all the treasures Taiyi Sect couldn't take with them during the demonic calamity were hidden in that place. The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation acted like a meat grinder; wherever it passed, it crushed any demonic creatures obstructing their path, no matter how fierce or formidable they were.

Even the enormous skull couldn't evade the formation's power, and even Third Rank demonic creatures were ground to pieces.

As they approached their target, the ten Gold Core Daoist Masters lowered their flight altitude and descended towards the ground. The formation continued to function with full force, relentlessly eliminating all the approaching demonic creatures.

After a few earthshaking techniques, the ground of the mountain trembled violently. As the spell effects subsided, the ground slowly returned to calmness. However, as the Taiyi Sect Gold Core Daoist Masters drew near, the entire mountain suddenly shook violently, as if it were about to collapse.

Countless thick, purple-black vines emerged from the ground. After surfacing, they twisted and writhed, entangling and pouncing on the airborne Taiyi Sect Gold Core Daoist Masters.

When Meng Zhang and the Extreme Sword Spirit General had come here before, they had attempted to use the earth escape technique to enter the mountain from underground. However, they were forced to turn back as the ground was covered with these vines.

Their previous caution was not unwarranted. These vines were indeed demonic creatures, and they were not ordinary ones. Even though the main bodies of the demonic creatures had not yet appeared, just the vines that crazily lunged at them exuded an aura surpassing that of Third Rank beings.

Sharp sword qi shot out from the formation, slashing through the vines and severing them into pieces that fell to the ground. Strangely, the severed vines remained lively, each piece pouncing on a demonic creature and devouring it completely.

The vines continued to consume more and more surrounding demonic creatures, causing their sizes to rapidly expand before twisting and attacking the Taiyi Sect group.

Then, droplets of clear water fell from the sky and landed on the vines. The vines immediately withered rapidly, losing all their vitality.

The Extreme Sword Spirit General and Delicate Water Spirit General, harnessing the power of the formation, enhanced their Divine Abilities, but they could only damage the vines extended by the demonic creature. It was far from enough to harm the creature's main body.

Deep Earth Spirit General raised both hands and pressed heavily on the ground. The earth and stones making up the ground parted rapidly, splitting apart and extending downwards.

Before long, the ground had completely split open, creating what seemed like a bottomless scar on the surface of the earth.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters had keen eyesight, and they could see deep underground a massive spherical object with countless vines extending towards the surface. The true form of this demonic creature turned out to be a massive sphere, which is quite rare. The Sun Moon Treasure Pearl above Meng Zhang's head emitted a brilliant light, and the boundless Sun and Moon Divine Light penetrated through the cracks in the ground, reaching the sphere-shaped demonic creature.

Wherever the Sun and Moon Divine Light passed, the dark purple demonic aura quickly dissipated, revealing the true form of the spherical demonic creature. Surprisingly, its body was composed of countless twisted demonic beings.

Meng Zhang found it too eye-straining to look at. He raised his Spiritsnake Spear and fiercely threw it downward. The Spiritsnake Spear, a formidable spiritual weapon, easily pierced through numerous obstacles and hit the sphere-shaped demonic creature, stirring it up.

An extremely fierce aura of killing intent continuously collided inside its body, breaking the sphere-shaped demonic creature into chaos and disarray. Accompanied by incredibly sorrowful screams, the creature gradually lost its vitality.

In terms of rank, this demonic creature was already at the pinnacle of Third Rank, just one step away from breaking through to Fourth Rank. Under normal circumstances, even if a group of Gold Core Daoist Masters surrounded it, they might not be able to kill it. However, the Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect were not only individually powerful but also greatly enhanced by their formation, especially Meng Zhang, who wielded the Spiritsnake Spear and was extremely fierce.

The Third Rank demonic creature was killed on the spot, clearing the final obstacle in the path of the Taiyi Sect group to their objective. However, with the death cry of the Third Rank demonic creature, the distant demonic creatures became even more frenzied. Several of them accelerated and, in the blink of an eye, two Third Rank demonic creatures flew over.

A human-faced bird-bodied creature and a bird-headed sheep-bodied monster led the pack, flying not far from the Taiyi Sect group.

The Taiyi Sect cultivators didn't pause and continued to advance quickly. Thunderbolts descended from the sky, striking fiercely at the two fastest-flying demonic creatures, causing them to retreat in a panic.

The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation swept through all directions, clearing all obstacles on their path and finally reaching their destination – a clearing not far from the top of the mountain, seemingly no different from other places.

However, relying on a special positioning method, the Extreme Sword Spirit General confirmed that this was indeed the place they were looking for. He and the Deep Earth Spirit General exchanged a glance and then left the formation, descending towards the ground.

He shouted loudly, "You protect us and don't let the demonic creatures get close here."

Before the shout even subsided, he and the Deep Earth Spirit General landed on the ground.

Meng Zhang called out, and the remaining eight Gold Core Daoist Masters each took a position, firmly surrounding the locations of the Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General.

With two fewer Gold Core Daoist Masters, the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation not only had significantly reduced power but also exposed two noticeable flaws.

Meng Zhang pointed with one hand, and the Sun Moon Treasure Pearl above his head flew to fill one of the vacant positions, taking the place of a Gold Core Daoist Master.

Delicate Water Spirit General formed hand seals and quietly chanted an incantation. A water droplet flew out from her body, landed on the ground, twisted for a moment, and transformed into an exact replica of Delicate Water Spirit General.

This water incarnation took its place in another vacant position, temporarily mending the final flaw in the formation.

The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation started operating again, although its power had visibly weakened, at least the glaring flaws were gone.

Chapter 688: Collection

After the reconfiguration of the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation, its power does not seem to have weakened much on the surface.

The various Gold Core Daoist Masters simultaneously operated the formation, turning the surroundings into an impregnable fortress.

The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation is formidable in attack and defense. Qiansuan, responsible for commanding the formation's changes, did not solely focus on defense but adopted an offensive strategy.

Outside the formation, thunder, lightning, and flames danced while spells filled the air, forming walls of death.

Shortly after Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General landed on the ground, the pursuing demons caught up and crazily pounced on them.

Even before the onrushing demons could get close, they were swept away by the power of the formation, turning into bursts of flesh and blood.

Demons from all directions charged towards the mountain peak, and new higher-ranked demons flew over, ready to join the battle.

After assembling several higher-ranked demons and countless lower-ranked demons, under the lead of the higher-ranked demons, the demons launched one frantic attack after another towards the Taiyi Sect group.

The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation demonstrated its might, keeping the vast horde of demons that seemed to submerge the entire mountain at a distance, preventing them from getting anywhere near.

Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General did not waste the time their fellow sect members had won for them and immediately took action upon landing.

Facing each other, they formed hand seals, continuously manipulated their True Essence, and chanted incantations in low voices, emitting vague murmurs.

After a while, strange winds blew around them, and the ground around them spontaneously ignited with purple flames.

Undisturbed by the changing environment, Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General continued their hand seals and incantations, constantly operating their secret techniques.

After some time, above them, a black hole appeared out of thin air.

The black hole had a distinct vortex that spun continuously, emitting a strong gravitational pull.

The gravitational force was incredibly powerful, causing both Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General to feel unstable.

Other Gold Core Daoist Masters not far away, though not as strongly affected as the two nearest Guardian Spirit Generals, also felt the impact of this gravitational force.

The previously fast-operating Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation briefly halted due to this vulnerability, nearly allowing the rushing demons to break through the interception and engulf everyone.

Fortunately, Qiansuan, who was in charge of the formation, reacted promptly and commanded everyone to activate another transformation of the formation.

The group changed their forms, and the power of the five elements—metal, wood, water, fire, and earth—sprayed out, emitting colorful rays that held all the charging demons in place. Then, they launched various spells and divine abilities amplified by the formation's power to kill all these demons.

The formation quickly recovered after being slightly affected and continued to keep all the demons at a distance.

Extreme Sword Spirit General nodded at Deep Earth Spirit General, and the latter planted his feet firmly in the ground, becoming incredibly stable. He raised both hands, managing to temporarily hold the rotating vortex all by himself.

Taking advantage of the vortex's pause and the disappearance of its attraction, Extreme Sword Spirit General leaped into the air and flew to the side of the black hole, reaching inside and exploring.

After a while, when Deep EarthSpirit General was almost unable to hold on, Extreme Sword Spirit General slowly retracted his hands. In his hands, he held a giant cauldron taller than a person. Extreme Sword Spirit General struggled to lift the giant cauldron and slowly moved away from the black hole, landing steadily on the ground. Deep EarthSpirit General, seeing this, finally breathed a sigh of relief and stopped exerting force to hold the vortex.

As the vortex started to resume its rotation, a powerful suction force erupted, seemingly trying to pull back Extreme Sword Spirit General's giant cauldron. Deep EarthSpirit General performed hand seals and chanted incantations again, using his secret technique to gradually close the black hole.

During the closing process, the black hole seemed to collapse. Deep EarthSpirit General extended his hands to help Extreme Sword Spirit General hold the giant cauldron. Together, they managed to stabilize it.

Extreme Sword Spirit General shouted, "This place is about to collapse; it's not suitable to stay for long. You all protect us while we make our escape."

Because of the burden of holding the cauldron, Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General felt immense pressure on their bodies, making it challenging to fly. Meng Zhang and the other seven Gold Core Daoist Masters flew into the sky and formed a circle, enclosing Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General within.

Then, the entire circle moved slowly but resolutely, flying towards the outside of the mountain, attempting to break through the encirclement.

During the movement of the circle, the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation's power was not significantly affected. The formation emitted bursts of special killing energy, scattering the rushing demons and any obstructing ones.

After some time, Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General gradually adapted to the pressure of the giant cauldron. They began to accelerate and fly more steadily.

As the speed of Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep EarthSpirit General increased, the Gold Core Daoist Masters forming the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation could finally accelerate as well.



The circle started to accelerate, quickly leaving the mountain and flying towards the outskirts. Throughout this process, the onslaught of demons never ceased. Waves of demons rushed forward like rising tides and receded, leaving behind broken demon corpses.

As the demons were forced back, suddenly, a higher-ranked flying ship appeared in the sky. It descended rapidly and landed not far from the Taiyi Sect Gold Core Daoist Masters.

The size of this higher-ranked flying ship was not large, but the formation on the ship was relatively complete. During its descent, it was attacked by many flying demons. However, the ship's protective formation promptly repelled these flying demons.

The Taiyi Sect disciple piloting the flying ship demonstrated remarkable skill and timing, leaving Meng Zhang and the other Gold Core Daoist Masters impressed.

Meng Zhang and the others protected Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General and flew onto the flying ship. As the two Guardian Spirit Generals carrying the giant cauldron landed on the ship's bow, the entire higher-ranked flying ship trembled violently, almost sinking under their weight.

Fortunately, the flying ship held up and did not collapse under the pressure of the giant cauldron. Being a higher-ranked flying ship, it was still able to fly at a relatively fast speed, even with the giant cauldron on board.

With no need to protect Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General anymore, the other Gold Core Daoist Masters were free to assist. The eight Gold Core Daoist Masters protected the flying ship as it soared into the sky and headed towards a location far away from the Demonize area.

#### Chapter 689: Void Cauldron

As the eight Gold Core Daoist Masters escorted the Third Rank flying boat into the sky, the Extreme Sword Spirit General and the Deep Earth Spirit General used secret techniques to summon the location of the black hole.

The black hole stretched and contracted, then suddenly expanded and gently burst open with a light sound. Despite its seemingly casual explosion, it possessed an exceptionally terrifying power. The space in that area began to collapse and quickly spread outwards. Numerous dark space fissures appeared around, and intense spatial storms gushed out from these fissures, sweeping everything in their path with unstoppable force.

Wherever the spatial storms passed, everything on the mountain peak vanished rapidly as if it had never existed. As the collapsing space expanded, the entire mountain peak began to disappear, as if it was completely erased from this world. The demons that once inhabited the mountain peak also disappeared without any resistance.

Some intelligent demons realized the perilous situation and attempted to escape, but the speed of the spatial collapse was too swift. Before they could flee far enough, they were engulfed by the immense suction force and drifted into the dimensional space.

Meng Zhang and the other Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Taiyi Sect, observing the scene from high above, had serious and amazed expressions. Meng Zhang pondered deeper; if his conjecture was correct, the area occupied by these demons was a deliberately preserved zone left behind by the major sects of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, indicating they must have some purpose in mind.

The disturbance caused by Taiyi Sect here and the significant damage done to this area could lead the major sects of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle to think that Taiyi Sect had malicious intentions, aiming to disrupt their plans. If they angered these major sects, Meng Zhang, even with his identity as a special envoy of the Jiuqu League, wouldn't be able to protect himself, let alone Taiyi Sect.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, Meng Zhang ordered everyone not to hold back and to leave this place at the fastest speed possible. He personally unleashed his potential through secret techniques, erupting with the strongest combat power.

As the Extreme Sword Spirit General and the Deep Earth Spirit General placed the huge cauldron on the flying boat, they could now join the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation once again. The biggest flaw in the formation was compensated for, and the formation's power was fully unleashed, sweeping all the demons that dared to approach and crushing them into pieces.

In reality, when Meng Zhang led the Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect to charge into the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, there were many Cultivators secretly infiltrating the vicinity, hoping to explore various treasures. However, when the demons began to riot and swarmed out, these Cultivators were terrified and fled from the area as quickly as possible. Some unfortunate ones ended up in the path of the demon's onslaught and were torn to pieces.

These Cultivators escaped just in time to preserve their lives. The situation of the demon riot was an extremely rare event that completely overturned their understanding. As for why the demons went

berserk and what exactly happened here, these Cultivators remained clueless. The Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Taiyi Sect relied on the power of the Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation to force the pursuing demons to retreat. They escorted the Third Rank flying boat while fighting and retreating, quickly leaving the area infested by the demons.

These demons seemed to be unusually frenzied and relentlessly chased after them without showing any signs of relaxing. Despite suffering heavy losses and countless demons losing their lives, it didn't deter them from pursuing.

The Taiyi Sect team moved away from the demon-infested area into a buffer zone, but the demons still chased after them. The Ten Directions Absolute Killing Formation was unleashed to its maximum power, but as more and more Third Rank demons pursued them, it became difficult to resist.

Fortunately, the team's escape speed was not slow, and they managed to keep the demons at bay, preventing them from approaching the Third Rank flying boat. Finally, when they reached the outskirts of the buffer zone, the Third Rank demons with apparent intelligence hesitated for a moment, roared in unwillingness, and then gave up the chase.

Everyone from the Taiyi Sect, including Meng Zhang, felt relieved and had a sense of escape. However, they couldn't fully relax yet as they needed to avoid various Cultivators and quickly return to Maple Leaf Mountain City.

This time, the Taiyi Sect members didn't travel at full speed; instead, they focused on concealing their tracks and leaving no traces behind. They put in a lot of effort to safely escort the Third Rank flying boat back to Maple Leaf Mountain City without anyone noticing.

After returning to Maple Leaf Mountain City, except for the four Guardian Spirit Generals who stayed behind, all the Gold Core Daoist Masters hurriedly used the Mother-Child Transmission Disc to return home without catching their breath. Initially, Meng Zhang planned to bring the giant cauldron back to the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate using the Mother-Child Transmission Disc. However, the Extreme Sword Spirit General made it clear that the giant cauldron couldn't be transported through spatial transmission methods or the Mother-Child Transmission Disc.

To perform spatial transmission with the giant cauldron, one must have the cultivation base of a Primordial Spirit True Monarch and a certain level of attainment in the Space Grand Dao. Since it couldn't be transported through the Mother-Child Transmission Disc, they had to temporarily leave it in Maple Leaf Mountain City.

The commotion caused by the Taiyi Sect members in the demon-infested area was exceptionally significant, and Meng Zhang couldn't imagine how the major cultivation forces in the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle would react to this.

During the following period, Meng Zhang made up his mind not to go out on adventures anymore but to stay quietly in Maple Leaf Mountain City, resolutely not stepping out half a step. At the same time, he cautiously used the intelligence system of Maple Leaf Mountain City to casually inquire about the subsequent events in the Demonize area.

Since they couldn't send the giant cauldron back, and now that Meng Zhang was in Maple Leaf Mountain City, he naturally had to thoroughly study this treasure. Obtaining the giant cauldron had involved significant risks for Meng Zhang and the entire Taiyi Sect, with almost all the Gold Core Daoist Masters of the sect coming out to make it happen.

This treasure, called the Void Cauldron, was an extremely rare and precious Fourth Rank magic tool. It contained a vast independent space where many of Taiyi Sect's heritage treasures and scriptures were stored.

The most crucial Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra, complete practice methods, experiences, and insights left by the predecessors who practiced this technique, as well as the experiences and insights of the predecessors who broke through the Primordial Spirit stage were all stored in the small world within the Void Cauldron.

#### Chapter 690: Tool Spirit

This Void Cauldron is of extremely high quality. Even an ordinary Primordial Spirit True Monarch without mastering the Taiyi Sect's secret techniques would find it difficult to control this magic tool. The uses of the Void Cauldron are boundless, but Taiyi Sect's junior cultivators with insufficient Cultivation Base can hardly unleash its main functions. They can only barely control it with some inherited secret techniques from the sect.

Even Gold Core Daoist Masters like Extreme Sword Spirit General cannot effectively utilize this magic tool. Initially, after the Taiyi Sect was rebuilt, they barely used this magic tool as if it were a hidden treasure.

Speaking of the Void Cauldron, it carries many mysterious colors and stories. After the peak of Taiyi Sect was annihilated, the Void Cauldron that was originally placed at the mountain gate suddenly turned into light and disappeared.

After the mountain gate incident, external cultivators of Taiyi Sect learned about the great changes that occurred within and rushed back to the sect. Some, however, quickly fled upon being alerted.

Among them was a Gold Core Daoist Master named Zhou Qing, who was also on his way back to the sect.

Although Zhou Qing was a Gold Core Daoist Master, he was inconspicuous during the peak of Taiyi Sect. Among the Gold Core Daoist Masters, there was a distinction in status. The sect valued true disciples and Primordial Spirit seeds. Daoist Masters like Zhou Qing mostly handled specific sect affairs, had some power, but were not part of the core leadership and couldn't control the sect's major decisions.

The Void Cauldron, which transformed into light, unexpectedly flew onto Zhou Qing's path, blocking his way and revealing its form as a giant cauldron. Zhou Qing received some information from the Void Cauldron and immediately halted his return to the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate. Instead, he gathered the scattered Taiyi Sect disciples and led them northwards, far away to the Middle-Earth Continent.

Zhou Qing and the group of disciples fled to the northern edge of the Grand Crossing Mountain Range on the Middle-Earth Continent and rebuilt the Taiyi Sect there. Although Zhou Qing's Cultivation Base was average and not outstanding among the Gold Core Daoist Masters, he possessed great skill and capability. He managed to unite the scattered Taiyi Sect disciples and rebuild the sect together, leading to its prosperity for hundreds of years.

After the reconstruction of Taiyi Sect, the Void Cauldron, being the most important heirloom of the sect, was always enshrined at the mountain gate. Unfortunately, Zhou Qing had already passed away during meditation when the demonic calamity erupted.

After several Guardian Spirit Generals awakened, they mentioned Zhou Qing's contributions to Taiyi Sect in front of Meng Zhang. These lofty Guardian Spirit Generals held great admiration for Zhou Qing, stating that if he had still been in charge during the demonic calamity, the Taiyi Sect might not have faced its downfall. Due to the crucial role the Void Cauldron played in the reconstruction of Taiyi Sect, the later disciples, including the Guardian Spirit Generals, held deep reverence for this treasure. In fact, Fourth Rank magic tools, also known as treasured tools, mostly have their own tool spirit.

As a special kind of living being, Tool Spirits possess independent intelligence, and some of them are even smarter than humans. Within the Taiyi Sect, there are some Tool Spirits with ancient qualifications, and junior disciples even regard them as elders.

The Void Cauldron also has a Tool Spirit, but most of the time, it remains in a dormant state and rarely appears in front of Taiyi Sect cultivators. This Tool Spirit holds a unique position and remains indifferent to the high-ranking elders and affairs of the rebuilt Taiyi Sect. The sect, now only a Gold

Core sect, lacks Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, so it cannot fully refine the Void Cauldron and completely control this Fourth Rank magic tool.

During the outbreak of the demonic calamity, when the Taiyi Sect mountain gate was about to be breached, the Gold Core Daoist Masters of the sect tried to take the Void Cauldron and break through to safety. However, for some unknown reason, the Void Cauldron didn't cooperate and refused to leave the Taiyi Sect mountain gate. The Gold Core Daoist Masters exhausted all their methods, but they couldn't persuade the Void Cauldron.

Apart from its mysterious nature, the Void Cauldron had been in the Taiyi Sect mountain gate for hundreds of years and stored many crucial items related to the sect's heritage. Under no circumstances could the people of Taiyi Sect ignore it and let it fall into the hands of demons.

In desperation, the Gold Core Daoist Masters had to use secret techniques to stimulate a special ability of the Void Cauldron. It utilized the power of the Space Grand Dao to escape the surface space and hide in the spatial interstice. The Void Cauldron remained hidden in this spatial interstice for hundreds of years, without appearing in the outside world.

Now, Extreme Sword Spirit General and Deep Earth Spirit General have arrived at the entrance where the Void Cauldron originally escaped into the spatial interstice. They used the inherited secret techniques of the sect to elicit a response from the Void Cauldron and bring it out from the spatial interstice.

Before performing the ritual, Extreme Sword Spirit General was worried that the Void Cauldron might refuse to leave the Taiyi Sect mountain gate, just like it did before. Fortunately, this time the Void Cauldron cooperated and didn't give them any trouble, allowing them to take it away from the mountain gate.

However, when the Void Cauldron left the spatial interstice, it caused a change that led to the collapse of the spatial interstice, creating a powerful spatial storm that engulfed the entire mountain peak where the Taiyi Sect mountain gate was located, along with a massive number of demons, all sucked into an alternate dimension.

Now, facing the treasure that is the Void Cauldron placed in front of him, Meng Zhang feels somewhat troubled. Normally, since the Void Cauldron possesses a Tool Spirit with high intelligence, it should have some understanding of their current situation.

Several Guardian Spirit Generals had met the Tool Spirit of the Void Cauldron hundreds of years ago. Although the Tool Spirit didn't pay much attention to them at the time, they should have recognized each other and not be strangers.

Tool Spirits, being unique beings, have extremely long lifespans that far exceed most Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. A few hundred years is not too long for a Tool Spirit.

On their way back, the four Guardian Spirit Generals, including Extreme Sword Spirit General, took turns trying to communicate with the Tool Spirit of the Void Cauldron. However, this Tool Spirit was too aloof and did not respond at all. Now, the four Guardian Spirit Generals feel a bit embarrassed.

They had all mastered some of the sect's inherited secret techniques and could barely activate this Fourth Rank magic tool. However, that required the Tool Spirit to give up resistance and actively cooperate with them to make it work. But now, the Tool Spirit pays no attention to them, rendering the secret techniques they know ineffective.