

## Sect Master 691

### Chapter 691: Past events

After the reconstruction of the Taiyi Sect, the interior of the Void Cauldron has always been considered the most reliable secret treasury, where the most important items of the sect are stored, including inheritance scriptures and the like. Before the sect's mountain gate was breached, they had put all sorts of valuable resources into it, knowing that they wouldn't be able to take them away.

Currently, within the Void Cauldron, everything Meng Zhang needs is stored. However, without the permission of the Void Cauldron's tool spirit, no one can take anything out of it.

The four Guardian Spirit Generals have tried various methods to communicate with the tool spirit of the Void Cauldron, but it remains indifferent, providing no response whatsoever. Faced with no other option, the Extreme Sword Spirit General had Meng Zhang come and try it personally.

As the contemporary Sect Master of Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang holds a high position in the sect, and even if the elders have a bad temper or a significant presence, they should still give him some face. However, to his embarrassment, the tool spirit of the Void Cauldron completely ignores him, despite his attempts to communicate.

If it were not for the previous encounters when the Extreme Sword Spirit General and the Deep Earth Spirit General sensed the presence of the tool spirit during the collection of the Void Cauldron, Meng Zhang would have suspected that the tool spirit had already dissipated long ago.

It puzzles everyone why the tool spirit of the Void Cauldron refuses to acknowledge even the face of the Sect Master.

After discussions among the four Guardian Spirit Generals, they speculate that the Void Cauldron might not recognize Meng Zhang as the Taiyi Sect Sect Master due to his identity not being formally recognized by the Void Cauldron.

Meng Zhang did not appoint himself as the Taiyi Sect Sect Master; he was the successor chosen by the previous Sect Master. Despite Taiyi Sect's turbulent history and being devastated three times, the lineage has remained unbroken and orderly. The mountain gate of Taiyi Sect, after multiple relocations, still houses the tablets of the past ancestors.

Meng Zhang's legitimacy as the Taiyi Sect Sect Master is unquestionable and respected, yet the Void Cauldron seems to disregard him completely, suggesting a lack of recognition for his position.

Feeling powerless and unsure of what to do, Meng Zhang recalls a memory from the past when he first took over Taiyi Sect. He discovered a record in the Sect Master's journal, which led him to establish a covenant with a Ghost Deity connected to the ancestral Trial Grounds of the Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang isn't the type to conceal much from people he trusts, and being a person of trust, he confided in the four Guardian Spirit Generals, who have always been loyal and devoted to the sect. They were privy to most of the sect's secrets.

As the four Guardian Spirit Generals fell into contemplation, Meng Zhang hesitated for a moment and shared an old story with them. However, to enter the Trial Ground, one needs to be a Refining Qi stage cultivator with a powerful Soul. As a time traveler, Meng Zhang possesses a significantly stronger Soul compared to an ordinary person.

Being a time traveler is Meng Zhang's biggest secret, and he has always been careful to keep related matters strictly confidential, never revealing them.

Of course, this secret doesn't hinder him from attending to his duties. After Meng Zhang's own Soul power and Cultivation Base greatly advanced, he became unable to enter the Trial Ground again. However, he continued to pay attention to the Refining Qi stage disciples within the sect to see if any of them could meet the requirements for entry. Yet, individuals with such exceptional talents and a powerful Soul like Meng Zhang's were exceedingly rare, almost one in a million.

Over the years, Taiyi Sect had accepted several thousand disciples, but not a single one met the necessary criteria. As a result, the secret of the Trial Ground remained preserved in Meng Zhang's mind.

Now, hearing the four Guardian Spirit Generals speak about Taiyi Sect's past, Meng Zhang suddenly recalled this particular incident. Hesitating for a moment, he decided to share this past event with them, withholding very little information except for his identity as a time traveler.

After listening to Meng Zhang's account, the four Guardian Spirit Generals exchanged glances. The others had no clue, but Extreme Sword Spirit General spoke up after inquiring carefully about the details of Meng Zhang's worship of the Ghost Deity, ensuring Meng Zhang's respectful and cautious approach before he breathed a sigh of relief.

According to the Sect Master's journal, the Ghost Deity Meng Zhang worshiped had established an agreement with the ancestors of Taiyi Sect during its flourishing period to aid young disciples in entering the Trial Ground.

In reality, if it weren't for the firm assurance of this Ghost Deity's reliability in the Sect Master's journal, Meng Zhang would not have dared to worship an unknown deity. Although he was just a Refining Qi stage cultivator at the time, he had received proper training in Taiyi Sect and possessed enough common sense not to casually worship unfamiliar deities, especially those residing in the netherworld like Ghost Deities, as they were often capricious and merciless.

Countless predecessors in the Cultivation World had paid with their lives and blood to teach this lesson. When a Ghost Deity abided by an agreement, it acted like an emotionless contractual machine. However, when the terms were exceeded, it could turn into a malevolent god of death, taking lives without hesitation.

Out of caution, besides worshiping the Ghost Deity before entering the Trial Ground, Meng Zhang had never done so at any other time. Even after becoming a Gold Core Daoist Master, he was still reluctant to easily interact with Ghost Deities of the netherworld.

By bringing up this past event now, Meng Zhang felt a sense of urgency and desperation, as well as an intuitive connection in his heart. He wanted to know if this Ghost Deity had any connection with Taiyi Sect's ancestors.

Upon hearing Meng Zhang's words, Extreme Sword Spirit General praised his cautiousness and carefulness. Then he proceeded to speculate on the origin of this Ghost Deity.

#### Chapter 692: Sacrificial Offering

The records in the Sect Master's chronicle do not contain detailed information about this Ghost Deity's origins, only mentioning that an agreement was made between the entity and the ancestors of the Taiyi Sect during their heyday. However, the information in the chronicle is not entirely accurate. It was not because the previous Sect Master deliberately concealed anything, but rather due to their limited knowledge and experience, which restricted their understanding.

After the reconstruction of Taiyi Sect in the Grand Crossing Mountain Range, much of the information about Taiyi Sect during its prime slowly vanished. Extreme Sword Spirit General, as one of the elders who survived from Taiyi Sect's prime, holds many secrets of the sect. He keeps this knowledge close to his chest and will not easily reveal what he knows unless necessary, even to fellow disciples.

Upon contemplation, Extreme Sword Spirit General shared some information he possesses. During Taiyi Sect's prime, many formidable cultivators emerged within the sect. Besides those who followed the conventional path of cultivation, there were others who pursued alternative routes, such as the path of the Ghost Deity, a relatively rare Grand Dao practice.

Cultivators with at least a Gold Core-level cultivation base, due to certain circumstances, could willingly discard their physical bodies and actively invest their Souls into the Netherworld, embarking on the path of the Ghost Deity.

The Ghost Deity Grand Dao is fundamentally different from the evil path of Ghost Cultivation. Instead, it is considered a branch of the righteous path. To walk the path of the Ghost Deity, one must abandon everything in the mortal world and cultivate their pure Soul in the Netherworld.

Extreme Sword Spirit General is not very familiar with the specific cultivation methods of the Ghost Deity path. Moreover, he knows very little about the situation in the Netherworld.

With Taiyi Sect's profound heritage during its prime, a significant number of cultivators chose the path of the Ghost Deity. Among these cultivators, some achieved remarkable accomplishments and became powerful Ghost Deities.

Once a cultivator transforms into a Ghost Cultivator, their temperament often undergoes a drastic change. Similarly, embarking on the path of the Ghost Deity also has a considerable impact on one's temperament. Furthermore, after entering the Netherworld and achieving success in cultivation, it becomes difficult to interfere with matters in the mortal world.

Even cultivators from the same sect or family, upon becoming Ghost Deities, may not care as much about their previous sect or family and may regard their former fellow disciples and kin as strangers. This is a common occurrence.

However, Ghost Deities who were originally from Taiyi Sect tend to evoke a sense of closeness among Taiyi Sect cultivators. Compared to other Ghost Deities, they are seemingly more reliable.

During its prime, a Taiyi Sect Primordial Spirit True Monarch paid a considerable price to communicate with fellow Ghost Deities in the Netherworld and reach an agreement for mutual benefits. The Ghost Deity that Meng Zhang worshipped back then was probably an ancestor of Taiyi Sect. In accordance with the agreement with the previous Primordial Spirit True Monarch of Taiyi Sect, this Ghost Deity guided eligible junior disciples of Taiyi Sect into the Trial Ground.

After all, Taiyi Sect was an extremely powerful Primordial Spirit sect during its prime, far stronger than the entire Jiuqu League. Before the tragedy of their sect's annihilation, their predecessors undoubtedly left behind various measures.

For instance, when Zhou Qing Daoist Master obtained the Void Cauldron and gathered fellow disciples to escape and rebuild Taiyi Sect in the vicinity of the Grand Crossing Mountain Range, it should have been one of the measures left behind by Taiyi Sect's ancestors.

Since there were predecessors from Taiyi Sect who achieved Ghost Deity status in the Netherworld, it is possible that they made some arrangements there.

At least, according to Extreme Sword Spirit General and the other four Guardian Spirit Generals' knowledge, there were no remaining senior experts from Taiyi Sect in the mortal world. To gain recognition as the Sect Master by the Void Cauldron, Meng Zhang may have to delve into the Netherworld and seek the assistance of the previous Ghost Deities. Extreme Sword Spirit General suggested that Meng Zhang could once again worship that Ghost Deity.

Firstly, this person is likely an ancestor of Taiyi Sect, and there should be some connection between the older and younger generations. Even if they are unwilling to provide help beyond the agreement, they should not harm the junior.

Secondly, during Meng Zhang's worship, the four Guardian Spirit Generals will be guarding nearby. If anything goes wrong, they can help Meng Zhang interrupt the ritual and escape in time. This is the mortal world after all, and even a powerful Ghost Deity's abilities are greatly restricted here, unable to do as they please.

When Meng Zhang dared to worship this Ghost Deity in the past, it was because he believed in the records in the Sect Master's chronicle. Worshiping the Ghost Deity to seek passage to the Trial Ground was a covenant between Taiyi Sect's ancestors and the Ghost Deity. However, performing such a ritual for other purposes beyond the agreement could be dangerous.

Therefore, Extreme Sword Spirit General did not force Meng Zhang to agree but simply offered his suggestion.

Meng Zhang had gone through tremendous difficulties to obtain the Void Cauldron, but due to the tool spirit's rejection, he failed in his efforts. He felt unwilling to accept this setback. After considering Extreme Sword Spirit General's proposal, he found the risks manageable and acceptable. However, he did not immediately agree and asked for some time to contemplate.

Though Meng Zhang had never proactively revealed his identity as a Diviner, he had used the Tianji Art (heavenly calculation technique) multiple times within the sect and had not shied away from trustworthy fellow disciples. Some close cultivators within the sect had speculated about his identity as a Diviner, but Meng Zhang never mentioned it, and no one dared to probe into his secrets.

Within Maple Leaf Mountain City, there were naturally secluded places arranged for high-ranking members of the sect like Meng Zhang to meditate. After returning to his secluded chamber, Meng Zhang focused and used the Grand Evolving Fortune and calculated the risks of this action.

The Ghost Deity was estimated to be at least a Fourth Rank Ghost Deity, and Meng Zhang's calculations did not anticipate an unexpected failure.

When Meng Zhang's cultivation base was lower, the Tianji Art had helped him numerous times. Now that his cultivation base was higher, he encountered stronger opponents, and he increasingly felt the limitations of the Tianji Art. For instance, he had previously attempted to calculate the details of areas infested with demonic creatures but failed.

Areas heavily occupied by demonic creatures inherently resisted the influence of the heavenly dao. Even though the creatures there were at most Third Rank, their existence was inherently forbidden by the heavenly dao, making the Tianji Art less effective in such areas. However, there were also many situations where the Tianji Art proved useful.

For instance, before the ambush in Daoist Master Mountain Garden, Meng Zhang had secretly used the Tianji Art and obtained results with minimal risks and significant rewards. With this outcome, he dared to mobilize Taiyi Sect's experts and attempt the ambush.

Although Meng Zhang hadn't calculated the specific consequences of worshipping the Ghost Deity this time, he also did not sense any fatal danger. Despite facing a much stronger opponent, his Spiritual Awareness might not be reliable, but after careful consideration, Meng Zhang decided to accept Extreme Sword Spirit General's suggestion.

With his decision made, Meng Zhang no longer delayed and immediately prepared to act. Although years had passed, he vividly remembered all the details of the previous worship of the Ghost Deity.

He quickly arranged the ritual, prepared the offerings, and under the watchful eyes of the four Guardian Spirit Generals, he began to worship the Ghost Deity.

With a sincere and respectful demeanor, Meng Zhang knelt down, performed the ceremony with utmost devotion, and began praying fervently.

#### Chapter 693: Shou Zheng

Meng Zhang completed the entire sacrificial process honestly and displayed extreme sincerity. As soon as he finished the ritual, there was an immediate response in the area. Meng Zhang deliberately chose a spacious and quiet room, and suddenly, a cold and bone-chilling yin wind blew in.

The chilling yin wind swept through, causing even the Gold Core cultivators present to shiver with cold. Though they had some anticipation beforehand, the speed of the response after the ritual was completed still greatly exceeded everyone's expectations.

Accompanying the yin wind, a small black hole suddenly appeared above Meng Zhang's head. Within the black hole, it seemed like a vortex was constantly spinning.

Meng Zhang was momentarily stunned, and then his inspiration was triggered, sensing a mysterious idea. He hesitated for a moment, glanced at the four Guardian Spirit Generals, and whispered, "Keep an eye on my physical body; I'll be back shortly."

With those words, Meng Zhang sat cross-legged, focused his mind, and stabilized his consciousness. As he operated his cultivation method, a vague shadow appeared above his head. If one looked closely, they would find that the appearance and form of this shadow were extremely similar to Meng Zhang himself.

This was Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit, which had just separated from his physical body. Even a cultivator in the early Foundation Building stage could easily achieve the separation of their Yin Spirit. As they progressed to the mid and late stages of Foundation Building or even the Gold Core stage, the Yin Spirit could wander freely and even possess other beings, which were basic abilities.

As for a Daoist Master in the Gold Core stage, the abilities of the Yin Spirit were even greater. They could travel great distances, manipulate objects, and bewilder spirits...

Of course, precisely because everyone knew this, when killing cultivators in the Foundation Building stage or Gold Core Daoist Masters, they would remember to eradicate the roots by destroying their Yin Spirits along with their physical bodies.

As long as one had not achieved the Primordial Spirit stage, regardless of their abilities, the Yin Spirit would become very vulnerable after leaving the physical body. Not only could most of their abilities not be fully displayed, but they also had many weaknesses.

Therefore, it was generally unnecessary, and cultivators would not easily let their Yin Spirits leave their bodies.

When Meng Zhang performed the ritual for that Ghost Deity earlier, he received a message from that Ghost Deity. The black hole before him was a passage leading to a certain place in the Netherworld.

The Ghost Deity invited Meng Zhang to enter the passage and meet with him in the Netherworld.

The Netherworld was a realm belonging to the Soul, and crossing the barriers between the two worlds with one's physical body was extremely difficult. Furthermore, if the physical body was not specially protected in the Netherworld, it would quickly weaken and decay.

From the message, Meng Zhang did not sense any malice; instead, he felt a benevolence, somewhat like that of an elder.

He hesitated for a moment but chose to trust his own Spiritual Awareness and go to the Netherworld to meet the Ghost Deity.

This Ghost Deity was most likely a senior from the Taiyi Sect, and Meng Zhang had no grievances or enmities with him. He couldn't have gone to such great lengths just to lure and kill him, the Taiyi Sect Master.

Meng Zhang's character had two sides: one was cold and ruthless, and the other was kind-hearted. Sometimes he was indecisive and hesitant, while at other times, he was overly impulsive, bordering on reckless.

Meng Zhang was aware of the contradictions in his own character and had tried to analyze them. He had transmigrated to this world with memories from his past life. During his growth, he was influenced by his past memories while also needing to accept the various concepts and ways of survival in this world.

The most difficult thing for a person to change is their inherent nature, and Meng Zhang knew that his character had its issues but was hard to change completely. Now, his impulsive side had the



upper hand. He took the initiative to let his Yin Spirit leave his body and chose to believe that the Ghost Deity meant no harm.

After his Yin Spirit left his body, Meng Zhang nodded slightly at the four Guardian Spirit Generals and then stopped hesitating, diving straight into the black hole above.

As Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit spun within the vortex, he felt dizzy and almost completely lost consciousness. Faintly, he seemed to enter a pitch-black tunnel and instinctively moved swiftly through it.

After an unknown period, Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit finally regained its clear consciousness. He had arrived in a pitch-black space.

The space wasn't large, and darkness surrounded him on all sides. Fortunately, the Yin Spirit did not rely on eyesight, especially a Gold Core Daoist Master's Yin Spirit, which could extend Divine Sense to observe things more clearly than the eyes.

From Meng Zhang's perception, this space was not stable and seemed like it could collapse at any moment. Moreover, from the environment, it was evident that this was no longer the mortal world.

His Yin Spirit felt incredibly comfortable here, as if it had found its true home. There were strange forces permeating the surroundings, continuously nourishing his Yin Spirit, and it was a feeling akin to being in yin qi, which Meng Zhang was very familiar with from his experiences in the Trial Ground. So rich in yin qi, I'm afraid only the Netherworld could possess such a concentration.

As Meng Zhang was observing his surroundings and lost in his thoughts, a dazzling golden figure suddenly descended from the sky and appeared before him. The intense golden light made Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit feel very uncomfortable, and the imposing aura emanating from the figure was captivating, giving Meng Zhang an impulse to kneel down and pay devout respects.

Meng Zhang forcefully suppressed this urge and tried to remain calm. The golden figure seemed to realize the situation and quickly restrained its aura, dimming the golden light considerably.

Through Meng Zhang's Divine Sense, he perceived that this figure was composed purely of golden light.

"I, Meng Zhang, pay my respects to the Honored Deity," Meng Zhang respectfully bowed.

"We don't have much time, let's skip the formalities," the figure said.

"This deity was once known as Shou Zheng within the Taiyi Sect and is now a deity in the Netherworld."

"Shou Zheng Honored Deity..." Meng Zhang's words were interrupted by the Ghost Deity.

"This deity has said before, time is limited. Spare me the pleasantries and just listen to me."

"During the catastrophe that befell the Taiyi Sect, we Netherworld Ghost Deities were also affected due to our connections with the Taiyi Sect, and our fates were affected."

"There were many disciples in the sect who practiced the path of Ghost Deities, but few achieved true success. After the catastrophe, only a few survived."

"This deity narrowly escaped disaster but couldn't interfere with matters in the mortal world due to the separation of yin and yang."

"This deity worked hard to obtain some information about the mortal world. This deity has some understanding of Taiyi Sect's fate of being exterminated three times."

"After Taiyi Sect fled to the Endless Sea of Sand, this deity observed them with a few spells. This deity sees your loyalty to the sect and appreciates it."

"When you performed the ritual for this deity last time, this deity took the opportunity to infiltrate some power into the mortal world."

"This deity noticed your unique Soul and expended great effort to send you to the Trial Ground."

"You did not disappoint this deity, achieving such progress in just three hundred years."

Meng Zhang obediently followed the instructions of this senior from the sect, listening without uttering a single word.

"Before the extermination of Taiyi Sect, the elders in the sect had foreseen it and laid down many measures. However, due to the strength of the opponent, most of these measures were ineffective and easily broken."

"Though I also have some measures here, you won't need them for now. Besides, my power is difficult to directly exert in the mortal world."

"This time, when you perform the ritual for me, what do you request?"

Meng Zhang quickly and concisely stated his request at the fastest speed.

"I see. That old thing, Void Cauldron, always relies on seniority and now dares to disrespect even the Sect Master. Truly unruly."

"If he dares to appear before this deity, this deity will never spare him."

"Alright, this deity will give you a method to communicate with the Netherworld and summon an apparition of this deity. When the time comes, in front of Void Cauldron, summon this deity's apparition, and this deity will handle the matter."

As the golden figure spoke, they pointed with one hand, and a light point flew into Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit.

"Originally, this deity should have helped you more. With the power of this deity's apparition, it could have resisted a Primordial Spirit initial stage cultivator. However, this deity also has major enemies to deal with in the Netherworld and cannot be too distracted, nor should too much power be expended in the mortal world."

"If you want to summon this deity's apparition to confront an enemy, you must prepare high-grade offerings to reduce the consumption of this deity's apparition's power in the mortal world."

"Alright, this deity cannot stay here for long, and the passage connecting the mortal world cannot exist for too long either."

"We will end our conversation here today. After you achieve the Primordial Spirit stage, we can talk in detail."

"Lastly, let me remind you not to think that all Netherworld Ghost Deities are kind-hearted just because of this deity's attitude."

"When dealing with Netherworld Ghost Deities in the future, you must be cautious and never be as careless as you were today."

"Most Ghost Deities are cunning and have no good intentions towards the living. Those like this deity who can retain their true nature and still care for fellow sect members are only a few."

After finishing speaking, without waiting for Meng Zhang's response, the golden figure waved their hand vigorously towards Meng Zhang. Once again, he felt dizzy and entered a certain passage in a daze.

When he regained consciousness, his Yin Spirit had already left the black hole and returned to the quiet room.

Meng Zhang's Yin Spirit returned to its dwelling, and he opened his eyes and stood up from the ground.

At this moment, the black hole above his head had completely disappeared.

Facing the puzzled and concerned gazes of the four Guardian Spirit Generals, Meng Zhang hesitated for a moment, then proactively shared everything he had seen and heard without withholding any details.

After listening to Meng Zhang's account, the four Guardian Spirit Generals fell into silence. After a while, the most experienced Extreme Sword Spirit General spoke first.

"I heard of the name Shou Zheng back when I was in the sect. He was a senior with great fame and formidable abilities in the sect during its heyday."

Extreme Sword Spirit General referred to the Taiyi Sect at its peak. Since he remembered the name, this person who identified as Shou Zheng should undoubtedly be a senior figure in the sect.

After Extreme Sword Spirit General spoke, the other Guardian Spirit Generals also joined the conversation. Although they hadn't heard of Shou Zheng as a senior, they found Meng Zhang's experience convincing, and they felt that this senior was worth trusting.

#### Chapter 694: Projection

Since everyone believes that the Ghost Deity named Shou Zheng, whom Meng Zhang encountered, should be reliable as he is a senior fellow disciple in the sect and worth trusting. Next, with the help of this senior, they will try to suppress the tool spirit of the Void Cauldron.

In the ideas Shou Zheng transmitted to Meng Zhang, there was a ritual to summon his projection to the mortal realm.

With Shou Zheng's full cooperation, the ritual to summon his projection is relatively simple and easy to perform. There is no need for complicated procedures or many steps; just a few simple ones are enough to complete the ritual and bring forth his projection to the mortal realm.

The key to the ritual lies in offering some sacrifices, mostly items with spiritual essence. The higher the level of the offerings, the stronger the projection's power will be.

When Meng Zhang worshipped Shou Zheng in the past, he only used some ordinary and low-quality offerings, which were more symbolic and did not provide much power. Shou Zheng accepted this level of consumption, as he merely opened the passage to the Trial Ground according to the agreement.

However, the current situation is vastly different as they want to summon Shou Zheng's projection to the mortal realm. It is not easy to send a projection through the barriers between the two realms, and maintaining the projection's existence is also a challenge. Shou Zheng has emphasized that he also has significant enemies in the Netherworld and cannot expend too much power on this.

Therefore, if Meng Zhang plans to summon Shou Zheng's projection, he needs to prepare high-quality offerings. As the Gold Core sect, Maple Leaf Mountain City still possesses some accumulation in its treasury. Since this time, they are not summoning Shou Zheng's projection for combat purposes but only to prove Meng Zhang's identity as the Taiyi Sect Master, slightly lower-level offerings and a slightly weaker projection should suffice.

Meng Zhang personally went to search the treasury of Maple Leaf Mountain City and found several suitable offerings. Then, he and four Guardian Spirit Generals came to the chamber where the Void Cauldron was placed.

Standing in a corner of the chamber, Meng Zhang began performing the secret techniques taught by Shou Zheng, using hand gestures and chanting incantations.

After a moment, the offerings placed on the ground in front of him shook, and then they disappeared into thin air.

A black vortex appeared above Meng Zhang's head, and a faint human-shaped shadow leaped out of the vortex and appeared in the chamber.

The human-shaped shadow nodded to Meng Zhang as a sign of acknowledgment and then jumped into the Void Cauldron in front of them.

Both Shou Zheng and the Void Cauldron's tool spirit are senior figures in the sect, and Meng Zhang is unaware of what exchange took place between them inside the cauldron.

After a while, the human-shaped shadow leaped out of the cauldron again and took the initiative to speak to Meng Zhang.

"Alright, the space within the cauldron has been opened to you. You can freely access the items inside."

"Remember, you need to achieve Primordial Spirit as soon as possible to gradually refine this Void Cauldron and thoroughly master it."

The tone of Shou Zheng's projection conveyed an indescribable sense of exhaustion. Those few sentences seemed to have drained all his energy.

After speaking, without waiting for Meng Zhang to express his gratitude, the human-shaped shadow jumped back into the black vortex and disappeared along with it.

Meng Zhang and the four Guardian Spirit Generals glanced at each other and then stepped forward to carefully sense the changes in the Void Cauldron.

...

The tool spirit of the Void Cauldron still didn't pay any attention to Meng Zhang, but he could clearly sense that there was an independent space within the Void Cauldron that had opened up to him, and he could enter it anytime he wanted.

Meng Zhang called the four Guardian Spirit Generals, and one by one, they jumped into the giant cauldron.

Meng Zhang jumped into the cauldron first, and after a familiar feeling of dizziness, he arrived in an unfamiliar space.

It was a vast storeroom filled with numerous shelves, each holding jade slips and jade boxes. The floor was piled with many boxes, giving it a disorderly appearance.

Meng Zhang was surveying the surroundings when the four Guardian Spirit Generals arrived.

Seeing this storage room, the four Guardian Spirit Generals couldn't hide their melancholic expressions. On the eve of Taiyi Sect's main gate being breached, amidst the chaos, the remaining high-level members of the sect stored many items here that were difficult to take away.

The Void Cauldron, being a Fourth Rank magic tool, is a rare treasure, and its tool spirit is an astute and cunning individual. Unless the tool spirit is willing, even an ordinary Primordial Spirit True Monarch would find it challenging to collect this magic tool.

The items stored by Taiyi Sect are well protected, ensuring their safety. It will take a considerable amount of time to clear out this chaotic storage room and sort through the numerous items.

Meng Zhang approached the shelves and carefully searched through them. The scrolls were not too disorderly and had a certain order. It didn't take him too long to find what he needed the most.

In a specially crafted jade box, there was a scripture made of warm jade. It was the complete set of the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra," which recorded the entire set of cultivation methods from the Refining Qi stage to the completion of the Primordial Spirit stage.

In the corners of the jade box, there were also two jade slips. Meng Zhang casually picked them up and gently read them using his Divine Sense. These jade slips contained the cultivation experiences and insights left behind by senior fellow disciples who practiced the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning

Sutra," including annotations and explanations from those who achieved Primordial Spirit through this cultivation method.

With this harvest from the jade box, Meng Zhang not only could complement his main cultivation method but also had the wisdom and experiences of his predecessors as references.

Although every cultivator will eventually walk different paths, and the higher the cultivation level, the greater the differences in individual paths, one should not blindly follow the experiences and lessons of predecessors. However, with these cultivation insights from predecessors, Meng Zhang could avoid many detours and hidden dangers.

To walk a unique cultivation path of his own, he needed to be well-informed and broadly absorb the experiences of his predecessors. Even if all other items in this storage room were abandoned, just the contents of this jade box would solve Meng Zhang's major problem and clear the biggest obstacle to reaching the Primordial Spirit stage.

Besides the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" in this jade box, many precious heritage scrolls were stored here, some of which contained secret techniques to break through the Primordial Spirit stage left by senior Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. These were true invaluable treasures that only circulated among major forces and a few powerful individuals in the Cultivation World. Even if an ordinary cultivator spent an enormous amount of resources and paid a significant price, it would be difficult to obtain such teachings.

The four Guardian Spirit Generals were very familiar with this storage room and knew most of its contents. In the following days, Meng Zhang stayed in Maple Leaf Mountain City, reading the newly acquired scrolls, reevaluating his cultivation process, and, with the help of the four Guardian Spirit Generals, categorizing and transferring various items from the storage room into Taiyi Sect's treasury.

#### Chapter 695: Absorption

As Void Cauldron couldn't utilize the Mother-Child Transmission Disc for transportation, it had to remain within Maple Leaf Mountain City. Apart from arranging sufficient defensive forces here, Meng Zhang himself also stayed in this place.

With the existence of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc, instant transmission between Maple Leaf Mountain City and Taiyi Sect's Hundred Grass Slope was possible, making things quite convenient.

However, due to the dwindling stock of Void Nether Stone, they needed to control the number of transfers and reduce unnecessary teleportations. Originally, Meng Zhang thought that the number of



Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect would be sufficient, but after obtaining Maple Leaf Mountain City, he realized that their numbers were still insufficient.

Maple Leaf Mountain City was Taiyi Sect's extension into the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, representing the first expansion in such a distant location and also serving as Taiyi Sect's retreat route. Given its importance, it required careful management.

So far, the cultivators from Taiyi Sect's Hundred Grass Slope who had been sent to Maple Leaf Mountain City were either at the Foundation Building stage or Gold Core Daoist Masters. They not only had to fully control this territory but also thoroughly integrate into the local Cultivation World.

There were numerous affairs to handle in Maple Leaf Mountain City, and many instances where Gold Core Daoist Masters were needed. Even Meng Zhang, as the Sect Master, often had to set aside his own cultivation to deal with various sudden issues.

Fortunately, on the other side of Taiyi Sect's Hundred Grass Slope, there were now a steady stream of cultivators at the Foundation Building stage preparing to break through to the Gold Core stage.

Currently, Taiyi Sect had the ability to provide various assistance to outstanding disciples in their attempt to reach the Gold Core stage, which should significantly improve their success rate.

Perhaps with the appearance of a new group of Gold Core cultivators, the current shortage of manpower in Taiyi Sect could be alleviated.

Of course, amidst the busy schedule, Meng Zhang did not neglect his own cultivation. He carefully read various newly acquired classics, supplemented his main cultivation techniques, and diligently pondered various ways to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage.

Yellow Lotus Sect's Saintess Xu Mengying returned to Maple Leaf Mountain City not long after taking away the captured Daoist Master Smiling Lotus. A part of Yellow Lotus Sect's forces remained in Maple Leaf Mountain City, making it convenient for Xu Mengying to contact Meng Zhang.

This time, she came here to fulfill her promise. She informed Meng Zhang that she couldn't return to Jiuqu League temporarily due to some matters in the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle. Nevertheless, she gave Meng Zhang a jade pendant and provided him with a way to contact her.

Using this method of contact, Meng Zhang could secretly communicate with one of Xu Mengying's trusted confidants in Yellow Lotus Sect and obtain the classics and Nine Heavens Refined Essence that Xu Mengying had promised him. After conveying this matter, Xu Mengying hurriedly left.

With a lot on his plate and being the Sect Master, Meng Zhang couldn't personally handle every matter. Therefore, he entrusted this task to his senior disciple, Niu Dawei, and asked him to arrange for the Gold Core Daoist Masters in the sect to deal with it.

Not long after, Niu Dawei arrived in front of Meng Zhang with two jade bottles and a pile of jade slips. The two jade bottles contained Nine Heavens Refined Essence, specially stored using a unique technique. In terms of quantity, even if used by two to three Gold Core Daoist Masters, it would be more than enough.

The pile of jade slips contained the classics that Xu Mengying had promised Meng Zhang. They were mainly about cultivation hundred arts rather than cultivation techniques. Actually, several Guardian Spirit Generals cleared out many heritage classics from the space within Void Cauldron. Besides Taiyi Sect's various heritage cultivation techniques, the majority of the content was related to cultivation hundred arts.

For Taiyi Sect, this pile of classics from Yellow Lotus Sect wasn't particularly necessary at the moment. However, one can never have too many classics. Each additional one adds to the foundation of the sect. Moreover, some seemingly unnecessary classics might prove to be of great use someday.

During the struggle with True Monarch Mountain Peak, Yellow Lotus Sect's Saintess Xu Mengying ended up on the losing side. She was not only betrayed by her trusted followers but also pursued by Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others, nearly captured.

Meng Zhang had previously underestimated her, thinking that her situation within Yellow Lotus Sect must be unfavorable. However, looking at the things before him, Xu Mengying didn't even need to handle them personally; she could obtain these items through remote control of her trusted subordinates. It seemed that she held significant power within Yellow Lotus Sect.

During the confrontation with True Monarch Mountain Peak, Xu Mengying should be able to play a substantial role.

After carefully inspecting the Nine Heavens Refined Essence in the two jade bottles, Meng Zhang confirmed that there were no issues, and they could be used normally.

For a Primordial Spirit True Monarch to obtain Nine Heavens Refined Essence from the Nine Heavens, luck often played a significant role. Being able to gather so much Nine Heavens Refined Essence indicated that the senior Primordial Spirit cultivators in Yellow Lotus Sect had expended considerable effort. This was the heritage of a Primordial Spirit sect that had lasted for thousands of years.

Primordial Spirit True Monarchs within the sect could provide various conditions to help their junior disciples overcome various obstacles. The accumulation of these various aspects made it easier for the Gold Core Daoist Masters of a major sect to successfully advance to the Primordial Spirit stage.

Having obtained the Nine Heavens Refined Essence, Meng Zhang temporarily set aside all sect matters and began to concentrate on closed-door cultivation. As he slowly absorbed and refined the Nine Heavens Refined Essence, his Cultivation Base became purer and more refined.

Since he had previously consumed many Golden Firm Nuts and strengthened his physical body, his absorption and refinement speed of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence far surpassed that of an ordinary Gold Core late-stage cultivator.

After Taiyi Sect gained control of Maple Leaf Mountain City, they gradually obtained quite a bit of information from the original intelligence channels in the city, which provided some general information about the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle. Though not particularly confidential, it was barely sufficient for Taiyi Sect's needs.

Meng Zhang's most concerning news was whether the major sects in the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle had any significant reactions to the disturbance caused by their intrusion into the region inhabited by the demonic creatures. He felt a bit uneasy when thinking about leading many Gold Core Daoist Masters to forcefully enter that area and create such a commotion.

Although Meng Zhang and his group had concealed their tracks well, leaving no clues, given the level of attention the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle paid to that particular region, he assumed the various major forces wouldn't let it slide easily.

However, the actual situation turned out to be completely unexpected for Meng Zhang. According to the intelligence received in Maple Leaf Mountain City, the major forces of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle showed complete indifference to the incident. They only dispatched a team of Gold Core Daoist Masters to investigate the area occupied by the demonic creatures, and after a cursory examination, they took no further action.

Their arrival and departure were hasty, and they didn't bother to conduct a detailed investigation; it seemed like they were just going through the motions, merely handling official business.

Although Meng Zhang didn't know what the major forces in the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle were thinking or why they exhibited such behavior, the fact that they didn't cling to the matter or conduct a large-scale pursuit allowed him to finally breathe a sigh of relief.

#### Chapter 696: Return

Meng Zhang's attention is on another piece of information, which is the journey of the Jiuqu League delegation on the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle side.

Currently, Taiyi Sect is still making a living on the Jiuqu League's territory and naturally needs to pay enough attention to various major events of the Jiuqu League. The changes in the situation of the Jiuqu League and its surroundings will affect Taiyi Sect's living environment.

This time, Jiuqu League dispatched three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, leading the delegation to Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, attempting to establish contact with the power there and jointly resist the expanding Dali Dynasty.

According to the original plan of the Jiuqu League's high-level, the best scenario would be for Jiuqu League and Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle to form an alliance to jointly confront the Dali Dynasty. In the worst case, effective communication with the major forces in Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle is necessary to obtain some assistance from them.

Although the intelligence capabilities of Maple Leaf Mountain City are limited and unable to obtain specific details about the Jiuqu League delegation, the rumors circulating on the market seem to indicate that the results of the delegation's mission are not very promising.

It appears that the major forces in Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle are not very welcoming to the arrival of the Jiuqu League delegation. The delegation encountered obstacles everywhere and couldn't meet with the true top-level cultivators of Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle.

Even if certain forces treated the Jiuqu League delegation cordially out of respect for the three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, they were not interested in further cooperation with the Jiuqu League.

Although Jiuqu League cultivators are unfamiliar with the environment there, the Four Seas Commercial Firm has been rooted in Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle for many years and wields considerable influence.

Despite attempting to communicate through the channels of the Four Seas Commercial Firm, the Jiuqu League still didn't make much progress in their mission.

In the blink of an eye, almost two years have passed.

The three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs do not have the luxury of wasting time here. Eventually, the Jiuqu League delegation left a few representatives behind to continue contacting and communicating with the major forces of Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, while the majority of the delegation, led by the three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, is preparing to return to the Jiuqu League.

Upon hearing this news, Meng Zhang temporarily put aside everything in Maple Leaf Mountain City and, together with Extreme Sword Spirit General, set off for Tiger Mountain City to rendezvous with the Jiuqu League delegation.

Meng Zhang has his own considerations for this extra step. Firstly, he plans to leverage Taiyi Sect's Sect Master's influence within the delegation to contact well-informed individuals and obtain the latest information about the mission.

Considering the threat posed by the Dali Dynasty to Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect would also be affected. Any foresighted Jiuqu League cultivator would surely be concerned about matters related to this.

Secondly, Meng Zhang is boarding the Fourth Rank Cloud Boat of the delegation to return to Jiuqu League to avoid easily exposing Taiyi Sect's secret of possessing the Mother-Child Transmission Disc.

This secret might not be entirely unknown. During the previous battle between Taiyi Sect and the Sea Clan's army, they used the Mother-Child Transmission Disc to send reinforcements from Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, Hundred Grass Slope, to Red Rock Valley.

Although there was the protection of a Third Rank defense great formation, the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs might not have been able to see the specific situation inside Red Rock Valley clearly. However, Jin Li True Monarch is more familiar with Taiyi Sect's situation, and she might suspect the existence of a secret method of instantaneous transmission.

Jin Li True Monarch is a magnanimous person who wouldn't bother to pry into Taiyi Sect's secrets.

With the protection of Jin Li True Monarch, True Monarch Azure Mist also didn't delve deep into this matter at the time. Besides, there shouldn't be anyone else who could guess that Taiyi Sect possesses a means of instantaneous transmission.

The Mother-Child Transmission Disc is a true strategic tool that relates to Taiyi Sect's layout and troop movements. To protect this secret, Meng Zhang is willing to pay a significant price. Disciples of Taiyi Sect who were transported through the Mother-Child Transmission Disc were all placed under strict orders not to leak any information.

Similarly, the cultivators from the Hanhai Dao Alliance who used the Mother-Child Transmission Disc were also prohibited by Taiyi Sect disciples from disclosing anything about it. In all honesty, if it weren't for the fact that those cultivators from the Hanhai Dao Alliance fought for Taiyi Sect and suffered heavy casualties, Meng Zhang would have ordered them to be silenced.

However, fortunately, he still had certain boundaries in his heart, and these cultivators didn't know the specifics of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc, so he didn't issue such a cruel order.

No matter what, Taiyi Sect used various means and paid a considerable price to keep the secret of the Mother-Child Transmission Disc well protected. As the Sect Master, Meng Zhang is willing to endure a bit of inconvenience and delay to protect this secret.

After arriving in Tiger Mountain City with Extreme Sword Spirit General, Meng Zhang boarded the Fourth Rank Cloud Boat and set off on the journey back to Jiuqu League. Taking advantage of his status as a member of the delegation, Meng Zhang moved around on the Cloud Boat and finally had the nerve to approach Daoist Master Zhu Liangyu.

Zhu Liangyu had previously resolved a conflict between Meng Zhang and the Daoist Master Mountain Garden. Afterwards, he even received instructions from his master, True Monarch Profound Wind, not to get involved in the dispute between Yellow Lotus Sect and Meng Zhang. He was told to act as if he knew nothing about the dispute.

When Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General returned to the delegation on time, the Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others who had conflicts with Meng Zhang were still missing. Zhu Liangyu keenly sensed that something might be amiss, but he was unwilling to stir up trouble and pretended not to see this matter. He consoled himself, thinking that perhaps Daoist Master

Mountain Garden and the others missed the rendezvous with the delegation and found another way to return to Jiuqu League or had other matters to attend to in Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle.

When Meng Zhang took the initiative to approach him, Zhu Liangyu received him with a cold face. Fortunately, Meng Zhang didn't give him a hard time; he only inquired about some matters regarding the delegation's mission. These things weren't really earth-shattering secrets. Although the Jiuqu League's high-level didn't publicize them deliberately, capable cultivators would always find a way to know.

Zhu Liangyu didn't conceal anything and told Meng Zhang the truth. The results of the Jiuqu League delegation's mission were worse than the rumors. The major forces in Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle were very hostile towards the Jiuqu League. It was already good enough if they didn't become enemies, let alone forming an alliance with Jiuqu League.

The delegation encountered cold reception and obstacles everywhere. If it weren't for the presence of the three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, the delegation might have suffered accidents by now. As for the reasons for this situation, no one in the Jiuqu League delegation knew. The level of animosity Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle showed towards Jiuqu League was beyond everyone's expectations.

As a member of Jiuqu League, Meng Zhang began to have a vague sense of unease. This feeling partly came from his Diviner's Spiritual Awareness and partly from analyzing the situation.

Chapter 697: One after another from the core

Jiuqu League could not obtain any assistance from the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, and in the future, they may have to face the expansion of the Dali Dynasty alone. In this situation, even Meng Zhang, who holds little influence, and the powerful Primordial Spirit figures within the alliance, are likely to be at a loss.

Realizing he had no say in such matters, Meng Zhang could only sigh after hearing this news. Having learned everything he needed to know, he bid farewell politely to Zhu Liangyu and returned to his compartment aboard the Cloud Boat.

Having interacted with Zhu Liangyu a few times, Meng Zhang found him to be a decent person, not difficult to deal with. He felt a sense of urgency; not only did he need to break through to the Primordial Spirit realm as soon as possible, but Taiyi Sect also needed to enhance its strength to face the upcoming challenges.

During the journey back to Jiuqu League, both Cloud Boats, being Fourth Rank vessels, returned smoothly and without any trouble. On their way to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, they had

encountered a Fourth Rank demonic beast attack. However, on the way back, it seemed the presence of three Primordial Spirit True Monarchs was enough to deter the Fourth Rank demonic beasts in the Black Jade Forest, avoiding unnecessary confrontations.

After being delayed on the journey, when Meng Zhang returned to Jiuqu City, the headquarters of Jiuqu League, he only visited the triumphant Jin Li True Monarch briefly before hurrying back to the sect's gate. Once he arrived at Taiyi Sect's gate, Meng Zhang wholeheartedly immersed himself in his cultivation, ignoring everything else.

During this time, several major events occurred within Taiyi Sect, but they did not interrupt his practice. When Meng Zhang turned 300 years old, the senior disciple Niu Dawei had planned to organize a grand celebration for his 300th birthday. However, Meng Zhang politely declined the offer, suggesting that Taiyi Sect should maintain a low profile and silently develop for some time.

In reality, not long after Meng Zhang returned from the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, True Monarch Mountain Peak of the Yellow Lotus Sect became aware of the unexpected incident involving Daoist Master Mountain Garden and others they had sent out. Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General had clashed with Daoist Master Mountain Garden's subordinates in plain view beside the Fourth Rank Cloud Boat, and such events were impossible to keep secret.

True Monarch Mountain Peak even sent people to question Meng Zhang and Extreme Sword Spirit General, demanding an explanation of the incident. However, with Taiyi Sect's influence, it was unlikely that True Monarch Mountain Peak could pin the disappearance of Daoist Master Mountain Garden on Meng Zhang based on a minor conflict alone.

Meng Zhang didn't confront them directly but instead had representatives explain the situation to Jin Li True Monarch. Although Jin Li True Monarch might complain about Meng Zhang causing her trouble, she would not sit idly by and allow True Monarch Mountain Peak's baseless provocation to go unchecked.

Having held power among the high-ranking members of Jiuqu League for a long time, Jin Li True Monarch attached great importance to matters of face, and he particularly abhorred such unprovoked provocations from True Monarch Mountain Peak.

Jin Li True Monarch achieved the Primordial Spirit True Monarch realm after True Monarch Mountain Peak, yet she showed no fear towards them. Due to past grievances, she had no pleasant expression for True Monarch Mountain Peak. In the end, thanks to Jin Li True Monarch's protection, the matter was resolved, and True Monarch Mountain Peak could not hold onto it.



Although they passed this hurdle for the time being, Meng Zhang specifically instructed the high-ranking members of the sect to be extra careful and vigilant against the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators. They must not give the Yellow Lotus Sect any chance to exploit their weaknesses.

Meng Zhang himself focused solely on his cultivation, rarely leaving the sect premises. Meanwhile, at the Yuantu Great Prairie, the war led by the Jade Sword Sect intensified, with various factions of the Jiuqu League investing more and more resources. Almost all factions were called upon to participate in the war.

As a member of the Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect could not refuse the league's call to arms, even if they were unwilling. Meng Zhang's cultivation was at a critical stage, making it impossible for him to join the battle. Instead, Niu Dawei, the senior disciple, led the sect's cultivators to respond to the call and participate in the war against the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan.

This level of battle required not only Foundation Building and Refining Qi cultivators but also the participation of Gold Core Daoist Masters. Niu Dawei took most of the elite members of the sect with him, and among the first to be dispatched were five or six Gold Core Daoist Masters.

Consequently, Taiyi Sect faced a shortage of manpower in various aspects, particularly in the number of Gold Core Daoist Masters left behind, leading to several problems.

While in seclusion, Meng Zhang also worried about the losses suffered by Taiyi Sect cultivators in the war.

The conflict at the Yuantu Great Prairie involved a considerable amount of the Jiuqu League's strength, with many high-ranking members of Taiyi Sect taking part.

As a rising figure within the league, Jin Li True Monarch did not directly go to the front lines, but she was given a logistics and transportation task.

Jin Li True Monarch was very considerate of Taiyi Sect and found herself in need of more capable individuals. So, she used her authority to reassign most of the conscripted Taiyi Sect cultivators to work under her in logistics and transportation, providing them with relatively easy tasks.

As a result, Niu Dawei and the Taiyi Sect cultivators he led managed to avoid the intense frontline battles.

Initially, before Niu Dawei set out, Meng Zhang had given him two pseudo-Fourth Rank talismans bestowed by Jin Li True Monarch for self-defense. However, it seemed that Niu Dawei, who didn't need to fight on the battlefield, had no use for these talismans.

The war between the Jiuqu League and the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan at the Yuantu Great Prairie was destined to be a prolonged, protracted conflict with both sides engaging in fierce battles and constant back-and-forth struggles.

While the frontline cultivators suffered heavy casualties, Taiyi Sect in the rear kept receiving good news. Over the years, Taiyi Sect had four Foundation Building cultivators successfully break through to the Gold Core realm. Meng Zhang's second disciple, An Xiaoran, his third disciple, An Moran, and two other younger disciples became new Gold Core Daoist Masters.

With more than ten Gold Core Daoist Masters in Taiyi Sect, their strength surpassed many long-established Gold Core sects. Though the newly promoted Gold Core Daoist Masters needed time to solidify their cultivation base and practice new secret arts and Divine Abilities, at least they could hold their positions and stabilize the sect.

Furthermore, not only Taiyi Sect but the entire Hanhai Dao League witnessed the emergence of new Gold Core Daoist Masters. First, a disciple of Qiaoshou Sect, specially nurtured by Jin Qiao'er, successfully entered the Gold Core realm. Later, a highly talented disciple of Land Walk Sect, who had received great expectations from the entire sect, also became a Gold Core Daoist Master.

#### Chapter 698: Gold Core Completion

In the past, Taiyi Sect might have suppressed other members of the Hanhai Alliance and secretly sabotaged the formation of Gold Core by others. After all, Taiyi Sect itself is just a newly established Gold Core sect. If new Gold Core sects were to emerge under their control, it would certainly affect their grip on the Hanhai Alliance and even their rule.

Similar to how the Flying Swan Sect ruled over the Endless Sea of Sand in the past, they acted in the same manner. As rulers of the Endless Sea of Sand, they wouldn't tolerate any forces that could challenge their authority. Taiyi Sect should learn from their example.

Jin Qiao'er was accepted by Taiyi Sect not only because of her relationship with her master, Jin Li True Monarch, but also because she never sought power and never interfered with Taiyi Sect's rule.

As Taiyi Sect grew stronger and more powerful, the higher-ups in the sect seemed to become more magnanimous and accommodating, able to accept others. Meng Zhang's cultivation at the Gold Core stage was approaching completion, and it seemed that he was not far from breaking through to

the Primordial Spirit stage. Moreover, Taiyi Sect had more than ten Gold Core Daoist Masters, ensuring their overwhelming advantage over all members of the Hanhai Alliance.

At this point, even if a few more Gold Core Daoist Masters emerged within the Hanhai Alliance, it wouldn't affect Taiyi Sect's rule; instead, it would enhance the overall strength of the alliance. Taiyi Sect showed great tolerance in this matter.

During Meng Zhang's seclusion, he maintained some contact with the outside world. Periodically, someone from the sect would summarize the latest news and inform him through a communication talisman. At such times, Meng Zhang would temporarily interrupt his cultivation to issue some instructions to the sect.

As the saying goes, there should be a balance between work and leisure, both in civil and martial ways.

Upon learning that Qiaoshou Sect had a new Gold Core Daoist Master, Meng Zhang considered the current state of their Dustfall Mound, which had a Third Rank spirit vein of low quality, providing limited spiritual energy. Long ago, Meng Zhang had planned to develop the Grand Lion Ridge into a major trading city in the Demon Wind Gobi.

After many years of development, the Grand Lion Ridge had grown substantially and become the foremost market for hundreds of miles around. However, there was still a long way to go before it could become a grand trading city like Great Wind City. Now, most of Taiyi Sect's Gold Core Daoist Masters were deployed outside, and Jin Qiao'er was also trustworthy.

Meng Zhang decided to appoint Jin Qiao'er as the city lord of Grand Lion Ridge, responsible for overseeing all related matters in that vast market. This decision would be beneficial for his future plans.

Even during his seclusion, Meng Zhang delegated some of his responsibilities to the sect's cultivators, instructing them to handle this matter and sending representatives to convey his appointment.

Jin Qiao'er did not refuse Meng Zhang's appointment and quickly took up her post in Grand Lion Ridge.

There were many things inside and outside Taiyi Sect that occupied Meng Zhang's mind, but most of them were handled well by the disciples. This allowed him to focus more of his time and energy on his cultivation.

His cultivation at the Gold Core late stage was progressing quite smoothly, especially with the help of two bottles of Nine Heavens Refined Essence provided by Xu Mengying, which greatly saved him time.

However, Meng Zhang's consumption of the Nine Heavens Refined Essence far exceeded his expectations. Even after thoroughly absorbing and refining the two bottles, he still hadn't completed the Gold Core stage of his cultivation. He had to interrupt his cultivation and venture to the Nine Heavens to personally obtain more Nine Heavens Refined Essence.

Fortunately, he was lucky enough to obtain enough usable Nine Heavens Refined Essence after three trips to the Nine Heavens. With that, he finally completed the remaining part of his cultivation.

The battle between Jiuqu League and extraterritorial Barbarian Clan was still ongoing, but Meng Zhang had hidden himself within the Taiyi Sect mountain gate and finally completed his cultivation at the Gold Core stage, entering the state of Gold Core completion.

At this stage, it seems that breaking through to the Primordial Spirit stage is just a step away, as if it could be achieved at any moment. However, Meng Zhang, who is in this state, knows that there is still a long way to go before he can enter the Primordial Spirit stage.

He has read many useful scriptures and absorbed the experiences of predecessors. However, their experiences can't directly help him enter the Primordial Spirit stage; they only provide a rough direction.

Transitioning from completing the Gold Core stage to breaking through to the Primordial Spirit stage requires more than just closed-door cultivation. There are many tricks and obstacles along the way.

A Primordial Spirit True Monarch can freely manipulate the power of the Grand Dao, which is the fundamental difference between a Primordial Spirit cultivator and other cultivators.

For Meng Zhang to enter the Primordial Spirit stage, besides nurturing the Gold Core and waiting for the critical moment of breaking through to the divine transformation, he also needs to attempt to comprehend the power of the Grand Dao and determine his future path.

Although Meng Zhang has top-grade spiritual roots, their role diminishes during the breakthrough to the Primordial Spirit stage. His spiritual roots possess both Yin and Yang attributes, and he practices the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra." While the Sun-Moon attributes can be seen as equivalent to Yin and Yang attributes, they are not entirely the same.

There are differences between the Sun-Moon Avenue and the Yin Yang Grand Dao. The Yin Yang Grand Dao encompasses a broader range and has greater adaptability. In the universe, there are many places without sun or moon, but places without Yin and Yang are rare.

Meng Zhang has many choices in selecting the Grand Dao. His body attributes make him inclined towards the Yin Yang Grand Dao, and the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" primarily expounds on the Sun-Moon Avenue but extends to the Yin Yang Grand Dao.

Among the Primordial Spirit predecessors who practiced the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" in the Taiyi Sect, some managed to master the power of the Yin Yang Grand Dao through it.

Besides the words "Sun" and "Moon," the sutra also contains the words "Wheel" and "Turning." The Sun-Moon Wheel Turning implies spatial changes and the alternation of time.

If he continues to study this technique in depth, he may even come into contact with the Space Grand Dao and the Time Grand Dao.

The criteria for judging the excellence of a technique are diverse, including ease of cultivation, the magnitude of its power, its associated Divine Abilities, and its upper limit.

In the eyes of the top sects in the Cultivation World, the more Grand Dao aspects a technique encompasses and the deeper it goes, the more potential it has.

From this perspective, the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" being Taiyi Sect's core inheritance and highly valued even during its prime is well-deserved.

To comprehend the rules of the Grand Dao from one's main cultivation technique, it's not enough to merely immerse oneself in cultivation. Apart from a few exceptional geniuses, most Gold Core completion cultivators need to study scriptures and comprehend Daoist texts to sense the existence of the Grand Dao.

Meng Zhang already knew this and, since entering the Gold Core stage, he never neglected his contemplation of scriptures and Daoist texts, no matter how busy he was. Especially after discovering that this comprehension significantly enhanced his Heavenly Prediction Arts, he invested even more effort in it.

#### Chapter 699: Yin Yang Gourd

Although Meng Zhang is extremely eager to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage as soon as possible, he knows that cultivation cannot be rushed; it must proceed step by step. At many times, besides his own efforts, he also needs opportunities.

After a long period of seclusion, Meng Zhang finally left the closed-door secret room and resumed his responsibilities as the Taiyi Sect Master. When he calmed down and began to settle himself, the four Guardian Spirit Generals also brought him a great surprise.

The storeroom in the Void Cauldron's independent space has been almost fully checked. Useful resources have been taken out and transported back to the Taiyi Sect's main gate and stored in the treasury. The inheritance books and the like have been basically copied and sent back to the Hidden Scripture Pavilion of the Taiyi Sect's main gate.

The four Guardian Spirit Generals did not completely empty the space in the Void Cauldron because it is the most reliable secret storage place, capable of storing many important items. Even if the situation in Jiuqu League deteriorates or Taiyi Sect encounters unexpected events, with the treasures in the independent space of the Void Cauldron, Taiyi Sect still has a chance to rise again.

Besides, Maple Leaf Mountain City was originally prepared by Meng Zhang as a retreat for the Taiyi Sect. When Jiuqu League called for Taiyi Sect cultivators to participate in the war at Yuantu Great Prairie, the four Guardian Spirit Generals, being the most powerful force in the sect, naturally had to go.

Many treasures in the storeroom were not marked with their origins, and unless a cultivator had keen eyesight, they wouldn't be able to recognize their true value. It was only when the four Guardian Spirit Generals took turns to return to the main gate for rest that they could be transported to Maple Leaf Mountain City and slowly sort out the items.

In this way, it took several times longer than the originally planned time to finish counting these items. Not to mention the most precious inheritance books, just the various resources inside surpassed the accumulations of many long-established Gold Core sects over the years.

With this harvest, the entire Taiyi Sect was overjoyed. The risks that Meng Zhang took before were completely worth it. All the efforts were not in vain.

Among these items, Meng Zhang also found a treasure that is crucially important to him. It is a gourd exuding abundant spiritual energy, possessing extraordinary divine abilities. In the Cultivation World, there are many kinds of spiritual gourds. However, this particular gourd has exceptional materials and inherently contains the essence of Yin and Yang. In terms of rank, it is a Fourth Rank spiritual item.

It's unknown where Taiyi Sect's predecessors obtained this gourd.

Ordinary cultivators can attempt to refine a natal magic tool after reaching the Foundation Building stage. As the cultivator's cultivation base steadily improves, the natal magic tool can also be upgraded accordingly. However, it is pitiful that Meng Zhang has already cultivated to the Gold Core completion stage, just one step away from achieving the Primordial Spirit stage, but he has not yet refined a natal magic tool.

Although there are many factors contributing to this situation, Meng Zhang's case is far from being treated as a protagonist. Not to mention the natal magic tool, even his magic tools are not that remarkable. His most powerful spiritual weapon, the Spiritsnake Spear, is a damaged item handed down from Taiyi Sect's ancestors. It has experienced many setbacks and was only reluctantly repaired.

As for other magic tools like the Shadow Killing Sword and Fierce Yang Sword, they are not even worth mentioning.

Many cultivators require suitable magic tools to unleash their strongest combat power, and Meng Zhang is no exception. His current magic tools are only slightly better than basic equipment. If he were to be equipped with top-tier gear, his combat prowess could increase significantly. Now that he has obtained this spiritual gourd, it gives him an opportunity to compensate for his equipment shortcomings.

This spiritual gourd possesses qualities in material, attributes, and future development prospects that make it perfect to be refined into Meng Zhang's natal magic tool. After discussing with Shocking Thunder Spirit General, who is a masterful tool refiner, they formulated the final refinement plan. A truly exceptional tool refiner doesn't merely copy the blueprints of predecessors' magic tools but can innovate and create.

For the sake of refining this magic tool, Shocking Thunder Spirit General spent several years researching and gathering numerous materials. When everything was ready, Meng Zhang used his authority as the Sect Master to recall Shocking Thunder Spirit General back to the sect, allowing someone else to take his place in the war.

After much preparation, Shocking Thunder Spirit General and Delicate Water Spirit General joined forces and took turns using water refinement and fire refinement techniques to begin the refinement process. As copious auxiliary materials were poured into it, the spiritual gourd started to undergo various transformations. The Yin and Yang essence within the gourd was awakened, and its original green body turned into a mix of black and white.

Water and fire can also be seen as representations of Yin and Yang, and by employing both water refinement and fire refinement techniques, the gourd's Yin-Yang attributes were fully stimulated. Day and night, Shocking Thunder Spirit General and Delicate Water Spirit General tirelessly refined the gourd, and it took a full nine years to produce a preliminary item.

Next, it was up to Meng Zhang to contribute. He used his True Essence to refine the item and then incorporated it into his dantian for nurturing. In the Cultivation World, most Fourth Rank magic tools evolved from Third Rank magic tools. Although this item was only Third Rank, it had the potential to advance to Fourth Rank.

To nurture and strengthen this item, Meng Zhang spared no effort, even expending blood essence and depleting his Soul. After six more years, the item began to take shape and grew into a complete magic tool. He named this natal magic tool "Yin Yang Gourd," which had a black and white appearance.

The Yin Yang Gourd could release Yin and Yang Qi. The Yin Qi contained boundless deathly intent, capable of depriving others of their vitality. The Yang Qi, on the other hand, could dispel evil and demons while carrying life-giving properties, offering miraculous healing abilities.

Of course, the so-called "miraculous healing" did not mean it could genuinely revive the dead. It was just a powerful healing technique. When Yin and Yang Qi were combined, they could erode all things. Most things in the world were formed by the combination of Yin and Yang Qi, and if the quality of the spiritual gourd was high enough, it could indeed assimilate all things.

The Yin and Yang Qi in the gourd possessed strong sentience and could transform into special Dao soldiers, obedient to Meng Zhang's commands. With the Yin Yang Gourd, he could also enhance all Yin and Yang-based Divine Abilities. For instance, a Divine Ability called Twin Forms Towards Heaven Sword, which he cultivated in his early years, was refined using Yin and Yang Fiend Qi. With the strengthening from the Yin Yang Spirit Gourd, the power of this Divine Ability could be significantly boosted.

Chapter 700: Yin Yang Dao Soldier



With the Yin Yang Gourd as his natal magic tool, Meng Zhang's combat power has increased significantly. Furthermore, when he achieves the Primordial Spirit in the future, there is a chance for this magic tool to be promoted to a Fourth Rank magic tool.

The importance of a natal magic tool to a Cultivator is self-evident, and Meng Zhang has finally made up for this shortcoming before entering the Primordial Spirit realm.

Soon after refining the Yin Yang Gourd, Shocking Thunder Spirit General and Delicate Water Spirit General had to respond to the call and go to war in the intense battle at the Yuantu Great Prairie.

As Jade Sword Sect is about to launch a major counterattack against the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan, the demand for combat power on the frontlines becomes more urgent. All major forces of the Jiuqu League have been conscripted.

Several Gold Core Daoist Masters from Taiyi Sect, who were originally staying behind, were also called to the frontlines.

Meng Zhang, after spending a long time in the sect, felt a bit restless and decided to go to the Yuantu Great Prairie to participate in the battle against the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan. One reason was to witness the abilities of the Barbarian Clan, and the other was to rotate some of the Gold Core cultivators from his sect.

However, just as he was preparing to go, there was sudden intelligence from Red Rock Valley that there seemed to be unusual activity from the Sea Clan.

At this moment, Taiyi Sect is particularly vulnerable. Apart from a few recently formed Gold Core Daoist Masters, almost all the experienced Gold Core Daoist Masters have gone to the Yuantu Great Prairie.

More than half of the Foundation Building cultivators from the sect are also mobilized. The remaining less than half have to take care of various affairs within and outside Taiyi Sect, looking after the vast territory of the sect, and they are already overwhelmed with work.

The fact that the Sea Clan chose this time to cause trouble really angered Meng Zhang.

Having reached the Gold Core completion realm and possessing a new natal magic tool, Meng Zhang was itching for action.

If the Sea Clan dares to cause trouble at this time, he will not back down.

Meng Zhang teleported from the Hundred Grass Slope of the sect to Red Rock Valley, where the newly formed Gold Core Daoist Master, Luo Sanping, was patrolling outside. He hurriedly came to report when he heard that the Sect Master had arrived.

Luo Sanping had not been in the Gold Core realm for long and had formed the core around the same time as Meng Zhang's two disciples, An Xiaoran and An Moran.

He had only recently stabilized his Cultivation Base in the Gold Core realm and had not practiced many secret techniques or Divine Abilities. But due to the shortage of manpower in the sect, he was mobilized to guard Red Rock Valley.

Fortunately, Taiyi Sect now has two Third Rank tool refiners, Shocking ThunderSpirit General and Delicate WaterSpirit General, which ensures that the Gold Core Daoist Masters in the sect can obtain Third Rank magic tools.

Moreover, Taiyi Sect can intermittently acquire some Third Rank magic tools from the outside through various means. In the recently rebuilt treasure trove of Taiyi Sect, there are several usable Third Rank magic tools.

Of course, the truly powerful magic tools are distributed among the cultivators for the final mountain gate defense battle.

Luo Sanping holds a Third Rank magic tool and relies on a Third Rank mountain-guarding formation. As long as it's not a massive invasion by the Sea Clan, he can protect Red Rock Valley.

Even if they encounter a full-scale attack from the Sea Clan, he can hold on for a while and buy time for Taiyi Sect to mobilize its forces.

According to Luo Sanping's report, the Sea Clan has been constantly mobilizing its forces at the border of Taiyi Sect's territory. Their armies occasionally form formations in the border area and sometimes seem to be ready to launch a sudden attack on Taiyi Sect's territory.

After listening to Luo Sanping's report, Meng Zhang has a rough judgment in his mind.

It seems that the Sea Clan currently does not have plans for a large-scale invasion. Otherwise, they wouldn't need to create such a spectacle and could directly launch an attack.

They are most likely trying to bluff and disrupt the enemy.

Of course, if Taiyi Sect appears too weak and exposes significant vulnerabilities, the Sea Clan might take the opportunity to launch a genuine attack and take advantage of Taiyi Sect.

As long as the Sea Clan retreats before the Human Clan's Primordial Spirit True Monarch intervenes, the True Monarch from the Human Clan should not cause any trouble and will firmly hold on to the situation.

These Sea Clan guys really know how to seize opportunities. Taking advantage of the Jiuqu League's battle with the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan, they deliberately stir up trouble here.

Of course, the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan is the mortal enemy of the Human Clan Cultivators and also the enemy of the Sea Clan.

Although the possibility of collusion between the Sea Clan and the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan is not high, Meng Zhang still cannot take it lightly.

After checking the defenses inside and outside Red Rock Valley and confirming that there were no issues, he rejected Luo Sanping's offer to accompany him and flew alone towards the border area between Taiyi Sect and the Sea Clan.

According to Meng Zhang's judgment, as long as the Sea Clan does not intend to wage a full-scale war with the Jiuqu League, they will not deploy Fourth Rank experts. Being a Gold Core completion cultivator, he has nothing to worry about as long as he doesn't get surrounded by the Sea Clan's army.

When Meng Zhang arrived at the border area, he indeed saw a large Sea Clan army forming up ahead.

Although Meng Zhang wished he could annihilate the entire Sea Clan army, the situation forced him to consider his strategy.

The Sea Clan does not want to engage in a full-scale war with the Jiuqu League, which is currently at war with the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan. Similarly, the Jiuqu League does not want to break out into a full-scale war with the Sea Clan at this time.

If Meng Zhang were to cause significant casualties among the Sea Clan's army at this time, Taiyi Sect might have to face the retaliation of the entire Sea Clan alone.

He took out the Yin Yang Gourd, which he had been nurturing in his dantian for a long time, in his left hand.

Meng Zhang raised his left hand, and a black and white mixed airflow spewed out from the mouth of the gourd, transforming into three Daoists wearing black and white Dao robes. These were the Yin Yang Dao Soldiers nurtured within the Yin Yang Gourd. Nurturing Dao Soldiers requires a lot of precious materials and a considerable amount of time.

Under conditions of sufficient materials, one can nurture a Dao Soldier with the initial strength of the Gold Core realm each year, with a total of nine possible. If nurturing Dao Soldiers with the strength of the Foundation Building realm, six can be nurtured each year, with a total of thirty-six possible.

With this Yin Yang Gourd, as long as Meng Zhang had enough materials and time, he alone could rival a well-established Gold Core sect.

Due to time and material constraints, Meng Zhang had only nurtured three Dao Soldiers with the initial strength of the Gold Core realm within the Yin Yang Gourd.

As for Dao Soldiers with the strength of the Foundation Building realm, Taiyi Sect was not lacking. Within the mountain gate, there was a Soldier Nest that had been modified by Meng Zhang.

The Soldier Nest was a legacy left behind by the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit and, after Meng Zhang mastered it, became the source of Dao Soldier production for Taiyi Sect.

From initially producing only one type of Dao Soldier called the Yellow Earth Strongman, it could now produce a total of four types of Dao Soldiers.

Usually, the Soldier Nest primarily produces First Rank and Second Rank Dao Soldiers.

With this batch of Dao Soldiers, Taiyi Sect's strength in lower-level cultivators has increased several times.

Although Dao Soldiers cannot replace cultivators in many situations, they significantly narrowed the gap between Taiyi Sect and those well-established sects.

Now, Meng Zhang summoned these three Gold Core stage Yin Yang Dao Soldiers to show the Sea Clan army some strength and deter them from taking advantage of the situation.