

Overlord 781

Chapter 781: The Shame of the Hidden Sect

For the vast majority of Hidden Sect masters, the name Huang Chengcheng was previously not famous and seemed rather unfamiliar.

Therefore, when Huang Chengcheng appeared, everyone was somewhat taken aback, scrutinizing this elder who resembled a Taoist, some trying to recognize who he was, but most were puzzled as to why this old Taoist was laughing madly.

However, soon, as several individuals who knew or had heard of Huang Chengcheng voiced their surprise, these masters, whose hearing was exceptionally good, caught every word and thus began to look at Huang Chengcheng with curious eyes.

Was this the same Huang Chengcheng, who was the master of Yang Fei, the so-called Taoist inheritor who had broken into the Hidden Sect last time?

It seems this old Taoist is quite famous?

Had he really defeated various clan leaders and sect masters?

Really?

In the meantime, in the ranks of the Five Families' Alliance, many people exclaimed in surprise, and many sets of eyes fixed on the few elders who had made the remarks earlier.

Zhuge Cang, Duanmu Wugou, and Zhuge Qian, after a brief shock, secretly rejoiced, and Zhuge Qian pointed at Huang Chengcheng and shouted loudly, "Huang Chengcheng, you as a Taoist who slipped through the net, dare to show up here; you're simply seeking death!"

The light in Duanmu Wugou's eyes flashed brightly, and he immediately said, "That's right, listen up all of you from the Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, and Wang Family, this old Taoist is the Taoist who escaped our net in the past. Back then, people from the Eight Great Families participated in the attack on the Taoist sects; many second and third-tier families and sects also joined, so the Taoists are our common

enemy. Now the Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, and Langya Wang Family are conspiring with this Taoist. What are they trying to do? Are they trying to revive the Taoist sects and seek revenge for the massacre that occurred back then?"

Zhuge Wei also said sternly, "Indeed, now that these three families are conspiring with the Taoist who slipped through the net, their intentions are clearly malicious. They intend to take revenge for the Taoist sects. We must eliminate these people today to prevent future threats."

"Prevent future threats!"

"Kill the Taoist people to prevent potential danger!"

Instantly, within the ranks of the Five Families' Alliance, many people raised their arms and shouted, filled with a fighting spirit.

The masters affiliated with Qingtian Sect, Wang Family, and Poison Sect also showed great agitation.

Clearly, the identity of Huang Chengcheng was too sensitive.

The extermination of the Taoist sects had taken place over eighty years ago. Though it might seem long ago, to the Hidden Sect martial artists, whose average lifespan exceeded a hundred years, it wasn't considered very long. Among the contemporary masters, many had experienced that brutal battle.

Even if they weren't the main characters in that battle, many of the top masters present had been among the best back then. They had followed their respective sects or family elders to witness the siege on the Taoist sects.

It can be said that back then, the Taoist sect was the most powerful force in the Hidden Sect, leading various sects and aristocratic families in harmony and steady development, truly leading the Hidden Sect.

However, ambitious and conspiring together, the Eight Great Families attacked the Taoist sect, causing the biggest massacre in the Hidden Sect's millennia-long history.

Now, eighty years later, to hide the truth, the Eight Great Families had always obscured the real events from the younger generation, but for many of the older generation, the incident was vivid in their memories.

Now that Huang Chengcheng, a Taoist inheritor, appeared before them, to the vast majority, he was an enemy who deserved to die!

They must not allow the Taoist sect to rise again, for if it did, what would become of them?

Therefore, following the words of Zhuge Wei and others, many in the crowd, including many from the Qingtian Sect, Poison Sect, and Langya Wang Family, exhibited wary expressions and glared fiercely at Huang Chengcheng.

Feeling the numerous fierce intentions locked on him, Huang Chengcheng was slightly startled inside, yet his expression remained unchanged. Instead, he burst into laughter, "Hahaha, I didn't expect so many people to still remember the name Huang Chengcheng. What comforts me more is that you have always tried to hide from the younger generation the truth about what happened to the Taoist sects. Yet now, you finally admit the sins of attacking the Taoist sects back then."

"Hmph, the attack on the Taoist sects back then involved not only the Eight Great Families but also many second and third-tier families and sects. What of it if we speak of it now?" Zhuge Qian said coldly.

Wang Changchun also added, "Indeed, the events of the past have already taken place, and further discussion is useless. For the Hidden Sect now, stability is of utmost importance, and to remain stable, we need to completely eradicate any remnants of the Taoist sect."

"Yes, kill him!"

"We must never allow the Taoist sect to rise again, otherwise, we will never recover!"

For a moment, the crowd was excited, and dozens of people from the Five Families' Alliance loudly expressed their opinions.

Even among the Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, and the members of the Langya Wang Family, many showed complex expressions, revealing hints of killing intent.

Especially the stronger members of the lesser sects and aristocratic families affiliated with the three families, they did not understand why Huang Chengcheng was mingling with the high ranks of the three families, nor did they know what they were discussing; they only knew that either they or their ancestors had once participated in the encirclement and suppression of the Taoist sect. Should the Taoist sect be revived and seek revenge, none of their own sects or families would escape.

Ouyang He slightly furrowed his brows.

His gaze turned to Helian Zhan, and just as he was about to send a voice transmission, he heard Helian Zhan say, "Gentlemen, please calm down and listen to me."

His voice, full of vigor, was propelled by his robust and commanding True Qi, making everyone present hear him clearly, and they all quieted down.

Helian Zhan said, "The matter of the Taoist sect being encircled years ago is actually not directly related to many of the people present.

At that time, when the Taoist sect was eliminated, the major aristocratic families and sects also paid a heavy price, resulting in severe losses in the Hidden Sect cultivation world. The overall cultivation level regressed many years, and to this day, it has not yet recovered.

Moreover, because of the internal chaos within the Hidden Sect at that time, opportunities were given to Penglai and Heaven, causing the people of the Great Divine Continent to suffer.

It can be said that the action back then made the people of the Hidden Sect the sinners of the Yanhuang Clan.

Do you still remember the mission of the Hidden Sect?"

The crowd fell silent, many frowning, while those who had heard from the older generations showed a look of shame.

"Under the leadership of the Taoist sect, the mission of the Hidden Sect was to protect the Divine Continent and safeguard the inheritance of the Yanhuang lineage. The Hidden Sect and the Divine Continent complemented and depended on each other.

But ever since the slaughter of the Taoist sect, various factions of the Hidden Sect have forgotten their mission, resulting in the Divine Continent People suffering disaster that year.

Now, with Heaven and Penglai being ambitious, they are about to launch another dark war, yet here we are, the Hidden Sect Practitioners, still fighting among ourselves. Are we heading for self-destruction?"

"What? Heaven and Penglai are making moves again?"

"Is that true? Has anyone gone out to gather information?"

"Why hasn't the Divine Continent asked for help?"

Instantly, many people began discussing, clearly knowing the priorities when faced with the threat of Heaven and Penglai.

"Hmph, Heaven and Penglai have thoroughly infiltrated the world. This news is absolutely true, observed by Wang Chunyang, Ouyang He, and myself when we went out. At the same time, Zhuge Cang, Wang Changchun, and the Duanmu Family among others are also aware. But do you know what forces like Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor have been doing in the Divine Continent?

They have quietly infiltrated the world, interfering with the system of the Divine Continent, causing it to crumble. They are trying to replicate the history of the past, pushing the Divine Continent into an irrecoverable disaster once again."

Helian Zhan raised his hand, pointing at the people from the Zhuge and Duanmu families, and said with deep sorrow, "Heaven and Penglai have already invaded heavily, and the world situation is growing more tense.

At this juncture, we in the Hidden Sect should unite as one and face the external threats together. Instead, these families aim to control worldly powers after emerging from the Hidden Sect, causing the Divine Continent to fragment. They are the sinners of the Yanhuang, the disgrace of the Hidden Sect."

Wang Chunyang loudly said, "Brother Helian, why waste words on these selfish people? Let's eliminate them first, then unite the true heroes to oppose the foreign races together."

Chapter 782: Losing from the Start

"Don't listen to their nonsense. The fact that the Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, and Langya Wang Family have colluded with the remnants of the Taoist sect is true. Once the Taoist sect revives, we will all suffer their vengeance."

Upon hearing Helian Zhan's accusation, Duanmu Wuwang realized things were going to be bad. Then, hearing Wang Chunyang call for war, his heart stirred and he promptly followed up on the topic, "Let's eradicate them first, then we can unite and enter the world in force. With us united, what can Heaven and Penglai do against us?"

"Exactly, don't listen to Helian Zhan's bewitching words. With the Five Families Alliance united, we are the strongest force in the Hidden Sect World. Today, we will deal with our internal threats first, then go out and jointly resist the invasion of the Alien Race." Duanmu Wuwo added.

Wang Changchun, Zhuge Qian, Zhuge Wei, and others all spoke up in turn.

We can't go on like this; otherwise, we will really let the world believe that our families act out of selfish interests, regardless of the people of the Divine Continent, bearing the image of villains.

"Hmph, the Zhuge family, the Duanmu family, Giant Sword Manor, are you three truly stubborn and unwilling to turn back?"

Huang Chengcheng's eyes flashed coldly as he stared at the powerhouses of the three families and said loudly, "Do you really want to provoke strife within the Hidden Sect, depleting our strength? I'll give you one last chance. As long as you lower your heads and admit your mistakes now, after we leave, we'll unite against the invasion of Heaven and Penglai, and I can forgive and forget the past."

"Hahaha, how ridiculous! What right do you, Huang Chengcheng, have to say such things to us? You're just a leftover from the Hidden Sect. Today, we will eliminate you and completely uproot the Taoist sect!" Wang Changchun laughed loudly.

"Right, only by completely eradicating the Taoist sect can we rest easy," Zhuge Qian declared loudly.

The people from the Duanmu family all echoed in agreement, steering the mood.

Huang Chengcheng's face filled with disappointment, and he said indifferently, "If that's the case, then I can only bear the pain of sacrifice!"

After saying this, his eyes flashed with a sharp light, and he suddenly exclaimed, "If you don't take action now, then when?"

Zhugue Cang, Zhuge Qian, Zhuge Wei, the three from the Duanmu family, and several strong characters from the Giant Sword Manor suddenly had a bad feeling in their hearts.

The moment Huang Chengcheng's words fell, Ji Bangying's sword stabbed out beside Zhuge Wei, piercing through Zhuge Wei's body.

Sect Master Zhang's sword also passed through Duanmu Wuwang's chest from behind.

As Ji Bangying and Sect Master Zhang launched their surprise attacks, several Divine Travel Realm experts, affiliated with the Five Families' Alliance from second-tier sects and aristocratic families, joined the assault, all targeting the top powerhouses of the Duanmu, Zhuge, and Giant Sword Manor.

Some succeeded, others failed.

Zhuge Wei and Duanmu Wuwang, in disbelief, looked down at the bloody swords piercing through their chests, turned their heads to see the attackers behind them. Before they could see the faces of the enemies, their Seas of Consciousness exploded with a muffled sound, as the powerful Divine Soul Power struck, utterly killing the two who were caught off guard and severely wounded by the surprise attack.

Under the same realm, if it had been a head-to-head confrontation, they might have been able to fight back and forth, with neither side able to win even after hundreds or thousands of moves.

But in this situation, caught completely unawares and so close in distance, a surprise ambush was a fatal threat.

Neither Zhuge Wei nor Duanmu Wuwang could fathom why they were being stabbed in the back.

After all, the Ji family and Zhang family were part of the Five Families Alliance. Moreover, when they besieged the Taoist sect in the past, the Ji family and Zhang family were very active, especially the Zhang family, whose ancestors were direct disciples of the Taoist sect. The connection between the Zhang family and the Taoist sect was of the same lineage, yet still, they participated in the crackdown on the Taoist sect.

Now that Huang Chengcheng had allied with those three families, it meant that they were about to rebuild the Taoist sect. At such a time, neither the Zhang family nor the Ji family should be colluding with them, right?

With deep confusion, Zhuge Wei and Duanmu Wuwang closed their eyes in resignation.

They had considered that they might die in this great battle, but they never imagined they would die suddenly and in such a disgraceful way.

The other five attackers, although they struck a moment too late due to Duanmu Wuwang and Zhuge Wei being ambushed, causing their targets to be alert and escape with their lives, still managed to inflict significant damage on those five.

Furthermore, with these people suddenly turning traitor and stabbing in the back, the three families of Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor, as well as their loyalists, were plunged into great panic.

The melee erupted instantly.

Helian Zhan's sword flew out of his hand, attacking with his most powerful Qingtian Sword, aiming for Zhuge Cang.

Wang Chunyang also drew his sword, targeting Wang Changchun.

Giant Sword Manor had recently been involved in the hunt for a female thief, only to find themselves embroiled in an issue with the Wang Family's outcast from years past.

Although the target was an outcast of the Wang Family, they were still a descendant of the Wang bloodline. Giant Sword Manor's relentless pursuit was a direct affront to the Wang Family, and Wang Chunyang, known for fiercely defending his own, sought to doubly reclaim today the torment his nephew suffered recently at the hands of the people from Giant Sword Manor.

Suddenly betrayed by the Ji and Zhang Families, Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, among others, were alerted to danger. When Helian Zhan and Wang Chunyang attacked, the two were already prepared, dodging simultaneously and drawing their weapons to resist.

In an instant, the might of Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, Langya Wang Family and those secondary aristocratic families and sects who followed these three, struck out.

On the vast training ground of Qingtian Sect, the biggest battle among the strong since the siege of the Taoist sect over eighty years ago, now erupted in full force.

It was still five against three, as the Five Families' Alliance besieged the remaining three families.

However, the reality was different from what the people of the Zhuge family, Duanmu family, and Giant Sword Manor expected.

Filled with confidence, they believed that after joining forces with the Ji and Zhang Families, they held an absolute advantage and could annihilate the three families of Poison Sect, Qingtian Sect, and Langya Wang Family.

What they did not expect, however, was a critical betrayal by the Ji and Zhang Families when it mattered the most, turning their weapons against them.

Now, their three families were the ones encircled.

The advantage in numbers they once had disappeared in an instant, turning into an absolute disadvantage.

And, having lost the overwhelming advantage in numbers, facing the likes of Helian Zhan, Wang Chunyang, and Ouyang He—mighty warriors ranking among the top five in the Hidden Sect World—they were completely at a disadvantage.

Zhuge Cang's combat power could rank in the top three, powered by the formidable Talismanic Array of the Zhuge family, his ability to fight alone was on par with Ouyang He. Zhuge Wei and Zhuge Qian were also strong enough to be placed around the top ten, but now Zhuge Wei had been ambushed and killed by Ji Bangying.

Thus, even though Wang Changchun and others from Giant Sword Manor relied on the power of the giant sword and were strong, they were outnumbered and could not withstand the absolute pressure of the enemy's numbers.

Especially since these Divine Travel Realm powerhouses possessed strong Divine Thoughts and began to launch attacks with them.

For a time, both sides not only had to fend off the physical attacks of their enemies but also guard their minds and remain absolutely vigilant at all times to prevent their Sea of Consciousness from being bombarded by enemy Divine Thoughts.

Then, as the battle raged, some suddenly felt dizzy, their veins and meridians inexplicably damaged.

Others could not muster their True Qi, their cultivation suppressed.

It was then that the cries rang out.

"No good, there's poison!"

"People from Poison Sect have poisoned us, how despicable and shameful!"

Those who had not attained the Golden Body Immortal Realm were also afraid of being poisoned, despite being strong in the Divine Travel Realm.

Although some warriors had been vigilant from the beginning due to the presence of Poison Sect members among the enemies, some were careless and fell victim without any guard up.

From the start, Wang Changchun and Zhuge Cang knew this battle was impossible.

The betrayal by the Ji and Zhang Families was the most lethal thing to them.

It threw the formation and resolve of their Five Families' Alliance into chaos, causing many to panic and neglect their defense against the Poison Sect's toxins.

As many collapsed to the ground, invaded by the poison, Wang Changchun, Zhuge Cang, Duanmu Wugou, and others fled towards the base of Qingtian Sect.

They understood that the tide had turned against them and staying meant death.

As long as they could escape from here and out of the Hidden Sect World, they would still have a place in the outside world.

Chapter 783: Yang Fei: I'm Not the Only Successor of Taoist?

"Helian Zhan was indeed the strongest opponent I have ever faced in my life,"

Zhuge Cang reminisced about the previous brutal battle and still felt residual fear, his face finally showing traces of sorrow, "If it weren't for my elder brother Zhuge Qian blocking him for me, I would never have made it down the mountain."

Wang Changchun coughed violently and said, "Yes, Helian Zhan and Wang Chunyang, both are indeed the most talented and adept fighters in the Hidden Sect World. Wang Chunyang gave up the blade to follow the Sword Dao, and even found his own path to the Supreme Sword Dao. If it weren't for my junior brother's help, I wouldn't have escaped either, but even so, these sword wounds on my body were left by Wang Chunyang."

With tears emerging in his eyes, Zhuge Cang suddenly looked up fiercely and stared at Sect Master Zhang, saying, "Today's defeat is not my fault, but yours. Had it not been for the betrayal of the Zhang and Ji Families, our alliance of five families would still have held a steady winning hand."

"Sect Master Zhang, you once betrayed the Taoist sect, and now you've betrayed us. You are a true three-family slave, a complete scoundrel. With your character, they will surely not tolerate you. Once Huang Chengcheng reorganizes the Taoist sect, the Zhang Family will be the first they strike down."

Hearing this, Sect Master Zhang smiled and shook his head, "At this point, what purpose does it serve to say these things?"

Wang Changchun asked unwillingly, "Sect Master Zhang, when did you betray us? Were you and Ji Bangying pretending to collaborate with us from the beginning?"

Sect Master Zhang smiled and nodded, "Master Wang is indeed smarter."

Zhuge Cang, incredulous, said, "Why? You have a feud with the Taoist sect, so why collude with them? Wouldn't collaborating with us have been more beneficial for both of your families?"

Upon hearing this, the smile disappeared from Sect Master Zhang's face, and a look of hatred emerged as he looked at Zhuge Cang and said, "The Zhang Family has historically been a branch of the Taoist sect, mutually dependent. Without the Taoist sect, there wouldn't be a Zhang Family as it is today."

However, your ambitious ancestor had united various forces to annihilate the Taoist sect.

By the time my family received the news, it was too late to send warnings, so my ancestor made a painful decision to conspire with you and destroy the Taoist sect, merely to preserve our branch's lineage."

Zhuge Cang gave a bitter smile, "Heh, those ancestors who participated in the siege of the Taoist sect were ultimately too kind, sparing your Zhang Family."

Wang Changchun chuckled, "Who would have thought that the Zhang Family, who personally took countless lives of the Taoist sect, harbored such deep thoughts?"

Zhuge Cang sighed deeply and nodded, "Yes, in the end, the Taoist sect's fate was not sealed."

Regaining his smile, Sect Master Zhang said, "Exactly. The Hidden Sect was established by the Taoist sect. Over a thousand years, the Taoist sect has led various forces of the Hidden Sect to protect the Divine Continent, never suppressing any family or sect, truly winning people's hearts. Such a sect, how could it truly end its lineage?

Heh, do you know why you failed today?

The instigators of today's internal chaos in the Hidden Sect World, whether it's you or other factions like Qingtian Sect and Poison Sect, anyone acting against the unity of the Hidden Sect World would fail.

The Taoist sect might have been extinguished over eighty years ago, but its lineage has never vanished from the Hidden Sect World.

Do you know why that lady from the Duanmu Family was so exceptionally talented? Have you ever wondered who truly taught Helian Zhan to become the top genius of his time after he was taken in by Wu Zheng? And why did Wang Chunyang, who gave up the blade, choose the path of a Sword Cultivator?"

Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun stared in astonishment, speechless."

Wang Lei, Yang Fei, Helian Rong, and Xu Jian also listened with bated breath. Helian Rong couldn't help asking, "My father... was he also a Taoist Disciple?"

Sect Master Zhang nodded, "That's right. Although he belonged to the Qingtian Sect, he was actually a Taoist Inheritor."

Wang Lei took a deep breath, "Was my sixth uncle too?"

Sect Master Zhang said, "He might not be considered a true Taoist Inheritor, but at least he benefited from the Taoist cultivation techniques and received the legacy of a Taoist Sword Cultivator. Deep down, he is grateful to the Taoist sect."

Yang Fei's lips twitched a few times, and he couldn't resist asking, "Does that mean that within the Hidden Sect World, there are actually many Taoist Disciples, and I am not the only Taoist Inheritor as you mentioned?"

Sect Master Zhang nodded, "Of course, you are not the only inheritor of the Taoist way. But you are the direct disciple of Huang Chengcheng, which, in a sense, means you belong to the true orthodox lineage of the Taoist. Compared to those from other forces, your lineage as a Taoist Inheritor is more pure."

Yang Fei felt much better, and simultaneously, he recalled another matter, speaking to Sect Master Zhang, "Last time I entered the Hidden Sect World, my master said that someone would help me at the critical moment. Was he referring to you guys?"

Upon hearing this, Sect Master Zhang smiled and nodded, "Yes. When we learned that you were deeply troubled, we were very anxious and secretly inquired for a long time. Later, Helian Zhan sent me a message saying that you were safe, so we stopped looking for you."

Was that what you call very safe?

Yang Fei glanced at Helian Rong, who turned her head away with an innocent look.

Yang Fei sighed helplessly.

Indeed, to Helian Zhan, I was truly safe at that time.

This also explained why initially my master confidently promised that I would receive help, yet when big trouble arose, no one came forward to assist me.

These people linked to the Taoist way have really hidden themselves quite deep.

It was exactly for this reason that this time the alliance of the Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor could deliver a fatal blow.

Yang Fei couldn't help but inwardly remark on how master was truly secretive and impressive.

If my master is so formidable, then as the purest Taoist Inheritor, wouldn't I also be incredible in the Hidden Sect World?

Thinking of this, Yang Fei felt somewhat elated, thinking of Huang Chengcheng, and he said to Sect Master Zhang, "Is my master still at the Qingtian Sect?"

Sect Master Zhang smiled and nodded, "Yes, he is."

Yang Fei stood up, his gaze turning towards Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, and asked, "Elder, what should be done with these two? Are they still of any use? Should we kill them?"

Sect Master Zhang pondered for a moment and shook his head, "We should bring them back first and then decide."

Actually, he had just felt a strong urge to kill these two men deep inside.

After all, the Zhang Family and the Ji Family had indeed betrayed the Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor. Certainly, in their hearts, they must utterly despise him and Ji Bangying.

To avoid unnecessary trouble in the future, completely eliminating these two men would be the safest route.

However, Sect Master Zhang ultimately did not do so; he felt it was fairest to bring the two men back to the Qingtian Sect and let everyone discuss how to deal with these defeated elements.

After the great war more than eighty years ago, the Hidden Sect suffered huge losses in overall strength. This recent turmoil involving the three families had implicated many top-level experts, resulting in another significant loss to the overall strength of the Hidden Sect.

With the current changing global landscape, as the powerhouses from both Heaven and Penglai realms extensively enter the mundane world, according to ancient experiences, these two powers are very likely to ally again to confront the Divine Continent. The Hidden Sect needs to retain as much top-level combat power as possible.

With a complex look, Sect Master Zhang glanced at Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, wondering how many among these captured would truly realize their mistakes afterward and be able to resist the invasion of foreign powerhouses.

Chapter 784:

Accompanied by Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, Yang Fei, Helian Rong, Wang Lei, and Xu Jian followed Sect Master Zhang as they hurried toward Central State City.

Half an hour later, Central State City was in sight.

Upon entering the city, the bustling metropolis was exceptionally lively. In taverns and teahouses, discussions were endless. Storytellers, who seemed to have acquired information from mysterious sources about the incidents that had occurred on Qingtian Sect's mountain, spoke with such fervor it was as if they had witnessed the great battle firsthand.

As Yang Fei and his companions passed through the city, some recognized Sect Master Zhang and others recognized Duanmu Fourth Master (Xu Jian), immediately attracting many curious glances.

Soon after, people noticed the captive Wang Changchun and Zhuge Cang, which prompted exclamations of surprise and drew even larger crowds of onlookers. Some boldly inquired with Sect Master Zhang about what had happened.

For those who were acquainted with the older generation of cultivators, Sect Master Zhang would respond with a smile and a brief explanation. However, he paid no heed to the rest of the onlookers who were unfamiliar faces.

Even so, as the news spread, more and more curious bystanders from Central State City flocked to follow the group toward the direction of Qingtian Sect. By the time they left the city through the northwest gate, the procession was impressive, numbering several hundreds.

Everyone was eager to learn the truth and outcome of the battle that had occurred at Qingtian Sect, continuously pressing Sect Master Zhang and Duanmu Cheng (Xu Jian) for answers along the way.

As the crowd grew, some recognized Helian Rong and Wang Lei. Moreover, there were those who had seen Yang Fei at the teleportation passage before who recognized him.

People were buzzing with questions, wondering why Yang Fei was involved with these individuals, why Duanmu Cheng participated in the battle, and upon hearing that Duanmu Wuwang had perished in combat, why Duanmu Cheng would be seen with these people.

Their ears were almost deafened by the relentless queries as they finally approached the front gates of Qingtian Sect. The disciples of Qingtian Sect, with fierce expressions and swords in hand, guarded the gate. Upon seeing Sect Master Zhang return, the disciples respectfully greeted him and dispatched a hawk back to the sect upon capturing the significant figures of Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun.

With Sect Master Zhang and Helian Rong present, Yang Fei, Wang Lei, and Xu Jian easily entered Qingtian Sect's gate. However, the curious martial artists who had followed them from Central State City were barred at the gate, not permitted to enter.

Among these onlookers were some well-known experts, but given the major battle that had taken place at Qingtian Sect and the presence of strong fighters from various families within the sect, these renowned experts, in comparison, didn't count for much and hesitated to disrupt the sect at such a time.

When it was reported that Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun had been captured alive, key figures such as Zhao Wannian and Qin Sizhong from Qingtian Sect, along with a group of powerhouses, came forward to greet them.

At the mid-slope, where everyone met, Sect Master Zhao Wannian's eyes fell on Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, and he was immediately overjoyed, bowing to Sect Master Zhang, "Family Head Zhang's blade is as sharp as ever, his heroism unparalleled—it's truly remarkable that he has captured these two individuals."

Qin Sizhong and other prominent figures also spoke up in praise.

Sect Master Zhang laughed heartily, shaking his head, "My old friends, don't make fun of Sect Master Zhang. It wasn't I who captured Wang Changchun and Zhuge Cang; the credit goes to these young people. Especially this little princess from the Helian Zhan Family, who has studied poison techniques under Brother Ouyang for many years, mastering the Poison Technique to perfection. Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun were both ensnared by her tactics and toppled by her poisons."

Zhao Wannian and Qin Sizhong's expressions brightened upon hearing this, especially Qin Sizhong who looked at Helian Rong, "Miss Rong, was it really your doing?"

Under the watchful eyes of these influential figures, Helian Rong was not the least bit nervous; her master was Ouyang He, her father was Helian Zhan, and with the backing of Qingtian Sect and Poison Sect, she was truly the number one princess of the Hidden Sect World.

However, she was quick to clarify, not daring to take all the credit alone, "It wasn't just my doing. We four worked together to defeat these two."

"Oh?"

Qin Sizhong followed the direction Helian Rong pointed, finally noticing Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei.

Speaking of Yang Fei, his reputation in the Hidden Sect World was significant, widely known to nearly everyone, though few had actually met him in person.

Zhao Wannian and Qin Sizhong had never met Yang Fei, thus did not recognize him at first glance, but they did recognize Xu Jian (Duanmu Cheng), and their faces showed astonishment as they turned to Xu Jian, "How are you here?"

Duanmu Cheng had once managed all the secular affairs of the Duanmu Family and had extensive connections within the Hidden Sect had previously visited Qingtian Sect, and met several of its leaders, so they recognized him immediately.

However, they were unaware that the current Duanmu Cheng had been replaced by Xu Jian in a case of body seizing, and thus they were profoundly shocked to see Duanmu Cheng appearing here.

The Duanmu, Zhuge, and Giant Sword Manor formed a tripartite alliance, so why would Duanmu Cheng be walking with Helian Rong and the others?

Xu Jian found it inconvenient to let others know that he had seized Duanmu Cheng's body. Upon hearing the conversation, he clasped his fists and said, "I have met the two seniors. I, the junior, have already abandoned the dark and turned to the light, leading many people away from the Duanmu Family."

"Oh?" Zhao Wannian and Qin Sizhong, among others, were greatly surprised and full of doubt.

Duanmu Cheng had once been a major figure in the Duanmu Family, and even more, he was the dear grandson of Duanmu Wugou. How could he betray his own family?

Could there be some deception?

Just then, Helian Rong lightly coughed and pointed at Yang Fei, "Uncle Master Zhao, Uncle Master Qin, this is Yang Fei."

"Yang Fei?"

Immediately, several exclamations were heard.

Zhao Wannian, Qin Sizhong, and the other powerful experts around them focused their attention on Yang Fei.

Being stared at by four or five Divine Travel Realm experts at the same time, Yang Fei instinctively tensed up, feeling a surge of wariness.

"Are you the Taoist Inheritor who entered the Hidden Sect, left behind the Taoist Cultivation Technique, and then safely left?" Zhao Wannian asked, staring at Yang Fei.

Yang Fei clasped his fists to greet these influential figures, nodding, "Junior Yang Fei, has met all the seniors here."

Seeing that these people were about to say something, Helian Rong quickly pointed at Wang Lei, "His name is Wang Lei, from the Langya Wang Family. The capture of Wang Changchun and Zhuge Cang was largely due to these three, I merely took advantage of their battle to quietly employ some tactics and made a small contribution."

Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun's mouths twitched, and they glared fiercely at Helian Rong.

At that time, although the two of them were being suppressed, they definitely had a chance to escape and would not have been captured alive.

But just at the crucial moment, they realized they had been poisoned.

So now, when Helian Rong claimed she had only made a small contribution, they couldn't help but retort internally.

If it weren't for you, the demoness of the Poison Sect, secretly poisoning us, how could we, the grand Divine Travel Realm masters, be captured alive?

This was truly an embarrassing and humiliating defeat.

Having capsized in the gutter, being captured by a few youngsters was enough to ruin their lifetime reputation, likely becoming the butt of many jokes in the future.

Sect Master Zhang laughed and said, "When I arrived, Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun had already been severely poisoned and were utterly powerless to resist. These young people are truly impressive."

Zhao Wannian and the others regained their composure and swept approving glances at Yang Fei and Helian Rong, nodding, "The younger generation will do us proud, very comforting indeed."

"Let's go, head back to the mountain first, and see if others have also made similar achievements."

"That's right, we can say this time it was a complete victory, instantly killing five people, and now we've captured two alive. Even if the others escaped, they are no longer a threat."

During their conversation, the group made their way toward the direction of the Qingtian Sect's main peak.

Upon reaching the summit, they were greeted by Divine Travel Realm experts like Huang Chengcheng, Helian Zhan, Wang Chunyang, Ouyang He, Ji Bangying, and Gong Haichao.

Right away, Huang Chengcheng's gaze locked onto Yang Fei, and he beamed with joy, rushing forward and loudly exclaimed, "Good apprentice, you really came too, haha..."

Chapter 785: Can't Tell if It's a Person or a Ghost

Upon seeing his elusive master again, Yang Fei experienced a moment of daze and distraction.

Then, he felt an absurd sense of incongruity as master and disciple recognized each other in such a setting.

Wasn't it said that the identity of a Taoist Disciple and heir was extremely dangerous to reveal while moving within the Hidden Sect, necessitating the hiding of this status?

Although he had already learned much of the truth from Sect Master Zhang, it was somewhat difficult for Yang Fei's thoughts to adjust to this new reality.

While he was still lost in thought, Huang Chengcheng had already approached him, looking at Yang Fei with the same pride a father has in his son, scrutinizing him closely before gently patting his shoulder a few times, "Good lad, you have indeed become stronger than before, worthy of being my direct disciple, Huang Chengcheng."

Yang Fei's throat moved slightly as he said, "Master, what... what exactly is going on here?"

Upon hearing this, Huang Chengcheng smiled and pointed at Sect Master Zhang, "Have you not been informed of the truth by your Uncle Master Zhang, whom you are with?"

Yang Fei looked toward Sect Master Zhang, who was also smiling at him.

Great, I've gained an awesome Uncle Master for nothing.

Wait a minute...

Yang Fei also noticed the looks from Helian Zhan and Wang Chunyang, which prompted him to turn his gaze toward them.

The two men had looks of satisfaction and approval on their faces as they nodded to him, then Wang Chunyang's gaze shifted to Wang Lei.

Yang Fei felt somewhat confused inside.

It wasn't just one Uncle Master, but two. According to what Sect Master Zhang had said, Wang Chunyang, too, had received guidance from the master before giving up his dao for the sword. It wouldn't be too much to call him an elder brother, right?

With this thought, Yang Fei, who was originally feeling a bit down about no longer being the sole heir of the Taoist legacy, suddenly felt much better.

Having gained so many incredible Uncle Masters and elder brothers, I could surely stride proudly through the Hidden Sect, even without trying hard myself.

At this moment, Zhuge Cang looked up at Helian Zhan and asked, "My elder brother... did he escape?"

After the great battle erupted, Zhuge Cang and the others knew defeat was inevitable; the strong fighters on their side had tacitly attempted to rush down the mountain.

At that time, Helian Zhan had locked onto Zhuge Cang, pursuing him relentlessly. However, Zhuge Qian followed suit, stepping in at a critical moment to entangle Helian Zhan and urging Zhuge Cang to flee first.

At that moment, Zhuge Qian was at his peak, while Zhuge Cang, having fought Yang Fei several times, had not fully recovered. So he left Helian Zhan to his elder brother and fled, eventually eluding Qingtian Sect. Later, he encountered Wang Changchun and they set out together.

Now that he was captured and brought back to the mountain, Zhuge Cang harbored no illusions of surviving but was concerned for his elder brother's well-being.

As long as his elder brother was alive, the Zhuge family's members would have a degree of protection.

Even if these enemies would suppress the Zhuge family in various ways afterward, as long as Zhuge Qian was alive, they wouldn't dare to push things to the extreme. Otherwise, these forces would constantly need to guard against a Divine Travel Realm master seeking bloody vengeance on their family and sect members.

Meeting Zhuge Cang's expectant gaze, Helian Zhan spoke indifferently, "He's dead. As of now, you are the only Divine Travel Realm powerhouse left in the Zhuge family."

Zhuge Cang shed silent tears.

The Zhuge family had a thousand-year lineage, once gloriously renowned for their mastery of formations and talismanic art, and had even made headway in alchemy. Thus after the Taoist sect was destroyed, the Zhuge family reached its peak influence within the Hidden Sect.

Zhuge Cang had once believed that with the efforts of him and his brothers, the Zhuge family could rise to unprecedented heights.

But now, it was their very ambition that had brought the complete decline of the Zhuge family.

"Hahaha, such is the fate of kings and bandits, losing is losing, I have nothing to say. Kill or cut as you wish, I only ask for a swift end," Zhuge Cang declared through tears, his face devoid of any desire for life, yearning only for death.

Seeing him like this, Wang Changchun's lips twitched a few times, but he didn't speak.

Compared to Zhuge Cang, Wang Changchun was much younger, and unlike the Zhuge family, Zhuge Cang lost many of his close relatives. Giant Sword Manor, though it also suffered heavy losses in this great battle, had few of Wang Changchun's kin involved in the fighting. For him, as long as he was still alive, he hadn't lost.

Helian Zhan watched Zhuge Cang, seeing his determination to die, couldn't help but sigh and slowly shook his head, "What's the use of killing you? Zhuge Qian, Zhuge Wei, and Zhuge Hong won't come back to life if you die, nor will the experts and strongmen from Duanmu Family, Giant Sword Manor, and those allied with your three families who died here today."

Fire seemed to flash in Zhuge Cang's eyes as he stared fiercely at Helian Zhan, "What? Do you still want me, Zhuge Cang, to carry the responsibility for these people's deaths? Hahaha, to kill and to destroy one's spirit is nothing more than this. I have long said, the victor is king, and the loser is the bandit. Now

that I, Zhuge Cang, have lost, whether you want to kill or slaughter me, do as you will. There's no need to preach morality to condemn an old man like me."

Helian Zhan's brows furrowed slightly.

Zhao Wannian's voice came coldly, "This man is stubbornly unrepentant, just kill him with a sword for simplicity."

"Exactly, even now, after their ambitions led to the deaths of so many elite members of the Hidden Sect, they show no remorse. Keeping them alive would only bring disaster."

"That's right, kill him!"

The crowd began to voice their agreement.

Even Yang Fei thought keeping these two men around was a disaster and that it would be simpler to just kill them.

Yet Helian Zhan was slowly shaking his head, saying, "Zhuge Cang, Wang Changchun, indeed, your deaths would be insignificant, but have you considered, if you die, what would become of the surviving members of the Zhuge family, the Giant Sword Manor, and the Wang Family?"

Zhuce Cang and Wang Changchun's expressions turned grave, hit where it hurt the most.

Grinding his teeth, Wang Changchun lowered his head and said, "This was my, Wang Changchun's, error alone. Giant Sword Manor has already paid a heavy price for this. I hope our people will not be troubled further, and please do not let disaster befall my Wang family's kin."

Zhuce Cang's lips were trembling. He didn't want the family members of the Zhuge family to get tangled up in this mess, but he couldn't bring himself to bow down and beg for mercy.

A true man dies as he has lived; how could he bow to his enemies?

"After the Hidden Sect's encounter with the Taoist ambush, its vitality was greatly damaged, no longer holding an absolute advantage over Heaven and Penglai. With today's internal strife and self-destruction, causing many losses, this kind of internal consumption is truly detrimental to the very foundation of the Hidden Sect."

Huang Chengcheng sighed, his expression complex as he looked at Zhuge Cang, "You indeed deserve to die, but even in death, you should have some value. For the sake of those innocent people in the Zhuge family, you can still do something."

The expressions of the crowd changed, those who had previously proposed killing Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun now frowned slightly, clearly dissatisfied with Huang Chengcheng's words.

Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, however, saw a glimmer of hope for survival. Wang Changchun was inwardly overjoyed, and even Zhuge Cang's desire for death weakened somewhat.

Wang Changchun looked up directly at Huang Chengcheng and Helian Zhan, among others, and said, "That's right, the past is the past. But we can still atone for our sins. Given a chance, we will surely help the Divine Continent fend off those foreign tribes and exterminate the strong from Heaven and the Penglai Realm. We only ask that you show mercy to our kin for this reason!"

Zhuge Cang's mouth twitched a few times. Though he didn't speak, Wang Changchun's words also greatly moved him.

Better to live a poor life than to die a noble death, especially since the Zhuge family still had so many people in need of his protection.

If he could ensure the safety of his clan and reduce the consequences his people would have to face because of their actions, he was willing to live with the shame of failure.

Yang Fei watched silently from the sidelines.

His gaze fell on Zhuge Cang, thinking of the Thunder Talismans and Thunder Skills controlled by Zhuge Cang, as well as the Zhuge family's study and prowess in the field of Talismanic Arrays, and an idea began to form in his mind.

The mastermind behind this internal conflict certainly deserved death, but there were some people, some resources, that could still be put to good use.

Despite the Hidden Sect giving off an impression of strong unity, Yang Fei looked over the group and couldn't help feeling a bit wary.

Just as Tong Yunshu had warned him before, establishing his own force was essential, otherwise, if such turmoil broke out again in the future, he would be caught unprepared.

Right now, these people were together in harmony, but once they went out, who could differentiate a person from a ghost?

When the time came for the division of power and interests over the Divine Continent and even the whole world, conflicts would inevitably arise among the various forces.

He had to plan ahead and prepare in advance!

Chapter 786: The Purpose of the Taoist Sect

Regarding the punishment of Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun, the majority of those present believed they should be executed on the spot to prevent future trouble.

However, Huang Chengcheng and Helian Zhan insisted on letting them redeem their crimes through meritorious deeds. The powerhouses of Qingtian Sect and Poison Sect also supported this, and in the end, Wang Chunyang spoke up too, thus the matter was settled.

Zhao Wannian ordered people to take Zhuge Cang and Wang Changchun to the Qingtian Sect dungeon for custody, and then led everyone to the spacious and magnificent hall.

After the powerhouses of Qingtian Sect, Poison Sect, Langya Wang Family, Ji Family, and the Zhang Family sat down, the strong ones from the second-tier aristocratic families or sects that were allied with these families also found their seats and sat down.

Then, Huang Chengcheng took Yang Fei and Xu Jian to sit together.

As for Wang Lei and Helian Zhan, one returned to the ranks of the Langya Wang Family, and the other stood beside Helian Zhan and Ouyang He.

Wang Lei, who had been cast aside by the Wang Family ten years ago, would definitely not stand with the Wang Family under normal circumstances.

But on an occasion like today, with all the major forces of the Hidden Sect in attendance, if Wang Lei stood with Yang Fei and the others, it would be too much of a slap in the face for the Langya Wang Family. Moreover, Wang Chunyang had previously sent a message to Wang Lei, asking him to stand behind him. Considering the favor of having been helped by his Uncle Six last time, he had no choice but to return to the Wang Family ranks.

"The detailed report of casualties of this battle has just been submitted. As the host, let me inform all of you," Zhao Wannian said after clearing his throat.

He began, "In this battle, three Divine Travel experts from Duanmu Family, Duanmu Wuwang and Duanmu Wuwo, have perished, while Duanmu Wugou has been seriously injured and fled, his whereabouts unknown.

Zhuge Qian and Zhuge Wei of the Zhuge family have died in battle, and Zhuge Cang was severely injured and captured.

Manor owner Wang Changchun of Giant Sword Manor was seriously injured and captured. Cai Wenhua and Zhuo Hongfei's whereabouts are unknown.

In addition, Situ Mao, the Great Elder of the Situ family, Duan Houdao, the head of the Duan Family, and Huang Tingsong from the Huang Family, who were on good terms with the Zhuge and Duanmu families, were killed.

Aside from them, there were twenty-three peak Late-stage Innate Realm elite warriors killed, over forty severely injured, all captured, and thirty-seven who surrendered and chose to submit."

Zhao Wannian finished this section in one breath, providing a brief report on the sacrifices and losses of the enemy forces.

Then he showed a sorrowful expression and said, "Due to undercover agents from the Ji Family and the Zhang Family being placed among the enemy, they caught the enemy off guard at the critical moment, so our side did not suffer many casualties. Nevertheless, we still lost seven peak Innate Realm warriors in battle, with fourteen severely wounded and even more suffering minor injuries. Detailed statistics for these have not been collated."

After speaking, Zhao Wannian said, "Ladies and gentlemen, although we have lost soldiers and generals in this battle, it has united the remaining forces and harmonized our opinions. This is exceptionally good news for the legacy of the Hidden Sect World and the Divine Continent."

"That's right. Although this internal strife led to the loss of troops, it utterly thwarted those with wild ambitions and united everyone in the Hidden Sect. The merits of this battle outweigh the losses!" Wang Chunyang's side, Wang Chunfeng, the current head of the Langya Wang Family, loudly stated.

Ji Bangying, Sect Master Zhang, and others nodded in agreement.

The Yanhuang Nation has always advocated for a just cause in warfare; even in the face of troop losses in this grand battle of the Hidden Sect, the defeated goes without saying, but as the victorious side, we must also secure a good reputation and stand for righteousness.

After discussion among the crowd, this battle was dubbed a cleansing of the nefarious elements within the Hidden Sect, restoring a righteous atmosphere to the world.

With this tone set, Helian Zhan picked up a cup of tea and respectfully approached Huang Chengcheng, saying, "Brother Huang, back when I was stumbling upon a bottleneck in my cultivation, I was fortunate to receive your secret guidance. Helian Zhan's achievements today owe much to you, Brother Huang. Now, in the presence of all the heroes here, please accept my bow."

After speaking, Helian Zhan made an attempt to bow down, but Huang Chengcheng quickly stood up, supported him, and shook his head with a smile, "In my Taoist tradition, taking on a disciple is all about predestined affinity. Since you are a disciple of Qingtian Sect, it's impossible for the Taoist tradition to take you in as a disciple; I can't accept being called your elder brother. As for the guidance, it was presumptuous of me. I only hope the fellow Taoists of Qingtian Sect won't take offense."

Zhao Wannian, Qin Sizhong, and Gong Haichao each had a different expression, feeling somewhat uncomfortable with the fact that Helian Zhan had become so formidable after being guided by Huang Chengcheng.

Doesn't this imply that the Qingtian Sect's cultivation technique is inadequate?

Although tracing back in history, the founders of Qingtian Sect indeed benefited from the Taoist cultivation techniques, but among the current Eight Great Forces, which family's ultimate techniques do not originate from the Taoist or Mysterious Sect? Yet now, everyone has established their own schools, and to admit in front of the whole world that Qingtian Sect's cultivation techniques are inferior to the Taoist Mysterious Sect's would be too much of a loss of face, right?

Seeing Zhao Wannian and others remain silent and non-committal, the atmosphere on the scene became a bit awkward.

Sect Master Zhang was about to say something when Wang Chunyang also stood up, carrying a cup of tea to Huang Chengcheng's side, offering the tea and saying, "Mr. Huang, I thank you for your guidance in the past. Without your advice, Wang Chunyang would not have reached where he is today. Please, have some tea!"

Wang Chunfeng of the Langya Wang Family as well as Wang Chunhai twitched their eyelids, feeling everyone's gaze sweeping over them. The two lowered their gaze, their expressions unchanged, as if they hadn't seen this scene.

My family's brother received guidance from a powerful Taoist practitioner and afterwards abandoned the saber to cultivate the sword, eventually becoming a great sword cultivator. Although this seems to suggest that my Wang Family's Thunderclap Saber Technique is inferior to the Taoist sword techniques, my Wang Family, having received such a favor, is grateful and seeks to reciprocate the kindness. That is the mark of true heroes and chivalrous people.

Therefore, today, seeing Taoist Inheritor Huang Chengcheng here, we of the Langya Wang Family will no longer regard him as an enemy.

As for what you all think, that's up to you.

With Wang Chunyang's interjection, Huang Chengcheng laughed heartily and drank the tea offered by both men, then spoke loudly, "I know there are still many among us who feel awkward when the subject of the Taoist sect is brought up, holding on to past grievances. You may worry that if the Taoist sect is re-established, it might seek retribution for its annihilation in the past. That's only human, and I completely understand."

With that, Huang Chengcheng paused, his gaze sweeping over the crowd, and continued, "Today, here in the presence of all the heroes from around the world, I, Huang Chengcheng, as the thirty-fourth generation representative Sect Leader of the Taoist sect, assure you that the Taoist sect seeks only to research the Immortality Technique, to remember the mission of the Hidden Sect, to protect the Yanhuang Clan of the Divine Continent.

If the Taoist sect is rebuilt in the future, from myself onwards, Taoist Disciples will uphold righteousness, fighting to protect the Yanhuang Clan of the Divine Continent, to seek the way for understanding the secrets of immortality. As for the past destruction of the Taoist sect, it will let bygones be bygones, and all Taoist Disciples are forbidden to mention it again!"

This proclamation eased the minds of many who had been harboring wariness and discomfort about the Taoist sect deep in their hearts, making them feel much more reassured.

The Taoist sect places great importance on oaths, and with Huang Chengcheng making this vow as the Sect Leader, it was quite persuasive.

Yang Fei felt somewhat bewildered inside.

All along, he had been somewhat wary of Huang Chengcheng, finding his master too mysterious and giving him an impression of not being wholly trustworthy.

He felt that the master had done so much, surely scheming in the Hidden Sect World for a long time, all for the purpose of re-establishing the Taoist sect and then avenging the past.

In Yang Fei's eyes, nothing was more important than revenge.

But now, the master had made a vow that the Taoist sect would not bring up the past annihilation again, and this left Yang Fei somewhat dumbfounded.

His gaze fell on his mentor's face, seeing the sincerity there, he suddenly felt ashamed of many of his previous thoughts and suspicions.

He was moved by his mentor's broad-mindedness and felt ashamed of himself for only fixating on revenge.

Compared with his master, his own vision and magnanimity were indeed too small.

As a Taoist Disciple, perhaps rebuilding the Taoist sect was his mentor's lifelong endeavor.

And now, whether it's the Hidden Sect or the entire world's state of affairs, with everything in turmoil, being able to peacefully rebuild the Taoist sect is already the greatest contribution to the Taoist cause.

As long as one can unite the forces of the Hidden Sect to collectively resist foreign threats, strengthen the Divine Continent, and uphold the mission of the Taoist sect, then the past destruction will not matter if the Taoist sect can regain past glory.

At this moment, Yang Fei began to understand why his master wanted to restore the Taoist sect and also realized the true significance of its existence.

In times of chaos, to support and protect the Yanhuang heritage; in times of peace, pursue the path to immortality and cultivation.

Chapter 787: Discussing Entry into the World Affairs

Helian Zhan and Wang Chunyang's stance represented the Qingtian Sect and Langya Wang Family's recognition of Huang Chengcheng's efforts in rebuilding the Taoist sect.

Among those present, Ouyang He of the Poison Sect had close personal ties with Helian Zhan, and his disciple Helian Rong was Helian Zhan's only daughter. With such connections, the Poison Sect had no objections to Huang Chengcheng's restoration of the Taoist ways.

Additionally, the Zhang Family, represented by Sect Master Zhang, was a major supporter of the Taoist reconstruction. Thus, after this great battle, among the remaining five families, only the Ji Family had yet to make a statement.

Ji Bangying chuckled and raised his teacup toward Huang Chengcheng, saying, "Congratulations, Fellow Daoist Huang, on the reconstruction of the Taoist path. I believe under your leadership, the Taoist ways shall surely reach their pinnacle again."

Huang Chengcheng smiled and replied, "Thank you for the support of the Ji Family. The task of rebuilding the Taoist sect is arduous and long, and the current times are not like the old days. Now, the Hidden Sect World suffers from a scarcity of spiritual energy and cannot sustain itself much longer. Even if the Taoist way is rebuilt, cultivating more outstanding disciples is many times harder than before.

The Taoist way cannot return to its former glory, and I only wish that in my lifetime, I could see its reconstruction, thus fulfilling my role as a Taoist disciple and honoring the ancestors."

Huang Chengcheng spoke earnestly, voicing a reality that made everyone silently nod their heads.

Indeed, times had changed.

In the past, the Taoist sect could dominate alone, but since the sect was besieged and destroyed, many cultivation techniques and secret techniques had leaked. These techniques are hard to master in today's world with scarce spiritual energy, leading to a visible limit on the cultivation realm.

Today, the Five Great Forces possess over ninety percent of the Divine Travel Realm's strong practitioners. Even if the Taoist sect is rebuilt and strives hard, it is impossible for them to exceed the total number of Divine Travel Realm practitioners within the Five Great Forces.

Thus, even if the Taoist sect is successfully rebuilt in the future, its overall strength would not be enough to threaten the five families.

Therefore, regarding Huang Chengcheng's reorganization of the Taoist sect, all five families expressed their support, and representatives from other second-tier aristocratic families and sects had no objections either, each standing up one by one to congratulate Huang Chengcheng.

After receiving the attitudes of each family, Huang Chengcheng sat back down, satisfied.

At that moment, Ouyang He stood up and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, although the Hidden Sect has just undergone a major battle, it has stabilized the situation within, resulting in a high degree of unity among all forces. Now that the internal dangers are resolved, shouldn't we discuss making a significant move into the mortal world?"

Everyone nodded in agreement.

That's why the powers that had gathered here today hadn't left yet; they were staying to discuss the Hidden Sect's next move.

Based on what powerful figures like Helian Zhan, Wang Chunyang, and Ouyang He, who had ventured into the secular world, reported, the Heaven Plane had completely collapsed. The cultivators of Heaven were moving into the secular world en masse, and Penglai had already joined them; thus, the Hidden Sect Plane World was no longer secure.

The topic of entering the secular world had often been mentioned by the Eight Great Forces in the past but had never been collectively discussed. Now, driven by the circumstances, it was necessary and urgent to do so, and since everyone was together, it was a good time to discuss this matter.

Wang Chunyang nodded and said, "Master Ouyang is right; the outside world has undergone tremendous changes. The three major hidden places are now known, and with the serious leakage of spiritual energy, it won't be long before it collapses. Even if we can delay it a bit, the people from Heaven and Penglai won't let us continue to live peacefully here. Once they come to disrupt the Hidden Sect Plane, staying here would only result in huge losses."

Huang Chengcheng couldn't help saying, "Exactly, recently there was a nuclear explosion in Bermuda, which I believe was done by the people of Japan. The Heaven Plane World suffered a destructive impact and directly collapsed, causing significant losses to the cultivation world of Heaven."

"What? Penglai has already made a move against Heaven?"

"These islanders have always been treacherous. After our victory over them in the past, we should have eradicated them to prevent future troubles."

"Since they dared to attack Heaven, they must have accumulated enough power, believing they can challenge the world again. We must be wary of this."

"Exactly, since Heaven and Penglai have entered the mortal world, staying in the Hidden Sect is extremely dangerous. We need to prepare for entering the secular world."

"Not just prepare, but we must enter the secular world as soon as possible."

The crowd buzzed with discussions.

At last, Helian Zhan nodded and said, "Indeed, what Patriarch Wang just said is right. It's not about getting ready to integrate into society, but we must integrate as soon as possible."

"Yes, this matter must be arranged sooner."

"Yes, the sooner, the better. Once we are out, we can find out about the movements of Heaven and Penglai."

"However, this time our integration into society is different from before. Now, the stability of the Hidden Sect Plane is questionable. All of us from the Hidden Sect World, nearly nine million people, must move out. Such a vast number of people integrating into society will undoubtedly present a colossal challenge to the Divine Continent people, putting a lot of pressure on them," Ji Bangying stated.

The crowd nodded in agreement; many turned their gazes toward Yang Fei, who was standing by Huang Chengcheng's side.

Since the start of the meeting, Yang Fei had stood inconspicuously behind his master.

Now that they were discussing the matter of the Hidden Sect integrating into society, all these big shots turned their eyes toward him, and Yang Fei understood their intention.

So it's up to me, Yang Fei, huh?

In the past, their integration into society would have been a simple matter for me; I could have had Yanyang arrange it in minutes.

But now...

The expectant looks from these big shots made Yang Fei a bit nervous.

He didn't know if his words still carried any weight in front of Yanyang.

But in front of so many big shots, he couldn't show weakness. He had to demonstrate enough influence over mundane affairs.

Thus, facing everyone's gaze, Yang Fei cleared his throat and said, "Ahem, why are all of you venerable seniors looking at me?"

Ouyang He snorted, "Don't play dumb. You are Yanyang's husband, the son-in-law of the Qin family. You still hold sway within the Qin family, which currently has a significant voice in Divine Continent. As for the matter of the Hidden Sect's integration, go discuss it with the Qin family, and help us understand the general attitude of mundane society."

"In my opinion, we should just go out and talk directly with the Divine Continent's high-level officials. Can they really stop so many of our strong cultivators?"

"Exactly, our integration is to stabilize the situation in Divine Continent and fend off foreign invasions. The rulers of the Divine Continent would be more than welcoming; how could they object?"

"Ahem, please calm yourselves. It's not that Divine Continent doesn't want our help, but they will worry that our arrival might disrupt the current system. With so many of us moving out, and Divine Continent being only so large, there are only so many important positions, and this poses a huge challenge to the current power hierarchy of Divine Continent," Ji Bangying couldn't help but remind them.

Helian Zhan nodded and added, "Ji Family Master hit the nail on the head, pinpointing the crucial issue."

"Right, what the rulers of Divine Continent fear most is whether their rights will still be protected after our integration," Wang Chunfeng also laughed.

The superior figures nodded, seemingly agreeing with this rationale.

"If I were them, I'd worry about the same thing."

"Indeed, fearing being replaced or controlled is human nature."

"In such a case, isn't it very difficult to reach an agreement?"

"If it really comes down to it, we just go out directly. If worst comes to worst, we can simply take control of the Divine Continent rulers. Those who disobey can be killed, and we can elevate the obedient ones. Divine Continent is never short of talent; there are plenty who can govern the country. We just need to control everything from behind the scenes. Surely, we cannot allow ourselves to be suppressed or restricted by worldly nobles after our integration, can we?"

Chapter 788: Strive for the Best

Hearing these people's discussions, Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei felt increasingly alarmed and anxious.

These Hidden Sect powerhouses were accustomed to being high and mighty. In the Hidden Sect World, they each dominated a region, living freely without restraint. Naturally, they would be dissatisfied if they had to live within the confines of secular laws after going out and would certainly resort to violence to defy prohibitions.

These people are really hard to manage.

Of course, they also knew that it would be difficult to control them after they emerged into the secular world, where they would clash with various institutions. Thus, they decided to overthrow secular laws altogether and take charge themselves, with their word as law.

For the powerhouses from Heaven, Penglai Realm, and the Hidden Sect, these three major hidden lands, entering the secular world meant becoming the puppet masters behind the scenes and changing the secular rules.

Therefore, the more Yang Fei listened, the more he felt something was off. Realizing the severity of the problem, he immediately said, "Ahem, may I, the junior, say a few words?"

The crowd discussing turned their heads to look at him.

Yang Fei said, "Now that Heaven and Penglai Realm have already entered the secular world, they have made preparations ahead of time, and we are already a step behind. The most critical issue is that Divine Continent is now fractured, forming two opposing forces. This will give foreign races the opportunity to take advantage of our weakness. If the Hidden Sect and the secular world erupt in conflict and Heaven and Penglai cooperate to attack us at the right moment, then Divine Continent is in peril!"

The crowd nodded, agreeing with his point of view.

But someone soon said, "The Hidden Sect has millions of people, with both young and old having practiced Martial Arts to strengthen themselves. Although there aren't many Innate Realm powerhouses, there are numerous masters at the Energy Transformation Realm, and more than half are at the level of having developed Inner Strength. With such a lineup going out into the secular world, how

can secular forces contend with us? The Divine Travel Realm powerhouses among us will execute decapitation strikes, quickly controlling the situation without giving foreign races a chance to exploit."

"That's right, for the secular world, our large-scale entrance into it gives us an overwhelming advantage."

"Let's decide on this, and also, that youngster just mentioned that Divine Continent is now divided into two factions. Once we go out, we will control one faction. As long as they obediently follow us, we will help them eliminate the other force, swiftly stabilizing the situation and achieving unification."

"Yes, exactly my thoughts."

"This plan is feasible!"

Yang Fei was sweating profusely with urgency.

This was no joke.

With the enormous number of Martial Artists in the Hidden Sect, and tens of thousands of masters and powerhouses at the Middle Late Stage of Energy Transformation Realm or above, such a lineup appearing in the secular world could change the entire political landscape.

The key point was that these people were all accustomed to being powerful leaders, and now they had the same mindset, deciding to go out and control secular power.

If it weren't for his marital relationship with Qin Yanyang, Yang Fei might not feel anything towards these matters. But Qin Yanyang was his wife, and the Qin Family represented one side of Divine Continent's power. Worse still, Qin Yanyang adhered to her sense of righteousness and did not want the Hidden Sect to secretly control everything in Divine Continent. Consequently, when the Hidden Sect's army went out, they would definitely clash with Qin Yanyang's faction.

If the Hidden Sect's forces directly supported the Chu Family faction, then the Qin Family faction would be waiting for destruction.

"Respected elders, please calm down and hear me out once more," Yang Fei said, inwardly anxious but maintaining a calm exterior as he cleared his throat to interrupt the ongoing discussions.

The crowd looked up at him, some displeased, furrowing their brows.

Although you are Huang Chengcheng's disciple, and after the rebuilding of Taoist sects, you are very likely to become the next Sect Leader following Huang Chengcheng with a limitless future, in today's setting, what right do you, a junior, have to repeatedly interrupt?

However, even if some were not fond of Yang Fei's interjections, no one spoke out to scold him, considering Huang Chengcheng was still seated here.

There was no need to stick one's neck out and offend others unnecessarily.

Yang Fei also felt several malicious gazes, but he couldn't concern himself with that, and immediately said, "Given the current global chaos, the top priority for us is to unite all the forces of the Divine Continent that can be united to resist external threats. As for internal issues, we can discuss them together once the world is at peace. With the powerful energy of the various factions of the Hidden Sect, I believe that no matter what the structure of the world is at that time, each faction will have an absolute say and a place of their own."

His words were quite appealing, and even those who had been displeased by Yang Fei's interruption nodded silently.

Yang Fei continued, "What do the elders think of this? I will go out and discuss with the rulers of the Divine Continent right away, and promptly provide a plan for cooperation that will satisfy the elders. Meanwhile, the elders should return to their respective aristocratic families and sects, and make arrangements for the grand entrance of the Hidden Sect into the world. In a few days, I will wait at the entrance of the transportation channel to welcome the elders and ensure that the rulers of the Divine Continent personally give you an explanation."

"Hmph, what if you go out and incite that Qin Family girl to act against the Hidden Sect Plane?" a cold voice said, belonging to a Divine Travel Realm elder named Cao Limin, a clan elder from a second-rate aristocratic family affiliated with the Ji Family.

Once Cao Limin spoke out, many people expressed their support, given the previous threat from Qin Yanyang to the Hidden Sect, which had raised great caution among many leaders of the Hidden Sect.

Yang Fei quickly said, "Elder's concerns are superfluous. My wife's actions last time were to save me, and because we were so weak, we had no choice but to use that tactic as a threat. In reality, now that Heaven and the Penglai Realm have entered the world, the secular rulers of the Divine Continent also deeply realize they need the support of the Hidden Sect experts to overcome the difficulties. Moreover, if the rulers of the Divine Continent really wanted to deal with the Hidden Sect, why would they wait until now?"

"Precisely, the Divine Continent Country wouldn't really take action against the Hidden Sect. The current international situation is extremely tense, and the Divine Continent cannot afford further internal strife," said Helian Zhan suddenly.

Wang Chunyang nodded, "I agree with Brother Helian's statement. For the Divine Continent and the Hidden Sect, to engage in internal conflict now is suicide; unity and cooperation are necessary to stabilize the situation."

Ouyang He chuckled and said, "Let the lad go out and discuss it with his wife. If he cannot provide us with a satisfactory coexistence plan, how hard would it be for us to force our way out?"

"Right, let's hear their arrangement first. If it isn't satisfactory, we can always talk about it when we're out."

"We hold the absolute advantage, how can a little girl have us at her mercy?"

"Now we first stabilize the internal situation, and after we eliminate the formidable enemies from Heaven and Penglai, won't our aristocratic families and sects still have corresponding status and influence?"

"That's very true."

Hearing the shift in tone, Yang Fei secretly breathed a sigh of relief and cast a grateful look at Helian Zhan, Wang Chunyang, and Ouyang He.

Wife, oh wife, I've been breaking my heart over helping you, and yet you still hate me to the bone. Did I owe you in my last life, Yang Fei?

But to gain the support of so many Hidden Sect leaders for you, I believe deep down you must be grateful to me.

Hehe, I might even be able to use this opportunity to reconcile with you.

With these thoughts, Yang Fei's heart surged, and he could wait no longer. He said to Huang Chengcheng, "Master, shall I go first?"

Huang Chengcheng nodded, "Go, and be careful on your way."

Yang Fei responded and looked up at everyone, cupped his fists, bowed, and said with a clear voice, "Elders, please await my good news."

Having said that, he turned around and sprinted away.

Xu Jian immediately followed, calling out, "Wait for me."

Wang Lei's expression changed, and he said to Wang Chunyang, Wang Chunfeng, and Wang Chunhai, "I... I'll go first too, you all take care."

After all, as someone cast out by his family, just standing among the Wang family today was in defense of the Wang Family's face in front of outsiders. Now that Yang Fei and Xu Jian were leaving, there was no point in him staying alone; it was more meaningful to go out and accompany Qi Hongshao.

Chapter 789: The Shock of Yang Fei and Two Others

Helian Rong watched as several figures departed, her expression slightly moved, she then heard her father's voice transmission, "Don't you stir up trouble."

The Hidden Sect World is relatively traditional; even though it consists of martial artists who aren't particular about minor details, Helian Rong is still a woman, and mingling with several grown men, certainly did not sound good when spread around.

Helian Rong was somewhat rebellious in front of her father, but today, for the first time, she didn't contradict her father. Instead, she chose to stay silent and remained behind.

After Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei left, Helian Zhan and others then discussed how to handle the people and disciples of the Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor families.

In the end, they opted for a lenient approach.

They decided to confiscate the assets of the three families, reduce the resources they originally controlled, distribute them among the powers that participated in this siege, and decided to seize the current resources of the three families.

Thus, while the Duanmu Family, the Zhuge Family, and Giant Sword Manor survived this ordeal without extermination and managed to preserve the lives of their family members and disciples, they inevitably paid a heavy price for triggering the civil war within the Hidden Sect.

From then on, it was unlikely that these three families could easily rise again.

From top-tier families, they were immediately demoted to second-tier families, and their overall strength might even further decline due to suppression over the coming years.

If they wished to rise again, it would require an emergence of an extraordinarily talented genius from within the family and a great opportunity in a grand era, otherwise, they would continue to weaken until eventually fading from notice.

Three days later, Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei arrived at the teleportation gateway.

Due to the civil war within the Hidden Sect, many of the family members stationed here had withdrawn, but Mo Li remained here, loyally performing his duties.

Though he had only met this principled senior a few times, Yang Fei held a deep respect for him.

This man did not participate in the civil strife nor take sides but steadfastly upheld his beliefs, staying at the teleportation gateway, a sure sign of integrity and virtue within the Hidden Sect World.

Mo Li, seeing these young men, felt great admiration as well, seemingly seeing his younger self in them.

The news about the great battle at Qingtian Sect had been broadcasted through eagle messages, and Mo Li had known early, without needing to inquire from the men.

However, learning that Yang Fei and the others had gone out to negotiate with the outside world about a major invasive maneuver by the Hidden Sect, Mo Li solemnly emphasized, "Yang Fei, you must handle this matter with caution. With Heaven and Penglai Realm entering the world, their covetous desire towards the Divine Continent has not changed for a thousand years. This is a critical moment. There must not be another internal chaos between the Hidden Sect and the Divine Continent."

Yang Fei nodded, "Senior, rest assured, the junior will definitely try his best to promote a harmonious situation between both sides."

Mo Li nodded and said, "Go, time is pressing. The quicker, the better."

Yang Fei agreed, taking Wang Lei and Xu Jian into the teleportation channel.

Earlier, those two from the Military Department had already gone out to pass the information, so after Yang Fei and the others emerged, they did not face any attack from the special weapons of the Military Department outside.

However, seeing the well-prepared special formation, they understood that the Military Department still very much feared the Hidden Sect, always maintaining high vigilance, ready to defend against any sudden onslaught from the powerful martial artists of the Hidden Sect World.

The precedent set by the Zhuge, Duanmu, and Giant Sword Manor had instilled great fear in the leadership of the Qin Family.

The secular world's nobility harbors a natural fear deep inside towards the superlative martial artists of the Hidden Sect World.

Even though Qin Huai'an had now stepped into the threshold of the Divine Travel Realm and Qin Yanyang had directly entered the Divine Travel Realm, the high-end combat power of the secular Martial World was still significantly weaker compared to the Hidden Sect.

Qin Huai'an still stationed himself here, and upon receiving the news of Yang Fei's return, he promptly came out to meet them.

"How did it go?" Qin Huai'an asked as he saw the three men.

Yang Fei first called him grandfather, and Xu Jian with Wang Lei also greeted Qin Huai'an, showing their respect.

Qin Huai'an nodded to them, acknowledging their greetings.

Yang Fei responded, "The Zhuge family, Duanmu family, and Giant Sword Manor have been utterly defeated. They are finished!"

Qin Huai'an's eyes lit up with delight, "Good, that's good."

He then realized something was off, "Wait, didn't they form alliances with two other families? Their allies are even stronger, how could they have lost, and lost so quickly?"

Yang Fei explained, "The Ji Family and Zhang Family turned against them at a critical moment, delivering a fatal blow to all three families."

He then briefly described the situation.

Qin Huai'an exclaimed excitedly, "So you're saying your master now has significant influence in the Hidden Sect World?"

Yang Fei thought for a moment, then nodded, "It should be decent. At least Helian Zhan and Wang Chunyang remember the favors he did them in the past. Coupled with the Zhang Family's absolute loyalty to the Taoist Sects, and since the majority of smaller families and sects in the Hidden Sect World derive their cultivation techniques from the Taoist Sects, and the last time I made the Taoist and Mysterious Sect cultivation techniques public, it should establish some good karma and garner some seeds amongst the over nine million people there."

Qin Huai'an nodded, "That's right. From what you say, the vast majority in the Hidden Sect World are grateful to the Taoist Sects. As long as matters regarding the Taoist Sect are not kept hidden anymore, gradually the influence of the Taoist Sects will grow."

Yang Fei said, "Logically, yes. Oh grandfather, I've come out this time because there is something important to discuss with you."

"What is it?" Qin Huai'an asked.

"The existence of the Hidden Sect Plane World might be uncertain, but the Hidden Sect World has already decided to fully integrate into society. Regarding their integration, they've made some demands on how the two worlds should interact, and they hope Divine Continent can offer a satisfactory plan. Grandfather, we now must provide them with a plan that will satisfy them so that we can gain their support and bring an end to this fragmentation of Divine Continent as soon as possible," Yang Fei urged earnestly.

Qin Huai'an nodded gravely, then suddenly remembered something, "Oh, there's something I forgot to tell you. The night you entered the Hidden Sect, Ning Shucheng from the Ning Family made a surprise move, capturing all the members of the Chu Family and handed them over to us. That same night, forces from various factions in Imperial City took action and gained control over Imperial City. Shortly after, the

Military Department swiftly took control of the Central Battle Zone, and then the Ning Family also announced that the East Combat Zone had rejoined us. In the past few days, Divine Continent has been restored to unity."

"What?"

"Really?"

"Is that even possible?"

Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei were all stunned, each showing different reactions.

In just a few days, such significant events had occurred?

First, the internal strife within the Hidden Sect was resolved, and now the secular division of Divine Continent was perfectly solved?

Such swift changes were unbelievable!

Although it was incredible news, listening to it still made the three feel somewhat unaccustomed, as if they were hearing a tale.

Deep inside, Yang Fei even felt a faint sense of loss.

He had thought that by leveraging his own and his master Huang Chengcheng's familiar faces in the Hidden Sect, he could convince the Hidden Sect forces to support Qin Yanyang and hasten the unification of Divine Continent.

In doing so, Qin Yanyang would be grateful to him, potentially easing her anger and reconciling with him over time.

Now, however, he had merely taken a brief trip to the Hidden Sect, and by the time he emerged, the Qin Family had already achieved absolute victory, accomplishing unity within a few days. These past few days, major reforms had been undertaken across various departments, completely transforming the face of Divine Continent.

One could say that Divine Continent had truly entered the era of the Qin Family.

But then, Yang Fei's heart tightened again.

Given Qin Yanyang's temperament, could she still negotiate well with the Hidden Sect?

Could the significant integration of the Hidden Sect into society still proceed smoothly?

Chapter 790: A New Era

Of course, Yang Fei was definitely happy deep inside that the Divine Continent had so smoothly restored its unity and harmony.

The reason he felt a sense of loss was that he hadn't been able to make a contribution to this significant event, hadn't been able to help Qin Yanyang.

What mattered more was that he hadn't taken this opportunity to leave a deep impression in Qin Yanyang's heart, and make her feel grateful to him, thus forgiving him for that little mistake.

Yes, just a little mistake.

Even up to now, Yang Fei still believed that what happened with Tong Yunshu was just a minor error, not something unforgivable.

Now that the Divine Continent was unified and the Qin Family had absolute control over it, Yang Fei feared that, given Qin Yanyang's personality, she would be focused on her career and it would be even harder for her to forgive him.

A chill ran through Yang Fei's heart as he realized he had missed this chance and didn't know when another opportunity to seek Qin Yanyang's forgiveness would come.

After repeated confirmations from Qin Huai'an, Yang Fei, Xu Jian, and Wang Lei acknowledged the fact that the Divine Continent had been restored to unity.

Xu Jian and Wang Lei looked at Yang Fei. During their unrelenting journey back to the Divine Continent, Yang Fei had discussed with them the opportunity to seek Qin Yanyang's forgiveness. Both thought that if they could accomplish this, Qin Yanyang would certainly be grateful to him. Adding to that, the couple's deep affections for each other meant that Yang Fei, if he was shameless enough to be persistent, would eventually earn her forgiveness.

Now he had missed a golden opportunity.

Although Qin Huai'an was advanced in years, as someone who had been through it himself, he understood matters of the heart very well. Noticing Yang Fei's downcast expression, he paused, then quickly understood what Yang Fei was thinking and chuckled to himself. Qin Huai'an was very satisfied and approved of Yang Fei's single-minded desire to win over his granddaughter and reconcile as husband and wife.

As a man, he was more forgiving of Yang Fei's mistake, but he also knew his granddaughter's stubborn temperament. Seeing Yang Fei's current state, he patted Yang Fei's shoulder and encouraged him, "Don't give up. I believe your feelings for Yanyang are real, and she has definitely developed genuine feelings for you too. With her character, she will only fall for one man in her lifetime, so you still have a chance."

Yang Fei felt much better upon hearing that and was also somewhat touched. Looking at Qin Huai'an, he said, "Thank you, Grandpa. I indeed did something wrong to Yanyang and hurt her. You can still forgive me, and I... I really appreciate it."

Qin Huai'an said, "The matter with that Miss Tong... wasn't entirely your fault. Besides, when you married Yanyang, there had been no real marital relationship, let alone marital feelings. If we were to nitpick, your fault lies in hiding the truth from her."

Yang Fei's mouth twitched.

Xu Jian's and Wang Lei's facial muscles also twitched, and they turned their heads to the side, pretending to look elsewhere.

How could this kid not have hidden it?

He coveted what was in the pot while eating from the bowl, not wanting to let go of what was in the bowl, and even more so, not wanting to give up what was in the pot.

If he hadn't kept it a secret, would he have ended up with Qin Yanyang from the pot?

All men understand.

Seeing Yang Fei's expression, Qin Huai'an seemed to realize the crux of the issue and couldn't help but snort coldly.

Men knew men.

Qin Huai'an was also popular with women in his youth.

The only difference was that he had been able to resolve such issues quite well.

Of course, times were different. Women back then were not as independent deep down as they are now.

And Yang Fei was just too lucky, having met the haughty Miss Qin of his family.

This matter... well, it's better to let the young people figure it out themselves.

Given these thoughts, Qin Huai'an shifted his tone and said, "Did you come out just to discuss a suitable plan with us and then inform the people of the Hidden Sect?"

Yang Fei nodded and said, "Exactly. We must settle this matter quickly, or else those strong-willed and hot-tempered individuals from the Hidden Sect will become impatient. Once they all emerge without restraint, I'm afraid there will be a huge conflict with the secular laws."

Qin Huai'an's expression grew solemn as he said, "Hmm, those people are used to being free and unrestrained; suddenly expecting them to comply with secular laws will be difficult. Moreover, with millions in the Hidden Sect, if they were all to come out at once, it would cause a massive shock to the entire Divine Continent. One wrong move and disaster could arise from within, causing the collapse of the Divine Continent. This threat is no less significant than an invasion by foreign forces."

"That's right," Xu Jian said. "We must finalize this as soon as possible. I think we should first grant them lenient conditions, then find a relatively isolated place to settle the millions from the Hidden Sect. We shouldn't let them have extensive contact with the outside world just yet. There needs to be a suitable transition and buffer period, allowing the common people to become aware of their existence and the Martial Artists of the Hidden Sect to better understand the secular laws and rules, merging them gradually."

Wang Lei slowly nodded, "Senior Xu is right."

Yang Fei also thought Xu Jian's proposal was quite reasonable, and he looked at Qin Huai'an.

Qin Huai'an said, "This matter isn't something I can decide alone. Therefore, I'll immediately hold a video conference with the other senior leaders to draft a plan as soon as possible."

Having said that, he was about to attend to his duties when Yang Fei couldn't help but ask, "Grandfather, what about those people from before?"

Xu Jian and Wang Lei also looked expectantly at Qin Huai'an.

Xu Jian was now in Duanmu Cheng's body, with a wife and children. This man, whose actual age was over a hundred and thirty, had developed a certain special affection for his wife, Mu Sujing.

And Wang Lei, as for him, Qi Hongshao was his betrothed wife, selected by their parents since childhood. They had reunited during a time of crisis, and after experiencing countless life-and-death situations together, their love had grown strong. Now, having been apart for a few days, he felt a longing as if it had been three autumns.

Qin Huai'an glanced at Yang Fei, snorted, and said, "Are you sure you want to see her?"

Yang Fei, bracing himself, said, "I'm sorry, Grandfather. Although it might upset you, I can't lie to you—I can't just ignore Tong Yunshu."

Qin Huai'an chuckled coldly, "The sentimental and honorable indeed, but this will likely make things even more difficult with Yanyang in the future."

Yang Fei's heart sank, realizing that Qin Huai'an's reminder was apt, but he couldn't give up on Tong Yunshu.

He, Yang Fei, would not let go of either of these good women.

Regarding his career, Yang Fei had no great ambition; perhaps not giving up on Qin Yanyang and Tong Yunshu was his biggest ambition and determination as a man.

Qin Huai'an called his aide-de-camp and had him take Yang Fei and the other two to the place where Tong Yunshu, Qi Hongshao, and those from the Hidden Sect who had been escorted out last time were staying.

These people were temporarily stationed at a special base on Kunlun Mountain, and military tents served as their temporary residence.

Yang Fei went straight to Tong Yunshu's personal tent.

As for Wang Lei and Xu Jian, of course, they sought their own women.

Seeing Yang Fei return safe and sound eased Tong Yunshu's hanging worries.

On the other hand, after returning to the headquarters, Qin Huai'an immediately contacted Imperial City, and all the senior leaders holding critical positions dropped their work to hold a teleconference.

Qin Yanyang and Ning Shucheng were notably present.

Typically, such matters would be discussed by the more civilian-oriented leaders, but now, almost all were military leaders.

This also signified that the Divine Continent had entered a special era where the military governed all.

Almost all the major powers around the world had entered this special era; the entire Earth had stepped into a new realm.