

Sect Master 161

Chapter 161: Fake Pill

Even Meng Zhang, who was immersed in closed-door cultivation, was alarmed by a series of major events happening outside. He couldn't understand how the news about Twin Success Valley secretly cultivating Gold Core Daoist Masters, which should have been the highest secret of the valley, had leaked and become widely known.

In the past, there were faint rumors about this matter spreading, and even the spies of the Flying Swan Sect had gathered some clues. Meng Zhang had also obtained some information from Li Nu, a spy of the Flying Swan Sect.

However, the news that was originally circulating within a small circle suddenly spread on a large scale.

The Flying Swan Sect was not in a hurry to take action against Twin Success Valley; instead, they planned to observe and witness Twin Success Valley's success or failure. If Twin Success Valley cultivators really started forming the core, Flying Swan Sect would naturally intervene to stop it.

After this news spread, not only was Twin Success Valley in a difficult situation, but even the Flying Swan Sect could no longer remain silent.

As the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, although it was never explicitly stated, all forces knew that the Flying Swan Sect would never allow other forces to cultivate Gold Core Daoist Masters.

Now that Twin Success Valley had revealed signs of doing so, if the Flying Swan Sect did nothing, it would be seen as condoning such behavior and would damage its own prestige.

The recent actions of the Flying Swan Sect, though directed at Twin Success Valley, also affected Taiyi Sect, which was a vassal force of Twin Success Valley.

The fall of Singing Sand City had a significant impact on Taiyi Sect. It not only lost the meager income from the grocery store but also lost a channel for procuring resources.

Originally, the secretly mined scarlet copper ore was sold to the Earthfire Sect. However, in the current situation, Earthfire Sect had to temporarily suspend its trade with Taiyi Sect due to the orders from the Flying Swan Sect.

Taiyi Sect, being a vassal force of Twin Success Valley, was also blocked. Its disciples could not pass through the blockade lines of the major forces to go to Singing Sand City and Firewell Market.

The Flying Swan Sect thought it through carefully and was worried that Twin Success Valley might use the name of its vassal force to conduct external resource trading. Therefore, all caravans of Twin Success Valley's vassal forces were not allowed to pass through the blockade lines.

Taiyi Sect had stable trade with Lao Bulu, but due to the orders of the Flying Swan Sect, Lao Bulu temporarily stopped buying the white hidden earth ore mined by Taiyi Sect.

The situation was not too bad as Taiyi Sect already had a certain degree of self-sufficiency. The annual harvest of spirit grain could barely meet the needs of its disciples. The alchemical trade with Shi Weiming had only changed location and was not greatly affected.

Although Taiyi Sect lost the income from selling scarlet copper ore, Twin Success Valley had been purchasing white hidden earth ore at market price. After Lao Bulu stopped buying, Twin Success Valley continued purchasing all the white hidden earth ore and urged Taiyi Sect to invest more manpower to increase the mining volume.

As long as Taiyi Sect could maintain its current state, Meng Zhang wasn't too worried. What he needed to do now was to build the Foundation as soon as possible. With the strength of the Foundation Building stage, he would have a stronger ability to cope with the upcoming major changes.

While the situation around Twin Success Valley was changing tumultuously, there were also hidden currents and schemes within the valley.

On this day, in the main hall of Twin Success Valley, almost all the elders were gathered for an elder assembly to decide the next steps for the sect.

Twin Success Valley was currently in the eye of the storm, facing a critical moment. A single misstep could lead to the destruction of the sect.

Xiao Haisheng, who should have been sitting at the top position as the Twin Success Valley Sect Master, voluntarily gave up his seat during this elder assembly.

Having served as the Twin Success Valley Sect Master for many years, Xiao Haisheng held significant authority. Moreover, with his Foundation Building late stage cultivation base, he could be considered a formidable expert throughout the Endless Sea of Sand. The Flying Swan Sect, with only three Gold Core Daoist Masters, had to treat Xiao Haisheng with great respect.

Not to mention other matters, with Xiao Haisheng alone, he could suppress the neighboring forces like Liu Family, Forest Spring Watch, and Green Bamboo Mountain.

However, the elder sitting at the top position today, Xiao Fengyan, held an even higher status.

Xiao Fengyan was Xiao Haisheng's paternal uncle and also a False Core cultivator. A False Core cultivator was someone who had completed Foundation Building but couldn't form a true Core using normal means, so they had to resort to unconventional methods to create a False Core.

While False Core cultivators were inferior to genuine Gold Core cultivators in both strength and lifespan, they had an overwhelming advantage over Foundation Building completion cultivators.

A False Core cultivator could live for around three hundred years, while a Gold Core cultivator had a lifespan of at least five hundred years. Moreover, the strength of a False Core cultivator was higher than that of a Foundation Building completion cultivator, but they were still no match for a true Gold Core cultivator.

The true trump card of Twin Success Valley was not the rumored Ten Foundation Building technique but rather the False Core cultivator, Xiao Fengyan.

Over a hundred years ago, Twin Success Valley had accidentally obtained an inner core of a Third Rank demonic beast. Using this inner core as the main ingredient, they could refine a Foundation Building Pill.

However, the then Twin Success Valley Sect Master had a different idea.

Firstly, Twin Success Valley was already capable of refining Lesser Foundation Building Pills. Although the efficacy was far from that of a genuine Foundation Building Pill, and the success rate of disciples achieving Foundation Building was not high, having Lesser Foundation Building Pills reduced the urgency for Foundation Building Pills.

Secondly, the Sect Master realized that having a few more Foundation Building stage cultivators in Twin Success Valley wouldn't fundamentally enhance the sect's strength and foundation. Similarly, a few more Foundation Building Pill cultivators or a few less Foundation Building completion cultivators wouldn't affect the survival of Twin Success Valley.

However, having a False Core cultivator could play a decisive role in critical situations.

Thus, Twin Success Valley contacted an expert from the Jiuqu League and spent a great price to refine the Third Rank demonic beast inner core into a pill that a cultivator could use. After Xiao Fengyan completed Foundation Building, knowing that he had no hope of forming a true Core, he voluntarily assimilated the pill and became a False Core cultivator.

For years, Twin Success Valley had been publicly disclosing that the once renowned disciple, Xiao Fengyan, had died during meditation due to his depleted lifespan. In reality, Xiao Fengyan was hiding within the sect and only revealed himself during crucial moments. Only the Foundation Building stage elders within the sect were aware of Xiao Fengyan's existence.

Now, with Twin Success Valley convening an elder assembly that concerned the life and death of the sect, Xiao Fengyan naturally wouldn't be absent.

Among the attendees, there was also an elder named Shan Feiyu, who was not sitting with the other elders but was sitting alone on one side. Shan Feiyu was the most talented disciple accepted into Twin Success Valley since its establishment and the sole candidate the sect was preparing to cultivate into a Gold Core Daoist Master.

After years of dedicated nurturing and costly resource investment, this relatively unknown genius had already completed Foundation Building, with only one step away from the Gold Core stage. However, this one step was a tremendous obstacle that stumped the vast majority of Foundation Building completion cultivators, and very few could cross it.

Chapter 162: Determination

The Elder Council Meeting of Twin Success Valley started with intense debates. Many conservative elders were initially opposed to fully cultivating a Gold Core Daoist Master from among their ranks. They were content with the current status and didn't want to risk offending the Flying Swan Sect by putting all their efforts into nurturing a Gold Core Daoist Master. They believed it wouldn't be worth it.

Leaking even a little information could invite retaliation from the Flying Swan Sect. If this continued, no one knew how the Flying Swan Sect would react. If the Flying Swan Sect truly attacked, the foundation that Twin Success Valley had built over hundreds of years would be in jeopardy, and everything they had worked for would be lost.

On the other hand, some ambitious elders believed that Twin Success Valley had accumulated enough power over the years and was now just one Gold Core Daoist Master away from elevating

their sect's position. They couldn't afford to give up at this critical moment and risk losing all their previous efforts.

The two factions of elders began arguing and quarreling vehemently.

Sitting at the top, Sect Master Xiao Haisheng observed the elders below, feeling a sense of annoyance. He had met the Flying Swan Sect's Sect Master, Fei Hongzi, several times. While Fei Hongzi and he both had a Cultivation Base at the Foundation Building late stage, Xiao Haisheng considered himself more skilled and capable than Fei Hongzi. Yet, every time he encountered Fei Hongzi, he had to lower his head and show respect, even if it went against his will.

As the Sect Master of Twin Success Valley, he was a subordinate of the Flying Swan Sect, and Twin Success Valley was merely a Foundation Building sect, while Flying Swan Sect was a Gold Core sect. This inequality and submission bothered Xiao Haisheng greatly.

He had thought this dissatisfaction would persist for a lifetime. However, unexpectedly, Twin Success Valley produced a genius disciple like Shan Feiyu, bringing new hope not only to Xiao Haisheng but to the entire Twin Success Valley.

Shan Feiyu possessed a top-grade lower-tier spiritual root and had received the full support of the sect since he was young. Throughout his cultivation journey, he had enjoyed smooth sailing, never lacking in resources, excellent teachings, and outstanding legacies.

At the age of twenty-five, Shan Feiyu had completed the Refining Qi stage and successfully reached the Foundation Building stage without consuming any auxiliary elixirs, achieving impressive progress. After reaching the Foundation Building stage, his Cultivation Base continued to soar. At the age of only one hundred thirty-five, he had already completed the Foundation Building stage and was qualified to attempt the Gold Core stage breakthrough.

Over the years, Xiao Haisheng had invested numerous accumulated resources of Twin Success Valley to help Shan Feiyu lay a solid foundation and increase his chances of successfully reaching the Gold Core stage.

Xiao Haisheng had forced some opposing elders to submit and traded with Ghost Path cultivators, offering valuable resources to have them refine Jade Soul Fluid. Although the formation created by the Zhao Family had damaged the Yin-Yang Reversal Formation built by the Ghost Path cultivators, causing them to fail in producing the Jade Soul Fluid, Xiao Haisheng had provided alternative spiritual materials and, combined with Shan Feiyu's talent and hard work, eventually completed the Soul refinement.

Now, Shan Feiyu's true qi, Soul, and physical body were all in a state of completion, meeting the requirements for attempting the Gold Core stage breakthrough. They only needed a suitable opportunity to make the breakthrough.

They had already walked ninety-nine steps of the path; there was only one step left. As the mastermind behind the entire plan, Xiao Haisheng couldn't possibly give up now.

As the one directly involved in the Gold Core breakthrough, Shan Feiyu was even more determined to see it through.

Seeing some elders still opposing, Shan Feiyu's gaze became sharp as he swept his eyes over them. One sensitive elder trembled, suddenly recalling something.

Shan Feiyu, who had completed the Foundation Building stage long ago, was the number one expert in the sect, aside from the False Core cultivator, Xiao Fengyan. Even Sect Master Xiao Haisheng himself was inferior to Shan Feiyu in comparison. However, Shan Feiyu was low-key and seldom interacted with others, leading people to overlook this fact.

Moreover, once Shan Feiyu succeeded in forming his Gold Core, he would become the only Gold Core Patriarch of Twin Success Valley. If they incurred the enmity of a Gold Core Patriarch, even though he wouldn't directly take action due to sect rules, he might secretly make moves that the Foundation Building elders couldn't withstand. They might suffer, and it could even affect future generations, causing unrest for their descendants.

The opposing voices suddenly diminished significantly as the clever ones shut their mouths.

Xiao Haisheng noticed all of this. He was also dissatisfied with those elders who still hesitated at this moment, but now was the time to unite everyone and ensure the plan's success.

As Xiao Haisheng's gaze fell on him, Xiao Fengyan understood his intentions. With a light cough, he silenced the people below.

Xiao Fengyan was far superior to the others in age and Cultivation Base. As the only False Core cultivator in the sect, he possessed unparalleled strength and was the biggest hidden card of Twin Success Valley.

"Things have come this far, and there's no turning back. We can no longer retreat," Xiao Fengyan declared.

"Although the Flying Swan Sect seems to be pressuring us step by step, they haven't taken real action. It shows that they are unaware of our plans and merely reacted instinctively based on some unreliable information."

"If the Flying Swan Sect truly knew what we were planning, they would have already attacked us and wiped out our sect entirely."

"Since we started planning this major move, we have been at odds with the Flying Swan Sect. Now, we have no room to back down."

"I implore all of you to put aside your differences and work together to ensure the smooth progress of our plan."

"If the plan succeeds, Twin Success Valley will break free from its shackles and soar to new heights. All of you will be contributors to our success."

"But if the plan fails, we will have no place to bury our bodies, and Twin Success Valley will face annihilation."

With each word spoken by Xiao Fengyan, the faces of the people below became increasingly solemn, and some already showed a sense of realization.

Xiao Fengyan's decisive words settled the dispute within the sect and dispelled any unrealistic fantasies some had.

The entire Twin Success Valley began operating secretly, preparing for the final moment.

Outside, the Flying Swan Sect continued to pressure Twin Success Valley, but they had yet to take further action. Although Twin Success Valley's situation was becoming more difficult, they had a

deep heritage accumulated over hundreds of years. As the dominant sect in the surrounding region, they had various means to keep the sect afloat.

As time passed, Meng Zhang had also turned thirty. During that year, he completed the Refining Qi stage and obtained the qualification to attempt the Foundation Building stage breakthrough.

Chapter 163: Foundation Building

At the age of thirty, Meng Zhang's cultivation speed of refining Qi and completing foundation building was considered relatively fast even within the Endless Sea of Sand. After the decline of Taiyi Sect, they had never produced such a talented cultivator.

However, Meng Zhang was unaware that Twin Success Valley also had a genius with a high-quality spiritual root. Shan Feiyu from Twin Success Valley possessed a high-quality lower-grade spiritual root, one level below Meng Zhang's upper-grade spiritual root. Nevertheless, Shan Feiyu's superior background in Twin Success Valley gave him a head start, with conditions far surpassing what the declined Taiyi Sect could provide. As a result, Shan Feiyu had already left Meng Zhang far behind. At least for now, Shan Feiyu was no longer someone Meng Zhang could compete with.

Shan Feiyu was already preparing to break through to the Gold Core stage, while Meng Zhang was just beginning to prepare for the Foundation Building stage. Despite both being exceptional cultivators, their paths had never intersected until this crucial moment.

For Meng Zhang, a successful Foundation Building would resolve many issues and equip Taiyi Sect with more powerful adaptability during future challenges. Although possessing an upper-grade spiritual root meant not needing to consume a Foundation Building Pill for a great chance of success, Meng Zhang decided to secure a backup and asked Shi Weiming to fulfill his promise of providing the Foundation Building Pill.

Over the years, Meng Zhang had sent people numerous times to ask Shi Weiming for the Foundation Building Pill, but each time he was met with various excuses and evasions. Shi Weiming seemed reluctant to hand over the pill.

Deep Earth Spirit General, the person Meng Zhang sent to request the pill this time, returned to Taiyi Sect and informed Meng Zhang that Shi Weiming couldn't be trusted, as his words didn't match his actions.

At present, Foundation Building was Meng Zhang's top priority, and he couldn't afford to be entangled with Shi Weiming. Even without the Foundation Building Pill, it wasn't a major problem. After successfully completing his Foundation Building, Meng Zhang planned to settle the score with Shi Weiming gradually.

According to the experiences of previous cultivators, Meng Zhang would be best suited to break through to the Foundation Building stage above the Second Rankspirit vein. Breaking through above the First Rankspirit vein would require consuming a large number of spirit stones to compensate for the quantity and quality of spiritual energy, and the effects would be inferior to those of the Second Rankspirit vein.

Taiyi Sect did not possess a Second Rankspirit vein, so Meng Zhang initially planned to borrow from other sects that did. However, Jue Ying had already considered this and prepared a secluded Second Rankspirit vein at Luo YeDaoist Master's place.

Luo YeDaoist Master resided temporarily at a Second Rankspirit vein owned by the black market. Now, as Meng Zhang was about to break through to the Foundation Building stage, he decided to go there for seclusion, as it would be more convenient in all aspects.

After arranging all the sect matters, Meng Zhang set off with Jue Ying. Although Flying Swan Sect had used its subordinate forces to set up a blockade, it was mainly aimed at large groups of people and caravans. For a few cultivators like Meng Zhang and Jue Ying, the blockade was not very effective.

Jue Ying was skilled at sneaking and had led Meng Zhang through a few rounds to easily cross the blockade and arrive at Luo Ye's secluded cultivation spot.

Luo Ye had been disturbed by demonic energy and had been trapped in seclusion for many years. With Jue Ying guiding him, Meng Zhang paid his respects to this senior cultivator.

Luo Ye didn't hold back and shared the experiences from when she broke through to the Foundation Building stage many years ago, filling in the last piece of the puzzle for Meng Zhang's cultivation.

Before this, Meng Zhang had carefully studied the Sect Master's records, meticulously reading the cultivation experiences of the previous generations of Sect Masters. Before the complete decline of Taiyi Sect, only Foundation Building stage or above cultivators could become Sect Masters. After the decline, even being a Sect Master was not enough to successfully reach the Foundation Building stage.

The records of Foundation Building experiences in the Sect Master's records were brief and not detailed. As for Deep EarthSpirit General, his memory had not fully recovered yet, and as a Guardian Spirit General, his cultivation was vastly different from human cultivators. Thus, the information Meng Zhang obtained from him about Foundation Building was limited as well.

Now, Luo Ye's narration filled in the last gap in Meng Zhang's knowledge. This didn't mean that without Luo Ye's guidance, Meng Zhang couldn't succeed in Foundation Building, but with her advice, he could avoid many detours and reduce risks.

Regardless of Luo Ye's intentions, Meng Zhang truly appreciated her kindness. After receiving the knowledge from Luo Ye, Meng Zhang bid farewell and entered the prepared seclusion chamber. Meng Zhang spent some time organizing all the knowledge he had acquired throughout his life and combined it with the experiences of previous cultivators. He contemplated the challenges he might encounter during Foundation Building.

After careful consideration, he felt confident and free from distractions. He adjusted his mental and physical state and wholeheartedly began his journey to break through the Foundation Building stage.

The first of the three hurdles during the Foundation Building stage required a strong physical body without any hidden injuries or ailments. For Meng Zhang, this was not a problem as his body had been tempered multiple times and was in excellent condition.

The second hurdle was to have enough potent and pure True Qi. Meng Zhang had cultivated the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" for many years and accumulated a profound cultivation base. His True Qi was purified to the utmost, free of impurities, after experiencing the intense solar and lunar energy multiple times.

The third hurdle was to have a strong Soul. For Meng Zhang, this was not an issue. As a transmigrator, his Soul was inherently stronger than an ordinary cultivator's. After numerous trials in the Trial Ground, his divine consciousness had already reached the peak of the Refining Qi stage.

With all conditions met, a resolute mind and a pure and unwavering Dao heart, Meng Zhang's successful Foundation Building was a foregone conclusion, without any suspense.

He followed the methods recorded in the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" and systematically began his breakthrough into the Foundation Building stage. The pure True Qi circulated within his body, stimulating his Soul to react. The major difference between a Foundation Building stage cultivator and a Refining Qi stage cultivator was that the former successfully gave birth to divine consciousness.

Divine consciousness was the sixth sense beyond the five senses, allowing cultivators to internally perceive their own bodies and externally observe their surroundings clearly. Even with his eyes closed and ears covered, Meng Zhang could feel everything within a ten-zhang radius.

This newly-born divine consciousness had an impressive sensing range of ten zhang in all directions, making it quite rare. With divine consciousness, many illusions targeting the five senses would be rendered ineffective.

By internally observing his body, Meng Zhang could sense every internal organ, each muscle, and every blood vessel in his body clearly. With this ability, he could target specific parts of his body for cultivation, especially the internal organs, without harming himself.

Finally, using his newly-born divine consciousness, Meng Zhang guided the fusion of Lunar True Qi and Solar True Qi, forming a brand-new Sun-Moon True Qi. Thus, his entire Foundation Building process was completed.

Chapter 164: Drives out the Demon Air/Qi

Having successfully completed Foundation Building, Meng Zhang's life underwent a fundamental transformation. From this point on, he finally had some capital to stand in the Cultivation World.

For ancient cultivators, Foundation Building is the starting point of cultivation. Before reaching Foundation Building, cultivators can only be considered to have one foot inside the door of cultivation, and they cannot be truly called cultivators.

After Foundation Building, Meng Zhang was about to embark on a brand-new beginning.

Meng Zhang effortlessly passed the difficult barrier of Foundation Building that had troubled most Refining Qi stage cultivators in the Cultivation World.

Following his successful Foundation Building, Meng Zhang started to familiarize himself with the new abilities that come with this stage. For Foundation Building cultivators, divine consciousness is

the most crucial ability. With gradual training, the range and sensitivity of their divine consciousness will increase.

During the Refining Qi stage, although Meng Zhang could achieve "Divine Soul Leaving the Body," he couldn't venture too far away from his physical body. Apart from entering special places like Trial Grounds, his soul couldn't stay outside for too long.

Upon entering the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang's soul could travel far away from his body, up to ten miles. Moreover, he had also stopped further strengthening his soul, allowing it to advance.

In the Foundation Building stage, cultivators have a special focus on enhancing the strength and abilities of their souls. Initially, Meng Zhang's soul could only perform simple soul travel, withstanding the strongest winds at best. As his Cultivation Base improved, the range of soul travel expanded.

In the mid-stage of Foundation Building, his soul could travel under the sunlight. Soul travel in daylight marked the mid-stage of Foundation Building.

By the late stage of Foundation Building, his soul could even possess others' bodies after their death, giving the cultivator a chance to start anew even if their physical body was destroyed.

After Meng Zhang cultivated the Sun and Moon True Qi, he could use Solar True Qi and Lunar True Qi separately or merge them into Sun-Moon True Qi. This not only provided him with more tactical options but also represented a substantial improvement in true qi.

As for abilities like controlling wind and flying with the wind, which were common among Foundation Building stage cultivators, they were relatively insignificant.

After becoming familiar with the state of the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang left seclusion and appeared before Luo Ye.

Meng Zhang had spent just over half a year in seclusion this time, successfully completing his cultivation. At present, he was still a few days away from turning thirty-one.

Upon seeing Meng Zhang, Luo Ye and Jue Ying were elated. Although they knew the likelihood of Meng Zhang succeeding in Foundation Building was high, until it actually happened, they couldn't be sure if any unexpected incidents would occur.

Luo Ye gave Meng Zhang some advice and allowed him to continue his seclusion to consolidate his Foundation Building Cultivation Base and familiarize himself with the abilities of this stage.

Jue Ying brought the latest news from the outside world. The situation remained the same; Twin Success Valley was pressured and in a difficult situation, but it hadn't suffered any significant damage. As for the Flying Swan Sect, besides ordering its subordinates to blockade Twin Success Valley, there were no further actions, leaving everyone uncertain about their intentions.

At Taiyi Sect, there were no major incidents, and everything was as usual. The sect operated normally, and its disciples were safe. In Meng Zhang's absence, the members of the sect knew their responsibilities and maintained the sect's operations.

In the Foundation Building stage, daily cultivation required a Second Rank or higher spirit vein. Otherwise, they would need to spend a large amount of spiritual stones to set up special gathering arrays.

Since there were no major events outside, Meng Zhang decided to stay here and practice, making use of the Second Rank spirit vein.

Another six months passed, and Meng Zhang's Cultivation Base had completely solidified, making him a qualified Foundation Building cultivator.

Not wanting to delay any longer, Meng Zhang proposed to help Luo Ye drive out the demon air.

Having received many benefits from Luo Ye, it was time to repay the favor.

Although Luo Ye had a slight hesitation, hoping that Meng Zhang would continue cultivating for a few more years to increase his Cultivation Base and have a better chance of success, Meng Zhang considered the uncertain situation outside. There might be unexpected changes that could hinder him from fulfilling his promise to help Luo Ye.

Luo Ye and Meng Zhang made a pact for fifteen years, but it was still far from the agreed time, and yet Meng Zhang was ready to fulfill his promise.

Seeing Meng Zhang's unwavering confidence, Luo Ye let him proceed. After all, Luo Ye had been tormented by the demon air for many years and was more anxious for a solution than anyone else.

The following three months were a grueling battle for Meng Zhang, an unprecedented challenge.

The Solar True Qi burned the demon air, while the Lunar True Qi protected Luo Ye. When the two were combined into Sun-Moon True Qi, it contained a sense of true harmony, making it the nemesis of the demon air.

Sitting cross-legged, Luo Ye and Meng Zhang began their joint journey.

During these three months, both Luo Ye and Meng Zhang faced numerous difficulties and dangers, underestimating the power of the demon air.

The demon air was not only powerful and stubbornly pervasive, but it also seemed to possess a kind of instinct, almost like a living being.

Luo Ye and Meng Zhang were dealing with something far beyond mere forces; they were facing living entities with various reactions.

After each time they exhausted their true qi, they quickly swallowed pills to restore it, and pill toxins accumulated in their bodies rapidly.

Fortunately, Meng Zhang and Jue Ying had a considerable number of stone stalactites. By alternating their usage, they managed to eliminate the pill toxins and continue taking new pills.

Before the stone stalactites were depleted, they finally succeeded in driving out the demon air from Luo Ye's body.

It was an arduous and extraordinary battle, during which Meng Zhang not only gained unprecedented training but also accumulated rich experience in combating demon air.

Luo Ye was now free from the torment, her body fully restored, and his Cultivation Base unaffected, with a stable foundation.

On the other hand, Meng Zhang had nearly been contaminated by the demon air several times and suffered some damage to his foundation. Until his foundation was repaired, his Cultivation Base couldn't be further improved.

To mend his foundation without any special opportunities, it would take at least 20-30 years.

However, Meng Zhang didn't pay much attention to it; after all, he was still young, and delaying cultivation for 20-30 years was not a significant concern. Moreover, if he could obtain suitable spiritual treasures or pills to mend his foundation, it wouldn't be a problem.

Luo Ye, who had been troubled by the demon air for many years, was now in high spirits.

"Little Sect Master Meng, I won't say much about the gratitude I owe you. The favor of giving me a new lease on life is unforgettable."

"I thought my life was over, but you brought new hope. I originally believed that after expelling the demon air, preserving my Cultivation Base would be considered good enough. Unexpectedly, your Sun-Moon True Qi is truly profound. It not only expelled the demon air but also preserved my foundation, giving me hope to break through to the Gold Core stage."

Chapter 165: Comes to Beg

"After years of battling against the demonic energy, I have gained many new insights. I now have greater confidence in breaking through to the Gold Core stage," Luo Ye continued.

"However, Sect Master Meng, you have been a great help this time, and I feel guilty that it has affected your foundation," she added.

Having joined forces with Meng Zhang for three months, Luo Ye was well aware of her condition.

"It's just a minor matter. Senior, please don't worry about it," Meng Zhang said nonchalantly.

Luo Ye fell silent for a moment before handing a jade pendant to Meng Zhang.

"Sect Master Meng, this is the reward I promised you earlier. With your talent, Foundation Building stage is by no means the end of your cultivation. You also have the potential to break through to the Gold Core stage," Luo Ye explained.

"When you reach the late stage of Foundation Building and are ready to form the core, take this jade pendant to the territory of Jiuqu League. By then, you will receive assistance that can help you form your Gold Core."

Luo Ye explained in detail how to use the jade pendant and how to contact the Jiuqu League after arriving there.

As promised, Luo Ye had offered Meng Zhang a significant reward for helping her expel the demonic energy from her body. Although the exact details of the reward were yet to be known, the fact that it could help Meng Zhang form his Gold Core made it invaluable. After all, in the entire Endless Sea of Sand, there were only three Gold Core Daoist Masters in control of the Flying Swan Sect. The recent rumors about Twin Success Valley cultivating Gold Core Daoist Masters had caused a stir, highlighting the significance of the Gold Core stage in the region.

Although Meng Zhang had just achieved Foundation Building and the thought of breaking through to the Gold Core stage hadn't crossed his mind yet, he was certain that he would strive for it in the future. His cultivation base would not stop at the Foundation Building stage.

Carefully, Meng Zhang placed the jade pendant in a safe place. Anything that could aid in breaking through to the Gold Core stage was not to be taken lightly.

While Meng Zhang had helped Luo Ye without expecting a reward, receiving this jade pendant was an unexpected joy for him.

"Ever since I was injured by the demonic energy, I exiled myself to the Endless Sea of Sand. During these years, I've received a lot of help from the black market. Now that my injuries have healed, it's time for me to leave. Before I go, I must make some gestures and arrangements," Luo Ye said.

"Jue Ying will accompany me when I leave. From then on, the relationship between you, Sect Master Meng, and the black market won't be as close. Before I depart, I'll also give some instructions. However, I cannot predict how long my influence will last."

Listening to Luo Ye's words, Meng Zhang felt helpless. He had gained many benefits and assistance from the black market. The news that his relationship with the black market might be affected wasn't good.

As for Luo Ye's specific background and her connection with the black market, she hadn't revealed anything, and Meng Zhang didn't inquire further.

"I'll probably stay for another month. If there's anything you need my help with, don't hesitate to ask," Luo Ye generously offered.

Having known each other for a long time, Meng Zhang felt that neither had taken advantage of the other. He had benefited a lot, and Luo Ye owed him nothing.

Now that they were about to part ways, Luo Ye was offering one last assistance. Meng Zhang didn't hesitate to accept it and made a sincere request to Luo Ye.

Upon hearing Meng Zhang's request, Luo Ye readily agreed without any hesitation.

Half a month later, Luo Ye led Meng Zhang on a flying journey, and they traveled thousands of miles east of Singing Sand City to a hilly region.

The continuous hills were a rare sight in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Flying at a long distance for the first time after reaching the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang felt a sense of freshness.

Moving through the air, feeling the sharp gusts of wind, and overlooking the mountains below, Meng Zhang realized the true benefits of reaching the Foundation Building stage. No wonder, in ancient times when cultivation strength was stronger, the Foundation Building stage was considered a true Cultivator.

Flying freely through the air with the wind was an enjoyment and privilege of a Cultivator.

After flying for a while, Meng Zhang finally felt a hint of the extraordinary as a cultivator.

Luo Ye led Meng Zhang to a mountain range and began to descend.

"Here is the hidden residence of the Shi Family. These remnants of the Purple Gold Sect really know how to hide," Luo Ye said.

Meng Zhang had asked Luo Ye to help him get what he was owed from Shi Weiming—a Foundation Building Pill.

After Luo Ye agreed, she quickly gathered information about the Shi Family through the black market's intelligence network.

It turned out that the Shi Family's ancestors were cultivators from the Purple Gold Sect. After the sect's downfall, the Shi Family had been hiding and evading pursuit by the Flying Swan Sect for many years. It was only recently that they had stabilized and begun to develop their influence, thanks to Shi Changqing, a genius cultivator who emerged in the last hundred years.

The black market had spent considerable effort to discover the secret base of the Shi Family.

The place ahead didn't seem unusual at all and looked like any other deserted mountain in the area.

Following Luo Ye's direction, Meng Zhang glanced over.

Since reaching the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang's Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, had greatly improved. With just a quick glance, he saw through the hidden secrets of the place.

Luo Ye wasted no time and tore apart the protective formation below with a fierce punch, as if tearing apart a piece of cloth.

A ripple-like disturbance spread, revealing a completely new scene underneath.

Amidst the various small hills were numerous little valleys. Though Meng Zhang's Deception Breaking Eye couldn't see everything clearly due to the formation, he could sense the flowing streams, lush vegetation, and faint figures of people.

"Shi Changqing, Gu Tanghai, come out now!" Luo Ye's thunderous roar echoed in the sky, reverberating loudly.

In the valley below, signs of panic became evident.

Despite being a female cultivator, Luo Ye had a fiery temper. Having roared, she refused to wait even for a moment and unleashed a powerful punch towards the protective formation below.

The formation trembled violently, clearly affected by the impact.

"Shi Changqing, Gu Tanghai, why are you stalling? If you don't come out now, don't blame me for being impolite and destroying this shabby formation!"

Chapter 166: Admitting defeat

Luo Ye's imposing presence was indeed formidable. As soon as she spoke, two figures flew down from above.

One was a refined-looking middle-aged man, none other than Gu Tanghai, whom Meng Zhang had dealt with before. The other was a tall elderly man exuding a faint fragrance, likely the person in charge of the Shi Family, Shi Changqing.

Luo Ye was not just an ordinary cultivator at the Foundation Building late stage; she was an elite cultivator preparing to break through to the Gold Core stage. At this moment, she didn't bother hiding her strength and released her unique aura of a strong cultivator.

Gu Tanghai and Shi Changqing looked at the unfamiliar woman before them with wariness. Gu Tanghai also noticed Meng Zhang standing beside Luo Ye.

"Sect Master Meng, since when did you achieve Foundation Building? And who is this senior?" Gu Tanghai asked, surprised.

Seeing Gu Tanghai's astonishment, Meng Zhang smirked maliciously. "Brother Gu, did you think that just because you swallowed my Foundation Building Pill, I couldn't succeed in my Foundation Building?"

"Apologies, but I have successfully achieved Foundation Building. Are you all surprised and taken aback?" Luo Ye said impatiently. "Sect Master Meng and his companions, stop the unnecessary chatter. Once I defeat them, they will naturally spit out everything they swallowed."

"Hold on, senior, is there some misunderstanding here?" Gu Tanghai hurriedly intervened.

Gu Tanghai's cultivation base was only at the mid-stage of Foundation Building, making him no match for a late-stage Foundation Building cultivator like Luo Ye. As for Shi Changqing, he was at the early stage of Foundation Building and not particularly skilled in combat, being an alchemist instead.

The defensive formation set up by the Shi Family below was mainly for concealing their base, with only average defensive capabilities.

Not to mention Meng Zhang, who had just successfully achieved Foundation Building. Even this mysterious woman alone could sweep aside all of them.

"Enough with the nonsense and stop finding lame excuses to dodge responsibility. Quickly return the Foundation Building Pill of Sect Master Meng," Luo Ye ordered, interrupting Shi Changqing before he could speak further.

"If you dare to say another word of nonsense, I'll kill you on the spot."

Gu Tanghai stopped Shi Changqing's actions and bowed his head obediently. "Senior and Sect Master Meng, please wait a moment. I'll immediately retrieve the Foundation Building Pill."

After saying that, Gu Tanghai quickly pulled Shi Changqing and flew back down to the valley below.

"Hurry up, my patience is limited. If this takes too long, I'm afraid I won't be able to control my temper and destroy this place," Luo Ye arrogantly demanded.

Perhaps truly intimidated by Luo Ye, Gu Tanghai swiftly returned, carrying a jade bottle.

Meng Zhang took the jade bottle from Gu Tanghai and poured out two pill-sized pills. He activated the Deception Breaking Eye technique to carefully examine them.

According to Meng Zhang's knowledge of pills, these two Foundation Building Pills were indeed genuine.

To be extra sure, Luo Ye inspected them a few more times.

Once confirmed, Luo Ye snorted coldly, taking Meng Zhang with her as they flew away. Throughout the encounter, she didn't even spare a glance at Gu Tanghai. Meng Zhang, too, refrained from saying much and didn't bother introducing Luo Ye's identity.

Today, Luo Ye gave Meng Zhang a profound lesson. It turned out that with a strong enough cultivation base, one could indeed act however they pleased, being overbearing and domineering.

Watching the two figures depart, Gu Tanghai's feelings were complicated.

Originally, they had no intention of swallowing Meng Zhang's Foundation Building Pill. Shi Weiming, who was in charge of external affairs, strongly opposed such an act. But both Gu Tanghai and Shi Changqing were helpless.

As a small faction, it was extremely challenging for them to secretly collect the spirit herbs needed to refine Foundation Building Pills. They spent a great deal of effort and paid a high price to gather all the required ingredients.

The process of refining a batch of Foundation Building Pills almost depleted Shi Family's accumulated resources.

Although Shi Changqing was a talented alchemist with great skills, it was his first time refining Foundation Building Pills. Fortunately, he succeeded, but he only produced three intact Foundation Building Pills.

If they considered only the economic aspect, Shi Family suffered significant losses in refining this batch of Foundation Building Pills. Not to mention the additional expenditure of spiritual stones, just the consumption of those rare materials alone could have exchanged for five Foundation Building Pills if they were sold to the Flying Swan Sect.

Of course, refining such critical strategic resources as Foundation Building Pills couldn't be solely evaluated based on economics. Moreover, Shi Changqing's alchemy techniques were further refined through this process. It's worth noting that Foundation Building Pills were one of the most difficult Second Rank pills to refine.

However, after all the hard work and effort, and only having three Foundation Building Pills in hand, it was really frustrating to give two to Meng Zhang as promised. Both Shi Changqing and Gu Tanghai were deeply unwilling.

Certainly, Taiyi Sect was just a small faction, and they could delay and procrastinate indefinitely. But to Meng Zhang, the Foundation Building Pill was genuinely precious. Compared to the fate of the entire sect, Gu Tanghai had a clear understanding of which mattered more.

Gu Tanghai handed over the Foundation Building Pills, and Meng Zhang didn't pursue the matter further, which could be considered a win-win situation.

After this incident, although Meng Zhang didn't immediately sever the cooperation with Shi Weiming, he was already prepared to explore other avenues.

In the Cultivation World, sects with vision invested heavily in cultivating their own alchemists. Even if these alchemists were not highly skilled, and their alchemy endeavors resulted in severe losses, sects would still support them financially.

With a wide variety of pill types and enormous benefits, besides pills that increase cultivation base, there were those used for healing, detoxification, and restoring mana, which were equally indispensable. If a sect lacked the ability to produce these vital pills themselves, they might find themselves unable to acquire them even with vast amounts of spiritual stones.

Before, Taiyi Sect lacked the resources to do so, but now their financial situation had improved, and it was time to prioritize training alchemists.

Meng Zhang had obtained the contents related to alchemy techniques from the inheritance in the Trial Ground, ranging from alchemy apprenticeship to becoming an alchemist.

Once back at the sect, they could select and nurture disciples who showed even the slightest aptitude for alchemy.

Returning to Luo Ye's place of seclusion, Jue Ying brought back some news. Twin Success Valley had stopped buying white hidden earth minerals mined by Taiyi Sect and demanded that Taiyi Sect completely destroy any evidence of their dealings.

Without Twin Success Valley purchasing white hidden earth minerals, Taiyi Sect lost its primary source of large-scale spiritual stones. They could support themselves for a short time with their reserves, but if this situation persisted, they would face difficult times.

Meng Zhang originally planned to return to Taiyi Sect immediately. However, he realized that even if he returned now, there wouldn't be a good solution to this problem. It might be better to stay here, take advantage of the Second Rank spirit vein to save a significant amount of spiritual stones, and explore potential new sources of wealth.

Meng Zhang handed the Foundation Building Pill he had just retrieved back to Jue Ying, as promised.

Chapter 167: Leaving

During a casual conversation, Meng Zhang mentioned in passing that the Taiyi Sect was preparing to train their own Alchemists. The very next day, Luo Ye presented Meng Zhang with a generous gift – two exquisite First Rank alchemy furnaces. Among the tools used by practitioners of the same level, production tools like alchemy furnaces and crafting furnaces were not only difficult to refine but also of the highest value.

In addition to the furnaces, Luo Ye also gave Meng Zhang a manual of an exceptional Alchemist from the Flying Swan Sect. Many years ago, a group of roaming bandits intruded into the Endless Sea of Sand and targeted a lone Alchemist from the Flying Swan Sect. These audacious bandits not only obstructed and robbed the Alchemist but also committed murder and looted all his treasures. Afterward, they eradicated any evidence of their actions.

This incident caused a great uproar in the Endless Sea of Sand and stirred up waves like a tsunami. For any sect, Alchemists held crucial importance. For the Flying Swan Sect, which dominated the Endless Sea of Sand, the disappearance of their Alchemist was not just a matter of face, but it also trampled upon the sect's authority. The Flying Swan Sect mobilized significant forces to search for the Alchemist's whereabouts and investigate the incident.

Later, the bandits took the loot they had plundered and tried to sell it on the black market. The usually unscrupulous and audacious black market found this loot to be a difficult situation to handle. Eventually, they followed the rules and accepted the stolen goods but secretly informed the Flying Swan Sect about the bandits' whereabouts. Faced with the wrath of the Flying Swan Sect, the bandits met a miserable end, and the black market returned all the stolen goods to the sect.

However, unknown to anyone, the manual that contained the Alchemist's experiences and insights had been secretly copied by the black market. With this manual in hand, Taiyi Sect's cultivation of Alchemists would undoubtedly avoid many detours. The Alchemist inheritance Meng Zhang obtained from the Trial Ground merely recorded various alchemical techniques and some common elixir formulas. Becoming an Alchemist solely through self-study of this inheritance was not an easy task. The experiences and teachings recorded in this manual were the best guidance for his path.

Learning about the origin of this manual from Luo Ye's mouth, Meng Zhang couldn't help but marvel at the situation. Even seemingly powerful entities like the black market had to bow their heads in front of forces like the Flying Swan Sect. Meng Zhang didn't know if Luo Ye intended to warn him through this matter. After all, the black market was not entirely trustworthy.

Luo Ye's extravagant gift made Meng Zhang feel a bit uneasy. However, this unease stemmed from his insufficient understanding of the ways of the demonic cultivators. He didn't realize the significance of his assistance to Luo Ye. Demonic cultivators were the enemies of the Cultivation World, a malignant tumor within the world, and there were reasons for their notoriety.

Similarly, Ghost Path cultivators played with souls, using ghost tools to capture and enslave spirits. But Ghost Path cultivators could not attain immortality and would eventually die. Ghost tools would decay and dissipate over time. Ultimately, regardless of the time spent, all imprisoned and enslaved souls would return to the heavens and earth.

However, demonic cultivators were different. Once completely corrupted by demonic energy, the bodies and souls of living beings no longer belonged to this world. Demonic cultivators' practices amounted to robbing the world of its souls, depleting its foundations.

So, demonic cultivators are not tolerated by regular cultivators nor by this world. If Luo Ye had not been able to expel the demonic energy and had been corrupted into a new demon, not only would she have been rejected by this world, but even after death, she would never transcend and her soul would be consigned to the demonic soil. Luo Ye owed a great debt of gratitude to Meng Zhang, and no matter how she repaid him, it would not be enough.

After spending a few more days settling all the matters, Luo Ye bid farewell to Meng Zhang and left the place, departing from the Endless Sea of Sand. The vast world ensured that they might meet again someday.

The spirit vein here would be reclaimed by the black market two months later, so Meng Zhang had no rush to leave. Since attaining Foundation Building, he hadn't had the time to practice new spells and master the techniques of a Foundation Building stage cultivator. It was rare to have a spirit vein available at the moment, so Meng Zhang wanted to make good use of this opportunity to cultivate diligently.

As he entered the Foundation Building stage, he needed the corresponding techniques of a Foundation Building stage cultivator and new magic tools. Meng Zhang possessed a Second Rank

flying sword called "Crimson Flame Sword," which he obtained in the Purple Gold Sect's cultivator cave. Although not entirely satisfied with it, he had no other choice but to temporarily refine and use it.

Aside from that, Meng Zhang had no other Second Rank magic tools. Even though he had just succeeded in Foundation Building, it seemed somewhat modest. Fortunately, before Luo Ye left, she introduced Meng Zhang to an Elder at the Earthfire Sect in the Foundation Building stage. Shortly after Luo Ye's departure, Meng Zhang bought a Second Rank flying sword called "Toxic Fang" from the Elder at a low price. The Toxic Fang was made from the fang of a Second Rank demon python.

This demon python was massive, and its fang was thicker and longer than an adult's arm. After being refined by the Earthfire Sect's tool refiner, the fang had shrunk significantly and turned into a short dagger-like flying sword. Handling two flying swords simultaneously and multitasking was not a difficult task for Meng Zhang. Since he had no other magic tools at the moment, he began employing the dual sword technique.

For cultivators, having more magic tools did not necessarily mean better results. It was essential to consider one's capabilities. In many cultivator battles, it might seem like they were using several magic tools, but in reality, they could effectively control only one or two, while the others were merely employed to unleash their inherent power.

Meng Zhang didn't have this problem, but he felt that he had too few magic tools and they were insufficient for his needs. Therefore, he made up for it with his spells.

Entering the Foundation Building stage allowed Meng Zhang to learn new spells and techniques, while his previously acquired spells and techniques also gained greater power. During the Refining Qi stage, he already knew how to refine Solar True Flame and condense Lunar True Water. However, at that time, he had only scratched the surface, and the produced Solar True Flame and Lunar True Water were of limited purity and power.

Now, having entered the Foundation Building stage, his ability to withstand the sun and moon energy had increased, enabling him to upgrade the Solar True Flame and Lunar True Water he possessed.

While Meng Zhang secluded himself in this hidden place for cultivation, significant changes occurred outside. One month later, a true upheaval took place. The black market sent the latest news to Meng Zhang: Twin Success Valley had been annihilated by the Flying Swan Sect, and the surviving disciples of Twin Success Valley were being relentlessly hunted down by the sect's forces.

This news shocked Meng Zhang to the core. He had only been in seclusion for a few days, and how could Twin Success Valley be destroyed so quickly? Twin Success Valley was, after all, the dominant force in this region. Its destruction would bring forth numerous consequences and uncertainties. The fate of Twin Success Valley's affiliates, such as the Taiyi Sect, would be in question. How Flying Swan Sect handled the aftermath would be a matter of great significance for countless cultivators.

A few days before Twin Success Valley was annihilated, this story takes place. It is set in a mountainous region several hundred miles away from Twin Success Valley and over a thousand miles from Forest Spring Watch.

About a month ago, this place turned into a bustling construction site. First, several Foundation Building experts from the Flying Swan Sect, along with a large group of disciples, cordoned off the area, forbidding any cultivators from approaching. Shortly after, two Gold Core Daoist Masters from the Flying Swan Sect, Master Fei Yu and Master Fei Jiang, arrived with a large number of followers.

It was rare for three Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Flying Swan Sect to mobilize like this, along with many disciples. They began constructing a peculiar-looking tower on the mountaintop based on specific blueprints. The main material used in building the tower was carefully refined white hidden earth, which was transported by several Second Rank flying boats.

After toiling for half a month, the disciples of the Flying Swan Sect completed the tower's construction. They then inscribed runes and added various magic tools on it according to the blueprints. Once all the tasks were finished with significant manpower and resources, Daoist Masters Fei Yu and Fei Jiang personally inspected the tower, making sure there were no flaws.

With the tower completed, the disciples of the Flying Swan Sect dispersed, setting up a tight defensive formation around the area to prevent outsiders from approaching. Meanwhile, Daoist Masters Fei Yu and Fei Jiang went to the top of the tower, where a middle-aged man with an elegant demeanor named Wu Mingwei was already seated. He was Flying Swan Sect's most outstanding talented disciple and the chosen Gold Core seed among the three Gold Core Daoist Masters.

In a few days, Wu Mingwei would embark on his journey to break through to the Gold Core stage on this tower.

"Respects to the two masters," Wu Mingwei stood up and respectfully saluted.

"Mingwei, how do you feel?" Daoist Master Fei Yu asked kindly.

"I only feel calm and clear, with no flaws in my Daoist heart," Wu Mingwei replied in a plain tone.

"That's good, that's good. Mingwei, you should wait here in peace for the next few days and not be distracted by external affairs," Daoist Master Fei Yu expressed his relief.

In his view, Wu Mingwei's accumulation was already sufficient. He had completed his Foundation Building cultivation base, and his physical body, soul, and true qi were all perfect. His Daoist heart was as solid as a rock, meeting all the conditions for becoming a Gold Core cultivator. Everything was in place, and they were just waiting for the opportune moment for Wu Mingwei to form the Gold Core successfully.

Daoist Master Fei Jiang encouraged Wu Mingwei, saying, "After a few days, when you become one of us, you should call us senior brothers."

Wu Mingwei politely responded with humility.

After giving some instructions and settling all matters, Daoist Masters Fei Yu and Fei Jiang left the tower and flew to the nearby sky.

Daoist Master Fei Jiang remarked, "Senior Brother Fei Tian is quite cautious, requiring both of us to come here and guard Mingwei's core formation."

"I've commanded the Endless Sea of Sand for many years, and no ignorant fools dare to cause trouble," he said with a smile.

Fei YuDaoist Master replied solemnly, "The matter of Mingwei forming the core is related to our Flying Swan Sect's future for the next few hundred years and the situation in Endless Sea of Sand for the same period. No matter how cautious we are, it is not excessive."

"If it weren't for the recent unusual movements from Qi Family, Senior Brother Fei Tian might have come in person."

Fei JiangDaoist Master changed the topic, asking about Twin Success Valley's situation, as he rarely involved himself in mundane matters within the sect.

Fei YuDaoist Master pondered for a moment before answering, "Twin Success Valley's situation is somewhat strange."

"It's not surprising that they have thoughts about nurturing Gold Core cultivators, given their strength and foundation. However, this affair, which should have been conducted secretly, has become so public and widely known. There is something unusual about it."

"Firstly, I feel as if we are being used as pawns to eliminate Twin Success Valley. That's why I want to wait and see if there's any hidden agenda behind all this."

"Secondly, Mingwei's core formation is imminent, and I don't want any disturbances. Whatever Twin Success Valley's situation is, we'll deal with it after Mingwei forms the core."

Fei JiangDaoist Master frowned slightly and added, "A few days ago, I received a report from a disciple. Twin Success Valley activated their sect-protecting great formation three days ago, sealing off the entire sect. Do you think they would attempt core formation at a time like this?"

Fei YuDaoist Master sneered, "If only forming the core were that easy. Those ignorant fools are laughable. It's already extremely difficult for our Flying Swan Sect, with our heritage and resources, to nurture a Gold Core cultivator. If not for the residual influence of Purple Gold Sect, we wouldn't dare to say we wouldn't have experienced a failure in producing Gold Core cultivators." "Twin Success Valley, a mere Foundation Building sect, wants to nurture Gold Core cultivators. It's ridiculous. Do they even know the secret methods to break through to the Gold Core stage? Do they have enough resources? Rushing forward in ignorance will only lead to painful consequences."

As a Gold Core Daoist Master himself, Fei YuDaoist Master understood how challenging it was to form a Gold Core. Personal talent, effort, and fortuitous encounters were all necessary.

Fei YuDaoist Master had already concluded that Twin Success Valley couldn't possibly nurture a Gold Core cultivator, so he chose to ignore the matter, focusing on suppressing Twin Success Valley to maintain Flying Swan Sect's authority and remind all forces in Endless Sea of Sand who the true master was.

Fei JiangDaoist Master, with a background as a mortal martial cultivator who later stepped into the Dao, had a more comprehensive perspective. He said, "We shouldn't fear ten thousand things but the one in a million. I'm still a bit uneasy."

"Alright then, you stay here. Since Twin Success Valley isn't far from here, I'll take the trouble to go and see if there's any problem there," Fei YuDaoist Master decided.

Fei YuDaoist Master's thoughts were focused on Wu Mingwei's core formation. Originally, he didn't want to handle Twin Success Valley's situation at this moment. However, Fei JiangDaoist Master volunteered, and he couldn't reject him outright.

"Alright, you go then. Hurry back and don't delay matters here," Fei YuDaoist Master replied.

Chapter 169: Examination

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, greeted and flew towards the direction of Twin Success Valley with a single call. The journey of a few hundred miles was a breeze for a Gold Core Daoist Master and took only half an hour to fly through.

Twin Success Valley's mountain gate was situated within a valley surrounded by mountains. It was rare to see such towering peaks in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Each of these mountains acted as vigilant guards, firmly blocking the entrance to Twin Success Valley. Three days ago, the sect activated its sect-protecting great formation, unleashing its full power to thoroughly isolate it from the outside world. Looking from the outside, the mountain top was covered in mist, completely shrouding the valley below. Countless large sand particles floated between the mountains without any wind, obstructing any external probing.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, arrived high above Twin Success Valley's sect-protecting great formation. With his status and strength, he was not afraid of Twin Success Valley daring to attack him.

Looking down at the impenetrable sect-protecting great formation, even a Gold Core Daoist Master like him couldn't see what was happening below.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, furrowed his brow and lowered his flying altitude, descending slowly towards the formation.

Arriving at the edge of Twin Success Valley's sect-protecting great formation, he shouted loudly, "Is the Twin Success Valley Sect Master present? Come out and meet this Daoist Master immediately."

Fei Jiang's voice carried a special force that penetrated the sect-protecting great formation and transmitted inside.

After a while, Fei Jiang started to feel impatient. What was Twin Success Valley up to? He had already revealed his identity as a Gold Core Daoist Master, so why was no one coming out to welcome him?

If it weren't for his consideration of his identity as a righteous expert, Fei Jiang would have considered directly attacking the formation.

"Have all the people inside died? If you don't come out now, I won't be polite anymore."

Fei Jiang, being from a reputable sect, always gave warnings before taking action against others.

Finally, after some time, there was a response from below.

"Coming, coming. I was in closed-door cultivation, and it took me some time to finish my practice. I apologize for making the senior wait."

"It's all my fault; it's all my fault. Please don't blame me, senior."

The Sect Master of Twin Success Valley, Xiao Haisheng, hurriedly flew up from below in a flustered manner, explaining as soon as he arrived.

He hadn't yet come close, but he quickly kept explaining without pause. Xiao Haisheng had seen Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, from afar once before.

Fei Jiang's expression softened slightly upon seeing this.

"What is Twin Success Valley up to? Why did you activate the great formation and lock the doors in broad daylight? Could it be that you are secretly involved in something suspicious?"

"Senior, you've misunderstood. There's nothing suspicious going on. It's just that a few elders and I were practicing a technique together. We were worried about being disturbed by outsiders, so we temporarily closed the gates," Xiao Haisheng explained calmly.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, remained skeptical.

"Since there's nothing suspicious, then open the gates and let this Daoist Master go in and take a look."

"It's just a minor matter. How could I trouble the senior with such a big display?" Xiao Haisheng's attitude became even more respectful.

Despite his respectful tone and continuous stream of flattery, Xiao Haisheng still didn't open the gates.

Fei Jiang, being an experienced individual, saw through Xiao Haisheng's attempts to delay him.

Fei Jiang's suspicions grew even stronger.

"Enough with the nonsense. Open the gates immediately and let this Daoist Master inspect. If you dare to offer any more excuses, I won't be polite."

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, grew cold, issuing a final ultimatum.

Xiao Haisheng knew he couldn't continue to stall. Fei Jiang was determined to enter, but Xiao Haisheng didn't dare to let him in.

He tried one last effort to buy more time, but Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, had run out of patience and had no intention of continuing to waste time with him.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, reached out to grab Xiao Haisheng and force him to open the gates.

However, Xiao Haisheng's reaction was not slow, despite his weaker cultivation base.

He quickly retreated into the sect-protecting great formation.

"You're quite slippery, running away so quickly," Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, remarked nonchalantly.

"A mere Second Rank great formation wants to stop me. How naive," he added.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, raised both hands, and golden qi condensed in the air, transforming into countless sharp blades. Wave after wave, they descended onto the sect-protecting great formation below.

Numerous blades relentlessly struck the formation, sparking bursts of light.

All the Foundation Building elders of Twin Success Valley, along with many Refining Qi disciples, had taken their positions. After Xiao Haisheng escaped into the sect-protecting great formation, he immediately arrived at the control center.

This Second Rank superior sect-protecting great formation, established above a Second Rank spirit vein, received the support of many cultivators from Twin Success Valley. In the short term, it was enough to withstand attacks from Gold Core cultivators and delay sufficient time.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, attacked for quite some time, but he couldn't breach the formation. This not only made him lose face but also aroused his suspicion.

Twin Success Valley dared to prevent him from inspecting, which showed that they were guilty of something. Perhaps there was some shady business going on in the valley below.

Initially, Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, didn't believe Twin Success Valley had the capability to cultivate Gold Core Daoist Masters, but he came just to be cautious.

Now that Twin Success Valley was openly opposing him, he couldn't let them off easily.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, became serious. He made a single-handed gesture, summoning a golden beheading horse knife that fell into his hand. Gold Core Daoist Masters usually used Third Rank magic tools, also known as spiritual tools, which possessed spiritual qualities.

Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, originally came from the mortal world as a warrior and was skilled in using long beheading horse knives before entering Dao cultivation. After forming his Gold Core, he had a spiritual tool forged specifically for him.

After years of nurturing and use, this beheading horse knife not only gained spirituality but also became Fei Jiang's killer move.

He raised the beheading horse knife high and slashed it down. A golden blade aura struck the sect-protecting great formation, creating a deep fissure. Although the great formation quickly repaired the gap, its operation was significantly affected.

Some Refining Qi disciples with weaker cultivation bases within the great formation were shaken by the immense force, feeling dizzy and numb, almost spitting blood.

Chapter 170

Once Fei Jiang, the Daoist Master, became serious, he immediately utilized the methods of the Gold Core Daoist Master, displaying a formidable battle prowess.

After attacking for a while, weaknesses in the sect-protecting great formation became evident. Many disciples in the Refining Qi period, who had weaker cultivation bases, were injured and fell to the ground.

Although Fei Jiang Daoist Master couldn't break the great formation in a short time, if they continued like this, the formation would likely not hold up for much longer.

Managing the great formation, Xiao Haisheng sighed in the center. He realized that the power gap between a Gold Core period cultivator and a Foundation Building period cultivator was significant, and it couldn't be compensated just by relying on sheer numbers.

Xiao Haisheng had been exerting full control over the great formation, and the Foundation Building elders and Refining Qi period disciples were giving it their all to assist. However, it seemed like the great formation wouldn't last as long as they had hoped.

Without waiting for Xiao Haisheng to speak, Xiao Fengyan, who had been observing the entire battle, stepped forward voluntarily.

"Let me go out, even if it costs me my life, I hope I can delay them a bit longer," Xiao Fengyan said.

Xiao Haisheng knew that both he and Xiao Fengyan had underestimated the battle prowess of a Gold Core period Daoist Master. Many of their planned strategies were now useless.

Feeling bitter, Xiao Fengyan thought that as a cultivator who had achieved the fake pill stage, the difference between himself and a true Gold Core cultivator wouldn't be significant. However, witnessing Fei Jiang Daoist Master's strength, he realized that the gap between the two was vast.

Quickly flying above the sect-protecting great formation, Xiao Fengyan faced Fei Jiang Daoist Master from a distance.

"A mere fake pill cultivator, and you dare to show yourself. You're just a card in the hand of Twin Success Valley," Fei Jiang Daoist Master sneered.

In the eyes of a genuine Gold Core Daoist Master, a fake pill cultivator was nothing more than a slightly stronger Foundation Building cultivator and didn't deserve to be compared to a Gold Core cultivator.

Xiao Fengyan didn't say a word but immediately controlled a Third Rank flying sword and charged towards Fei Jiang Daoist Master.

While a fake pill cultivator couldn't fully unleash the power of a Third Rank magic tool, Xiao Fengyan, at the cost of his own life, could skillfully control the flying sword. "Today, this Daoist Master will show you that a fake pill is always a fake pill and can never become the real thing!" Fei Jiang Daoist Master grinned wickedly and attacked Xiao Fengyan with his sword.

Xiao Fengyan was determined, and with the assistance of the sect-protecting great formation, every time he acted, it was as if he was working in tandem with the formation. Whenever he couldn't withstand an attack, he would retreat into the formation to use its strength to resist.

The battle became intense, with blades clashing and Qi surging, making the situation extremely dangerous.

After a while, Fei Jiang Daoist Master couldn't defeat Xiao Fengyan and was forced into a prolonged battle.

Suddenly, Fei Jiang Daoist Master looked puzzled at the sky. In the distant upper air, innumerable silver rays appeared and fell like drizzling rain from the heavens.

"This Heavenly Rainfall came so early this time, many days ahead of schedule. Luckily, our sect was prepared and constructed the reception tower in advance, preventing any mishaps. My nephew, Mingwei, has also made preparations to break through to the Gold Core stage and seize this opportunity," Fei Jiang Daoist Master murmured to himself.

The silver drizzle falling from the sky was not evenly distributed but seemed to be drawn towards a specific location on the ground, precisely where Flying Swan Sect had recently constructed a tall tower.

However, not all of the silver drizzle fell in that direction; a large part of it unexpectedly descended on the position where Fei Jiang Daoist Master was.

"Strange, why is the Heavenly Rainfall falling here?" Fei Jiang Daoist Master's face showed a puzzled expression, but suddenly he seemed to realize something, and his expression turned to unprecedented rage.

"Damn you, you bunch of petty people from Twin Success Valley! How did you know the secret of the Heavenly Rainfall?"

"You...how dare you..."

Fei Jiang Daoist Master was so furious that he couldn't even speak properly.

The long-hidden huge secret was exposed, and instead of feeling anxious, Xiao Fengyan became calm, letting go of all his fears, worries, and panic.

It had come to the point where it was a life-or-death struggle, and everything would be decided in this battle.

If they succeeded, Shan Feiyu would become the core of Twin Success Valley, and the sect would soar to new heights, with the ability to contend with Flying Swan Sect.

If they failed, they would be left with no place to bury their dead, and the entire Twin Success Valley would be wiped out.

With this realization, Xiao Fengyan fought with newfound confidence, firmly holding back Fei Jiang Daoist Master.

At this crucial moment, Fei Jiang Daoist Master couldn't care less about his Gold Core Daoist Master status.

He took out a pass on message flying sword and input the information he had just learned.

The pass on message flying sword turned into a streak of light and flew towards the direction of Fei Yu Daoist Master, carrying the secret of Twin Success Valley and the message asking for Fei Jiang Daoist Master's assistance.

After sending the pass on message flying sword, Fei Jiang Daoist Master no longer held back. He used all his abilities, vowing to break the sect-protecting great formation below in the shortest time possible.

The battle became even more intense, and the Twin Success Valley cultivators knew there was no turning back, giving it their all.

Meanwhile, Fei Jiang Daoist Master's pass on message flying sword had an exceptionally fast flying speed, even faster than an ordinary Gold Core Daoist Master's. It reached Fei Yu Daoist Master in a remote location.

After reading the information from the pass on message flying sword, Fei Yu Daoist Master's face showed an expression of disbelief followed by extreme anger.

"Twin Success Valley, Twin Success Valley, you're asking for death!"

At this moment, Fei Yu Daoist Master deeply regretted not acting decisively earlier and destroying Twin Success Valley when there were rumors about it. He had let today's disaster happen.

In his heart, he lamented being bound by the identity of a so-called righteous expert for so long, causing him to act timidly and indecisively, losing his proper vigilance.

He realized that it was better to kill 3000 wrongfully than to let one escape, which was the way of life in the cultivation world.

Fei Yu Daoist Master quickly shook off his regrets and reacted promptly to the situation.

As he gave orders, the elite cultivators guarding Flying Swan Sect in the surroundings quickly boarded flying boats and rushed towards Twin Success Valley.

Their orders were to assist Fei Jiang Daoist Master and break Twin Success Valley's sect-protecting great formation as quickly as possible. They were to annihilate the entire Twin Success Valley, leaving no one alive and thoroughly destroying the sect.