

Sect Master 171

Chapter 171: The Snipe Freshwater Mussel Conundrum

With the departure of the elite disciple of the Flying Swan Sect, the surrounding security force weakened. Fei Yu Daoist Master, however, remained unfazed, as he had his Gold Core Daoist Master to assume personal command and oversee the innumerable Foundation Building period and Refining Qi period disciples.

Fei Yu Daoist Master watched as the flying boat vanished in the horizon, feeling doubtful. The Heavenly Rainfall was the highest-level confidential information of the Flying Swan Sect, and only three Gold Core Daoist Masters and a few core Foundation Building period cultivators knew about it. How could this news have leaked out, and how did Twin Success Valley find out about it?

The Heavenly Rainfall was a rare occurrence that happened every 300 years above the Endless Sea of Sand. It involved the dropping of massive Tenth Water Essence, which were pure and highly coveted magical items. During the time when the Purple Gold Sect ruled the Endless Sea of Sand, their Primordial Spirit True Monarch would go down to the upper air and directly gather these Tenth Water Essences. Later on, the Purple Gold Sect discovered that by using white hidden earth as the main material, they could refine a special receiving and instructing tower that would collect all the Tenth Water Essences that fell from the sky.

If a Foundation Building period completion cultivator with appropriate practicing techniques absorbed these Tenth Water Essences during the formation of their core, it would help them form a Gold Core. This method became a secret of the Purple Gold Sect and an effective measure for training Gold Core Daoist Masters.

After the Purple Gold Sect was extinguished, the Flying Swan Sect became the new overlord of the Endless Sea of Sand and inherited many of the Purple Gold Sect's heritages, including this secret. Every 300 years, the Flying Swan Sect's experts would use a special method to survey the general position where the Heavenly Rainfall would drop. They would then construct a receiving and instructing tower nearby to collect the Tenth Water Essences that fell and help the Gold Core seed form a Gold Core in the gate that was arranged beforehand.

Thanks to this method, the Flying Swan Sect successfully ensured the ordered inheritance of Gold Core Daoist Masters in the gate and prevented it from being cut off. The primary material used to construct the receiving and instructing tower was white hidden earth, a seemingly common refiner material. Although the white hidden earth ore was extremely common, the Flying Swan Sect found it hard to monopolize all the white hidden earth ores. However, they thought of many means to prevent the overflow of white hidden earth.

The Flying Swan Sect supervised the flow direction of white hidden earth ore and white hidden earth in the Endless Sea of Sand full power, making it fall as far as possible in public. At the same time, they purchased unlimited amounts of white hidden earth that appeared in the market without any restrictions.

The white hidden earth crystal doesn't have much use for ordinary cultivators, except for when refining magic tools or helping Gold Core Daoist Masters subside the surplus Tenth Water Qi within their bodies. The Heavenly Rainfall secret has always been kept by the Flying Swan Sect and has

never leaked. However, Twin Success Valley somehow found out about it and wants to capture the Heavenly Rainfall to help their disciples form Gold Cores.

Fei Yu Daoist Master is worried about the quantity of Tenth Water Essence that fell during the Heavenly Rainfall and whether it will be enough to help Wu Mingwei form his core. He watches as Wu Mingwei attacks the Gold Core period and feels his aura increasing successively. Fei Yu Daoist Master chooses to believe in this promising youth and the people's recognized Gold Core seed.

However, while Fei Yu Daoist Master is distracted, the land starts to vibrate fiercely, and the mountain peaks and rocks start to fall. The receiving and instructing tower on the summit starts to sway, and Fei Yu Daoist Master feels a familiar aura coming from the bottom of the place. He realizes that it's Qi Nanfei, a Gold Core Daoist Master from the Northern Desert Qi Family and an old opponent of the Flying Swan Sect.

This place is a true wilderness without any spirit veins to depend on, and within a short time, it's impossible for the Flying Swan Sect to turn it into an impregnable fortress. However, they have set up various bans and alarms in the surrounding area and have strict guards near the receiving and instructing tower.

Fei Yu Daoist Master is angry and rushes towards the direction of the familiar aura. He knows that Qi Nanfei wants to refuse stubbornly and is willing to fight to the death.

In the Endless Sea of Sand, many cultivators can use the Earth Escape Spell to escape in the place bottom. The Flying Swan Sect cultivators are experienced and have strengthened the bottom completely with steel talismans, making it almost impossible for anyone to use Earth Escape Spell. They have also set up various bans and alarms to monitor the bottom sound and prevent any silent sneaks.

However, after receiving Fei Jiang Daoist Master's message flying sword, Fei Yu Daoist Master is worried and wants to destroy Twin Success Valley to prevent them from fighting for the Heavenly Rainfall. In the hurry, most of the security cultivators are transferred, reducing the defense strength greatly and creating a loophole in the surrounding security. Qi Nanfei, who has been waiting for an opportunity, seizes this rare chance and submerges from the place bottom to destroy the receiving and instructing tall tower and prevent Wu Mingwei from forming a Gold Core. Fei Yu Daoist Master flies and launches a crazy attack on Qi Nanfei, who is his old opponent. Qi Nanfei resists the attack while deliberately leading the fight towards the position of the receiving and instructing tall tower. The might of the Gold Core Daoist Master's fight is so big that it affects a broad range. If they don't deliberately restrain themselves, the complementary waves from the fight will cause huge destruction to the surroundings, creating an artificial disaster.

The Flying Swan Sect cultivators must defend against Qi Nanfei's attack while preventing Twin Success Valley from capturing the Heavenly Rainfall. The situation is tense, and the outcome is uncertain.

Chapter 172: Benefitting as the Third Party in a Dispute

Daoist Master Fei Yu could see through Qi Nanfei's intentions at a glance. He not only tried his best to prevent Qi Nanfei from approaching the Core-Induction Tower but also deliberately led the battle away from it.

Qi Nanfei ventured alone into the territory of the Flying Swan Sect with the purpose of stopping the birth of a new Gold Core Daoist Master in the sect. He was willing to endure a few attacks from Fei Yu to destroy the Core-Induction Tower.

Fei Yu exerted all his efforts to protect the Core-Induction Tower from being damaged and to ensure that the process of Wu Mingwei forming his core was undisturbed.

Qi Nanfei and Fei Yu Daoist Master had clashed several times before, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses. Unless unexpected events occurred, it would be difficult to determine a clear winner even after two or three rounds of combat.

However, in general, destruction is usually easier than construction. Fei Yu had to protect the Core-Induction Tower, which put him in a somewhat passive position at times.

At this moment, the disciples of the Flying Swan Sect in the vicinity quickly realized the situation and rushed to help.

Typically, Foundation Building stage cultivators would not intervene in battles between Gold Core Daoist Masters, and Refining Qi stage cultivators lacked the ability to approach the battlefield.

Nevertheless, being an ancient sect with Gold Core Daoist Masters, the Flying Swan Sect had ways to influence Gold Core Daoist Masters through its disciples.

Groups of disciples gathered in front of the Core-Induction Tower and jointly activated a massive stone monument. They formed the commonly used war formation of the Flying Swan Sect, the Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation.

The complete Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation required four stone monuments and was divided into four parts. With a sufficient number of Foundation Building stage cultivators, they could suppress a Gold Core Daoist Master using this formation.

However, the Flying Swan Sect did not have enough cultivators to form the complete Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation; they could only manage a partial and incomplete formation.

Nevertheless, even a partial Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation, being the signature formation of the Flying Swan Sect, still possessed formidable power. A transparent light screen rose before the formation, protecting the cultivators behind it and the Core-Induction Tower from the aftermath of the battle between Qi Nanfei and Fei Yu Daoist Master.

Now, Fei Yu Daoist Master could fight Qi Nanfei without worrying about affecting the Core-Induction Tower.

The Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation not only provided protection but also exerted enormous pressure on Qi Nanfei's position.

Qi Nanfei's expression turned unsightly; the strength of the Flying Swan Sect's cultivators placed him in a somewhat disadvantaged position.

Unlike the Flying Swan Sect, the Northern Desert Qi Family's strength was inferior, with only two Gold Core Daoist Masters. For many years, they had been suppressed by the Flying Swan Sect in the Northern Desert.

If the Flying Swan Sect were to produce a fourth Gold Core Daoist Master, the Northern Desert Qi Family might never have a chance to turn the tables and might even face destruction.

Even if it meant paying a price, Qi Nanfei was determined to prevent the Flying Swan Sect disciples from forming their cores that day.

A stern look appeared on Qi Nanfei's face, and he intensified his attacks.

Fei Yu Daoist Master understood what Qi Nanfei was capable of and the stakes involved. He also put forth all his strength to stop Qi Nanfei.

All the cultivators from the Flying Swan Sect present, including Fei Yu Daoist Master, focused their attention on preventing Qi Nanfei. They failed to notice other changes.

Qi Nanfei's first surprise attack had already caused significant impact on the Core-Induction Tower. Although it appeared intact, its internal structure had been damaged, causing the speed of core formation to slow down.

A silver drizzle fell from the sky, not only in the direction of the battlefield and Twin Success Valley but also toward another location.

Both Fei Jiang Daoist Master, who was attacking Twin Success Valley, and Fei Yu Daoist Master, who was fighting Qi Nanfei, overlooked this phenomenon.

Qi Nanfei continued his intense battle with Fei Yu Daoist Master. Battles between Gold Core Daoist Masters could drag on for ten days or half a month without a clear victor if one side intended to prolong the fight.

Meanwhile, at Twin Success Valley, Fei Jiang Daoist Master single-handedly dominated the battle against the pseudo Foundation Building stage cultivator, Xiao Fengyan, and the sect-protecting great formation of Twin Success Valley. By the time the reinforcements from the Flying Swan Sect arrived on flying ships, the outcome was already evident.

The cultivators from the Flying Swan Sect activated another massive stone monument, forming a partial Four-Pole Town-Mount Formation, and launched an attack on the sect-protecting great formation of Twin Success Valley.

After a bitter struggle, the sect-protecting great formation of Twin Success Valley was shattered. The Foundation Building stage elders and Refining Qi stage disciples who were channeling true qi into the formation were left injured, and casualties were severe.

Xiao Fengyan, the pseudo Gold Core Daoist Master, lost the protection of the sect-protecting great formation and was slain by Fei Jiang Daoist Master.

The destruction of the sect-protecting great formation revealed Twin Success Valley's internal situation to Fei Jiang Daoist Master without hindrance.

Upon seeing a high tower within Twin Success Valley, almost identical to the Core-Induction Tower of the Flying Swan Sect, Fei Jiang Daoist Master's face turned frosty.

He no longer had the patience to investigate how Twin Success Valley learned this secret and concealed the construction of the Core-Induction Tower from the Flying Swan Sect.

"Kill them all! I want Twin Success Valley to be annihilated, not a soul left!" Fei Jiang Daoist Master's furious order resounded in the ears of every Flying Swan Sect cultivator present.

With a powerful swing of his horse-cutting blade, Fei Jiang Daoist Master struck the Core-Induction Tower with all his anger. The blow was incredibly potent, and in a massive explosion, the tower was

severed in half. Inside, Shan Feiyu, who was in the process of breaking through to the Gold Core stage, perished without even knowing what had happened. Though Fei Jiang Daoist Master destroyed Twin Success Valley's Core-Induction Tower, the Tenth Water Essence that was supposed to be absorbed by the Flying Swan Sect's Core-Induction Tower ended up flowing in another direction, away from the sect.

Fei Jiang Daoist Master continued his onslaught within Twin Success Valley, venting his anger. It was only later that he noticed this anomaly.

Meanwhile, Fei Yu Daoist Master also realized that something was amiss.

Wu Mingwei's aura had been steadily rising, but after reaching its peak, it unexpectedly stagnated. Some time later, his aura began to decline rapidly.

"This... This is a failure in forming the core? How could this happen? We made adequate preparations beforehand, and with Wu Mingwei's situation, forming the core should have been almost certain," Fei Yu Daoist Master murmured to himself.

Seeing Fei Yu Daoist Master bewildered, Qi Nanfei couldn't help but burst into triumphant laughter.

Chapter 173: New Gold Core

"Your Flying Swan Sect's wishful thinking has failed. It seems even the heavens are not on your side," Qi Nanfei chuckled with delight after Wu Mingwei's attempt to break through to the Gold Core stage failed.

"Qi Nanfei, did your Qi Family have a hand in this?" Fei Yu Daoist Master burst into anger.

"You can say whatever you like. It doesn't matter to me," Qi Nanfei shrugged.

Fei Yu Daoist Master angrily rushed towards Qi Nanfei, and the two engaged in a fierce aerial battle.

After a while, Fei Jiang Daoist Master realized that something was amiss with the Heavenly Rainfall this time. He hurriedly returned from Twin Success Valley to check on Wu Mingwei's situation. The task of pursuing Twin Success Valley's cultivators was entrusted to the Flying Swan Sect disciples. As Fei Jiang Daoist Master urgently left, some fortunate individuals within Twin Success Valley were given a way out.

Seeing Fei Jiang Daoist Master flying back urgently from afar, Qi Nanfei let out a strange cry. "Today, there are too many of you. I won't accompany you."

Qi Nanfei soared into the sky and disappeared in the distance like lightning.

After Fei Jiang Daoist Master and Fei Yu Daoist Master joined forces, they were too preoccupied to chase after Qi Nanfei. They were busy examining Wu Mingwei's condition.

Wu Mingwei's attempt to break through to the Gold Core stage had indeed failed. He suffered heavy injuries and harmed his foundation. As for when he could recover and restore his foundation, no one knew.

Fei Yu Daoist Master was both anxious and angry to see the Gold Core seed that they had carefully cultivated in such a miserable state. How could things have turned out like this when they had made all the arrangements?

Typically, when a cultivator advances from the Foundation Building stage to the Gold Core stage, they need to undergo seclusion within a Third Rank spirit vein. Wu Mingwei did not undergo seclusion within the Flying Swan Sect's mountain gate, choosing instead to go to this remote and spiritually impoverished area for this Heavenly Rainfall.

Heavenly Rainfall occurred approximately every three hundred years and greatly increased the chances of forming a Gold Core. The abundant spiritual energy within the Tenth Water Essence could completely replace that of a Third Rank spirit vein.

In the history of the Flying Swan Sect, many predecessors had successfully formed their cores during Heavenly Rainfall.

Fei Yu Daoist Master and Fei Jiang Daoist Master discussed and concluded that Wu Mingwei's failure to form the core was due to the dispersal of the Heavenly Rainfall, which prevented him from absorbing enough Tenth Water Essence.

"We must investigate this thoroughly and find out who is behind this sabotage!" Fei Yu Daoist Master declared firmly.

This investigation was not difficult.

Each time Heavenly Rainfall occurred, it had a certain range. An Induction Tower had to be built within this range to attract the Tenth Water Essence.

The Flying Swan Sect's experts had already determined the range of this Heavenly Rainfall, and it was not too large. The location where the Flying Swan Sect built their Induction Tower and Twin Success Valley's mountain gate both fell within this range.

A careful investigation within this range would quickly yield results.

Before the Flying Swan Sect's cultivators could start the investigation, news arrived.

Not long ago, precisely when Wu Mingwei attempted to form the core, there was a surging of spiritual energy and the convergence of a sea of spiritual essence above Forest Spring Watch. It was apparent that someone was forming their core.

Shortly after, clouds billowed above Forest Spring Watch, and golden radiance shone brightly. This was a clear sign that a cultivator had successfully formed their core.

The location of Forest Spring Watch's mountain gate also fell within the range of the Heavenly Rainfall.

Now everything was clear.

It was certain that Forest Spring Watch had learned the secret of the Heavenly Rainfall and secretly made arrangements. Taking advantage of the conflict between the Flying Swan Sect and Twin Success Valley, someone had played the role of a fisherman.

This fisherman had been exceptionally successful. Not only did they elude the Flying Swan Sect's attention, but they also manipulated Twin Success Valley to act as cannon fodder while forming their own Gold Core.

The Flying Swan Sect sprang into action.

Soon, more news came in. Guang ZhiDaoist of Forest Spring Watch, now Guang ZhiDaoist Master, had successfully formed his Gold Core.

Subsequently, the Flying Swan Sect was thrown into a state of confusion mixed with anger.

Guang ZhiDaoist Master was originally a talented disciple of Forest Spring Watch, becoming famous at a young age. He successfully reached the Foundation Building stage at a young age and smoothly cultivated to the late stage.

Over twenty years ago, Guang ZhiDaoist Master set off on an expedition to the Deadly Sea of Sand, and there was no news from him since. According to Forest Spring Watch's report, he unfortunately perished within the Deadly Sea of Sand.

Unexpectedly, Guang ZhiDaoist Master had hidden so deeply. He had even seized the opportunities from Wu Mingwei and Shan Feiyu.

Forest Spring Watch did not know where they had obtained the secret of the Heavenly Rainfall or how long they had been preparing, but they had finally made a remarkable breakthrough.

Upon learning about Guang ZhiDaoist Master, Fei Jiang Daoist Master and Fei Yu Daoist Master hurriedly set off for Forest Spring Watch. However, Guang ZhiDaoist Master had already left Forest Spring Watch at the fastest speed after forming his core.

The Endless Sea of Sand was vast, and even with a large force and numerous manpower, it was impossible to find a Gold CoreDaoist Master who wanted to remain hidden.

As Fei Jiang Daoist Master said, if they were to attack Forest Spring Watch and kill Guang ZhiDaoist Master, they might face dire consequences. A Gold CoreDaoist Master without any distractions would continuously engage in guerrilla warfare within the Flying Swan Sect's jurisdiction. Over time, the Flying Swan Sect's dominance over the Endless Sea of Sand would undoubtedly be shaken.

From then on, the three Gold CoreDaoist Masters of the Flying Swan Sect would be busy guarding against Guang ZhiDaoist Master, leaving them no time for anything else.

As for using the safety of Forest Spring Watch's disciples to threaten Guang ZhiDaoist Master, that was simply wishful thinking.

Reality was not a third-rate melodramatic romance, with numerous scenes of "you want me to leave, but I refuse." Threatening someone with their loved ones was not always an effective plot. With Guang ZhiDaoist Master's character of endurance, he would never be manipulated in such a manner.

Chapter 174: Strain

For a sect with a Gold Core Daoist Master, if they don't have absolute certainty to annihilate the Gold Core of the opposing side, they should not easily start a war of extermination. Otherwise, there will be endless troubles.

Flying Swan Sect had suppressed the Qi Family of the Northern Desert for many years, engaging in small-scale battles and causing significant casualties, but they had never launched a full-scale war for this very reason.

Regardless of whether Flying Swan Sect was willing or not, Guang Zhi Daoist Master had already become a Gold Core Daoist Master. Since he was now a Gold Core Daoist Master, he was entitled to both the good and bad treatment that came with it. After the internal turmoil within Flying Swan Sect calmed down, some people proposed actively recruiting Guang Zhi Daoist Master to prevent him from running to the Qi Family of the Northern Desert and altering the power balance in the Endless Sea of Sand.

In the world, there are no forever friends, nor forever enemies.

Guang Zhi Daoist Master had plotted against Flying Swan Sect, causing them to suffer heavy losses and lose face, but all that was already in the past.

People must learn to look forward. As the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, Flying Swan Sect should prioritize their interests and not let emotions sway their decisions.

This viewpoint surprisingly gained popularity within Flying Swan Sect.

Of course, the voices of opposition were louder.

Cultivators sought enlightenment with a single thought. If Guang Zhi Daoist Master really transformed and became a member of Flying Swan Sect, there would be many cultivators within Flying Swan Sect who would fail to achieve enlightenment.

Cultivators were not heartless, desireless immortals. The cultivators of Flying Swan Sect had not reached the level of being completely emotionless. They couldn't forget the humiliation they had just suffered so quickly.

And so, Flying Swan Sect found itself embroiled in internal disputes. As for Forest Spring Watch, apart from increasing surveillance, there were no further actions taken.

The Liu Family, a major force, took the opportunity after Twin Success Valley's demise to quickly seize control of Twin Success Valley's territory and absorb its legacy.

The news from the black market was indeed highly accurate, even being able to glean information about the internal debates within Flying Swan Sect.

After Meng Zhang obtained this information and analyzed the current situation, he quickly made a decision.

As long as the internal disputes in Flying Swan Sect were not settled, there would be no further actions. As long as Guang Zhi Daoist Master existed, Flying Swan Sect would be in a dilemma.

Twin Success Valley was the regional overlord, possessing a large amount of resources and numerous vassal forces.

Now that Twin Success Valley was no more, a huge vacuum had appeared in the surrounding areas.

Meng Zhang's successful Foundation Building had also elevated Taiyi Sect to the level of a Foundation Building sect gate, granting them the qualifications to join the fray.

Taiyi Sect should take advantage of this opportunity to expand its sphere of influence and strengthen its own power. This way, no matter how the situation changed, they would have more capital.

After making the decision, Meng Zhang hurriedly returned to Taiyi Sect at the fastest speed.

This was the first time he returned to the sect after successfully building his Foundation.

Without time to exchange pleasantries with the disciples, Meng Zhang immediately mobilized all the disciples and prepared to seize Twin Success Valley's legacy.

Singing Sand City was more than 700 li away, and it was the most fertile area within Twin Success Valley's industry.

After the news of Twin Success Valley's extermination spread, the disciples of Twin Success Valley who had been stationed in Singing Sand City scattered in all directions to escape.

This juicy piece of meat was too tempting, and it was not something Taiyi Sect could covet at the moment. According to the information Meng Zhang received, the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain had already set their sights on this rich territory.

Meng Zhang's chosen target was the original sphere of influence of the Zhao Family.

After the Zhao Family perished, the Fuzhao Valley, where the Second Rank spirit vein was located, had been occupied by Twin Success Valley.

Among the Zhao Family's five oases, besides giving one to Taiyi Sect, the rest were still managed by Twin Success Valley.

The First Rank flying boat of Taiyi Sect and the Scarlet Feathered Eagle were used to transport disciples.

Meng Zhang personally led a group of disciples and rushed to Fuzhao Valley.

After the Second Rank protective formation set up by the Zhao Family was broken, Twin Success Valley had simply set up a First Rank formation here temporarily.

In any case, with Twin Success Valley's reputation, even without the protection of a formation, other forces in the vicinity would not dare to forcefully attack Twin Success Valley's territory.

Without the Second Rank formation obstructing them, Fuzhao Valley was completely defenseless before Meng Zhang, a cultivator at the Foundation Building stage.

Meng Zhang led the Taiyi Sect disciples directly and rushed into Fuzhao Valley.

The Twin Success Valley disciples who had originally been stationed in Fuzhao Valley were in a state of constant panic. Some disciples had already fled, and those remaining had no intention of defending this place.

Meng Zhang occupied Fuzhao Valley, and all the Twin Success Valley disciples were captured.

These disciples, even at the Foundation Building stage, were not present; they were all a group of Qi Refining period disciples.

After Twin Success Valley occupied Fuzhao Valley, they carefully cultivated it.

The Scarlet Feathered Fluid produced by the Second Rank spiritual eye of this Second Rank spirit vein had significant effects on all bird-type monster beasts. From the beginning, the Zhao Family was accustomed to raising avian-type monster beasts, which accumulated rich experience and cultivated the Scarlet Feathered Eagle, passing down the lineage.

Twin Success Valley also had experience in raising various types of monster birds, so there was no need to specifically raise the Scarlet Feathered Eagle.

The Scarlet Feathered Fluid produced in recent years was used to raise some immortal cranes and other monster birds.

The spirit fields of the Zhao Family were not left uncultivated in Twin Success Valley but were carefully tended to by skilled spirit farmers.

After Twin Success Valley scattered and broke through the siege of various groups of cultivators, they also gained many spoils of war, including the majority of the Zhao Family's treasury.

Apart from some resources being transported back to Twin Success Valley, there were still plenty of various resources left in the treasury to continue the operation here.

Moreover, in Fuzhao Valley, there happened to be a Second Rank flying boat carrying goods. Even in sects like Twin Success Valley, Second Rank flying boats were not abundant.

Now, all these resources fell into Meng Zhang's hands, becoming spoils of war for Taiyi Sect.

Regarding the captured Twin Success Valley disciples, Meng Zhang did not give them too much trouble.

Now that Twin Success Valley had been destroyed, they were all homeless. If they were willing to join Taiyi Sect, as long as they swore loyalty, they could become members of Taiyi Sect.

For those who didn't want to join Taiyi Sect, they could leave their storage bags and depart from here cleanly.

As a result, about half of them left with only the clothes on their backs, leaving this place. Perhaps these Twin Success Valley disciples still had some pride and looked down on Taiyi Sect, which was once their vassal.

The other half of the disciples agreed to join Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang knew that these people had no choice but to join Taiyi Sect under the circumstances and had no real loyalty to Taiyi Sect. As soon as there was a slight setback, these people would be the first to leave the sect.

However, Meng Zhang had his own plan for keeping these people.

Taiyi Sect was currently like a giant swallowing prey, having consumed a large amount of territory, and was lacking available manpower. If they were to proceed with the steady cultivation of trustworthy direct disciple descendants, it would take an unknown amount of time.

Currently, Taiyi Sect needed to seize territories, and naturally, they needed to rapidly increase the number of disciples.

Meng Zhang not only recruited a large number of loose cultivators, but also considered the scattered disciples of Twin Success Valley to be excellent candidates for recruitment.

Disciples trained by sects like Twin Success Valley had a higher quality than ordinary loose cultivators and possessed great potential.

As for how to ensure their loyalty and how to use them, Meng Zhang had his own methods.

Chapter 175: Contends for the Domain

Meng Zhang possessed a soul book, and as long as a cultivator willingly left their name on it, their life and death would be entirely within Meng Zhang's control. However, the new disciples who recently joined the sect were hesitant. It was unlikely that they would voluntarily leave their names on the soul book. Forcing them might lead to unforeseen consequences.

The willingness to leave one's name in the soul book had various interpretations. If a cultivator was willing at the time, even if they regretted it later, it would be too late. Conversely, if they were unwilling at the time, there was no way to leave their name.

To make someone willingly leave their name in the book, there were many ways, with coercion and inducements being the most common.

Meng Zhang was currently busy and had no time to deal with this matter. Besides, many of the disciples recruited were temporary members of Taiyi Sect. To become true members of Taiyi Sect, they would need to go through layers of selections and eliminations. Meng Zhang didn't want to waste his efforts on them.

After securing Fuzhao Valley, Meng Zhang sent out disciples to occupy the other four oases that originally belonged to the Zhao Family.

As soon as the disciples were dispatched, two flying boats arrived from the distant horizon, heading towards Fuzhao Valley. Based on the emblem on the flying boats, they belonged to Flying Eagle Sect.

Flying Eagle Sect and Zhao Family were of similar strength, but Flying Eagle Sect was slightly weaker. For many years, they had maintained a good relationship, and the current Flying Eagle Sect's Sect Master, Chen Zhentian, was sworn brothers with Zhao Yanbei, the former head of the Zhao Family.

On the night of Zhao Family's extermination, Chen Zhentian and his experts had raided Fuzhao Valley. However, when Twin Success Valley's cultivators arrived, Chen Zhentian fled, not knowing if he had gained anything.

Now that news of Twin Success Valley's destruction had spread, Chen Zhentian once again brought his experts to Fuzhao Valley. His purpose was self-evident.

Since Meng Zhang achieved Foundation Building, he hadn't experienced a real battle yet. Now, the perfect opportunity to establish his prestige had presented itself with Flying Eagle Sect sending experts to challenge him.

Flying Eagle Sect probably wasn't aware that Taiyi Sect had already occupied this place. When Chen Zhentian and his experts disembarked from the flying boat and faced Meng Zhang, a Foundation Building period expert, their panic could be imagined.

The outcome of the battle was unsurprising—Meng Zhang killed all the Flying Eagle Sect experts, including their Sect Master, Chen Zhentian.

To establish his prestige, there was no room for mercy.

Seeing the expert from Taiyi Sect, the Twin Success Valley disciples who had just joined immediately became more obedient.

The Endless Sea of Sand was vast, and the oases were widely scattered. To effectively control various strongholds in their domain, having enough flying boats was essential. Now, with two First Rank flying boats delivered after seizing the Second Rank flying boat from Fuzhao Valley, Meng Zhang had enough mobility to protect their territories.

After achieving Foundation Building, Meng Zhang lacked a Second Rank spiritual vein to cultivate himself, so he had to temporarily stay in the Leaf Falling Seclusion. Now, with Fuzhao Valley's Second Rank spiritual vein, this issue was resolved.

Meng Zhang considered that Flying Eagle Sect might also have a Second Rank spiritual vein. Since having more Second Rank spiritual veins was always beneficial, Meng Zhang decided to completely exterminate Flying Eagle Sect and seize their spiritual vein.

After arranging matters in Fuzhao Valley, Meng Zhang called several disciples and, on a First Rank flying boat, rushed towards Flying Eagle Sect's entrance.

Flying Eagle Sect's entrance was not far from Fuzhao Valley, probably only more than 500 li away.

Before long, they arrived at their destination.

However, Meng Zhang was a step too late.

Outside Flying Eagle Sect's entrance, many cultivators were attacking their sect-protecting formation. After the recent loss of their Sect Master and numerous elite members at the hands of Meng Zhang, even their Second Rank formation lacked enough experts to fully activate its power.

Under constant attacks, Flying Eagle Sect's sect-protecting formation was on the verge of collapse.

These cultivators were wearing the standard uniforms of Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect disciples.

Meng Zhang left the flying boat and carefully assessed the situation in front of him.

Unexpectedly, Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect were acting so quickly. It seemed that they had also made the same decision as Meng Zhang—to fully occupy Twin Success Valley's domain and annex weaker sects.

When Twin Success Valley was still around, though it was somewhat overbearing, it had some merit. Under Twin Success Valley's rule, the region maintained peace and order. All sects and factions could not openly launch attacks or commit mass killings, let alone initiate extermination wars or engage in annexations.

During Taiyi Sect's weaker days, they relied on Twin Success Valley's rules to preserve the sect from annexation or destruction. Later, when Meng Zhang led Taiyi Sect to rise, he took advantage of these rules and gained many benefits.

Now, after Twin Success Valley's demise, the region had quickly descended into chaos. The lawless era of wars and annexations had arrived, with larger fish devouring smaller fish.

If Meng Zhang hadn't succeeded in Foundation Building, Taiyi Sect would have been among the small fish to be swallowed. But now that Meng Zhang had become a Foundation Building cultivator, it was Taiyi Sect's turn to annex others.

It seemed that Meng Zhang had lingered here for a bit too long, attracting the attention of a cultivator he had some acquaintance with.

It was Ruan Dadao, the Foundation Building cultivator and former gate lord of Golden Blade Sect. He looked at Meng Zhang, who was floating in the air on the other side, with a somewhat surprised and uncertain expression.

At the Foundation Building dharma meeting of Forest Mountain School's Lin Shenpo, Meng Zhang had seen Ruan Dadao from a distance. At that time, as a high and mighty Foundation Building cultivator, Ruan Dadao would not have paid attention to Meng Zhang, a mere Qi Refining period cultivator.

Later, as Meng Zhang's reputation grew, Ruan Dadao must have heard about him, the Sect Master of Taiyi Sect.

"Taiyi Sect's Meng Zhang, I have seen Brother Ruan," greeted Meng Zhang before leaving on his own initiative.

The assets left behind by Twin Success Valley were abundant, and there were plenty of other forces in the surroundings worth annexing. It was unnecessary for him to clash with Ruan Dadao here.

Apparently, Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect had joined forces. The weak Taiyi Sect should have already made preparations.

As Meng Zhang departed, Ruan Dadao's expression remained unchanged. He hadn't expected that young Meng Zhang would achieve Foundation Building so quickly. Originally, Taiyi Sect would have been the next target for annexation. However, with the presence of Meng Zhang, a Foundation Building cultivator, Taiyi Sect was now untouchable.

There were plenty of tempting opportunities around. Why bother with the hard nut that was Taiyi Sect?

Chapter 176: New Situation

Ruan Dadao was surprised to see that Meng Zhang, who had just successfully built his Foundation, was already so aggressive. The Taiyi Sect is now not only not a target for others to merge with, but has also taken the initiative to launch external conquests and annexations. As a result, the surrounding situation became chaotic, with various cultivation forces forming alliances and attacking each other.

After several months, the situation began to clarify. The Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain gained the most from the destruction of Twin Success Valley. Although they were not as powerful as Twin Success Valley, they had a rich heritage and many disciples, including some experts. With the tacit approval of the Flying Swan Sect, except for the Twin Success Valley's main gate, which was

occupied by the Flying Swan Sect, most of the other territories fell into the hands of these two forces.

The allied forces of these two families swept through the area, attacking and conquering cities, and breaking through most of Twin Success Valley's strongholds. Any Twin Success Valley disciples who dared to resist were killed. Due to Flying Swan Sect's deep hatred for Twin Success Valley, these two families were determined to eliminate all of Twin Success Valley's remaining forces and refused to accept any Twin Success Valley disciples who wanted to join them. They even sent out special pursuit teams to hunt down Twin Success Valley disciples who were on the run.

The surviving Twin Success Valley disciples scattered and fled, and Taiyi Sect took the opportunity to absorb many of them. Although Forest Spring Watch had Guang ZhiDaoist Master, a Gold Core Daoist Master, they did not benefit from the situation and instead retreated. As long as the matter between Guang ZhiDaoist Master and Flying Swan Sect was not resolved, Forest Spring Watch had to be cautious and avoid provoking Flying Swan Sect. They were afraid that the elders in their sect might act impulsively and destroy Forest Spring Watch.

Even though Forest Spring Watch was tempted by the legacy left by Twin Success Valley, they did not dare to reach out and take it at this time. In addition to directly controlling a relatively prosperous area, Twin Success Valley also had many vassal forces that ruled over some remote and impoverished areas. These areas were now under the control of forces such as Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect.

After many years of changes, there were originally more than a dozen vassal forces. After several months of war, only four Foundation Building sects remained. Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect joined forces and became the most powerful force, swallowing up most of the vassals that originally belonged to Twin Success Valley.

The once powerful Forest Mountain School adopted a strategy of retreat and did not directly compete with the allied forces of Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect. They only took the spoils of war near their own territory and did not expand further. If it were not for Meng Zhang's successful Foundation Building, the originally weak Taiyi Sect would have long been a target for others to merge with.

Meng Zhang, as a Foundation Building cultivator, naturally had some influence. He gathered many loose cultivators, Twin Success Valley's remaining cultivators, and other survivors of destroyed forces. With his army of miscellaneous troops, he was able to intimidate others. Commanding his subordinates, Meng Zhang launched attacks everywhere and gained a lot of benefits, occupying many territories.

For major cultivation forces, territories are the foundation of their existence. The more territories they have, the more prosperous they are, and the more resources they can provide for cultivation. The larger the territories and the more people there are, the more disciples they can recruit. Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect's alliance first swept through the Refining Qi sects. After finishing, they found that Taiyi Sect, which had been left alone, was also expanding. Now, a new situation has formed. Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect are the strongest, Forest Mountain School is more than capable of protecting itself, and Taiyi Sect appears to be the weakest.

Outside, after Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain swallowed up Twin Success Valley's direct territories, they also had their eyes on the territories of their vassals and were ready to act at any time. Although these vassals' territories were poor, every little bit counts.

Qiaoshou Sect, Golden Blade Sect, Forest Mountain School, and Taiyi Sect are facing the pressure from Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain. What should they do? At this time, the usually conservative Forest Mountain School sent out envoys to visit the other three sects. The envoy proposed that the four sects join forces to maintain their independent status and resist Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain.

To be honest, among the four forces, there were some who had considered joining Liu Family or Green Bamboo Mountain, but they could not gain enough support within their own sects. Liu Family's actions were vicious, and the vassal forces under them were not having a good time. As for Green Bamboo Mountain, they appeared kind but were actually cruel and ruthless. A few years ago, they wiped out the Yang Family, one of their vassal forces, just for a treasure, and their reputation was ruined.

Now, it seems that although Twin Success Valley was a bit domineering in their actions, they were not particularly harsh, and their disciples could still maintain some face. After experiencing the feeling of being in charge, who would want to be a vassal again?

The envoy from Forest Mountain School visited the three sects and gained their support, making the leaders of the three sects, Dawei, interested. The most critical issue now is whether the four sects can resist the joint forces of Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain. If the strength gap is too large, they may surrender early. Being a servant and suffering a bit is better than losing their lives. After all, cultivators who would rather die than surrender are few, and those who are wise enough to recognize the situation are the mainstream.

A few days later, Taiyi Sect's Sect Master Meng Zhang, Golden Blade Sect's Foundation Building elder Ruan Dadao, and Qiaoshou Sect's elder Aunt Jin all came to Forest Mountain School. The two Foundation Building elders of Forest Mountain School, Xu Yishan and Lin Shenpo, received them.

Today's meeting is related to the next decision of the four sects. If they make the wrong decision, they may face the danger of being wiped out. This is a major event that concerns the life and death of the sects. The Refining Qi period Sect Masters of the three sects cannot make the decision alone. They must invite the Foundation Building cultivators who are the real leaders of their sects.

Meng Zhang, who is the youngest and a Foundation Building cultivator, continues to serve as Taiyi Sect's Sect Master after building his Foundation. He is very ambitious and believes that Taiyi Sect's ultimate goal is not just to be a Foundation Building sect.

After secret discussions among the Foundation Building cultivators, they quickly made a decision. According to intelligence analysis, the strength of the four sects combined is not weaker than that of Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain. Surrendering to them is not an option. They will fight first and then see what happens.

Next, the four sects began to mobilize their disciples, preparing for war. The movements of the four sects could not be hidden, and Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain also began to mobilize their disciples and move forward, ready to act at any time.

This region has maintained peace for many years, but with the destruction of Twin Success Valley, one battle after another is breaking out. Soon, the decisive battle that will determine the fate of this region will begin.

Chapter 177: Declaration of War

The Taiyi Sect, Forest Mountain School, Qiaoshou Sect, and Golden Blade Sect have formed an alliance and agreed to unite against a common enemy. Faced with the relentless advance of the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain, the four factions have devised a strategy and immediately put it into action. All four forces are located west of Singing Sand City, while the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain approach from the east. Once they have taken control of Singing Sand City, they could potentially move westward at any time.

Ruan Yuan, the Sect Master of the Golden Blade Sect and representative of the four factions, has traveled to Singing Sand City to meet with Liu Dahai, the head of the Liu Family, and Azure Bamboo, the Sect Master of Green Bamboo Mountain. In order to hold positions of power within forces like the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain, the head or Sect Master must be a cultivator at the Foundation Building stage. Otherwise, they would not be able to gain the trust and support of their followers. If these forces fail to produce Foundation Building stage Sect Masters, it would signify their decline.

After the downfall of Twin Success Valley, the elders and disciples stationed in Singing Sand City received news and fled voluntarily. Forest Spring Watch also closed its operations in the area and withdrew its personnel. In the past few years, the Flying Swan Sect had already ordered the blockade of Singing Sand City, leading to a decline in business and the gradual loss of the Shang Family. Numerous shops have closed down as a result.

The Flying Swan Building was the first to close and withdrew all its personnel. The Four Seas Building followed suit, shutting down and recalling its staff. Over the years, Singing Sand City has become desolate and devoid of people. What was once a bustling trading market has turned into a ghost town.

However, Singing Sand City still possesses a Second Rank spirit vein and enjoys a favorable location. After years of careful cultivation by Twin Success Valley, even in its current state, the foundation remains. If it were to change hands and no longer be opposed by the Flying Swan Sect, with proper management, there is a chance to restore the city to its former glory.

Both the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain have set their sights on this lucrative opportunity. After undisclosed negotiations, they have agreed to jointly manage Singing Sand City. The coalition of the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain encountered little resistance and successfully occupied Singing Sand City.

The hasty retreat of Twin Success Valley's people prevented them from causing any damage to the various buildings in Singing Sand City. They were unable to destroy the sect-protecting great formation and only managed to deactivate it, taking the core formation disc with them. After a busy period, the Formation Masters of the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain managed to create a makeshift replacement to control the great formation. They then reactivated the formation, restoring the city's defenses.

Subsequent cultivators from the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain have since moved into Singing Sand City, transforming it into a forward operating base. Because the next target is Forest Mountain School and other sects, Liu Dahai, the head of the Liu Family, and Azure Bamboo, the Sect Master of Green Bamboo Mountain, personally arrived in Singing Sand City to plan their next actions. Upon learning of the alliance formed by the four factions to counter their forces, Liu Dahai and Azure Bamboo began to deploy their troops and make strategic arrangements.

Facing two Foundation Building stage leaders like Liu Dahai and Azure Bamboo, Ruan Yuan remained composed. He withstood the pressure from the Foundation Building stage cultivators and presented the prepared letter of challenge. The letter stipulated that one month later, the two sides would engage in a decisive battle in the desert not far west of Singing Sand City to determine the ownership of the region west of Singing Sand City.

After discussing it, Liu Dahai and Azure Bamboo agreed to the terms of the challenge in the letter. Ruan Yuan promptly left Singing Sand City with their response and returned.

Liu Dahai and Azure Bamboo agreed to the challenge because they wanted to defeat their opponents in a fair and decisive battle. This would reduce resistance to their conquest of the western region of Singing Sand City and facilitate their future rule.

The four factions proposed this challenge because even with their alliance, they still lagged behind each other in terms of resources and accumulation. If the conflict dragged on with guerrilla warfare and a protracted battle, they would likely struggle to sustain their efforts. Additionally, with the factions joining forces, there would be internal power struggles and conflicting interests, even in the face of a common enemy. If the conflict dragged on, internal strife could arise.

After Ruan Yuan returned with the responses from Liu Dahai and Azure Bamboo, the four factions immediately began to deploy their forces. Not far from Singing Sand City, less than 300 miles away, there was a small oasis situated on a First Rank spirit vein. It was originally owned by a small cultivation family.

In recent conflicts, this small family was annihilated by the Golden Blade Sect, and the oasis became their spoils of war. Now, the armies of the four factions gradually arrived at this location to gather and prepare for the upcoming battle against a formidable enemy.

Of course, the so-called "armies" consisted of just over 600 people. Apart from Taiyi Sect, which had a smaller number of members, a little over a hundred, the other three sects each sent nearly 200 disciples. For these four factions, this was their maximum effort, with their elite members fully deployed.

Cultivators were not comparable to ordinary people. Even with just a few hundred individuals, they could display a formidable aura that surpassed the might of a hundred thousand ordinary soldiers.

The alliance between the four factions was only a temporary measure, and there was certainly no high level of trust among them. Therefore, the forces of each faction gathered separately and conducted individual drills.

In battles of this scale between cultivators, there could be no disorganized and undisciplined brawls like street fights. Each faction had their own methods of coordinating their disciples to fight together against the enemy. Larger sects like the Flying Swan Sect even possessed secret techniques for deploying large-scale war formations.

While the four factions did not possess such capabilities, they each had their own means. Well-trained and disciplined cultivators could form various formations to achieve victory against superior numbers or stronger opponents.

Except for Taiyi Sect, the other three sects had inherited their respective sect's commonly used formations. However, they had never experienced such a large-scale battle before and lacked sufficient experience.

With just one month left before the battle, they seized the time to sharpen their skills and conduct intensive training.

Meng Zhang found himself facing a headache. Originally, Taiyi Sect had only a few dozen disciples, but in recent days, they had recruited a large number of wandering cultivators, nearly doubling their numbers. The advantage was that they now had more people, which increased their deterrence. Without this temporary expansion, Taiyi Sect would not have been able to deploy so many personnel.

The downside was that most of these new recruits had their own agendas and lacked discipline. They had no experience working together and lacked a sense of cooperation. Leading this motley crew into battle and enduring the brutal bloodshed would be an impossible task.

No matter how difficult the task, it had to be done, and it had to be done well. Fortunately, Meng Zhang had anticipated this situation and made preparations in advance.

Among the inheritances he obtained in the Trial Ground, there were several formations suitable for large-scale battles in the Cultivation World. He selected one called the "Qiankun Rotation Formation" and organized the disciples to practice it for the upcoming battle in one month's time.

Chapter 178: Formation Setup

Meng Zhang wasted no words and gathered all the participating disciples of the Taiyi Sect together, casting a cold gaze upon the chaotic scene below. Foundation Building cultivators stood there, doing nothing but relying on their imposing presence to intimidate the crowd.

As everyone quieted down, Meng Zhang coldly declared, "With the imminent battle, our sect will now enforce military law."

"Those who disobey orders will be executed. Those who desert during the battle will be executed. Those who shrink back in fear will be executed."

With Meng Zhang's words, a solemn and murderous atmosphere filled the air.

Initially, Meng Zhang thought there would be some individuals who would challenge his authority, giving him an opportunity to make an example out of them. However, he had overestimated the courage of these people.

The core disciples of the Taiyi Sect naturally supported Meng Zhang wholeheartedly. As for those cultivators who had recently joined, they wouldn't be foolish enough to confront Foundation Building cultivators. Only a fool wouldn't have survived until this point, and those who were willing to lower their pride and join the sect wouldn't have much integrity left.

Meng Zhang, who had recently reached the Foundation Building stage, underestimated his ability to suppress Refining Qi cultivators.

Although he didn't achieve his goal of using fear to control the crowd, he managed to subdue them and make them obedient to his commands, which was enough for now.

During this period, Meng Zhang carefully assessed the numerous new disciples he had recruited.

Meng Zhang possessed the innate Divine Ability of Mind Reading, and its power had increased after reaching the Foundation Building stage. Reading the thoughts of a group of Refining Qi cultivators was as easy as flipping his hand.

None of these disciples possessed any secret techniques that could control or lock away their thoughts.

Meng Zhang called each disciple individually and asked them questions. Although the questions seemed simple, his Mind Reading Divine Ability was quietly at work.

With so many people, Meng Zhang spent a considerable amount of time and exhausted himself before completing this crucial task.

Meng Zhang had grasped the thoughts of all the disciples. Their secrets, which they believed were well-hidden, had not escaped Meng Zhang's Divine Ability.

Meng Zhang divided these disciples into three categories.

The first category consisted of those who were loyal and devoted to the Taiyi Sect.

Among these new disciples, such individuals were extremely rare, with only a handful of them. They deserved special attention and would receive focused cultivation from the sect in the future.

The second category included those who had doubts about the Taiyi Sect but had good intentions and didn't harbor excessive calculations.

These disciples had the potential for transformation and hope. They could be observed and educated slowly, and they shouldn't be easily abandoned. They deserved another chance.

The final category comprised those who never had good intentions from the beginning and only temporarily joined the Taiyi Sect due to circumstances. As soon as they had the opportunity, they would immediately leave the sect and might even turn against it.

For the third category of people, Meng Zhang planned to eliminate them all during this upcoming battle. Of course, he wouldn't make it too obvious in order to appease the new disciples.

Meng Zhang didn't reveal the name of the formation, "Qiankun Wheel Rotation Formation," to the crowd. He simply informed them that they would be practicing a basic formation for the next month, which would be used in the upcoming battle. Pai Sect, Golden Blade Sect, and other sects have inherited formations that are ordinary and wield average power, lacking notable reputation. Many of these formations don't even have proper names, and the better ones are given random names. Apart from their own sects, other sects haven't even heard of them. The new disciples who practice formations believe that their own formations are of this kind.

Except for Meng Zhang, only a few people know the true details of the Qiankun Wheel Rotation Formation. Meng Zhang has divided all the disciples into two groups. One group consists of the true core disciples of the Taiyi Sect, who need to be protected during the upcoming battle. Yang

Xueyi leads this group. The other group is the dissidents that Meng Zhang plans to eliminate, with Zhang Hantao, the head of this group.

Originally, the Zhang family was a small family near the Taiyi Sect. When Meng Zhang led the disciples of the Taiyi Sect to sweep through the surrounding areas, Zhang Hantao realized that a small Refining Qi family couldn't resist the team led by Foundation Building cultivators. Therefore, Zhang Hantao wisely chose to surrender.

Meng Zhang, who was eager to pacify the surrounding areas quickly, didn't reject the idea of accepting defectors. Zhang Hantao's voluntary surrender set a good example for the surrounding forces. Moreover, Zhang Yingying, a female cultivator from the Zhang family, had shown talent in alchemy since she was young and had been taken as a disciple by an alchemist from Twin Success Valley, who trained her diligently. After becoming an Alchemist, Zhang Yingying resided in Singing Sand City, refining pills in Twin Success Valley's shop. She also secretly supported the Zhang family.

When Twin Success Valley fell, Zhang Yingying didn't join the fleeing Twin Success Valley disciples but instead escaped halfway and returned to the Zhang family. Even though she was only a First Rank Alchemist, capable of refining First Rank pills for Refining Qi cultivators, Meng Zhang saw her as a rare productive talent.

With the Zhang family joining the Taiyi Sect, Zhang Yingying naturally became an asset to the sect, providing a better foundation for the cultivation of alchemists within the Taiyi Sect. Originally, if Zhang Hantao had been honest, he might have found his place within the Taiyi Sect. Unfortunately, this cunning man made numerous secret moves.

When Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect joined forces to sweep through the surrounding areas, Zhang Hantao secretly contacted these two forces. Even after the four sects formed an alliance and united against external threats, he didn't stop his actions. Many years ago, a female cultivator from the Zhang family had married a cultivator from the Liu Family as a concubine. While Twin Success Valley existed, the Zhang family never publicized this relationship. Now, facing the approaching Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain coalition, Zhang Hantao secretly tried to use this connection to secure a way out for the Zhang family by aligning with the Liu Family.

Zhang Hantao's covert actions didn't escape Meng Zhang's eyes. Meng Zhang saw through all his intentions. Meng Zhang wished to strike Zhang Hantao down with a single blow, but he realized that publicly executing Zhang Hantao would bring more harm than good, so he reluctantly restrained himself.

Meng Zhang understood that Zhang Hantao was doing everything to protect his family, but he would never accept such a person who played both sides and betrayed others. Zhang Hantao became the leader of this dissident group, and his fate was sealed.

The Qiankun Wheel Rotation Formation, with its interplay of Yin and Yang, positive and negative, rotation, and coordination, can bring out the disciples' abilities beyond their normal levels. Although Wen Qiansun only has a mid-stage Refining Qi cultivation base, his exceptional knowledge of formations led Meng Zhang to appoint him as the commander-in-chief responsible for overseeing the formation and commanding during battle. Wen Qiansun has mastered all the mysteries hidden within the Qiankun Wheel Rotation Formation. Meng Zhang's plan will primarily be executed by him.

Chapter 179: Fights (First Part)

In order to set up the formation, besides practicing with disciples, some props are needed for the formation. One commonly used prop is the formation flag.

Starting a few years ago, Meng Zhang began preparing in advance and commissioned the Earthfire Sect to refine some formation flags. His idea at the time was that the cultivation base of Taiyi Sect disciples was generally not high, so they needed to form a formation to enhance their combat power. Later, after Tian Li became an official tool refiner, the sect also assigned him the task of refining formation flags. Tian Li naturally took on the task happily as it allowed him to complete sect missions, gain contributions, and improve his own refining skills. Over the years, Taiyi Sect has accumulated a considerable number of formation flags.

For this battle, Meng Zhang used most of the flags and prepared a total of sixteen formation flags. Sixteen carefully selected disciples were responsible for handling the flags, serving as key nodes in the formation. Cultivators surpass ordinary people in both intelligence and physical fitness. Under Meng Zhang's supervision, the disciples, who were pushed to their limits, quickly familiarized themselves with the general operation of the formation. They also recorded all the intricate changes within the formation.

The group led by Yang Xueyi consisted mainly of elite Taiyi Sect disciples and served as the main force in this operation. The disciples led by Zhang Hantao were not entirely new to the sect; some of them had joined Taiyi Sect several years ago. Of course, Zhang Hantao was unaware that these old disciples were actually spies from surrounding forces such as Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect, who had infiltrated Taiyi Sect.

Ironically, Twin Success Valley has already been destroyed, yet the spies from Twin Success Valley who infiltrated Taiyi Sect are still wholeheartedly playing their roles. After a month of training and multiple drills, both groups of disciples have gained a preliminary understanding of the Base Formation method, learned to cooperate, and adapted to the changes within the formation. At least they appeared decent and had some combat capability.

However, during this month, these cultivators were pushed to their limits by Meng Zhang's rigorous training. Even with the robust physique of cultivators, many of them found it difficult to keep up. After Meng Zhang publicly executed one disciple who was being deceitful, everyone finally became obedient. While Meng Zhang cursed at them, he intensified their training.

Three days before the battle, seeing that they had reached a passable level, Meng Zhang stopped the training and allowed everyone to rest and recuperate, making good use of the time to restore their energy and prepare for the upcoming major battle.

In addition to Taiyi Sect, the other three sects have also made their preparations. Three days later, the agreed-upon battlefield, located in the desert west of Singing Sand City, is where the decisive battle will take place.

The disciples from the four sects are divided into four groups, clearly separated from each other, with a certain distance in between. This was agreed upon by the representatives of the four sects in advance. Due to the lack of coordination and trust among the four sects, it was better to line up separately and fight individually.

In front of the four sects is the western gate of Singing Sand City. The protective great formation of Singing Sand City has already been activated, making it difficult for everyone to see what is happening inside. Choosing this location as the battlefield actually gives Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain a significant advantage. They rely on Singing Sand City as a stronghold, so as long as the situation becomes unfavorable, they can retreat into Singing Sand City to regroup. That's why they generously gave the other side a month's time to gather and consolidate their forces. Amidst the long-awaited gazes of everyone, the cultivators of Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain finally made their move. A group of cultivators dressed in Green Bamboo Mountain's standard robes surrounded two huge humped sand lizard beasts and slowly walked out of Singing Sand City. Following behind them were the cultivators of Liu Family, dressed in their standard robes.

After everyone had come out of Singing Sand City, the two groups of cultivators began to form their formations. The humped sand lizard beasts carried two huge stone tablets on their backs, emitting a yellowish light. Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators formed a formation centered around these two tablets. All Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators were covered by the light emitted from the tablets. The humped sand lizard beasts moved slowly but steadily, heading towards the direction of the four allied forces. Liu Family cultivators only formed a simple formation and followed behind the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators, pushing forward.

Meng Zhang and the other Foundation Building cultivators from the four sects had already gathered at the front of their own camp, observing the changes ahead. Several Foundation Building cultivators had an unpleasant expression on their faces when they saw the commotion caused by the Green Bamboo Mountain cultivators.

"A powerful weapon like the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation, how could Flying Swan Sect bear to pass it on to Green Bamboo Mountain?" Ruan Dadao was puzzled.

"It's just a broken version of the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation, and its power may not even be 10% of the original. Green Bamboo Mountain has been a lapdog for Flying Swan Sect for many years, and this is all they're worth," Xu Yishan said disdainfully.

As the ruler of Endless Sea of Sand for many years, Flying Swan Sect's large-scale war formation, the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation, was famous and renowned. The formation consisted of four specially refined mountain-pressing tablets, divided into the four cardinal directions, and was jointly operated by many cultivators. When the four directions were combined, it had the power to suppress the sea and mountains.

Green Bamboo Mountain has always had a close relationship with Flying Swan Sect. Many years ago, they paid a high price to obtain two discarded mountain-pressing tablets from Flying Swan Sect. The mountain-pressing tablets were as heavy as mountains and could not be operated without special secret techniques. Flying Swan Sect would naturally not teach Green Bamboo Mountain the secret technique for refining the mountain-pressing tablets. As for the various changes in the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation, it was Flying Swan Sect's highly confidential information, and Green Bamboo Mountain did not even dare to think about it.

The founder of Green Bamboo Mountain was once an Inner-Sect Disciple of Flying Swan Sect, leaving behind many legacies and connections for future generations. The cultivation techniques inherited by Green Bamboo Mountain were also closely related to Flying Swan Sect, with many origins and connections.

The senior cultivators of Green Bamboo Mountain had been exploring for a long time and sought help from many friendly Flying Swan Sect cultivators. They finally managed to operate the two mountain-pressing tablets using some crude methods and even created a shoddy version of the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation, which only had two cardinal directions.

Meng Zhang was not intimidated by the formation created by Green Bamboo Mountain, unlike the other Foundation Building cultivators. He had already used his Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, to carefully observe the opponent's formation. After reaching the Foundation Building stage, the ability of his Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, had greatly improved. Compared to when he was in the Refining Qi stage, it was like the difference between heaven and earth.

Meng Zhang was not a professional Formation Master, and his knowledge of the formation path was not as good as that of Taiyi Sect's disciple, Wen Qiansun. However, his vision and experience were not inferior, and he quickly saw through the truth and falsehood of Green Bamboo Mountain's formation.

"It's just a strange-looking formation that doesn't resemble anything, and it's a far cry from the Four Directions Subduing Mountain Formation. Green Bamboo Mountain is really out of ideas to bring out such a thing," Meng Zhang said.

Everyone thought that Meng Zhang was belittling the opponent to boost the morale of their own side. However, they did not know that Meng Zhang was telling the truth.

Chapter 180: Fights (Middle Part)

Although Ruan Dadao knew he shouldn't argue with Meng Zhang at this time, he couldn't help but speak up when he saw Meng Zhang's smug expression. "Since Sect Master Meng of the Little Sect looks down on this great formation of Green Bamboo Mountain, why don't we have Taiyi Sect face them head-on while we attack from the side?"

"Why should I? I'm not a fool. You want my disciples to face the enemy head-on while you hide and take advantage of the situation. You really think I'm as foolish as you?" Meng Zhang immediately retorted. Although Taiyi Sect and Golden Blade Sect had temporarily formed an alliance due to the situation, their relationship was far from good.

"Alright, alright. We should all work together at this critical moment. Don't ruin our friendship over some petty argument," Aunt Jin quickly intervened when she saw Ruan Dadao getting angry at Meng Zhang.

"Of course, those who are capable should take on more responsibility. If Sect Master Meng really has a way to deal with the formation of Green Bamboo Mountain, then this heavy task should be entrusted to him," Aunt Jin turned the conversation around and teased Meng Zhang.

"Yes, Sect Master Meng talks big. I wonder if he's just bluffing," Ruan Dadao emphasized the word "little Meng" in his words.

Lin Shenpo wanted to say something, but Xu Yishan stopped him with a look. Green Bamboo Mountain was approaching with great momentum, and someone had to stop them. Taiyi Sect facing Green Bamboo Mountain head-on was a win-win situation.

Meng Zhang seemed to have been caught by Aunt Jin's words and actually agreed to let Taiyi Sect face Green Bamboo Mountain head-on. Of course, Meng Zhang wouldn't act so easily and also proposed his own conditions. After a simple negotiation, everyone finally reached an agreement.

At this time, the humped sand lizard beast was approaching the front of the four sects' joint forces at a slow speed. After Meng Zhang gave the order through transmission technique, Wen Qiansun took the initiative to lead the Taiyi Sect disciples who had already formed a formation to face Green Bamboo Mountain head-on, while the cultivators of the other three sects flanked them from both sides.

After giving the order, Meng Zhang flew forward with several Foundation Building period cultivators. There were some conventions or customs in the Cultivation World for such a head-on battle. Soldiers faced soldiers, generals faced generals. Other than that, there were no opportunities to use tactics or strategies.

Seeing the Foundation Building period cultivators of the four sects flying over, a group of Foundation Building period cultivators on the other side also flew out. Since they had already started fighting, there was no need for words. They just chose their opponents and fought without hesitation.

The top fighter of Green Bamboo Mountain, Zhu Jianfei, was at the forefront. He had a mid-level Foundation Building cultivation base and was proficient in combat skills. Aunt Jin, the elder of Qiaoshou Sect, stepped forward to face him. Green Bamboo Mountain was named after the various spiritual bamboos that grew on the mountain. In addition to most of the First Rank spiritual bamboos, there were also a few Second Rank spiritual bamboos. Zhu Jianfei had selected a batch of Second Rank spiritual bamboos and refined them into a set of green bamboo swords. There were exactly twelve green bamboo swords, which formed a sword formation.

Aunt Jin was also a veteran Foundation Building cultivator and was considered the strongest among the affiliated forces of Twin Success Valley. Zhu Jianfei did not underestimate her because she was a woman. He showed his true skills from the beginning. The twelve green bamboo swords were connected end to end, forming a circular green ring that directly covered Aunt Jin. Aunt Jin dodged and shot out several golden lights from her hand. Qiaoshou Sect's female cultivators were mostly skilled in using needles, which were not only used for sewing but also as deadly weapons. In Qiaoshou Sect, flying needles were more popular than flying swords. Aunt Jin had a set of golden needles that consisted of eighteen needles. In her hands, this set of flying needles was extremely sharp, invincible, and elusive, making it difficult for people to defend against.

Zhu Jianfei and Aunt Jin immediately engaged in a fierce battle. Liu Dajiang was the elder of Liu Family and also a mid-level Foundation Building cultivator. He followed closely behind Zhu Jianfei and flew towards his opponent. Xu Yishan of Forest Mountain School took the initiative to meet him and fought him head-on.

The reason why Forest Mountain School was able to persuade the other three sects to join forces against Green Bamboo Mountain and Liu Family was partly due to Xu Yishan's breakthrough from the early Foundation Building period to the mid-level Foundation Building period. Liu Dahai, the head of Liu Family, Liu Dachuan, and Azure Bamboo, the Sect Master of Green Bamboo Mountain, faced Ruan Dadao, Lin Shenpo, and Meng Zhang, respectively.

These six people were all early Foundation Building cultivators. Lin Shenpo had only recently advanced to the Foundation Building period, and Meng Zhang had only been in the Foundation Building period for less than a year. The other four were experienced and cunning cultivators who had been in the Foundation Building period for many years. The six of them divided into three pairs and fought each other.

Meng Zhang's opponent was Azure Bamboo, the Sect Master of Green Bamboo Mountain. Although both of them were Sect Masters, they were not at the same level. Azure Bamboo had already entered the Foundation Building period before Meng Zhang was even born and had been in charge of Green Bamboo Mountain since then. As a renowned strong cultivator, Azure Bamboo looked down on Meng Zhang, a newly promoted Foundation Building cultivator.

However, once he started fighting, he had to put aside all his prejudices. The weapon in Azure Bamboo's hand was a bamboo stick made from Second Rank spiritual bamboo, just like Old Man Bamboo Stick. After Deep Earth killed Old Man Bamboo Stick, his magic tool became Deep Earth's spoils of war. Due to confidentiality reasons, Deep Earth had never used that bamboo stick.

Meng Zhang had gained some understanding of Green Bamboo Mountain's techniques by examining the magic tools of Old Man Bamboo Stick and various books in the storage bag. After the battle began, Meng Zhang first released the Crimson Flame Sword and made a frontal attack. The Crimson Flame Sword was powered by Solar True Qi and caused a sea of fire.

Then, while Azure Bamboo was busy defending against the Crimson Flame Sword, Meng Zhang released the Short Sword Poison Fang and used Lunar True Qi to launch a sneak attack from behind. The Poison Fang was specifically used for assassination and had a vicious and mysterious move. The two flying swords, one bright and one dark, one normal and one strange, alternated their attacks, covering each other and killing Azure Bamboo, an experienced Foundation Building cultivator, without any counterattack.

The Strange and Upright Sword Art was the jade slip that Meng Zhang and Jue Ying obtained from the Purple Gold Sect cultivator's cave. This sword technique required a Foundation Building cultivation base to practice, and Meng Zhang began practicing it immediately after entering the Foundation Building period. Meng Zhang was indeed talented and had mastered the essence of this sword technique in just a few months and used it in actual combat.

Although he temporarily gained the upper hand, Meng Zhang dared not be careless. As a lord of a sect, Azure Bamboo must have some hidden cards. Meng Zhang would not be at ease until he forced these cards out.

Shortly after the other two pairs of cultivators began fighting, they fell into a fierce battle. They were all early Foundation Building cultivators, and their foundations were not much different. Even if they fought for half a day, it was difficult to determine a clear winner, let alone kill their opponent. At least for now, neither side had used a decisive move.