

Sect Master 191

Chapter 191: Startled Walks

Over a hundred years later, once again in the hands of Taiyi Sect disciples, when they saw this Golden Crow Lantern, it not only stirred memories in "Three Spears" Gu's mind but also brought up shadows in his heart.

"Three Spears" Gu fought for the benefits offered by the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain. He had no true loyalty to either faction; it was merely a simple mercenary arrangement, and not a very reliable one at that.

To forsake principles for personal gain and to seek advantage while avoiding harm is the essence of loose cultivators like "Three Spears" Gu. He would help and lend a hand for some benefits, but risking his life in a fight was out of the question.

Seeing Meng Zhang had already activated the Golden Crow Lantern, "Three Spears" Gu didn't even wait for the attack to come; he immediately used a magic tool to block the two flying swords before turning around to escape.

"Three Spears" Gu was already a hundred and eighty years old, and considering the lifespan of a Foundation Building stage cultivator, he didn't have many good years left. Especially as a loose cultivator, he had struggled for opportunities throughout his earlier years, facing numerous life-threatening crises and carrying many hidden injuries. His lifespan couldn't compare to those pampered cultivators from renowned sects.

With age, his courage waned, and he became increasingly reluctant to risk his life. At the slightest sign of danger, he would promptly flee without hesitation.

Meng Zhang had just unleashed the Golden Crow Lantern, yet before the enemy's attack had even arrived, the opponent turned and ran away.

Meng Zhang initially suspected a trick and gave chase for a while, only to realize that the enemy genuinely had no intention of fighting and only wanted to escape.

Meng Zhang had no intention of killing "Three Spears" Gu, nor did he have the certainty to do so. He could only let him escape.

In reality, the Golden Crow Lantern, as a Second Rank top-grade magic tool, required a Foundation Building late-stage cultivator to fully unleash its power. Meng Zhang could only barely drive its power, relying on the compatibility with his Solar True Qi and the magic tool. He couldn't fully unleash its potential.

The reason the Golden Crow Lantern had been in Twin Success Valley's possession for so many years was due to the mismatch with their cultivation methods, preventing them from fully utilizing its great power. Otherwise, Dan Yihu might not have returned the magic tool to Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang could never have imagined that he scared off a Foundation Building stage cultivator solely relying on this magic tool.

Seeing "Three Spears" Gu flying further away until he disappeared completely, Meng Zhang flew back and joined the new battle.

With two flying swords in hand, Meng Zhang attacked the Elder Bamboo Leaf of Green Bamboo Mountain. Lin Shenpo was also a skilled swordsman with exceptional sword techniques and profound cultivation in top-tier sword arts. Together, they managed to trap the Elder Bamboo Leaf, leaving him with no chance to escape. "Three Spears" Gu's sudden escape gave Meng Zhang the opportunity to focus on the battle, which became a crucial factor in deciding the outcome.

Daoist White Sand was also a seasoned warrior, experienced in successful retreats. He had escaped numerous life-threatening situations by seizing opportunities early.

He also had no intention of risking his life for the Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain. When he saw the battle situation taking a turn for the worse, he immediately abandoned his comrades and fled alone.

After forcing Ruan Dadao to retreat, Daoist White Sand flew towards Date Spice Oasis while loudly shouting, "The wind is tight, withdraw!"

The White Sand Pirates, who were originally assisting in the defense of Date Spice Oasis, heard their leader's warning and quickly followed suit, withdrawing from the battle.

Ruan Dadao didn't join in the siege against Elder Bamboo Leaf but instead assisted Shi Weida in attacking Liu Fengbo. As Liu Fengbo, the young master of the Liu Family, had an exceptional spiritual root talent, he had never experienced any major formations or battles. He was groomed and focused on by his family from a young age, leaving him with limited combat experience.

Initially, he had been engaged in a fierce battle with Shi Weida when he saw Ruan Dadao flying towards them. Filled with panic, he immediately turned and fled.

Now, the battlefield was left with only two elders from Green Bamboo Mountain, struggling to hold on. The numerical advantage was now five to two, making the difference in strength apparent.

Zhu Jian, who could have easily escaped, hesitated for a moment when he saw the Elder Bamboo Leaf trapped. Instead of abandoning his fellow disciple and fleeing, he attempted to rescue him. After all, if the five Foundation Building stage cultivators stood by and watched Zhu Jian save the Elder Bamboo Leaf, it would be a huge blow to their pride.

Moreover, Zhu Jian's skills were indeed formidable. Even Aunt Jin, who had given her all, could only barely hold him back. The rare opportunity arose, and they all understood the need to keep Zhu Jian there, breaking the backbone of Green Bamboo Mountain to eliminate future threats.

After a bloody battle, the Elder Bamboo Leaf was eventually surrounded and beaten to death, unable to escape.

Once the Elder Bamboo Leaf died, Zhu Jian realized the situation was hopeless. He endured several strikes and managed to break free from the encirclement, flying towards Green Bamboo Mountain.

In the recent battle, all five Foundation Building stage cultivators had used their full strength. Seeing Zhu Jian attempting to escape, they couldn't let go of this chance to deliver a decisive blow.

Chasing closely behind, they flew towards Green Bamboo Mountain.

Zhu Jian was heavily injured, and his flying speed was consistently slow, making it impossible to shake off the pursuers. They clung to him tightly, giving him no breathing room.

Zhu Jian could only fight and retreat, but his injuries were getting worse.

The Foundation Building stage cultivators of Liu Family and Green Bamboo Mountain, as well as the two Refining Qi stage cultivators guarding Date Spice Oasis, all scattered and fled, abandoning the battlefield.

The united forces of the four sects made their way into Date Spice Oasis without much effort, fully occupying the place.

Next, the four sects began dividing the territory and looting the spoils of war.

Date Spice Oasis remained intact and contained many valuable items, especially the Spirit Plant Coconut Palm Trees, which became the focal point of contention among the four sects.

The sects couldn't afford to start a full-scale conflict with each other and, after some deliberation, decided to conduct separate trials to allocate the spoils based on their performance.

Taiyi Sect's cultivators were advantageous when fighting as a formation, but they lacked enough talented disciples to participate in individual trials.

The other three sects had a long history and numerous experts; they sent all Refining Qi stage cultivators to participate in the individual trials. In contrast, Taiyi Sect only had Yang Xueyi, a Refining Qi stage cultivator, aside from Meng Zhang, who had entered Foundation Building stage and bestowed a First Rank top-grade flying sword upon him.

Yang Xueyi had natural talent in swordsmanship and, with Meng Zhang's guidance, mastered a set of exquisite sword techniques called "Dance of the Windy Willow." He earned Taiyi Sect a good number of spoils through several rounds of trials.

Zheng Chao, as the War Hall Master of Taiyi Sect, also had a Refining Qi stage cultivation base like Yang Xueyi and had been given a terrifying magic tool called the "Soul-Stirring Bell" by Meng Zhang. His performance in the trials was satisfactory.

As for the other cultivators, they couldn't match the opponents. Tian Li possessed Meng Zhang's "Fire Seal," but his cultivation base was slightly inferior, and he hadn't reached the Refining Qi stage. He was defeated by a Refining Qi stage opponent as soon as he entered the trials.

Similarly, Wen Qiansun, also at the Refining Qi stage, couldn't turn the tide against a Refining Qi stage adversary.

Hu Jing, at the same Refining Qi stage as the others, managed to barely win one round with the help of her tamed spirit beasts, but that was the extent of their success.

Chapter 192: Background

In the fierce competition, the Taiyi Sect didn't win many rounds, and the spoils of war were also average. Nevertheless, considering the vastness of this oasis, everything inside, including a large number of mortals, became the spoils of war for the four sects. The disciples of these four sects were busy loading the spoils onto flying boats to prepare for transport back. They also began to count the mortals and considered whether to take them away.

As for occupying this oasis, it required the decision of several Foundation Building cultivators; the group of Refining Qi cultivators couldn't make such a decision. While the four sects were busy

transporting their spoils, five Foundation Building cultivators had been chasing after them and gradually approached Green Bamboo Mountain.

Desperate to escape, they ran towards the foothills of Green Bamboo Mountain, where they saw hope. As long as they could enter the protective formation of Green Bamboo Mountain, they could completely shake off their pursuers. However, the cultivator with the bamboo sword was not lucky enough and got surrounded by the five people.

The bamboo sword, just one step away from survival, was now trapped and unable to break free, forced into a final struggle against all odds. A cultivator on the brink of death is the most dangerous and frantic. The five individuals were well aware of this and were extremely cautious, fearing that they might be dragged down along with the bamboo sword.

Focusing on self-preservation, they held back in their attacks, giving the bamboo sword more time to struggle. When the five individuals chased the bamboo sword to the foothills of Green Bamboo Mountain, the patrolling disciples noticed the situation.

While they activated the protective formation to defend against the enemy's attack, they immediately sent word to Sect Master Azure Bamboo about the bamboo sword's situation. As for leaving the protective formation to rescue the bamboo sword, those Refining Qi cultivators didn't have the courage for that. With the cover of the protective formation, they could face Foundation Building cultivators, but once they left it, they would be sending themselves to their deaths.

Upon receiving the report from the disciples, Azure Bamboo observed the situation from within the protective formation. The bamboo sword was on the verge of being killed after being pursued all the way to their home. As for Elder Zhu Ye, the chances of survival were likely slim.

Inside Green Bamboo Mountain, only Azure Bamboo, a Foundation Building cultivator, remained, and their injuries hadn't fully healed yet. If they stood by and watched the bamboo sword being beaten to death, Green Bamboo Mountain would be close to ruin.

Having experienced multiple setbacks and heavy losses, Green Bamboo Mountain couldn't afford the consequences of losing the bamboo sword. Azure Bamboo gritted their teeth and made a final decision, running towards the back mountain.

There, in a concealed location, several caves were located. Whenever a Foundation Building cultivator of Green Bamboo Mountain approached the end of their lifespan, they would voluntarily enter one of these caves to enter deep hibernation. Using a secret technique, they sealed off all life force, and their bodies entered a state of slumber, losing all perception of the outside world. This extended their lifespan significantly.

When Green Bamboo Mountain faced a major crisis, on the verge of destruction, the Sect Master of Green Bamboo Mountain would come here and use a secret technique to awaken them, enabling them to fight for the sect with their remaining life force.

These caves were the foundation and last resort of Green Bamboo Mountain. Since Azure Bamboo had made up their mind, there was no hesitation. They opened the restrictions outside the cave and approached a large bell. Unleashing secret techniques and channeling true qi, Azure Bamboo followed a specific method and began to ring the large bell. After a long time, there were noticeable movements from two of the caves.

In no time, two elderly men with white hair and a lifeless look on their faces appeared before Azure Bamboo. He sighed inwardly as he remembered that there were at least five or six Foundation Building cultivators who had entered the caves and gone into hibernation. Now, only two cultivators emerged, indicating that the rest had likely depleted their life force during their slumber and perished.

The two cultivators' auras were already unstable, and their lifespans were running short, with their life flames on the verge of extinguishing. The purpose of forcibly awakening them was to have them make one last stand for the sect. After the battle, regardless of the outcome, they would lose their lives.

Azure Bamboo wasted no time and quickly gave them concise instructions, urging them to fly outside. The two elderly cultivators left the protective formation and headed towards the battlefield. They joined the fight without any defensive maneuvers, adopting a tactic of sacrificing themselves entirely.

Upon seeing the two elders appear, the bamboo sword's eyes turned red, filled with tears. He knew he couldn't waste the lifeline that the elders had traded for his survival. Seizing the opportunity, he escaped the battlefield and successfully entered the protective formation of Green Bamboo Mountain.

After their final burst of strength, the two elders' bodies, devoid of all vitality, fell from the sky and shattered upon hitting the ground.

Watching his elders sacrifice themselves to save him, the bamboo sword struggled to contain his emotions, his gaze filled with anger as he memorized the faces of the five outsiders.

As the five individuals observed the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the two elders, they quickly understood what had happened. They had heard of sects with profound backgrounds using such methods, and although they hadn't encountered one like Green Bamboo Mountain before, they knew what it entailed.

Of course, sects like Taiyi Sect and the other four were not equipped with such powerful tactics due to their shallow foundations.

The five individuals exchanged glances and understood each other's intentions. It seemed that Green Bamboo Mountain had exhausted all its tricks, revealing its last resort. Although the protective formation of Green Bamboo Mountain was formidable, without capable cultivators to operate it, its full potential couldn't be realized. The five Foundation Building cultivators realized that with some effort and at a certain cost, they could break through the protective formation and infiltrate Green Bamboo Mountain, where hundreds of years of wealth and resources lay waiting. They couldn't help but feel tempted.

Meng Zhang glanced at everyone, and their greed was evident. However, they were not impulsive youngsters and wouldn't act recklessly, even if they felt enticed.

The question of whether to take action or not became a topic of discussion among them.

High above, in the distance from the five individuals, two unfamiliar Foundation Building cultivators were monitoring their movements and relaying information to an even more distant location.

After Flying Swan Sect breached the original Twin Success Valley mountain gate, many of its disciples settled in and turned it into a makeshift base. The original Twin Success Valley cultivators and their mortal relatives were mercilessly eliminated by the furious Flying Swan Sect cultivators. Righteous sects could be just as ruthless as demonic cultivators when they struck.

Chapter 193: Enduring patiently

As the leader of the Righteous Path in the Endless Sea of Sand, the Flying Swan Sect is not lacking in ruthless methods. When it's time to take action, they show no mercy, and they do not hesitate to act decisively. The recent fate of Twin Success Valley once again proved the power of the Flying Swan Sect.

Over the years, Fei YuDaoist Master, a prominent figure of the Flying Swan Sect, has been secretly hiding in this area, never revealing himself to the public. Similarly, Fei JiangDaoist Master has been concealed in the nearby region, remaining elusive.

In his daily life, Fei YuDaoist Master spends most of his time alone in seclusion. However, one day, an urgent Flying Swan Sect cultivator arrived outside his quiet chamber, seeking an audience with him.

"Lao Jian, is there something important you wish to discuss?" Even though Lao Jian is an Inner-Sect Disciple of the Flying Swan Sect, and has successfully reached the Foundation Building stage many years ago, he still shows the same level of respect as he did when he was a junior Refining Qi cultivator in the presence of Fei YuDaoist Master.

"Daoist Master, the four sects have invaded Twin Success Valley, and both Green Bamboo Mountain and Liu Family suffered heavy defeats. Now, they have reached the foot of Green Bamboo Mountain, and it seems that Green Bamboo Mountain may not be able to withstand the attack. If they proceed with their assault, the Green Bamboo Mountain faces the risk of annihilation."

"Some of our disciples on reconnaissance duty have inquired whether we should offer assistance. After all, Green Bamboo Mountain has had a close relationship with our Flying Swan Sect and has been submissive over the years."

Without receiving Fei YuDaoist Master's permission, Lao Jian does not dare to rush in. After reporting outside the quiet chamber, he silently awaits Fei YuDaoist Master's decision.

After a moment inside the chamber, Fei YuDaoist Master's voice can be heard. "Lao Jian, after all these years, why haven't you made any progress? You still can't distinguish between what matters more and what matters less. Forest Spring Watch Guang Zhi is the real threat to our Flying Swan Sect."

"I deliberately restrained our sect and instructed you all to endure patiently, aiming to make this scoundrel lower his guard and inadvertently reveal his whereabouts."

"You acted recklessly to save Green Bamboo Mountain, and you seem satisfied with that. But if you disturb Guang Zhi, it will lead to a disaster."

Fei Yu Daoist Master's tone remains gentle, without much reproach. Nevertheless, Lao Jian is frightened and quickly kneels down, saying loudly, "Disciple is confused and nearly jeopardized Daoist Master's grand plan. Please forgive me, Daoist Master."

"It's alright, don't assume such a posture. Just remember one thing – the squabbles between those little worms, who wins or loses, are irrelevant to the overall situation. Your task is to silently observe and not intervene."

"Disciple will heed Daoist Master's command," Lao Jian respectfully replies.

"Very well, you may leave. If there's no urgent matter, don't disturb me easily."

After Lao Jian withdraws, he discusses Fei Yu Daoist Master's instructions with some fellow disciples and conveys the message to those who are monitoring the situation.

Meanwhile, inside the quiet chamber, Fei Yu Daoist Master begins to contemplate carefully. As a fellow Gold Core Daoist Master, he fully understands the difficulty of dealing with Guang Zhi. Over the years, the Flying Swan Sect has refrained from any major actions and has not intervened in the conflicts between the other sects. This approach is meant to create an impression that the Flying Swan Sect does not intend to solve the issue with Forest Spring Watch through force but rather wants to force them into submission through relatively peaceful means. Flying Swan Sect and Forest Spring Watch don't have to be in a life-and-death struggle; they can coexist peacefully. If Guang Zhi receives this information and voluntarily reveals his whereabouts, then the Flying Swan Sect will take further actions. However, such matters cannot be rushed; they need to be handled slowly. With the lifespan of a Gold Core Daoist Master, they can spend decades or even centuries carefully calculating and strategizing in their conflicts.

At the foot of Green Bamboo Mountain, there was a small debate among five individuals. Ruan Dadao coveted the wealth of Green Bamboo Mountain and strongly advocated attacking and plundering the place completely. Aunt Jin might have some reluctance, but considering the alliance between the two sides, she didn't directly oppose Ruan Dadao. Shi Weida had some concerns, fearing that annihilating Green Bamboo Mountain might attract interference from the Flying Swan Sect. Lin Shenpo held a neutral stance on the matter, merely testing the Flying Swan Sect's bottom line with this expedition.

By gradually escalating the situation step by step, Forest Spring Watch perfectly aligned with the Forest Mountain School's plans. Meng Zhang, who had remained silent, suddenly turned his head and activated his Deception Breaking Eye, peering into a distant cloud formation. After just a glance, he immediately averted his gaze to look elsewhere. A while later, Meng Zhang said, "Alright, we have achieved our goal with this expedition and received the rewards from Dan Yihu as promised. The spoils of war we gained are not bad. I suggest we stop here and avoid unnecessary risks. Date Spice Oasis still has many treasures waiting for us to claim."

Shi Weida received Meng Zhang's support, and with the opposition of two others, they decided not to continue their attack on Green Bamboo Mountain. Aunt Jin's support was not steadfast, and Lin Shenpo remained neutral. Consequently, Ruan Dadao, with no one else to support him, had no choice but to join the others and head back.

In the distance, a Foundation Building cultivator said to their companion, "Isn't that kid Taiyi Sect's Sect Master, Meng Zhang? Did he spot us just now?"

"Taiyi Sect is just an insignificant, low-level sect. Their so-called Sect Master is nothing more than an undeserving leader of a mediocre sect. How could this kid, with no real ability or merits, see through our sect's profound hiding techniques?"

"But I've heard that Taiyi Sect also has a long history and a significant background."

"So what if their ancestors had a prestigious sect? The descendants turned out to be worthless, leading to the decline of the sect. These insignificant sects are probably just slightly stronger than loose cultivators."

Leaving behind their minor dispute, Meng Zhang and the others' departure from Green Bamboo Mountain marked the end of the conflict. On the side of Date Spice Oasis, Dan Yihu from Twin Success Valley had long since sneaked nearby, finding a concealed spot to hide. As Meng Zhang and the other five chased after Elder Zhujian and left, Dan Yihu quickly went underground, using the Earth Escape Spell to stealthily enter Date Spice Oasis.

After Dan Yihu entered Date Spice Oasis, the joint forces of the four sects completely occupied the place. However, they were initially busy looting the surface treasures and later got into disagreements, agreeing to divide the spoils through individual competitions. For a long time, they didn't have time to dig into the ground or pay attention to what was hidden beneath. In reality, a group of Refining Qi cultivators would have a hard time detecting the whereabouts of a Foundation Building cultivator intentionally hiding their presence.

Chapter 194: Encounter and a Half Share

Just when Dan Yihu thought he was concealed and that no one had noticed his covert entry into Date Spice Oasis, there was already someone silently trailing him from the shadows.

Dan Yihu navigated the underground with familiarity, reaching a location less than a hundred yards beneath the spiritual vein known as Lingyan.

At first glance, this place appeared like any other, with a solid layer of rock covering it.

Dan Yihu carefully searched for a while before finding his target. He activated his divine consciousness, meticulously observing every direction, above and below, ensuring there were no abnormalities. Then, he took out a jade token, infused it with true qi, and uttered an incantation.

Within the thick layer of rock, a large hollow suddenly appeared, just large enough for a person to pass through.

Shortly after Dan Yihu stepped into the cavity, it quickly vanished.

A little while later, Deep Earth Spirit General appeared in the very spot where Dan Yihu had been.

Dan Yihu was willing to spend a considerable price, persuading several sects to send troops and subjugate Date Spice Oasis; there must be a reason behind his decision. Not only did Meng Zhang know about this plan, but the Foundation Building cultivators from other sects were also aware of it.

Not long ago, Meng Zhang and several Foundation Building cultivators had pursued Bamboo Sword in hot pursuit. Naturally, they had no time to pay attention to what was happening at Date Spice Oasis. However, they believed that with so many disciples still present there, they would quickly learn of any incidents and respond promptly.

Before engaging in the battle, Meng Zhang had carefully thought about it. He was certain that there was something within Date Spice Oasis that Dan Yihu wanted to obtain.

Thus, long before the intense battle among the Foundation Building cultivators, Deep EarthSpirit General had secretly arrived near Date Spice Oasis. After the others chased after Bamboo Sword, Dan Yihu used the Earth Escape Spell to enter Date Spice Oasis, but he couldn't escape the notice of Deep EarthSpirit General.

After his cultivation base had recovered to the Foundation Building stage, Deep EarthSpirit General's talent in the Earth Escape Spell became even more formidable, far surpassing ordinary Foundation Building cultivators. He followed Dan Yihu all the way here, never losing track of him.

When Dan Yihu suddenly disappeared into thin air, Deep Earth did not panic but carefully observed his surroundings.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Dan Yihu had entered another space through the hollow.

This place was a naturally formed interstitial space, completely separate from the mortal realm.

Many years ago, the predecessors of Twin Success Valley discovered this place. To create an independent space from scratch, even a Gold Core Daoist Master would find it beyond their capabilities. However, utilizing a naturally formed interstitial space could be achieved by a Foundation Building cultivator with some effort.

The predecessors of Twin Success Valley used a secret technique to transform this interstitial space into a hidden chamber, using it as the sect's secret repository. Outside the chamber, specific prohibitions were in place to conceal its existence. Moreover, the strong spiritual energy emanating from Lingyan effectively masked any traces of these prohibitions.

As for the information about this secret repository, only a few high-ranking members within Twin Success Valley were aware of it.

Throughout the years, the secret repository remained concealed, and its existence had never been leaked.

Even the Li family, which had been annihilated, was only a vassal family of Twin Success Valley. They knew about the existence of the repository and maintained hopes of a resurgence for their family. Before Shan Feiyu's attempt to break through to the Gold Core stage, Twin Success Valley was well aware of the tremendous danger involved. A single misstep could lead to the annihilation of the entire sect. Therefore, Twin Success Valley had prepared contingencies in advance to safeguard the sect's ultimate heritage in case of a disaster.

Of course, if it weren't for Guang ZhiDaoist Master suddenly forming his core and attracting the complete attention of Flying Swan Sect, Twin Success Valley's contingencies might not have been enough to withstand the pursuit of the Flying Swan Sect.

Now, the remnants of Twin Success Valley have found refuge in a secure location. After settling down, they recalled the existence of this secret repository. Since Twin Success Valley didn't fully pursue the remnants, it not only granted them some breathing room but also planted new ideas in their minds - the desire to reclaim the treasures hidden within this repository.

Thus, Dan Yihu devised a plan, leveraging his old friendship with Gu Tanghai, convincing four sects to join forces and attack Date Spice Oasis while he took the opportunity to infiltrate the repository.

The secret repository was not particularly large, but it stored vast quantities of spirit stones and various precious spirit materials. Most importantly, it contained Twin Success Valley's various inheritance scriptures.

A long row of bookshelves against the walls held an immense collection of books, along with over a hundred jade slips. After entering the repository, Dan Yihu began to count and inspect the contents.

Meanwhile, outside, Deep EarthSpirit General had been searching meticulously and finally made a discovery. As his cultivation base returned to the Foundation Building stage, his memories gradually resurfaced. Having once possessed Gold Core strength, his vision and insight were extraordinary. Calmly searching, he easily detected and dismantled the restrictions within the repository.

After a fierce surge of spiritual energy, Deep EarthSpirit General disappeared from his original location and reappeared inside the repository.

Dan Yihu, who was busy sorting through the inventory, suddenly looked up and saw a tall and peculiar figure behind him. The figure was entirely enveloped in a thick suit of stone armor, making it impossible to discern his appearance or physical features.

When Dan Yihu released his divine consciousness, it was blocked by the divine consciousness of the intruder. Now, Dan Yihu realized that the other person was also a Foundation Building cultivator.

"Who are you? Why are you here? How did you know about this place?" Dan Yihu asked sternly.

Deep EarthSpirit General remained silent but scanned the surroundings of the repository. After a moment, he spoke, "So, Elder Dan has come for these treasures."

"I wonder what plans the cultivators from the four sects outside have when they realize they were manipulated by Elder Dan," he added, without directly answering Dan Yihu's question, issuing a veiled threat.

After a brief silence, Dan Yihu asked, "What do you want then?"

"My demands are not excessive. According to the rules of the martial world, we'll split everything in half. We'll combine what's here with what we have outside, and no one gains an advantage or loses out," Deep EarthSpirit General proposed.

"This is the treasure vault of my Twin Success Valley. Everything here represents the accumulation of our sect for many years. Why should you get half of it?" Dan Yihu protested angrily.

"One half per person is already quite fair. If you're unwilling, I can call all the Foundation Building cultivators from those four sects here, and we'll distribute everything together," Deep EarthSpirit General replied, hitting a nerve with Dan Yihu.

As former vassals of Twin Success Valley, they would not be concerned with any emotional ties to the sect. Faced with such a vast wealth, they would undoubtedly seize it for themselves. At that

time, as the owner of the repository, Dan Yihu might end up empty-handed, unable to retain anything.

Chapter 195: Guarding

Dan Yihu's greatest concern was that once his whereabouts were exposed, cultivators from the four major sects at the Foundation Building level would swarm in and capture him, taking him to the Flying Swan Sect for the reward. He had no expectations of the integrity of these cultivators from the four sects. If that situation were to arise, it might also expose the hiding places of the other members of Twin Success Valley, making Dan Yihu the eternal criminal of the valley.

As for killing to cover his tracks, Dan Yihu wasn't confident in silently taking down a Foundation Building cultivator. He was decisive, which was why he was entrusted with important tasks within the sect. After some consideration, he carefully weighed the pros and cons.

"Alright, I promise you, we split the items in half," Dan Yihu said with a tone that concealed his inner anger.

Knowing the situation was beyond his control, he chose not to engage in pointless disputes and decided to tolerate it for the time being. Dan Yihu took out a storage ring and a storage bracelet, packing various items from the secret library inside.

In the Endless Sea of Sand, it was rare to find such a large storage magic tool with such capacity. The Deep EarthSpirit General silently observed Dan Yihu's actions without saying a word. Dan Yihu understood that he couldn't make any subtle moves in front of another Foundation Building cultivator.

Having filled about half of the items from the ground into the storage magic tool, Dan Yihu then walked up to the bookshelves, intending to collect all the books and jade slips. However, the Deep EarthSpirit General waved his hand, sending out a stream of true qi to interrupt Dan Yihu's actions.

"I said, everything here is divided equally between the two of us, fifty-fifty."

"These are all the heritage texts of my Twin Success Valley, not some spiritual stones or materials," Dan Yihu retorted with a hint of frustration.

"The heritage texts of my Twin Success Valley cannot be leaked."

The Deep EarthSpirit General remained silent, gazing calmly at Dan Yihu. After a moment, it seemed that Dan Yihu couldn't bear the pressure any longer and gritted his teeth, saying, "Fine, fifty-fifty then." Helpless, Dan Yihu could only pack half of the books and jade slips from the shelves. After completing all of this, he left in a fit of anger.

Before departing, he couldn't resist saying, "You have always concealed your true identity and refused to reveal your name. Now that we part ways, would you like to leave behind a title, so I can come seeking advice from you in the future?"

The Deep EarthSpirit General looked at Dan Yihu as if he were a fool. Concealing his identity deliberately, he wouldn't willingly expose himself just because of Dan Yihu's words.

Feeling annoyed, Dan Yihu huffed and left.

Although the Deep Earth Spirit General appeared confident, he also had concerns. If Dan Yihu refused to compromise and they ended up fighting, it could alarm the other cultivators on the ground and attract Foundation Building cultivators from several sects. Even with the alliance between him and Meng Zhang, they wouldn't be able to overpower the other Foundation Building cultivators.

In that case, the fifty-fifty split between him and Dan Yihu would become a four-way split, and of course, Shi Weida would have to be included in the division as well. The superior option among these distribution methods was obvious.

After Dan Yihu left, the Deep Earth Spirit General looked at the pile of items stacked in the secret library and felt a bit of a headache. He couldn't fit all of these things into his storage bag. Transporting these items back to Taiyi Sect would require some effort. At this moment, Meng Zhang and the others had already left Green Bamboo Mountain. Unlike when they were pursuing their enemies, their flight back was not particularly fast, allowing Meng Zhang to enjoy the scenery along the way.

Ruan Dadao was quite dissatisfied with the failure to attack Green Bamboo Mountain. During their journey back, he kept complaining and mocking Meng Zhang and Shi Weida for being too timid. However, Meng Zhang paid no attention to him.

Using his Deception Breaking Eye a while ago, Meng Zhang noticed someone in the distance surveilling from high above. Flying to such heights indicated that they were at least Foundation Building cultivators. The most likely culprit capable of sending Foundation Building cultivators to monitor them was the Flying Swan Sect. The thought of Flying Swan Sect cultivators watching them made Meng Zhang feel uneasy.

He didn't want to reveal his Deception Breaking Eye ability, so he didn't mention the Flying Swan Sect cultivators' surveillance to the others. He simply dismissed Ruan Dadao's opinion and urged everyone to leave the area quickly.

Of course, Meng Zhang wasn't a divine being with foresight, and he didn't know about the Flying Swan Sect's Gold Core Daoist Master's decision. Even if they had successfully attacked Green Bamboo Mountain, the Flying Swan Sect wouldn't have interfered. Meng Zhang could only rely on the known information and his judgment to make what he believed was the best choice.

Ruan Dadao continued grumbling, but seeing that nobody paid him any attention, he fell silent for the rest of the journey. The five of them successfully returned to Date Spice Oasis.

Regarding the distribution of the spoils among their disciples, none of the five had any objections. As for whether they would occupy Date Spice Oasis, they discussed it and decided that each of the four major sects would leave behind a group of Qi Refining stage disciples. After all, there was a Second Rank spirit vein here, and they couldn't just abandon it.

Shi Weida also expressed his willingness to stay at Date Spice Oasis and have the Spirit Plant Date Palms divided among the four sects. After transplantation, the spirit field would be empty, and Shi Weida wanted to cultivate more spirit grain to supply Singing Sand City's needs. He planned to recruit numerous loose cultivators for this purpose.

Truth be told, despite occupying a considerable territory, the four major sects lacked manpower, especially Foundation Building stage cultivators, whose numbers were insufficient to manage everything effectively.

After the battle, Ruan Dadao and the others left, but Meng Zhang decided to stay and help Shi Weida stabilize the situation. Most of the resources in Date Spice Oasis were taken away by the four major sects, including many mortal residents.

Shi Weida managed to get in touch with Gu Tanghai and recruited a group of cultivators from Singing Sand City to assist in managing the oasis. Under Meng Zhang's protection, the Deep Earth Spirit General secretly transported all the treasures from the secret library back to Taiyi Sect.

With the Deep Earth Spirit General guarding Taiyi Sect and a simple organizational structure in place, the various disciples were able to handle their responsibilities. Meng Zhang staying in Date Spice Oasis didn't hinder Taiyi Sect's operation.

Meng Zhang had long been fed up with the events that had taken place in the territory that originally belonged to Twin Success Valley. Now that he had some time, he tirelessly patrolled the area, dealing with the various loose cultivators who came to plunder—either by killing or driving them away.

After multiple battles, Meng Zhang had gained experience and became more proficient in combat. The numerous souls of fallen cultivators left him with a hint of a bloodthirsty aura.

Chapter 196: Accepts the Disciple

Time flew by, and in the blink of an eye, two years had passed. During these two years, Meng Zhang spent most of his time near Date Spice Oasis, only briefly leaving to return to Taiyi Sect a few times.

Two years ago, both Golden Blade Sect and Qiaoshou Sect obtained a Lesser Foundation Building Pill from Dan Yihu. Golden Blade Sect's Sect Master Ruan Yuan attempted to break through to the Foundation Building stage with the help of the pill but failed and suffered some minor injuries. On the other hand, Qiaoshou Sect's Sect Master Jin Qigu successfully achieved Foundation Building after taking the pill. Recently, Jin Qigu had just emerged from seclusion, and Qiaoshou Sect was preparing to hold a Foundation Building dharma meeting in her honor.

Meanwhile, Taiyi Sect continued to develop steadily without any major events. Thanks to Meng Zhang's efforts in the past two years, the area that originally belonged to Twin Success Valley had returned to a peaceful state. Through numerous battles, Meng Zhang had earned quite a reputation, proving his formidable combat prowess to all the loose cultivators who sought to take advantage of the area. Even a Foundation Building stage loose cultivator fell victim to Meng Zhang's dual-sword technique.

On this afternoon, as usual, Meng Zhang absorbed the intense sun essence at a hill in Date Spice Oasis to refine the true qi within him. After completing his practice for the day, he glanced at a certain spot behind the hill and jokingly scolded, "Hey, why are you hiding there? Come out!"

A little while later, a young man who appeared to be no more than eleven or twelve years old but had the stature of an adult timidly emerged from behind the hill. Approaching Meng Zhang, the shy

young man showed a slightly embarrassed smile and respectfully bowed, saying, "Greetings, Master."

"Dawei, what are you doing hiding there? Do you have something on your mind?" Meng Zhang's attitude toward his first disciple was very kind.

"Master, are we going to leave this place in a few days?" Dawei asked.

"Why, feeling a bit reluctant?" Meng Zhang reassured him, "Don't worry, your parents and family will leave with you. They will settle in the Taiyi Sect's territory. Though this place is your hometown, it's not as safe as the Taiyi Sect."

Meng Zhang patiently comforted his disciple. Half a month ago, a young man named Niu Dawei awakened his spiritual roots within Date Spice Oasis. However, when the four sects were discussing which sect Niu Dawei should join, they forgot to decide on it. Shi Weida wanted him to join the Shi Family, but Meng Zhang, using his Deception Breaking Eye, saw the extraordinary potential in Niu Dawei.

Without the ability to measure Niu Dawei's specific spiritual root aptitude since he lacked a Spirit Testing Disk, Meng Zhang was still confident that Niu Dawei had excellent talent. As a result, he intervened and persuaded Shi Weida to let Niu Dawei join Taiyi Sect.

Shi Weida, lacking Meng Zhang's discerning eyes, couldn't see Niu Dawei's exceptional qualities. Without Meng Zhang overseeing Date Spice Oasis in the past two years, the situation there wouldn't have been as stable, especially dealing with the troublesome loose cultivators. Moreover, Shi Weida was aware that Meng Zhang had a powerful Foundation Building stage cultivator backing him up, and it was wise to maintain a good relationship with him rather than offend him.

Therefore, Shi Weida gave in to Meng Zhang's request and allowed Niu Dawei to become his disciple. Following the conventions of the Cultivation World, Niu Dawei joined Taiyi Sect, and his parents and relatives could live within Taiyi Sect's territory. Regularly, Taiyi Sect's flying ship would visit Date Spice Oasis, transporting various supplies. After the area had regained its tranquility, it gradually started producing resources.

To be honest, Taiyi Sect's disciples were still too few to manage their own territory properly, let alone have the resources to develop Date Spice Oasis. Otherwise, once this fertile land, originally part of Twin Success Valley, was developed, the benefits would be immense.

As Taiyi Sect expanded its territory and its population grew, more and more disciples with awakened spiritual roots joined the sect in recent years. However, these newly admitted disciples needed time to grow and weren't yet ready for active duty.

Meng Zhang looked at the honest and straightforward Niu Dawei and felt very satisfied. Not only was this disciple talented, but he also had an excellent character. Despite his towering physique, he was a good-natured and pure-hearted young man. What was most commendable was his sincerity, loyalty, affection towards family, and filial piety towards his parents. If not for these qualities, even someone as discerning as Meng Zhang wouldn't have easily accepted him as a disciple.

It was worth noting that over the years, many disciples had joined Taiyi Sect, and some showed promise. However, none had impressed Meng Zhang enough until he met Niu Dawei, making him Meng Zhang's first disciple. Meng Zhang had high hopes for this eldest disciple and had been personally guiding him during this period.

At this moment, a green shadow flashed by. A small creature darted to Niu Dawei's feet, playfully scratched him, and then quickly ran off. "Liu Li (Colored Glaze), if you keep being annoying, Dawei won't play with you anymore," Meng Zhang playfully scolded with a smile.

Seeing Liu Li (Colored Glaze), the green cat, Niu Dawei's face showed an eager expression, seeming eager to join the fun. "You can go, just remember not to play with Liu Li (Colored Glaze) too late," Meng Zhang instructed.

As soon as Meng Zhang finished speaking, Niu Dawei joyfully followed Liu Li (Colored Glaze) like a pardoned man and ran off.

Most spirit pets didn't like staying in their spirit beast bags. Since he acquired these two little creatures, Meng Zhang allowed them to roam freely most of the time, as long as they didn't stray too far from him. Over the years, the two little creatures had grown rapidly, not in size but in intelligence. Their combat strength didn't improve significantly, but their intelligence had increased remarkably.

At that moment, a figure lightning-fast from the sky landed in front of Meng Zhang. After becoming Meng Zhang's spirit pet, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) had been getting faster and faster, fully utilizing its talent for speed. Now, without special techniques, no ordinary Foundation Building early-stage cultivator could hope to catch up with Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning).

The name Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) truly lived up to its reputation.

Meng Zhang decided to release Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) to patrol around the oasis regularly. Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) flew to Meng Zhang, fluttering up and down, gesturing in its unique way. Though it couldn't speak, Meng Zhang understood its meaning.

"You daring creature, still coming around. You really think I can't handle you?" muttered Meng Zhang under his breath.

Chapter 197: Chasing Lightning Accomplishment

Two years ago, during the Foundation Building stage, the cultivator Liu Fengbo from the Liu Family fled in the midst of battle, causing the whole situation to collapse. Elder Zhuye from Green Bamboo Mountain died on the spot, and Zhujian was severely injured but managed to escape. Liu Fengbo wasn't the first to run away; two loose cultivators had fled before him, and he followed suit. However, this act of desertion left Zhujian, the sole survivor, harboring deep resentment toward Liu Fengbo.

It's understandable for loose cultivators to be unreliable and selfish, but for Liu Family, as allies, to act the same way was highly disappointing, especially considering the enormous cost paid by Green Bamboo Mountain. As a result, the alliance between Green Bamboo Mountain and the Liu Family was on the brink of breaking apart. If not for Zhujian's injuries, he might have gone to teach Liu Fengbo a lesson in person.

Though Liu Family's patriarch, Liu Dahai, didn't say much to his face, Liu Fengbo could sense the disappointment from the patriarch. In an attempt to redeem himself and prove his worth, Liu Fengbo repeatedly provoked conflicts at the Date Spice Oasis over the past two years.

He had become cleverer, mostly engaging in hit-and-run tactics and avoiding direct confrontations. If challenged to a one-on-one duel by Meng Zhang or Shi Weida, he would fight. But if they tried to corner him together, he would immediately flee.

During these one-on-one duels, even if he was slightly at a disadvantage, he would swiftly disengage and avoid prolonged entanglement. Shi Weida grew increasingly frustrated with his tactics, but killing a cautious Foundation Building stage cultivator was no easy task.

Fortunately, Liu Fengbo's havoc was somewhat limited. Even if he ambushed Refining Qi stage cultivators, Meng Zhang and Shi Weiming promptly intervened to stop him.

This time, news arrived that the troublemaker, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning), was about to cause more chaos. Zhui Dian was incredibly fast and agile, often being the first to spot Liu Fengbo's whereabouts.

Having spent two years at the oasis, Meng Zhang knew that once he returned to Taiyi Sect, Shi Weida alone might not be able to handle Liu Fengbo effectively. Before leaving, Meng Zhang had to find a way to deal with this menace. Even if he couldn't kill him, inflicting significant damage was essential.

Upon receiving Meng Zhang's message, Shi Weida immediately flew outside the oasis to intercept Liu Fengbo, while Meng Zhang took a different direction and employed the Earth Escape Spell to leave the oasis. After making a wide detour outside, Meng Zhang positioned himself behind Liu Fengbo and stealthily hid underground.

Flying in the sky, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) couldn't see Meng Zhang hidden beneath the ground, but the mystical connection between spirit pet and owner allowed it to fly directly above him. While Meng Zhang remained concealed underground, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) patrolled the area as commanded.

After several encounters with Liu Fengbo, where he managed to escape each time, Meng Zhang didn't remain idle; instead, he had Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) secretly track him. After multiple attempts, Meng Zhang gained a certain understanding of Liu Fengbo's patterns. Although Liu Fengbo fled in different directions each time, once he was a considerable distance away from Date Spice Oasis, he tended to stay within a roughly fixed area.

Now, Meng Zhang lay in ambush, waiting for Liu Fengbo to pass by. After waiting for over half an hour, he sensed Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) starting to move. Following its direction from beneath the ground, Meng Zhang used the Earth Escape Spell to move towards the target. The speed of burrowing underground was slower than flying in the sky, but with Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) secretly tracking Liu Fengbo from above, Meng Zhang wasn't afraid of losing sight of him. He just needed to follow the pet's movements to locate Liu Fengbo.

After another half hour, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) began to slow down. At this point, Meng Zhang had finally caught up from behind. Gradually ascending towards the surface, when he was close to the ground, he activated the Deception Breaking Eye technique to look above.

Meng Zhang scanned the surroundings and spotted Liu Fengbo's figure on a small hill to his right. The young man was seated in a cross-legged position, meditating to replenish his energy and calm his mind. Probably feeling that he had already distanced himself from Date Spice Oasis, Liu Fengbo appeared noticeably relaxed. Of course, being a Foundation Building stage cultivator, he possessed divine consciousness. Even in a relaxed state, his divine consciousness would remain vigilant in times of danger. Meng Zhang didn't underestimate him, concealing his aura and slowly advancing from underground towards Liu Fengbo's location. In the inheritance he obtained at the Trial Ground, there was knowledge and practical skills related to ambushes, assassinations, and infiltration.

Carefully approaching his target, Meng Zhang stopped just before reaching the critical distance that would trigger Liu Fengbo's alertness. Without hesitation, he leaped out of the ground and lunged towards Liu Fengbo. The first attack, aimed at his target, was the venomous flying sword, the Lifeless Killing Sword, a technique specialized in assassination that Meng Zhang had acquired in the Trial Ground.

In his cultivation journey, Meng Zhang had obtained two sword techniques: the Whirling Willow Sword Art, which he had often used during the Refining Qi stage, and the Lifeless Killing Sword. During the Foundation Building stage, he mainly practiced the Strange and Upright Sword Art from the Purple Gold Sect. The effectiveness of a sword technique not only depended on the cultivator's talent but also on the compatibility with the flying sword used.

The fire-attributed flying sword, Crimson Flame Sword, wasn't suitable for the Lifeless Killing Sword technique, but the Venomous Flying Sword could be used with some difficulty. Liu Fengbo's divine consciousness sensed the impending ambush, but Meng Zhang's speed was too fast for him to fly to the safety of the sky in time.

The Venomous Flying Sword attacked like a lightning-fast python's fang, closing in on Liu Fengbo. Over the past two years, Liu Fengbo had accumulated some combat experience and managed to respond correctly despite the hasty situation. Unable to escape the fight, he chose to face Meng Zhang head-on as the latter pounced on him.

A sudden drop in temperature surrounded the area, frost appearing on the ground, and white mist forming in the air. Liu Fengbo's arms seemed to turn into icy steel as he actively intercepted the Venomous Flying Sword.

In addition to blocking the enemy's flying sword, Liu Fengbo also revealed a hidden trump card. Faced with an inevitable sneak attack, he didn't fear or retreat; instead, he aimed to fight Meng Zhang fiercely. The Ice-Cold True Qi of the Liu Family was well-known and distinctive.

As Meng Zhang approached Liu Fengbo, he felt as if he had fallen into an icy cave, his body becoming unbearably cold. However, he forcefully resisted the shiver, relying on his Solar True Qi to generate a warm current that quickly restored his body to normal.

Liu Fengbo wore a regretful expression on his face. After the sneak attack, he immediately forced out the natal essence within his body, combining it with the Ice-Cold True Qi. Any cultivator who came into contact with this natal essence would feel a bone-chilling cold, making it hard to suppress shivering. This shiver would cause most of the opponent's true qi to dissipate.

Meng Zhang's body had undergone the baptism of Yin Qi several times, granting him strong resistance to cold. Coupled with his practice of the Very Yang and Very Hard Solar True Qi, he inadvertently evaded the enemy's deadly trick.

Chapter 198: Officially Crossing the Threshold

After Liu Fengbo spewed out a mouthful of natal vitality, his whole body immediately became weak. Meng Zhang seized the opportunity and used the killing move of the Lifeless Killing Sword, stabbing him several times. Liu Fengbo was unable to dodge and ended up with two more wounds on his body.

The venomous teeth of the flying sword were made from the fangs of a poisonous python. During the refining process, many poisonous flowers and herbs were added, greatly increasing its toxicity. Shortly after being hit, the poison immediately spread throughout Liu Fengbo's body, attacking his heart and lungs.

Normally, he would have had enough time to slowly expel the toxins, but in a life-and-death battle, he did not have that luxury. He could only barely suppress the spread of the poison, greatly affecting his strength.

During the fierce battle, Liu Fengbo tried several times to escape. However, once Meng Zhang got close, he tightly entangled him, making it impossible for him to escape and forcing him to fight in place. After a fierce battle, Meng Zhang finally killed Liu Fengbo on the spot.

Although he inevitably suffered some injuries, the results of the battle were still good. Meng Zhang had only been in the Foundation Building stage for a few years, but he had already killed several Foundation Building cultivators in a row. This kind of record was rare.

Meng Zhang waved his hand and took Liu Fengbo's storage bag, which did not contain anything too valuable. There were some spirit stones, commonly used pills, talismans, and about ten cold poison yin thunders.

The famous cold poison yin thunder was very precious to Refining Qi stage cultivators. Meng Zhang had used it to kill a seriously injured Foundation Building elder of Twin Success Valley in the past. After reaching the Foundation Building stage, he did not think much of the power of the cold poison yin thunder. It was just the power of a normal Foundation Building stage cultivator's attack, and it was not very useful to him. However, he could give it to the Refining Qi stage disciples of his sect for self-defense.

For Liu Family Foundation Building cultivators, the cold poison yin thunder was also not easy to refine. It would not be easily given to anyone who was not a highly regarded junior of the family. Liu Fengbo had not been in the Foundation Building stage for long, and it was unclear where he had obtained so many cold poison yin thunders.

In fact, what Meng Zhang was really interested in was the ancestral technique of the Liu Family. Cultivators with Liu Family bloodline who practiced the ancestral technique could reach the Foundation Building stage in the ice cave of the Liu Family's treasure trove without the need for auxiliary items such as Foundation Building Pills.

It was said that the Liu Family technique had a major flaw after reaching the Foundation Building stage. However, from Meng Zhang's several encounters with Liu Family Foundation Building

cultivators, the flaw was not obvious. If possible, Meng Zhang would like to get his hands on the Liu Family ancestral technique and study it carefully.

After entering the Foundation Building stage, a cultivator's cultivation base and lifespan greatly increased. They could not be confined to their own practiced techniques and needed to broaden their knowledge, learn from others, and absorb the strengths of various schools to lay the foundation for advancing to the Gold Core stage.

Although Meng Zhang had only been in the Foundation Building stage for a few years, he was confident in his cultivation and believed that advancing to the Gold Core stage was only a matter of time.

After dealing with the battlefield, Meng Zhang recalled his great contributor, Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning), and returned to Date Spice Oasis. When Shi Weida heard the news of Liu Fengbo's death from Meng Zhang, he breathed a sigh of relief and also became more respectful of Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang's combat power did not seem like that of someone who had only been in the Foundation Building stage for a few years. It seemed that he must have had a high-level mentor behind him. From then on, Shi Weida's attitude towards Meng Zhang and the disciples of Taiyi Sect became much better.

A few days later, the Second Rank flying boat of Taiyi Sect arrived as scheduled. Meng Zhang's eldest disciple Niu Dawei and his family, including several dozen relatives, reluctantly boarded the flying boat.

After leaving this time, Meng Zhang would not return here for a long time. After handing over to the Taiyi Sect disciples stationed here and loading the cargo onto the flying boat, he returned to Taiyi Sect. The airspace around the four major sects and Singing Sand City was relatively peaceful, thanks to the efforts of the five major forces. Loose cultivators from outside did not dare to cause trouble here. The Second Rank flying boat returned safely to the Taiyi Sect mountain gate without incident. After the Taiyi Sect's mountain gate was moved to Fuzhao Valley, the area became quite large. Not only did Taiyi Sect cultivators live here, but most of their mortal relatives also lived on the outskirts of the valley.

After settling everything, Meng Zhang brought Niu Dawei to the Sect Master's hall and carefully measured his spiritual root aptitude with a measuring spirit plate. As Meng Zhang expected, Niu Dawei's spiritual root aptitude was extraordinary. It was a middle-grade spiritual root, and it was in the upper range of middle-grade spiritual roots.

Previously, Taiyi Sect only had two upper-range middle-grade spiritual roots. One was Wen Qiansun, who awakened his spiritual root when he was over thirty years old. Because of his age, many people in the sect did not think highly of him. Later, his cultivation progress was good, and he showed outstanding talent in the formation path, which caught Meng Zhang's attention and he was given special attention.

The other was Yang Xueyi, who came from a cultivation family and joined Taiyi Sect after her family was exterminated. Yang Xueyi not only had excellent cultivation aptitude, but also had high

talent in making talismans and cooking with spiritual energy. She was highly valued in the sect and was regarded as the star of tomorrow.

Now, Taiyi Sect had one more Niu Dawei, and it seemed that Taiyi Sect was showing signs of revival. As long as these disciples were given enough time to grow, Meng Zhang believed that the future of Taiyi Sect would not be limited to the edge of the Cultivation World.

After measuring his spiritual root, Meng Zhang carefully measured Niu Dawei's physique. Niu Dawei's physique was quite special. It was not a common five-element attribute, but a wind attribute and a thunder attribute.

If it were the previous Taiyi Sect, they might not have had a suitable technique for cultivating special attributes. However, after serving as Sect Master for many years, Taiyi Sect had accumulated some knowledge in this area. After some selection, Meng Zhang chose the "Wind and Thunder True Solution" for Niu Dawei to practice.

For Taiyi Sect, having Meng Zhang as the Sect Master and accepting Niu Dawei as the first disciple was a big event. Upon the suggestion of General Affairs Elder Tian Zhen, Meng Zhang decided to hold a grand initiation ceremony to formally accept Niu Dawei into the sect. They chose an auspicious day, and Tian Zhen made all the necessary arrangements.

Although Meng Zhang did not invite outsiders due to his own intentions, Taiyi Sect disciples who received the news tried to return to the sect to attend the ceremony. In recent years, Taiyi Sect had expanded greatly and recruited many disciples. There were also many mortals who awakened their spiritual roots and joined Taiyi Sect.

Taking advantage of this initiation ceremony, most Taiyi Sect disciples gathered together. Standing above the sect's main hall and looking down at the crowded crowd below, Meng Zhang was filled with emotion. When he first took over the sect, there were only two or three disciples. But after more than twenty years, the sect had more than a hundred disciples, and their cultivation base and overall quality far exceeded that of the past. From a Refining Qi sect, Taiyi Sect had barely qualified to participate in the Cultivation World game as a Foundation Building sect.

Chapter 199

After completing the introductory manual, Meng Zhang did not leave the mountain gate but stayed to cultivate. In his spare time, he also guided Niu Dawei's cultivation. Although Meng Zhang had not practiced "Wind and Thunder True Cultivation" himself, and no one else in the sect practiced this technique, as a Foundation Building cultivator, he had a keen insight and was able to apply his knowledge to help Niu Dawei progress quickly. Meng Zhang carefully studied the various intricacies of "Wind and Thunder True Cultivation" and with his excellent aptitude and guidance, Niu Dawei's cultivation base improved rapidly.

In addition, the treasure obtained from Twin Success Valley's Dan Yihu, which was half of the secret library, was already transported back to Taiyi Sect by Deep Earth God. Most of the cultivation resources and spirit stones were sent to the sect's treasury. After Deep Earth Spirit General organized the books and jade slips, they were sent to the Hidden Scripture Pavilion. The current Hidden Scripture Pavilion of Taiyi Sect had a considerable collection of books and was no longer a small study room but a three-story building with its own area and protection restrictions

outside, guarded by disciples. Each room in the building had talismans inscribed to prevent fire and insect damage.

The Hidden Scripture Pavilion was not just an empty shell, it contained a large number of books, including precious classics. Apart from the first floor, which was open to the sect's disciples for free, the books on the other two floors required the consumption of sect contribution points to borrow. In the past two years, Deep Earth Spirit General had also fulfilled his responsibilities as the Hall Master by regularly holding dharma meetings and providing guidance to disciples who sought his help.

Twin Success Valley was indeed a dominant force that had been passed down for hundreds of years and could dominate a region. The books brought back by Deep Earth Spirit General contained many valuable parts. After reading them, Meng Zhang gained a lot of knowledge, and the Hidden Scripture Pavilion of Taiyi Sect received a useful supplement. After staying in the sect for less than three months, Meng Zhang received an invitation from Qiaoshou Sect to attend their Foundation Building dharma meeting, which was to be held in the sect next month. The invitation was specially extended to cultivators who had a good relationship with the sect.

At the same time, Qiaoshou Sect sent someone to inform Meng Zhang that Sect Master Jin Qigu had other matters to discuss with him. Although the trade routes were cut off and various items were scarce, Meng Zhang still instructed his disciples to prepare a generous gift. As the time for the dharma meeting approached, Meng Zhang selected a few disciples and boarded a First Rank flying boat to head towards the direction of Qiaoshou Sect's mountain gate.

Qiaoshou Sect's mountain gate was located about a thousand miles west of Taiyi Sect and was close to the edge of the Deadly Sea of Sand. The Endless Sea of Sand continued to the north, and beyond that was the legendary Deadly Sea of Sand. Although the Endless Sea of Sand was desolate and remote and not suitable for human habitation, many people still lived there due to the numerous oases, especially in the area directly ruled by the Flying Swan Sect. However, the Deadly Sea of Sand to the north of the Endless Sea of Sand was a true forbidden zone for life. Not only was the living environment extremely harsh, but there were also many dangers that could threaten the lives of cultivators. Most Foundation Building cultivators dare not venture deep into the Deadly Sea of Sand and only approach its edges. There are many legends surrounding the Deadly Sea of Sand, including that it is the stronghold of demonic cultivators, the hiding place of Ghost Path cultivators, or the birthplace of sand monsters. However, none of these legends have been verified. Even the Flying Swan Sect, the dominant force in the Endless Sea of Sand, keeps its distance from the Deadly Sea of Sand and does not approach it easily.

Occasionally, some bold cultivators enter the Deadly Sea of Sand to explore and seek opportunities, but most of them perish, and the few who survive cannot provide detailed information about the place. As a result, fewer and fewer cultivators dare to venture into the Deadly Sea of Sand. Even if they have to, they only circle around its periphery and never enter its interior.

Qiaoshou Sect's mountain gate is not far from the edge of the Deadly Sea of Sand, and it has not experienced any unusual events for many years. Meng Zhang and his companions boarded a First Rank flying boat and arrived safely at Qiaoshou Sect's mountain gate. The mountain gate is composed of a continuous slope covered with densely planted spirit mulberry trees, which look lush and lovely. Outside the continuous slope are large oases where mortals ruled by Qiaoshou Sect live.

Qiaoshou Sect's disciples are mainly women, but there are also many men. However, male disciples have lower status in the sect and limited prospects because Qiaoshou Sect's most advanced inherited techniques can only be practiced by women. Men can only practice some low-end techniques. Qiaoshou Sect's unique ability to raise spirit silkworms, extract silk, weave silk fabrics, and make magic robes is also entirely controlled by female cultivators.

When Qiaoshou Sect saw the Taiyi Sect emblem on the flying boat, its protective formation automatically opened, revealing a portal. Shortly after the flying boat entered, a Qiaoshou Sect female disciple riding a crane guided the flying boat to land in a designated location. Soon after the flying boat landed, Qiaoshou Sect's welcoming female disciples came to receive Meng Zhang and his disciples.

Meng Zhang brought several disciples with him to Qiaoshou Sect, not to show off but to let them see the world and interact with outstanding disciples from other sects. The female disciple in charge of welcoming guests led the Taiyi Sect group to a courtyard, where other guests who came to observe the ceremony were also staying. In this area west of Singing Sand City, four sects and the Shi Family formed a small group. Due to the Flying Swan Sect's blockade, they had no contact with the outside world. Even if they had some previous relationships, they had been completely severed.

Taiyi Sect arrived relatively late, and Ruan Dadao of the Golden Blade Sect and Gu Tanghai of the Shi Family had already arrived. Both received two Lesser Foundation Building Pills. Jin Qigu of Qiaoshou Sect succeeded in Foundation Building, but Ruan Yuan of the Golden Blade Sect failed. Now, Ruan Dadao came to participate in Jin Qigu's Foundation Building dharma meeting, and his mood must be complicated.

Chapter 200: Later Generation

Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect have been allied for many years, maintaining a close relationship. The two sects have cooperated seamlessly, taking advantage of the vacuum left by the demise of Twin Success Valley and reaping the most fruitful rewards. Even Taiyi Sect, led by Meng Zhang, has had to step back in the face of the united front formed by the two sects.

However, any alliance must be built on a foundation of relative equality between the parties involved. In the Cultivation World, achieving equal status requires a reasonable balance of power. Aunt Jin of Qiaoshou Sect, with her mid-level Foundation Building cultivation base, was already above Ruan Dadao. However, due to the fierce and valiant disciples of Golden Blade Sect, Qiaoshou Sect's female cultivators, who excel in production, are slightly weaker in terms of combat strength. This balance allows the two sects to maintain their equal standing.

Now, with the addition of a Foundation Building cultivator in Qiaoshou Sect, the power gap between the two sects has widened significantly. Meng Zhang is starting to ponder whether the alliance between the two sects will remain as stable in the future. He wonders if there might be an opportunity to undermine their alliance.

Although the four sects are currently united and maintaining a good cooperative relationship in the face of external pressures, Meng Zhang harbors deep concerns about the alliance between Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect. However, he knows that rushing into such matters is not advisable and that he needs to patiently seek opportunities. Guests from various sects continue to arrive one after another. In reality, there are only three sects and Singing Sand City present, which is far less impressive compared to the grandeur of the Forest Mountain School's Lin Shenpo's Foundation

Building dharma meeting in the past. Even Meng Zhang, who is still young, feels a sense of nostalgia for the changes that have taken place in the surrounding situation in just a few short years. Many familiar faces have disappeared without a trace.

At this moment, Aunt Jin, a Foundation Building cultivator of Qiaoshou Sect, comes out to receive the guests from all sides. Ruan Dadao's expression noticeably becomes somewhat unnatural when facing Jin Qigu. Seeing a junior he has known for many years suddenly attaining a similar status to his own, while his own highly anticipated disciple fails to achieve Foundation Building, makes Ruan Dadao uncomfortable, despite Jin Qigu's respectful attitude.

Lin Shenpo of Forest Mountain School, Gu Tanghai of Singing Sand City, and Meng Zhang of Taiyi Sect sincerely congratulate Jin Qigu on his Foundation Building. After all, the strengthening of their small group's power is always a good thing.

Apart from the interactions between the Foundation Building cultivators, the younger disciples of each sect also make their appearances. As the host, Qiaoshou Sect has the largest number of disciples present, while the other sects are represented by the elite of the younger generation who have the privilege of accompanying their Foundation Building seniors to the dharma meeting.

Meng Zhang secretly activates his Deception Breaking Eye technique and carefully observes the younger disciples of each sect. The young disciples of Forest Mountain School are average, neither outstanding nor mediocre, which is fitting for a Foundation Building sect like theirs. The two members of the Shi Family brought by Gu Tanghai have ordinary aptitude.

Golden Blade Sect has the most disciples present, and their cultivation bases are quite strong, with no shortage of individuals at the Refining Qi Ninth Layer. However, Meng Zhang observes that these individuals have average aptitude and have relied on long-term accumulation to gradually improve their cultivation bases. Their future prospects are limited, and Foundation Building will be difficult for them.

On the other hand, Qiaoshou Sect has several promising disciples, especially a female disciple named Jin Qiao'er. She is exceptionally intelligent, with a restrained brilliance that sets her apart. Meng Zhang deduces that she possesses at least a middle-grade spiritual root and likely possesses some kind of special talent.

Jin Qiao'er appears to be around fourteen or fifteen years old, lively, innocent, and outgoing. Not only is she dearly loved by Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu, but the other disciples in the sect also dote on her. The disciples from the visiting sects are also eager to approach Jin Qiao'er, except for Yang Xueyi of Taiyi Sect, who maintains a respectful distance from her. The disciples got together to discuss important matters. Several factions had been planning for years to open up trade routes and establish a path to Jiuqu League. Now, all the preparations were almost complete. After some discussion, they set a departure date two months later, when they would form a caravan and hit the road together.

The next day, Jin Qigu gave a public lecture on the path of cultivation. However, Meng Zhang found it dull and uninteresting. Having already achieved Foundation Building, he had a deeper understanding of the principles Jin Qigu was discussing. Moreover, he found her lectures to be

mostly empty words with little substance. The Refining Qi disciples listening to her talk felt confused and unable to comprehend the abstract concepts she presented. Even the most intelligent among them gained little insight.

After Jin Qigu's lecture, the guests did not stay long and returned to their respective sects. With the journey ahead, each sect had many things to arrange.

As the departure date approached, Meng Zhang made arrangements for the affairs of his sect. When he was away, General Affairs Elder Tian Zhen handled daily affairs, while Deep Earth Spirit General was responsible for emergencies. The disciples in the sect had their own roles, so Meng Zhang did not have to worry about them.

Li Xuan, the Foreign Affairs Elder, and Yang Xueyi, the Hall Master of the Symbol Hall, accompanied Meng Zhang on the journey. Wen Qiansun, who had recently broken through to the Refining Qi Seventh Layer, also wanted to go out and explore, so Meng Zhang brought him along. In addition, more than ten disciples were responsible for various tasks on the road.

One storage bag after another was loaded into the cabin of the Second Rank flying boat. These storage bags were filled with various goods for sale by Taiyi Sect, mainly minerals. Since deciding to trade with Jiuqu League two years ago, Meng Zhang had ordered the full-scale development of all the mines they owned. Except for the white hidden earth mine, which was entirely supplied to Forest Spring Watch, they had accumulated a lot of scarlet copper ore, mysterious iron ore, and other minerals.

The most precious of these was the Xunfeng Stone produced by Singing Sand Mountain. Gu Tanghai had managed to restore production in the Singing Sand Mountain mine in a short time. He had worked hard to extract Xunfeng Stone from the mine with the help of many cultivators. According to the original agreement, Taiyi Sect could also get a large share of it. After several years of accumulation, the quantity was considerable.

Another precious spiritual material was a large amount of Warm Jade. When Meng Zhang stayed at Date Spice Oasis, he went out several times to raid various loose cultivators. Not far from Date Spice Oasis, he discovered a Warm Jade mine that had originally belonged to Twin Success Valley. The quality of the Warm Jade produced there was very high, and it had been an important source of wealth for Twin Success Valley. After discovering the mine, Meng Zhang immediately took it over and organized a large-scale mining operation, despite the shortage of manpower in his sect. The mined Warm Jade was transported to Date Spice Oasis and regularly sent back to Taiyi Sect via flying boats.

Shi Weida looked on enviously, but he did not dare to compete with Meng Zhang for resources. Moreover, he was unable to manage Date Spice Oasis, let alone come up with any other ideas.