

## Sect Master 201

### Chapter 201: Leaving

On the agreed day, before dawn, five Second Rank flying boats gathered in the sky near the Golden Blade Sect. Each boat had a Foundation Building cultivator on board. Meng Zhang from Taiyi Sect, Ruan Dadao from Golden Blade Sect, Jin Qigu from Qiaoshou Sect, Lin Shenpo from Forest Mountain School, and Gu Tanghai from the Shi Family stood at the front of their respective boats, exchanged glances, and then retreated to their cabins without saying a word. The five Second Rank flying boats connected in a line and flew southwest.

In less than half a day, the five boats successfully left the territory of the Golden Blade Sect. The boats accelerated, brushing against the edge of the Flying Swan Sect's territory at a high speed, and crossed a vast, uninhabited desert.

Before nightfall, the five boats entered a vast and treacherous desert called the Demon Wind Gobi, the only place in the Endless Sea of Sand where demons gather. After half a day of high-speed travel, the boats began to slow down. The five Second Rank flying boats were not designed for prolonged high-speed travel. The core restrictions had already started to heat up due to the earlier rush to pass through the border with the Flying Swan Sect. Fortunately, the power to propel the boats forward primarily relied on spirit stones, and the cultivators taking turns to operate the boats could manage.

As they entered the Demon Wind Gobi, the speed of the boats slowed down, and the cultivators on each boat became more vigilant. The five Foundation Building cultivators stood at the front of their boats, attentively observing their surroundings. The terrain of the Demon Wind Gobi was winding and extensive. Even if they passed through the outskirts of the Demon Wind Gobi without any incidents, it would still take nearly ten days. However, if they encountered demons blocking their path, the situation would be uncertain.

Among the five individuals, Ruan Dadao had previously been to the Jiuqu League territory when he was young, but he took a different route, following a large group of people through the Flying Swan Sect's territory. Only Gu Tanghai had experience entering the Demon Wind Gobi many years ago.

With the positioning abilities of Foundation Building cultivators, as long as nothing unexpected happened, they didn't have to worry about getting lost. They just needed to identify the direction of the Jiuqu League and fly straight there.

The five Foundation Building cultivators meditated at the front of the boats throughout the night, which passed without any incidents. As long as they didn't leave the Demon Wind Gobi, none of them dared to be careless.

During the day, the speed of the boats slightly increased. However, considering the long journey ahead, the boats couldn't maintain high speeds indefinitely. They could only proceed at a normal speed and accelerate when necessary.

As they ventured deeper into the Demon Wind Gobi, large patches of green started to appear below. Various wild beasts and many demons could be seen on the ground. The further they went, the more demons there were, and even demon tribes began to appear.

Some sensitive tribal leaders had already noticed the flying boats in the sky. Fortunately, most land-dwelling demons didn't possess the ability to fly. Even Second Rank demons could barely glide through the air, with much slower speeds and lower altitudes compared to human flying boats. Only Third Rank demons, regardless of their race, had the ability to soar through the sky.

With the flying height and speed of the five Second Rank flying boats, as long as they didn't encounter large-scale demon bird tribes, there was no need to worry about any danger.

After flying for most of the day without any incidents, the disciples in the Refining Qi stage on the boats began to relax. They started moving around, chatting, and playing inside the boats.

I don't know what Qiaoshou Sect was thinking, but they actually let their talented disciple Jin Qiao'er accompany Jin Qigu on this trip. Although it wasn't her first time riding a flying boat, it was her first time passing through such a vast desert.

Jin Qiao'er stood on the flying boat, stretched out her body, and looked down at the scenery below, marveling at everything she saw. After watching the scenery for a while, she began to jump back and forth between the flying boats.

Refining Qi stage cultivators didn't have the ability to fly, but Foundation Building cultivators could create special talismans or magic tools for them to help them gain similar abilities, as long as they were willing to put in the effort. However, these items were often more style than substance, expensive, and out of reach for ordinary Refining Qi stage cultivators. Moreover, they were usually not available for sale in small markets like Singing Sand City.

Jin Qiao'er was highly favored in Qiaoshou Sect. The wind shoes she wore on her feet were made by a master refiner from Earthfire Sect, whom Aunt Jin had asked to make them. The wind shoes consumed spirit stones as power and allowed Jin Qiao'er to leap a hundred feet, hover and turn in the air, and even fly for a short time.

The five flying boats were not far apart, and Jin Qiao'er's agile body leaped and ran between them, jumping from one boat to another. She visited each of the boats of the various factions.

Clever and adorable little girls are always hard to dislike. Moreover, Jin Qiao'er had a sweet mouth, was cheerful and lively, and was very popular with everyone. The several Foundation Building stage elders treated her kindly, and the Refining Qi stage male disciples were even more enthusiastic about her.

After circling around several flying boats, Jin Qiao'er came to the Taiyi Sect's flying boat. She saw her familiar big sister Yang Xueyi and immediately clung to her. Whether it was because of the same-sex repulsion or not, Yang Xueyi didn't show much enthusiasm towards Jin Qiao'er and had an indifferent attitude towards her, not wanting to talk to her.

However, Jin Qiao'er seemed to be unaware of Yang Xueyi's rejection. She kept talking non-stop with her little mouth pouting, acting like an old friend. After all, the other party was a guest of the sect, so even if Yang Xueyi didn't like her, she had to endure and listen to her chatter.

After talking for a while, Jin Qiao'er suddenly saw Liu Li (Colored Glaze) running out of the cabin. Most girls are visual creatures, and when Jin Qiao'er saw the cute and silly Liu Li (Colored Glaze), she exclaimed in surprise and immediately chased after it.

Meng Zhang rarely put his two spirit pets into the spirit beast bag. During this trip on the flying boat, Liu Li (Colored Glaze) had been running around the cabin, and Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) had even flown outside the flying boat, playing around. Taiyi Sect disciples knew that they were the sect master's spirit pets and indulged them, allowing them to play and frolic.

Jin Qiao'er chased Liu Li (Colored Glaze) into the cabin and then ran from the cabin to the deck. The interior space of the Second Rank flying boat was not large, and Jin Qiao'er was wearing wind shoes that could increase her speed and jumping ability. However, no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't catch the agile Liu Li (Colored Glaze).

Seeing that hard work didn't work, Jin Qiao'er tried softness. She took out a bunch of jerky and other snacks from her storage bag, hoping to entice Liu Li (Colored Glaze).

## **Next Chapter >>Chapter 202: Airborne Attack**

### Chapter 202: Airborne Attack

Meng Zhang sat at the bow of the boat feeling a bit amused. He spared no expense in taking care of his two spirit pets, providing them with everything they needed including spiritual rice, fruits, and various elixirs that could be consumed by spirit pets. Even an ordinary Taiyi Sect Inner-Sect Disciple would not have such treatment. If he had such conditions when he was cultivating, his cultivation base would have progressed faster and he would not have wasted so much time.

Jin Qiao'er took out a bunch of snacks that young girls would eat, but it was impossible to tempt Liu Li (Colored Glaze). As expected, Liu Li (Colored Glaze) did not even look at the pile of things that Jin Qiao'er took out. With a casual glance, Liu Li (Colored Glaze) made a disdainful expression. Seeing Liu Li's (Colored Glaze) expression, Jin Qiao'er immediately became a bit dejected. Then, with a very painful expression on her face, she reluctantly took out two crystal-clear, unknown fruits from her storage bag.

As soon as Jin Qiao'er took out the fruits, Liu Li (Colored Glaze) immediately rushed over and stretched out its claws to grab them. It looked very anxious and the previous aloofness was gone. Jin Qiao'er, who was prepared for this, did not miss her chance. She was, after all, a Refining Qi mid-stage cultivator. She suddenly reached out and grabbed Liu Li (Colored Glaze) by the back of its neck. Liu Li (Colored Glaze) struggled desperately and made angry meowing sounds.

"Let's see if you still run away or ignore me now," Jin Qiao'er said with a smile on her face, seemingly angry. She used a bit of force, and no matter how Liu Li (Colored Glaze) struggled, it could not break free.

Just then, a black shadow flashed across the sky. Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) had flown over, attracted by the scent. Taking advantage of Jin Qiao'er's distraction, it grabbed one of the fruits in its mouth and flew away like lightning. Jin Qiao'er was stunned and had a wry smile on her face. Liu Li (Colored Glaze), who was caught in her hand, made an angry sound. This annoying guy always took advantage of its ability to fly and stole its good things.

After a while, Jin Qiao'er and Liu Li (Colored Glaze) became friends and played together. They even teamed up to scold Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning). Watching the spirit pets and Jin Qiao'er playing together, Meng Zhang's face showed a gentle smile. Each of the two little guys ate one of

her cherries. If he, as their owner, did not show any response, he would feel like he was taking advantage of the little girl.

However, for a while, Meng Zhang could not find a suitable spiritual object to give as a gift. Jin Qiao'er was excited and played with Liu Li (Colored Glaze) and Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) for a long time. Jin Qigu's voice came from the front of the flying boat. "It's getting dark, Qiao'er, it's time to come back." Jin Qiao'er had not had enough fun, but after Jin Qigu urged her several times, she reluctantly said goodbye to her two new friends.

As Jin Qiao'er jumped towards the Qiaoshou Sect's flying boat, several black shadows descended from the sky and attacked the flying boats. Meng Zhang's face changed, and his Second Rank flying sword, Red Flame, immediately flew out and blocked one of the black feathers. The seemingly weak and powerless feather contained a very powerful force, which could withstand Meng Zhang's Second Rank flying sword.

The Foundation Building cultivators on the other flying boats also reacted in time and quickly took action to block the black feathers that were attacking their flying boats.

Feathers shattered into small pieces and flew in all directions, and the scattered force stirred up gusts of wind that blew in all directions. Jin Qiao'er, who was in the air, was first frightened by the sudden attack, and then her body was caught in the whirlwind. Jin Qiao'er had no flying ability and relied entirely on a pair of wind-control shoes on her feet to move freely between the flying boats. Now suddenly caught in the whirlwind, she screamed in fear and lost her ability to react.

Aunt Jin on the flying boat in front was shocked and was about to rescue her. Ripples appeared in the air above the flying boat formation, and three black crows suddenly appeared and attacked the flying boats below. Black feathers fell like a rain of arrows. All the Foundation Building cultivators, including Jin Qigu, had to deal with this wave of attacks. If the flying boat was damaged or even sunk, the five Foundation Building cultivators might be fine, but the group of Refining Qi disciples on board would be in great danger.

Aunt Jin created countless needle shadows that blocked all the feathers that were shot at the flying boat. Meng Zhang's two swords flew up and down, knocking all the feathers away. The three black crows were immediately recognized. They were ink crows, a very fierce demon bird. Ink crows were born with the ability to move in the shadows, and Second Rank ink crows had talents such as shadow assassination and shadow ambush.

Just now, the three ink crows took advantage of the cover of the clouds and quietly approached the flying boat formation, then took the opportunity to launch a surprise attack. The other four Foundation Building cultivators did not notice the ink crows sneaking in using the cover of the clouds. Meng Zhang was distracted by Jin Qiao'er and his spirit pets and did not use his Deception Breaking Eye to observe the sky regularly. With just one negligence, these uninvited ink crows used shadow movement to fly close and then launched a shadow ambush.

The three ink crows worked together and temporarily entangled the five Foundation Building cultivators. Jin Qiao'er's body lost control and danced in the air, completely at a loss. Seeing Jin Qiao'er's body falling like this, Yang Xueyi on the flying boat threw out two talismans with all her might. One talisman was a wind-stabilizing talisman, which turned into a stream of light and stabilized the whirlwind around Jin Qiao'er's body, preventing her from drifting with the wind. The other talisman turned into a stream of light and landed on Jin Qiao'er's body.

This was a feather-falling talisman, which made Jin Qiao'er's body immediately become as light as a feather. Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) flew over like lightning, then opened its small mouth and bit Jin Qiao'er's half-sleeve, trying to pull her up to the flying boat. Normally, although Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) had much greater strength than its peers, its body was too small. Even if it exerted all its strength, it could not pull Jin Qiao'er at all. Fortunately, now, due to the feather-falling talisman, Jin Qiao'er's body became extremely light, and she was pulled by Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning).

Seeing Yang Xueyi and Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) helping out, Jin Qiao'er also calmed down. She activated her wind-control shoes and followed Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) to jump onto the Taiyi Sect's flying boat. Seeing Jin Qiao'er safe, Meng Zhang and Jin Qigu both breathed a sigh of relief. The three ink crows let out a series of unpleasant cries. A large group of black ink crows flew from the distant sky and directly attacked the flying boat formation. A large number of ink crows covered the sky and the earth, endless.

### **Next Chapter >>#203: Being out of danger**

#### Chapter 203: Being out of danger

When faced with the boundless flock of ink-black crows, a line of poetry emerged in Meng Zhang's mind: "The black clouds press down on the city, the city yearns to collapse."

With such a large number of crows, they indeed possessed the ability to siege and conquer a city. Even Foundation Building sects like Taiyi Sect and Qiaoshou Sect would easily fall before them.

Dealing with lone demonic beasts wasn't difficult, not even the Second Rank ones.

However, if they formed a group of their own and could propagate their numbers, these demonic beasts would become extremely formidable. To form a group, they would need at least a Second Rank demonic beast to act as their leader. If a demonic beast group had multiple Second Rank beasts, then the leader would be at least a peak Second Rank, equivalent to the strength of a human at the late stage of Foundation Building.

Demonic beasts followed the most primitive and ruthless law of the jungle: survival of the fittest. If one's strength couldn't subdue the entire group, they wouldn't become the leader.

This was different from human society, where rules, traditions, and familial ties played a role. The leader of a sect or a family might not necessarily be the strongest.

With such a vast flock of crows, their leader was probably not far from being a Third Rank demonic beast.

The five Foundation Building cultivators looked serious, feeling an immense pressure in their hearts.

Gu Tanghai, being the most experienced, was the first to respond correctly. He shouted, "Full speed ahead, follow me!"

The flying boat that Gu Tanghai was on was already at the forefront, responsible for leading the way for the team.

After his shout, the flying boat immediately accelerated at its fastest speed, heading in the opposite direction of the flock of crows.

Gu Tanghai also jumped to the top of the flying boat and used all his strength to fend off the attacks of three crows.

The other flying boats followed suit, and the other four Foundation Building cultivators also jumped to the top of their respective boats, fending off the crows in the same manner.

The Second Rank flying boat exerted its full speed, rapidly depleting its spiritual stones, and its speed increased until it reached its limit.

At every moment, a large number of spiritual stones were consumed, but at this point, no one cared about that.

In the hearts of everyone on the flying boat, there was only one thought: faster, just a bit faster...

The five Foundation Building cultivators put all their efforts into it, making sure the three crows had no chance to attack successfully. Every time they struck, the crows were repelled.

The distant flock of crows, mainly consisting of First Rank ones, couldn't catch up with the Second Rank flying boat escaping at full speed.

As the flying boat continued to flee, the distance between them and the flock of crows grew wider and wider.

Even though some Second Rank crows attempted to break away from the flock and pursue them, they couldn't keep up. The three crows that first launched the surprise attack were already the fastest among the flock.

Now, they had to engage in battle with the five Foundation Building cultivators while desperately trying to keep up with the flying boat's speed.

After covering a long distance, the three crows finally couldn't endure anymore and had to slow down, ceasing their pursuit.

Although they had escaped quite far, no one dared to be complacent; they continued to urge the flying boat to maintain full speed.

Only when the flock of crows in the rear was completely out of sight, and they had flown for a considerable time, did they start to slow down.

Once the flying boat reduced its speed, the five Foundation Building cultivators gathered on Gu Tanghai's flying boat.

At this moment, the five of them couldn't hold back anymore; they no longer maintained the high and composed demeanor they had in front of their disciples.

Everyone breathed a long sigh of relief. Jin Qigu patted his chest with lingering fear and said, "Fortunately, there were no Third Rank demonic beasts in the crow flock; otherwise, we would have been in grave danger this time."

Ruan Dadao continued, "Fortunately, Brother Gu has rich experience and made a timely decision, allowing us to escape in time."

After some discussion, they all decided to be extra cautious in their upcoming journey and not let their guard down.

Due to avoiding the flock of crows, the flying boat team had deviated from their original course. After some careful probing, they adjusted their direction and returned to the correct path, continuing their journey towards the Jiuqu League.

After the thrilling experience, Jin Qiao'er was restricted by Jin Qigu and not allowed to wander around freely; she could only stay on her own flying boat. This made Jin Qiao'er pout with dissatisfaction, wearing a disgruntled expression.

However, Meng Zhang ordered Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning) to take the initiative and fly to Qiaoshou Sect's flying boat to play with her for a while, which made her happy again.

With such a close call, it seemed like all the bad luck had passed, and the journey ahead became smoother.

The time they had lost due to the deviation from the course was gradually made up in the following journey.

Ten days later, the flying boat team finally exited the Demon Wind Gobi and entered another vast desert.

After spending half a day crossing the desert, the flying boat team entered an endless grassland.

Both Gu Tanghai and Ruan Dadao had been to this side of the Jiuqu League before, and Gu Tanghai had even spent some time living here.

The Jiuqu League was composed of various cultivation forces, with numerous families and sects. The cultivation world here was far more prosperous and developed than the Endless Sea of Sand. There were countless Foundation Building sects and families in the Jiuqu League's territory, and only Gold Core forces had a certain status. The whole alliance was dominated by existences at the level of Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

Two cultivation forces directly bordering the Endless Sea of Sand were the Gold Core sect Fire Cloud Sect and a branch of the Yellow Lotus Sect.

Both forces had launched major invasions into the Endless Sea of Sand during the great changes in the area several hundred years ago when Purple Gold Sect was weakening. However, after Flying Swan Sect rose to become the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, they expelled these two forces.

Fire Cloud Sect and Flying Swan Sect held deep animosity toward each other and had been unable to let go of their hatred for hundreds of years. The two sides often engaged in bloody conflicts along their borders.

Any cultivator coming from the Endless Sea of Sand was seen by Fire Cloud Sect as an ally of Flying Swan Sect. Once they entered Fire Cloud Sect's territory, they would be attacked by Fire Cloud Sect cultivators.

This practice of Fire Cloud Sect seemed justified. Flying Swan Sect was the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand, so any cultivator coming from there was either a disciple of Flying Swan Sect or its vassal.

Similarly, the branch of Yellow Lotus Sect also held a strong aversion to cultivators coming from the Endless Sea of Sand and subjected them to various difficulties.

Over the years, cultivators coming from the Endless Sea of Sand had learned their lessons. They would avoid the territories of these two forces, take a detour, and head directly to Great Wind City.

With Gu Tanghai leading the way and guiding them, the flying boat team successfully bypassed the territories of Fire Cloud Sect and the Yellow Lotus Sect's branch, taking a big detour and entering the territory of Great Wind City.

## **Next Chapter >>#204: Great Wind City**

### Chapter 204: Great Wind City

Great Wind City is a bustling cultivation metropolis, spanning thousands of miles and renowned for its prosperity. As one enters the territory of Great Wind City, a distinct change in scenery becomes apparent. The landscape reveals mountains, plains, rivers, and grasslands, a stark contrast to the endless desert that once dominated the view.

The lower regions are dotted with human settlements, villages, and towns, bustling with activity and imbued with the essence of mortal life. Upon entering the territory of Great Wind City, a sense of safety is felt, and Jin Qigu lifts the restrictions on Jin Qiao'er, granting her freedom once again. Jin Qiao'er promptly dashes onto the flying vessel of the Taiyi Sect, engaging in playful antics with Liu Li (Colored Glaze) and Zhui Dian (Chasing Lightning), two young companions.

As the fleet of flying vessels continues its journey, a magnificent and majestic city comes into view. Even for Meng Zhang, a traveler from another time, such a grand city is unprecedented. Great Wind City sprawls across a vast area, encompassing vast plains, adjacent mountains, and lakes.

Unlike ordinary mortal cities, Great Wind City does not rely on city walls for defense. Instead, it is protected by numerous formations and restrictions, fortifying the entire city. Cultivators can often be seen flying amidst the towering mountains, a common sight between the peaks that reach into the clouds.

In the Endless Sea of Sand, a Foundation Building stage cultivator may be considered significant, even if they establish their own sect and claim a territory. However, in the vicinity of Great Wind City, Foundation Building stage cultivators are as common as grains of sand, with Refining Qi cultivators abundant and Foundation Building cultivators filling the streets. It takes a Gold Core cultivator to truly stand out.

The number of flying vessels taking off and landing within Great Wind City is countless. The city is jointly governed by several powerful cultivation families, all of which can be considered major clans. The leading families, Lu Family and Gu Yue Family, boast more than one Gold Core Daoist Master among their ranks. While the Gold Core Daoist Masters of other families may come and go, only the Huang Family has a Gold Core Daoist Master in this generation.

A single Great Wind City surpasses the power of the Flying Swan Sect, the ruler of the Endless Sea of Sand. During the journey, Gu Tanghai provided a detailed account of Great Wind City to the Foundation Building stage cultivators from the four sects. Now, as they approach Great Wind City, combining Gu Tanghai's previous explanations with their own observations, the group is filled with awe and reverence for the city.



As the fleet of flying vessels draws closer to Great Wind City, several cultivators riding flying mounts, led by a Foundation Building stage cultivator, approach the fleet. They are the patrol cultivators of Great Wind City. The Foundation Building stage cultivator flies up to the leading vessel and conducts a brief inquiry. Upon learning that the group is from the Endless Sea of Sand and intends to sell minerals in Great Wind City, the inquiry is concluded with minimal fuss.

After the inspection, Gu Tanghai confidently guides the fleet into Great Wind City, landing in a spacious and level open area. This location is a well-established warehouse, a renowned establishment within Great Wind City. It has a long-standing reputation for safety and reliability, making it a favored destination for merchants from all walks of life.

Overall, the security near Great Wind City is relatively good, with few incidents of vendettas, killings, or treasure disputes occurring. As Great Wind City thrives on commerce, it prioritizes maintaining a favorable business environment and ensuring the safety of trade routes.

Although Meng Zhang and the others are foreign merchants, they can confidently engage in transactions within Great Wind City without worrying about others coveting their wealth. Soon after settling in, intermediaries approach Meng Zhang and offer their assistance in facilitating trade and establishing connections. Meng Zhang and the others were amazed by the vibrant commercial atmosphere in Great Wind City. However, instead of immediately engaging in trade, they decided to first familiarize themselves with the market conditions. As for the goods stored in the city, the warehouses ensured their safety, justifying the high rental costs.

Meng Zhang had previously received a small mirror from Jue Ying for communication between them, but it lost its function once they left the Endless Sea of Sand. Luo Ye had given Meng Zhang a jade pendant to contact her friends in the Jiuqu League, but it was meant to be used during critical moments nearing the formation of the core, so it couldn't be used casually.

Being a first-time visitor to Great Wind City, Meng Zhang felt completely unfamiliar and lacked any connections. Fortunately, Gu Tanghai didn't hold back and shared all of his experiences and knowledge with the group. After settling in, the sects acted together, exploring Great Wind City and frequently interacting with various commercial establishments.

Meng Zhang, accompanied by Wen Qiansun and Yang Xueyi, spent a day wandering through Great Wind City, gaining some preliminary understanding. Through various channels, they obtained a rough idea of the purchasing prices for various minerals. With the tense situation in the Endless Sea of Sand, they didn't want to delay outside for too long.

After interacting with several Shang Family merchants and finding the prices acceptable, the group decided to sell their goods. Each cabin of the Second Rank flying vessels was filled with various storage bags, as the sects had brought a substantial amount of merchandise. However, the market barely reacted to the accumulated goods from the sects, as a single commercial establishment swiftly acquired them all. Given the daily throughput of goods in Great Wind City, this amount of supplies was insignificant.

After completing the transactions, Meng Zhang roughly calculated the profits and realized that simply selling raw mineral resources and traveling such a long distance didn't yield high returns. Not to mention the manpower and resources consumed in mining operations, the expenditure of spirit stones during the journey alone amounted to a considerable sum. The risks encountered along the way and the time costs for several Foundation Building stage cultivators were not insignificant.

Although Foundation Building stage cultivators have longer lifespans than Refining Qi stage cultivators, they also spend more time on various matters. This is especially true for cultivators who aspire to further advance their Cultivation Base, as time becomes even more precious. Of course, the main purpose of the merchant convoy's visit to Great Wind City was not solely to earn spirit stones but ultimately to establish mutual exchanges.

Meng Zhang believed that such commercial activities could be conducted once every 2-3 years without issue. However, if the frequency became too high, problems would arise. Just as one is bound to encounter ghosts when traveling at night, frequent passage through the Demon Wind Gobi would undoubtedly lead to major problems. If a flying vessel were to encounter trouble in the Demon Wind Gobi, the losses would be significant.

After selling all the goods, the sects dispersed and began their individual activities in Great Wind City, preparing for a substantial round of purchases. The first thing Meng Zhang wanted to buy was a Second Rank protective formation. Something that was difficult to obtain in the Endless Sea of Sand could easily be purchased in Great Wind City. This situation was not only due to the relative scarcity and underdeveloped commerce in the Endless Sea of Sand but also the strong control exerted by the Flying Swan Sect.

Taking advantage of the rare opportunity of traveling such a distance, Meng Zhang purchased two Second Rank protective formations in one go—one for regular use and one as a backup. With the main task completed, Meng Zhang, accompanied by Wen Qiansun and Yang Xueyi, visited numerous shops and engaged in a significant round of purchases.

## **Next Chapter >>#205**

### Chapter 205

When in the Endless Sea of Sand, every time Meng Zhang came across a market, he would go to the ghost market to see if there were any opportunities to pick up some bargains. At first, in small places like Singing Sand City, he could still find some gains, but when he got to Firewell Market, the gains were not as great. Now that he had come to a prosperous commercial place like Great Wind City, he naturally wouldn't miss the ghost market.

There is also a ghost market in Great Wind City. In fact, this kind of thing was passed over from Jiuqu League. The ghost market in Great Wind City is large in scale, with many stalls. However, after wandering around for a night, Meng Zhang's gains were few. Meng Zhang's two major tools for picking up bargains were his Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, and his own knowledge and experience.

Cultivation is more developed in Great Wind City, and although the Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, which is rare in the Endless Sea of Sand, has not yet become commonplace here, it is definitely not considered rare. Of course, there are also differences in the quality of Divine Abilities, and Meng Zhang's Deception Breaking Eye is among the most advanced of all Divine Abilities.

However, even ordinary Divine Abilities on the stalls are enough to see through the details. As for knowledge and experience, what Meng Zhang knows can be shown off in front of the bumpkins in Singing Sand City, but in Great Wind City, where there are many experts, it is not really anything special.

After wandering around all night, Meng Zhang realized one thing: picking up bargains is really hard to come by. If Meng Zhang were a small Refining Qi period cultivator, he could still scavenge for some junk here. But now that he is already a Foundation Building period cultivator and a master of one door, there are plenty of ways to earn spirit stones, so there is really no need to waste time here.

After resting at the warehouse for a while, Meng Zhang took Yang Xueyi and Wen Qiansun and continued their shopping trip. In Great Wind City, Meng Zhang also discovered a Four Seas Building. The Four Seas Building belongs to the Four Seas Business League, a large commercial organization established by the famous cultivation clan You Family. Even in remote places in the Endless Sea of Sand, there are Four Seas Buildings.

The Four Seas Building in Firewell Market respects the orders of the Flying Swan Sect and does not engage in large-scale transactions with other sects such as Taiyi Sect. In Great Wind City, the Four Seas Building naturally does not need to pay attention to the Flying Swan Sect's ban. Meng Zhang took the two of them into the Four Seas Building, which gave people the feeling of a large supermarket in the Cultivation World. There are many goods, everything is available, and there are many high-quality items.

Shopping in the Four Seas Building is a one-stop-shop, so there is no need to wander around Great Wind City looking for different shops. Meng Zhang purchased some low-level spiritual objects for the disciples in his sect to practice some special techniques and secrets. For example, for the senior disciple Niu Dawei, who practices the "Wind and Thunder True Explanation," Meng Zhang purchased a piece of thunder strike wood. As for wind attribute spiritual objects, there is no need to purchase them since there are plenty of Xunfeng stones produced in Singing Sand Mountain.

Yang Xueyi was interested in a First Rank superior quality talisman pen and bought it with her own money. Yang Xueyi comes from the cultivation family Yang Family, and after the family was destroyed, she must have inherited a lot of family treasures. Moreover, as the Hall Master of the Taiyi Sect Talisman Hall and the manager of the Dining Hall, she has earned a lot of contribution points within the sect. All in all, she is a genuine little rich woman. Wen Qiansun bought what appeared to be an ordinary formation disk, and even with Meng Zhang's eye, he couldn't see anything unusual about it. However, Wen Qiansun was overjoyed, and Dawei was satisfied. After wandering through a bunch of shops, Meng Zhang took the two of them to the famous Wen Hua Building in Great Wind City.

The Wen Hua Building is a place that specializes in selling various spells, techniques, and cultivation classics. A wooden building over ten zhang high is located at the end of the street, and a sign with three gilded characters of "Wen Hua Building" is located at the top of the wooden building.

Meng Zhang entered the interior of the Wen Hua Building, and the first thing he did was to watch the various techniques inside. The techniques collected by the Wen Hua Building are indeed numerous, and the types are complete. Not only are there common five-element attribute constitutions, but there are also techniques for practicing rare constitutions such as wind attribute and ice attribute.

In addition to many low-end techniques, there are also many medium-level techniques, and even some superior techniques. As a Foundation Building sect's inheritance technique, it is more than enough. Even some Gold Core sects with shallow backgrounds may not have such a complete collection of techniques.

Of course, the prices of these techniques are definitely not cheap. Before purchasing a technique, a cultivator must make a heart demon oath to ensure that they abide by the promises made at the time of purchase. This kind of constraint is far less effective than Meng Zhang's soul book, but it is barely enough to restrict ordinary cultivators.

Each technique presented to the customer for review only has a name and a brief introduction. Firstly, Taiyi Sect's current inheritance techniques are enough, and secondly, Meng Zhang feels that the prices are too expensive, so he has no intention of buying any techniques.

In addition to selling cultivation techniques and various spells, the Wen Hua Building also sells books related to the hundred arts of cultivation. The prices of these books are also high. Fortunately, with the inheritance obtained from the Trial Ground, Meng Zhang doesn't have to waste money on them.

In addition, there are many Taoist classics for sale in the Wen Hua Building. Some were written by experts in the Cultivation World, while others were written by moralists among ordinary people. The content inside seems to have no direct relationship with cultivation, and they are all very abstract and mysterious Grand Dao theories. It seems that they are not very meaningful for cultivation.

However, Meng Zhang learned a secret from the Trial Ground that only circulates among the major sects and families. Studying Taoist classics and understanding the Taoist canon really has great benefits for cultivation. Especially as the cultivation realm gets higher, it is necessary to read more Taoist classics.

Why say it's really beneficial? Because this has always been a tradition in the Cultivation World. The elders of the sect or family often educate young disciples to read more Taoist classics, which will have many benefits. As for whether there are really any benefits, the elders who say these things probably don't even know themselves. The words they use to educate their disciples are the same words that their elders used to educate them. In his previous life, Meng Zhang read a martial arts novel that had a passage like this. To practice a certain Buddhist martial art, one must also be well-versed in Buddhist scriptures. Otherwise, not only will it be impossible to practice the martial art to the highest level, but it will also harm oneself. In the cultivation process of this world, there are similar situations.

For example, if Meng Zhang practices Taoist techniques, he must be well-versed in Taoist classics and understand Taoist thoughts to master the essence of the techniques he practices. Of course, if one only stays in the Refining Qi period or Foundation Building period for their whole life, then there is no need for this. But if one has ambition in cultivation and wants to explore the Gold Core or even Primordial Spirit realm, then this is an essential process.

## Chapter 206: Purchasing books

Studying the Dao scriptures and understanding the Dao teachings is not something that can be achieved overnight. Even if one diligently devotes decades of continuous study, without sufficient comprehension or bad luck, there may not be much accomplishment.

On the other hand, by taking elixirs daily and practicing Refining Qi, one can clearly feel their gradual progress and subtle changes. Moreover, in the Cultivation World, most cultivators are

constantly running around for cultivation resources, competing with the heavens for their destiny. They hardly have the time to settle down and contemplate the Dao teachings.

Even the disciples of sects and clans, who are required by their elders to casually read the Dao scriptures, might find it difficult to achieve immediate results, even if they are geniuses. Over time, though the tradition of encouraging younger disciples to read more Dao scriptures persists, even those elders educating the younger generation may see it more as a formality rather than truly believing in the benefits of reading them extensively.

The real treasures are hidden within the mundane and seemingly useless discussions, overlooked and ignored by the world, leaving one speechless. In this Cultivation World, it is primarily dominated by Daoist sects. Even in the mortal world, there is a strong atmosphere of discussing the profound and the Dao, and many insights can be gained from the Dao scriptures written by ordinary people, which can also enlighten higher-level cultivators.

In the Taiyi Sect's history, there have been instances of Primordial Spirit True Monarchs breaking through their realms due to reading an ordinary person's Daoist discourse. Thus, under the covert influence of major cultivation forces, various mortal dynasties actively promote the study of Daoist classics among their people, encouraging them to explore Daoist theories.

In the ancient times of Meng Zhang's past life, the Four Books and Five Classics were the foundation of the literati. In this world, all scholars study various Daoist scriptures.

The imperial court uses Daoist scriptures in their civil service examinations to select officials. Those who excel in the study and comprehension of Daoist scriptures hold a high status in the mortal world and may even become guests of certain major sects in the Cultivation World.

While the major forces subtly promote the development of Daoist teachings, they do not openly reveal the significance of Daoist cultivation. Some cultivators with outstanding aptitude and talents, even if they inadvertently sense the benefits of studying the Dao scriptures and understanding the Dao teachings, may keep it to themselves and rarely reveal it.

At most, they might pass this knowledge on to their close junior disciples and encourage them to read more Daoist scriptures with dedication and contemplation. However, whether these junior disciples can absorb and achieve results from the teachings is another matter altogether.

Given the cautious nature of the Cultivation World, where even the tiniest secrets are treated like something of utmost importance, nobody would selflessly publicize such profound secrets related to cultivation. Even if some outliers do reveal these secrets, how many people would truly believe in them? And even if some do believe, how many would persist in studying the scriptures over time?

As a result, the vast majority of low-level cultivators in the Cultivation World remain in a state of confusion and bewilderment. However, this is not due to their lack of ambition. Their status in society prevents them from obtaining information that is not accessible to others.

Before reaching the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang, like most cultivators in the Endless Sea of Sand, was preoccupied with advancing his cultivation base. At that time, managing the sect, dealing with external enemies, and surviving in challenging circumstances all took precedence. There was little time and energy to devote to studying the Dao scriptures.

After reaching the Foundation Building stage, Meng Zhang now has enough time to catch up on this aspect. He knows that within the Endless Sea of Sand, the success rate of forming the core is low,

not only due to restrictions on resources and techniques but also because many lack understanding in this area.

Without grasping this knowledge and contemplating the Daoist scriptures, even if one's luck is extraordinary enough to successfully form the core, it will be difficult to make further progress in the future.

Meng Zhang is not content with remaining at the Foundation Building stage for the rest of his life; he aims to break through to Gold Core, Primordial Spirit, and even higher realms. To achieve that, studying the Dao scriptures and understanding the Dao teachings is an inevitable lesson.

He has bought all the Daoist scriptures available in the Wenhua Tower, and fortunately, these are not expensive books that directly aid cultivation. Additionally, Meng Zhang has visited several bookstores in Great Wind City to purchase some rare Daoist scriptures not found in the Wenhua Tower.

After a busy shopping spree, he has filled numerous storage bags with the scriptures and stored them in the flying boat. If time were not limited and the flying boat's capacity were not restricted, Meng Zhang would have considered searching for even more Daoist scriptures.

But for now, he must stop here.

Upon returning to his sect, Meng Zhang plans to place these Daoist scriptures in the Hidden Scripture Pavilion, providing them for free to his disciples to read. Although the benefits of studying and understanding the Daoist scriptures might not be obvious during the Refining Qi stage, Meng Zhang wants to encourage his disciples to read them and cultivate a culture of studying Daoist teachings within the sect.

When some of his disciples reach the Foundation Building stage in the future, Meng Zhang will enforce a rule that requires Foundation Building disciples to dedicate some time to studying the Daoist scriptures. However, whether these disciples can absorb and benefit from this knowledge will depend on their own choices and efforts. Meng Zhang has done what he can; as a Sect Master, he cannot monitor the study progress of each disciple.

Although there is currently only one Foundation Building stage cultivator in the sect besides Meng Zhang, Deep Earth Spirit General, he still aims to cultivate a culture and habit of studying the Daoist scriptures within the sect. While Meng Zhang is deeply engrossed in contemplating how to proceed upon returning to the sect, other cultivators have completed their purchases and returned to the warehouse.

When everyone is almost gathered, they are only waiting for the people from the Qiaoshou Sect to arrive.

Ruan Dadao is getting impatient and begins to complain, "Women are troublesome. They take forever to make decisions when buying things, wasting time."

After waiting for a long time, Jin Qigu and Jin Qiao'er finally rush back, accompanied by several female disciples, their expressions anxious.

Observing the situation, Meng Zhang takes the initiative to greet them, "Sect Master Jin, is there something wrong? Your expressions seem a bit off."

The other cultivators present also look inquiringly, and Ruan Dadao's face is filled with curiosity.

Jin Qigu hesitates for a while, then sighs and slowly begins to speak, "We are all companions traveling together, and I can't hide anything from you."

"I've had some bad luck; I encountered a troublesome individual."

Beside him, Jin Qiao'er sees Jin Qigu struggling and quickly interjects with a slightly tearful voice, "It's not Qigu's fault. It's all Qiao'er's fault that we've gotten into trouble."

## Chapter 207: Yellow Lotus Sect

In Jin Qiao'er's tearful narration, Jin Qigu occasionally added a few words to help everyone understand what happened. Jin Qigu, accompanied by Jin Qiao'er and several female disciples, made a round in Great Wind City to purchase the necessary supplies. Jin Qiao'er, with a childlike nature, had never been to such a large city before, so everything she saw on the roadside felt fresh to her. She played and shopped all the way.

Jin Qigu doted on Jin Qiao'er greatly and since they were in the safe confines of Great Wind City, she allowed her to wander around freely. After all, Jin Qiao'er was never out of his sight, so there was no need to worry about any issues.

Who could have imagined that Jin Qiao'er would catch the attention of a cultivator from the Yellow Lotus Sect? This Yellow Lotus Sect cultivator stopped Jin Qiao'er and claimed that they were destined to be master and disciple.

Jin Qiao'er was the successor of Aunt Jin's teachings, and Qiaoshou Sect had high hopes for her, considering her the future star who could revitalize the sect. In any case, they wouldn't let her fall into the hands of another sect.

Before Jin Qigu could intervene, Jin Qiao'er instinctively showed great disgust and hostility towards that person. The man tried to take Jin Qiao'er forcibly but was stopped in time by Jin Qigu. When they exchanged blows, Jin Qigu immediately felt that the other person was at least at the late stage of Foundation Building, and she couldn't resist even a few moves.

Fortunately, the patrolling cultivators of Great Wind City arrived at a critical moment and prevented further conflict. After understanding what happened, the patrolling cultivators didn't favor the Yellow Lotus Sect disciple just because of his affiliation. After giving the person a warning, they drove him away.

Before Jin Qigu left, the patrolling cultivators warned him to be cautious, as Yellow Lotus Sect was a powerful force with many extraordinary individuals.

In a hurry, Jin Qigu left with Jin Qiao'er and quickly returned to the warehouse. After hearing the whole story, everyone's expressions turned grim. Ruan Dadao even disregarded their alliance with Qiaoshou Sect and muttered under his breath, "This is trouble-seeking."

After arriving in Great Wind City, everyone actively gathered information about the nearby cultivation forces and got some understanding of Yellow Lotus Sect, a powerful force in the entire Jiuqu League. They had numerous disciples and experts and were known for their unruly and domineering style.

Since the disappearance of Yellow Lotus Sect's Primordial Spirit True Monarch, the Gold Core Daoist Masters within the sect had been embroiled in internal strife. The Main Altar was full of power struggles and disputes, and the branches acted independently, not following the Main Altar's orders. The Main Altar and the branches were at odds with each other, and there were hostile relationships between them.

The branch near Great Wind City was the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch. Although it was just a branch, its strength surpassed even Fire Cloud Sect in the surrounding cultivation forces, though not as powerful as Great Wind City.

Meng Zhang found it strange when the warehouse's attendants introduced the surrounding cultivation forces, including the East River Branch and Fire Cloud Sect. These forces seemed no weaker than Flying Swan Sect. Yet, a few hundred years ago, Flying Swan Sect had forcibly expelled both Yellow Lotus Sect and Fire Cloud Sect from the Endless Sea of Sand. Was there some hidden reason behind this?

Perhaps Flying Swan Sect had some concealed power that people didn't know about, or maybe the two sects didn't invest too much effort in the Endless Sea of Sand. Meng Zhang couldn't figure it out and had to temporarily put these questions aside.

Great Wind City was always wary of the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch but didn't want to engage in direct conflict with them. Although the Yellow Lotus Sect was internally chaotic, no one knew if the East River Branch could seek help from the Main Altar or other branches if they clashed with Great Wind City.

Over the years, Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators from the East River Branch had caused trouble and disturbances in Great Wind City, affecting the city's favorable business environment. The high-ranking members of Great Wind City had to suppress their anger and only drove away the troublemakers without further punishment.

When everyone heard that Jin Qigu and the others had offended a Yellow Lotus Sect cultivator, their expressions turned grim. Even Great Wind City, which had multiple Gold Core Daoist Masters, couldn't handle Yellow Lotus Sect, let alone these Foundation Building disciples.

Although Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators wouldn't dare to act openly due to Great Wind City's rules, they could cause harm in subtle ways that others couldn't bear.

Ruan Dadao's face turned gloomy, and he almost couldn't help but drive Jin Qigu and the others away to completely cut ties with them.

Meng Zhang's expression was also unpleasant, not because he worried about being implicated but because of his aversion to Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators. He detested these so-called senior experts who wanted to seize treasures by force, claiming that they were destined for the treasures. They also forcibly took away people, claiming that they were destined to be together.

At this moment, Lin Shenpo comforted, "Qigu, don't worry; Great Wind City is still safe. As long as you stay in the warehouse, Yellow Lotus Sect won't be able to do anything to you."

However, the experienced Gu Tanghai shook his head and rebutted, "Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators are always cunning and malicious. Even if you hide in the warehouse, it's not a long-term solution."



Gu Tanghai's words silenced everyone, and Jin Qiao'er was on the verge of tears. "I think since everyone has almost finished their business here, we should leave immediately. If we act quickly, the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators probably won't react in time," Meng Zhang suggested.

"You're right. We shouldn't linger here; as long as we leave, the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators can't do anything to us," Gu Tanghai agreed with Meng Zhang's proposal.

Jin Qigu also didn't want to stay in Great Wind City any longer and felt that returning to their sect would offer some safety.

Lin Shenpo also echoed Meng Zhang's suggestion. Most people agreed to leave immediately, and everyone sprang into action.

Fortunately, the goods they brought had already been sold, and they had bought everything they needed. The disciples they brought were also in the warehouse.

After a brief organization, the five flying boats took off and headed outside of Great Wind City.

Fortunately, they acted quickly and resolutely. Soon after the five flying boats left, someone arrived at the warehouse to inquire about their group's information. However, by the time Yellow Lotus Sect learned about them, the flying boats had already left Great Wind City.

In their haste to leave, they didn't even spare a thought for the spiritual stones. The flying boats sped forward, quickly leaving the territory of the Jiuqu League.

Once they entered the Demon Wind Gobi, they slowed down their pace. The return journey was relatively smooth. They didn't encounter any ambushes from the demonic bird clans like they did when they first arrived.

Being more vigilant, they acted with extreme caution. Meng Zhang used his Deception Breaking Eye several times to observe the surrounding environment. If anything seemed amiss, they immediately changed their route to avoid danger.

## Chapter 208: Startled Changes

Amidst the unease and anxiety of the crowd, the flying boat team successfully crossed the Demon Wind Gobi and returned to the region west of Singing Sand City. After bidding farewell to each other, the five flying boats dispersed, each heading back to their respective homes.

When Meng Zhang's flying boat landed in Fuzhao Valley, many disciples from the sect came to gather around voluntarily. After the flying boat touched the ground, Taiyi Sect became busy once again. Although it had not been long since they left, things at the sect were running smoothly, and no unexpected incidents had occurred.

However, sorting through the supplies brought back was a troublesome task, especially the pile of scriptures that filled the Hidden Scripture Pavilion's remaining space to the brim. Deep Earth Spirit General's memory had not fully recovered yet, but he instinctively felt that reading these scriptures would bring significant benefits. He helped Meng Zhang sort through the scriptures and organized the disciples to transcribe them, creating backups.

Several classic scriptures were transcribed multiple times and distributed to all the disciples within the sect. Meng Zhang added a new rule to the sect's regulations, stating that when inspecting the

disciples' progress, their studies of these scriptures would also be examined, not just their cultivation bases.

In the desolate land of the Endless Sea of Sand, practicality was always emphasized. Matters like studying scriptures might not show immediate benefits, and major sects like the Flying Swan Sect and others did not have a strong interest in them. They were seen more as tradition and stories, rather than valuable resources. As a result, not many cultivation forces collected scriptures, and there were few scriptures available for sale in the market.

This time, it was only by going to the prosperous Great Wind City that Meng Zhang could acquire so many scriptures. With the supplies acquired, Taiyi Sect wouldn't need to engage in external trade for a long time. However, after the incident with the Yellow Lotus Sect cultivators, they could no longer visit Great Wind City. If they wanted to engage in trade in the future, they would have to communicate with the Qi Family of the Northern Desert through the Deadly Sea of Sand's edge.

Not long after Meng Zhang returned to Taiyi Sect, before he could settle into peaceful days, an unexpected piece of news completely disrupted his tranquil life. A few days earlier, disciples from the Forest Mountain School had secretly transported White Hidden Earth ore to be used by Guang ZhiDaoist Master, with the help of people from the Forest Spring Watch. However, the Flying Swan Sect had been secretly monitoring them.

Flying Swan Sect tracked them all the way, and finally discovered Guang ZhiDaoist Master's whereabouts. Fei YuDaoist Master and Fei JiangDaoist Master of the Flying Swan Sect caught up with him and cornered Guang ZhiDaoist Master. Although Guang ZhiDaoist Master had absorbed a large portion of the Heavenly Rainfall during the core formation, there was still a significant amount that fell to Twin Success Valley and Flying Swan Sect.

Guang ZhiDaoist Master, although he barely succeeded in forming his core, had some innate deficiencies. After forming the core, he didn't even have time to stabilize his cultivation base and was busy running around with the Flying Swan Sect. Lacking a third-rank spirit vein for cultivation, he had to use a large number of spiritual stones to maintain his cultivation base and prevent it from declining.

With innate deficiencies and lack of proper nourishment, he had not yet grasped the Divine Abilities and secret arts that a Gold Core stage cultivator should possess. Among Gold Core Daoist Masters, he was relatively weak, and when Fei JiangDaoist Master and Fei YuDaoist Master, who had been in the Gold Core stage for many years, cornered him, he quickly fell into a disadvantage and faced a life-threatening crisis.

Fortunately, there was a way when there seemed to be none. At a critical moment, Qi NanfeiDaoist Master from the Northern Desert Qi Family appeared and managed to help Guang ZhiDaoist Master escape at great cost. Although both of them managed to flee, they were seriously injured, especially Guang ZhiDaoist Master, whose injuries were so severe that it threatened to shake his foundation.

Additionally, Fei TianDaoist Master from the Flying Swan Sect personally took action and blocked Qi NanguiDaoist Master of the Qi Family in their stronghold in the Northern Desert.

Fei JiangDaoist Master and Fei YuDaoist Master were now free of worries and could fully concentrate on chasing down Qi Nanfei and Guang ZhiDaoist Master. It was said that under their relentless pursuit, Qi Nanfei and Guang ZhiDaoist Master were in dire straits, and their survival was uncertain.

Upon receiving this news, Meng Zhang couldn't help but think, "It's over." Without Guang ZhiDaoist Master's deterrent, both Forest Spring Watch and Taiyi Sect would be utterly helpless against the Flying Swan Sect's might. At this point, Meng Zhang started considering whether to gather the disciples and abandon Taiyi Sect's foundation, fleeing far away. But where would they escape to? Even if they ran, could they evade the Flying Swan Sect's pursuit? In the world of cultivation, where could Taiyi Sect find a safe haven?

In a state of panic and confusion, Meng Zhang received an invitation from Gu Tanghai in Singing Sand City, inviting several sect leaders to gather and discuss their next course of action. At a loss for ideas, Meng Zhang didn't hesitate and immediately rode the Red Feathered Eagle, rushing to Singing Sand City.

With an additional person, there might be one more idea. When Meng Zhang arrived in Singing Sand City, Xu Yishan and Lin Shenpo from the Forest Mountain School had already arrived. Despite his own severe injuries, Xu Yishan came to the meeting.

To everyone's surprise, Guang Hong, a Daoist from Forest Spring Watch, had also come. Forest Spring Watch must be in great urgency due to Guang ZhiDaoist Master being hunted down. As the concerned party, Guang ZhiDaoist Master's fate was undoubtedly in grave danger.

Without waiting for too long, Aunt Jin and Jin Qigu from Qiaoshou Sect, as well as Ruan Dadao from Golden Blade Sect, hurriedly arrived.

After everyone assembled, they wasted no time and directly delved into the main issue: how to deal with the current situation. Since Flying Swan Sect had already taken action against Guang ZhiDaoist Master, considering their typical approach, they would likely strike fiercely against Forest Spring Watch, completely wiping them out. The other sects allied with Forest Spring Watch would likely face unfavorable outcomes as well.

In the face of Flying Swan Sect's potential attack, the group had only two choices: fight or surrender. If Flying Swan Sect made a move, there would be no peaceful resolution. Gu Tanghai briefly explained the current situation and waited for everyone's response.

Ruan Dadao and Aunt Jin exchanged glances; they had already discussed the matter on their way here. Forest Mountain School and Forest Spring Watch were too deeply involved, like locusts tied together by a string, unable to be separated. However, Golden Blade Sect and Qiaoshou Sect had not offended the Flying Swan Sect; they only had some conflicts with the Green Bamboo Mountain and Liu Family. Moreover, their actions in claiming territory in Twin Success Valley shouldn't cause any issues.

If Golden Blade Sect and Qiaoshou Sect voluntarily surrendered, perhaps they could gain the Flying Swan Sect's forgiveness. Even if they had to serve Flying Swan Sect in the future, as long as their sects survived, it would be worth it.

## Chapter 209: Having own axe to grind

Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao were considering whether they could join forces with Taiyi Sect's Meng Zhang and Gu Tanghai to take down the people of Forest Mountain School and go to Flying Swan Sect to seek credit and forgiveness in exchange for their lives. It was quite a surprise to see Guang HongDaoist from Forest Spring Watch appearing here.

Guang Zhi Daoist Master of Forest Spring Watch was undoubtedly the person Flying Swan Sect hated the most. As a disciple of Guang Zhi Daoist Master, Forest Spring Watch had long been targeted by Flying Swan Sect for elimination. If they could capture Guang Hong Daoist and present him to Flying Swan Sect, the people there would undoubtedly be delighted.

Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao, who harbored ulterior motives, exchanged glances, contemplating how to persuade Meng Zhang and Gu Tanghai to stand with them while keeping it a secret from Forest Mountain School and Forest Spring Watch.

Guang Hong Daoist also exchanged glances with Xu Yishan. Facing the overwhelming attack from Flying Swan Sect, Forest Spring Watch was too weak and needed to make use of any available strength to resist the invasion. Their plan was to rally several sects to stand against Flying Swan Sect together.

Meng Zhang observed the situation coldly, knowing that everyone had different thoughts despite being Foundation Building cultivators like himself. He could read some surface-level thoughts using Mind Reading and understand their intentions.

Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao had a good plan, but they were unaware that Gu Tanghai was associated with the Shi Family, remnants of the Purple Gold Sect, and had conflicts with Flying Swan Sect. Even if the Shi Family surrendered to Flying Swan Sect, there was no guarantee they would be accepted.

Guang Hong Daoist's idea was even more laughable. At this point, who would be foolish enough to sacrifice for Forest Spring Watch? What could Forest Spring Watch offer to win others over?

Forest Mountain School was deeply involved and had no way out. Given any other choice, who would be foolish enough to follow Forest Spring Watch to their doom?

As for Gu Tanghai, he was a mid-Foundation Building cultivator, and his cultivation level was higher than Meng Zhang's, making it challenging to read his thoughts. Additionally, Gu Tanghai was cunning and kept a poker face, revealing nothing of his intentions.

Meng Zhang couldn't truly fathom Gu Tanghai's thoughts.

To be honest, he felt uneasy about turning on his allies so quickly, but when pushed to the brink, Meng Zhang had no choice but to harden his heart and change sides if necessary. After all, the survival of the sect was paramount.

The only thing that made Meng Zhang hesitate was that even if Taiyi Sect allied with Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect, they would still have no advantage against the other three sects, including Flying Swan Sect. The balance of power was unfavorable.

Meng Zhang remained silent, and so did everyone else. They didn't want to show their stance as it would immediately determine their fate – friends or foes.

After a while, perhaps unable to bear the awkward silence or thinking that continuing like this was not a solution, Guang Hong Daoist coughed lightly, preparing to speak, but was interrupted by Gu Tanghai.

"Guang Hong Daoist, you don't need to say much. At this point, we cannot risk our lives and our sect to stand with Forest Spring Watch," Gu Tanghai stated.

Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao appeared pleased, thinking Gu Tanghai was siding with them and ready to take action against Guang Hong Daoist.

However, Gu Tanghai continued, "But I have known you all for some time, and I don't wish to engage in hostilities. I've decided to leave Singing Sand City immediately with my subordinates and avoid the wrath of Flying Swan Sect."

Gu Tanghai declared his neutrality, leaving Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao somewhat disappointed but firm in their final decision. They immediately stood up from their seats, and Jin Qigu, who was seated behind Aunt Jin, also stood with them.

The three of them stared at Guang Hong Daoist with a fierce gaze. Aunt Jin addressed Meng Zhang, "Sect Master Meng, the situation is settled. With your intelligence, you surely know how to make the right choice."

Meng Zhang sighed. He really didn't want to make this choice, but at this point, what else could he do?

Guang Hong Daoist could only blame his luck. Why didn't the heavens favor Forest Spring Watch?

Forest Spring Watch staked their sect's fortune, finally cultivating a Guang Zhi Daoist Master, only for him to be hunted down and facing uncertain life or death.

Seeing Meng Zhang stand up, Xu Yishan pleaded, "Sect Master Meng, we fought side by side before, risking our lives. Do we have to become enemies now?"

Meng Zhang looked at Xu Yishan and inwardly cursed himself for not being cunning enough. In this cutthroat Cultivation World, honesty and friendship were detrimental.

Thinking about Taiyi Sect's survival, Meng Zhang finally made up his mind. He couldn't afford to hesitate anymore.

Aunt Jin exclaimed urgently, "Sect Master Meng, you must think carefully. Even if you don't care for yourself, you must think for Taiyi Sect. If Flying Swan Sect attacks, all dissenters will be annihilated."

The decision was so difficult.

Thinking of Taiyi Sect's survival, Meng Zhang finally made his final decision. No longer hesitating, he prepared to summon his flying sword and strike first, catching them off guard.

However, just as he was about to act, a frantic voice interrupted from outside.

"Something's wrong, something's wrong! Flying Swan Sect's army is coming!"

Everyone heard the news and quickly left the meeting hall to see what was happening.

In the distant sky, numerous flying boats with Flying Swan Sect insignias were approaching Singing Sand City. Many Flying Swan Sect disciples rode various flying beasts, guarding the flying boats.

At the forefront of the formation, more than ten Foundation Building cultivators led the large group of people, flying towards Singing Sand City.

Flying Swan Sect was indeed not one to remain idle. Once they made a move, it was with tremendous force.

Their overwhelming strength could crush any resistance and easily destroy the sects present.

Seeing the enemy approaching in the sky, everyone present turned pale and felt bewildered.

Aunt Jin and Ruan Dadao had decided to surrender to Flying Swan Sect, but they hadn't made prior arrangements or captured Guang Hong Daoist to present as an offering. They didn't know if Flying Swan Sect would accept their surrender.

If the Flying Swan Sect army attacked without distinction and annihilated everyone in Singing Sand City, they would be in big trouble.

Gu Tanghai also wore a bitter smile, "I wonder if surrendering now would still be possible?"

Flying Swan Sect's army had arrived too quickly, disrupting their plans and catching them off guard. They didn't know how to respond.

## Chapter 210: Favorable turn

Several Foundation Building cultivators had keen eyesight. Even from a distance, they recognized the leading cultivator flying at the forefront—Elder Zhao Lie Feng from the Flying Swan Sect's War Hall, a renowned late-stage Foundation Building cultivator.

The War Hall was a department within the Flying Swan Sect dedicated to external conquests, with its disciples being elite warriors. As the Hall Master, Zhao Lie Feng was exceptionally fierce and unmatched in battle.

Seeing the approaching enemies, Gu Tanghai smiled helplessly. "Now that things have come to this point, regardless of what choices we make in the future, we must deal with the present situation first."

As Gu Tanghai spoke, the protective formation of Singing Sand City was fully activated. Beams of light flashed, and a thick light shield enveloped Singing Sand City completely. Despite having a Second Rank Formation as support, everyone present knew that their side wouldn't stand a chance once the battle began. The difference in strength was too great for a mere Second Rank Formation to compensate.

As the conflict seemed inevitable and both sides were about to engage in battle, a white light beam shot like lightning from behind the Flying Swan Sect's formation, directly towards Zhao Lie Feng at the front.

With a casual gesture, Zhao Lie Feng caught the white light beam, turning it into a small flying sword.

After receiving a message through the flying sword, Zhao Lie Feng, who was advancing rapidly, suddenly came to a halt in mid-air. His action caused the more than ten Foundation Building cultivators behind him, as well as the countless flying boats and mounts, to stop as well.

Zhao Lie Feng remained suspended in the air for quite some time, lost in thought. No one knew what he was thinking.

Below, the people within the formation observed the scene with curiosity. The sight of the disciplined Flying Swan Sect cultivators retreating left everyone astonished and relieved.

The sudden turn of events left everyone puzzled. The Flying Swan Sect's army was already at the city's doorstep, ready to start a war, yet they retreated all of a sudden.

After a long while, Zhao Lie Feng finally made a move. With a command, the vast army of Flying Swan Sect immediately turned around and flew in the opposite direction, away from Singing Sand City.

Witnessing the Flying Swan Sect's army voluntarily retreating, the people felt relieved, but they were still puzzled about what had happened. Why did the Flying Swan Sect, on the verge of attacking, suddenly withdraw?

After some time, Singing Sand City finally lifted its alert, and the grand formation was also retracted.

This turn of events somewhat eased the tense atmosphere in the hall. At least for the time being, nobody had the intention to start a fight.

Ruan Dadao and Aunt Jin chuckled awkwardly and returned to their seats, ignoring the uncomfortable atmosphere in the room.

Nobody was in a hurry to leave and return to their sects. Everyone wanted to stay in Singing Sand City to get firsthand information.

Meng Zhang, including him, also chose to stay in Singing Sand City to wait for further updates. Shi Family and the black market had a close working relationship. Despite the pressure from the Flying Swan Sect, they could still exchange information.

Luo Ye had been away for a long time, and Meng Zhang's channels in the black market were not as extensive as the Shi Family's.

Perhaps the Flying Swan Sect had not taken deliberate measures to keep the information secret, but the next day, new information came from the black market.

The first piece of news was that Qi Nanfei and Guang Zhi Daoist Master escaped into the Deadly Sea of Sand and managed to evade Fei Jiang Daoist Master and Fei Yu Daoist Master's pursuit by taking advantage of the complex environment of the Deadly Sea of Sand.

After that, Qi Nanfei and Guang Zhi Daoist Master safely arrived in the Northern Desert, the territory of the Qi Family.

The second piece of news was about a large-scale riot of sand monsters near the Flying Swan Sect's core territory. Countless sand monsters, including more than one Third Rank sand monster, appeared during the chaos.

Third Rank sand monsters were on par with Gold Core Daoist Masters, capable of causing great havoc in the Endless Sea of Sand whenever they appeared.

Over a hundred years ago, during the attack on Taiyi Sect, at most one Third Rank sand monster had appeared, and that monster mainly attacked in other directions. Otherwise, Taiyi Sect might not have had any survivors.

After the incident, the Flying Swan Sect paid a heavy price to finally quell the sand monster riot.

However, this time, the scale of the sand monster riot far surpassed that of a hundred years ago. In a short period, it had severely crippled the Flying Swan Sect.

Many forces closely allied with the Flying Swan Sect were annihilated by sand monsters. Even in the Flying Swan Sect's direct territories, many strongholds were breached.

Flying Swan Sect was now preoccupied and unable to spare any resources to deal with the Forest Spring Watch.

Upon hearing these two pieces of news, the people in the hall were emotionally stirred, their expressions fluctuating.

Suddenly, Ruan Dadao became extremely cordial towards Guang Hong Daoist Master and said, "Brother Guang Hong, we were just making a small joke earlier. You mustn't take it seriously."

Aunt Jin chimed in a beat later but adopted an obviously pleasing tone. "Brother Guang Hong, we are all one family. It's normal for family members to have some disagreements. Please don't think too much about it."

"Exactly, we are like one big family. Brother Guang Hong, please don't be a stranger," Jin Qigu also added.

Meng Zhang rolled his eyes. These old foxes were adept at adjusting their stance according to the situation. Their thick-skinned behavior might even withstand a flying sword.

Meng Zhang was still too young; he lacked the cunning and thick-skinned nature of these old foxes. He wanted to say some pleasing words, but somehow, he couldn't get them out and could only chuckle awkwardly.

The situation was becoming clear: the Flying Swan Sect was entangled by sand monsters and couldn't afford to focus on the Forest Spring Watch anymore. Guang Zhi Daoist Master's successful escape meant that the Forest Spring Watch had a Gold Core Daoist Master as a backing, solidifying its status as a genuine Gold Core sect.

Not to mention Guang Zhi Daoist Master's personal strength, the Forest Spring Watch was already above Qiaoshou Sect and Golden Blade Sect.

If they didn't improve their relationship with the Forest Spring Watch, they risked being annihilated by them easily.

Seeing Ruan Dadao and others' performance, Lin Shenpo's face revealed a sarcastic smile. He was about to speak when Xu Yishan, who was more mature, stopped him.

Xu Yishan exchanged a glance with Guang Hong Daoist Master. The two had reached an understanding and knew that they shouldn't have a falling out with Ruan Dadao's group just yet.

Even if the Forest Spring Watch became the dominant power in the nearby area, they still temporarily needed the help of sects like the Golden Blade Sect. These sects were still valuable to them.

"Brother Ruan and Sister Jin are right. We are all one family, and there is no knot that cannot be untied or obstacle that cannot be overcome," Guang Hong Daoist Master said sincerely.

Including Meng Zhang, everyone showed touched expressions as if those few words had truly made them one family.