

Sect Master 561

Chapter 561: Dustfall Mound

Looking at the distant scene of the world collapsing and the earth splitting, as if it were the end of the world, everyone was dumbfounded. After a while, it was Jin Li Daoist Master who first reacted.

"Tianzhu Uncle Master burned his own life, forcibly activating the power of Grand Dao, and perished together with that Fifth Rank Earth Spirit."

"Due to the drastic changes in the rules of heaven and earth around the battlefield, various anomalies have appeared. Cultivators at the Gold Core stage had better not approach that area to avoid being harmed by the lingering power of Grand Dao."

"Alright, let's put aside the matter of Tianzhu Uncle Master for now. What are your plans next?"

Upon hearing Jin Li Daoist Master's question, everyone fell into rare silence. Finally, it was Fei Shi Daoist Master who spoke first.

"Since Senior Tianzhu said that something has happened to Feihong Mountain, it's most likely not false."

"Even if True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind don't know about Senior Tianzhu's death and dare not act rashly, their underlings will likely be used as cannon fodder."

"We know nothing about the specific situation. Let's first understand the current situation and then figure out a plan."

Meng Zhang agreed with Fei Shi Daoist Master's statement. Regardless of the decisions they make or their plans, it is better to first understand the latest situation.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters set off again, leaving everything behind in the Deadly Sea of Sand, quickly flying away from that place. They rushed all the way and caught up with the cultivator army that had left earlier, composed of the three forces.

This army, composed of cultivators from three forces, had just left the Deadly Sea of Sand and had not had the chance to contact their respective homes yet. Qi Nanfei Daoist Master must have never

thought of this. After escaping the battlefield, he did not immediately try to catch up with the army and join the other cultivators of his family.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters tactfully contacted their own cultivators and then launched a surprise attack on the unsuspecting Qi Family cultivators. Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect cultivators all participated in the ambush. The Qi Family, with mediocre strength, had virtually no resistance. They were wiped out without much effort.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters had already agreed to strictly keep the news of True Monarch Tianzhu's death confidential and not to leak it easily.

Meng Zhang and the two Gold Core Daoist Masters from Flying Swan Sect found an excuse to comfort their own cultivators. The army of cultivators stopped their advance and tried to contact their respective homes.

After leaving the Deadly Sea of Sand, the nearest base was Taiyi Sect's stronghold in the Demon Wind Gobi. Since the army of Taiyi Sect's cultivators entered the Demon Wind Gobi for battle, their communication channels with the rear had been kept open.

Before long, Meng Zhang and Yang Xueyi received the latest information from Taiyi Sect's Secret Hall.

Fire Cloud Sect, with the assistance of Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch, organized a formidable force of cultivators and launched a sudden long-distance raid, ambushing Flying Swan Sect's mountain gate, Feihong Mountain.

Due to the belief in Yellow Lotus Sect's Mountain Branch promise and excessive trust in the strength of True Monarch Mountain Peak, Flying Swan Sect dispatched all their elite cultivators to participate in the battle at Deadly Sea of Sand, leaving their mountain gate too weakly defended.

Flying Swan Sect had experienced a previous incident of being captured by Fire Cloud Sect, which led to their reinforcement of Feihong Mountain's defenses. However, facing the joint forces of Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch and Fire Cloud Sect, Feihong Mountain did not hold for long and fell again.

The enemy continued to pursue victory and completely swept through Flying Swan Sect's territory. Probably to preemptively strike, the joint forces dispatched three Gold Core Daoist Masters on a

long-distance raid, targeting Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, Grand Lion Ridge, hoping to stage another great victory.

However, Wen Qiansun, who had recently broken through to the Gold Core stage, promptly responded and defended the mountain gate with the Third Rank mountain protection formation, Grand Lion Ridge.

Being proficient in formations even before becoming a Gold Core Daoist Master, Wen Qiansun displayed the power of the mountain protection formation to its fullest after achieving this stage, resisting the enemy's attack.

When the enemy's attacks proved futile, Delicate Water Spirit General, who had been observing from the sidelines, suddenly launched a surprise attack and severely wounded one of the attacking Gold Core Daoist Masters.

Taking advantage of the chaos caused by the enemy, Wen Qiansun activated the power of the formation to counterattack and inflicted another heavy blow to the enemy.

In the end, the three attacking Gold Core Daoist Masters paid a heavy price with one slightly injured and two seriously injured, and they had to retreat in embarrassment.

After this battle, the invading joint forces of Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch probably realized that Taiyi Sect was not an easy nut to crack. Even if their main force was not present, it wasn't easy to conquer Taiyi Sect.

As they needed to sweep the areas around Feihong Mountain and guard against Taiyi Sect's counterattack, the joint forces did not continue to advance towards Demon Wind Gobi. Instead, they chose to consolidate their occupied territories.

Under the joint forces' sweep, most of the Endless Sea of Sand had fallen. Even Flying Swan Sect's original main gate, Yellow Sand Ridge, was captured by the enemy.

After receiving this information, Meng Zhang did not conceal it but called the five Gold Core Daoist Masters together to inform them of the situation.

When Taiyi Sect's Secret Hall conveyed the information to Meng Zhang, Flying Swan Sect, through other channels, also learned about everything happening in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Taiyi Sect's territory was mostly intact. As long as Meng Zhang and Yang Xueyi led their army back, they would at least have the ability to resist, if not completely impenetrable.

Flying Swan Sect, on the other hand, had lost its territory and became a destitute group. Fei Shi Daoist Master looked at Meng Zhang with a gloomy expression, feeling bitter.

Wen Qiansun of Taiyi Sect had recently broken through to the Gold Core stage, and Meng Zhang found a way to keep him within the sect. What was even more unexpected was that Taiyi Sect still had another hidden Gold Core Daoist Master, who had remained unknown until the crucial moment and played a decisive role.

"Sect Master Meng, you really are cunning," Jin Li Daoist Master couldn't help but feel a little dissatisfied with Meng Zhang's act of hiding their true strength.

Meng Zhang didn't defend himself. If given another chance, he would still try to hide their strength. If it weren't for Delicate Water Spirit General's intervention this time, the enemy wouldn't have been easily repelled.

Flying Swan Sect had lost its territory, and their greatest support, True Monarch Tian Zhu, had already passed away. Faced with the potential retaliation from True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak, if Fei Shi Daoist Master and the others decided to leave and abandon the Endless Sea of Sand, then Taiyi Sect would be left to bear all the pressure alone.

Taiyi Sect was currently in a precarious situation. If they left here, where would they go to find a place to settle?

Meng Zhang and Yang Xueyi had already discussed this matter before. They decided to hold on to their current foundation and not give up unless it was absolutely necessary.

Facing the dire situation, what path would Flying Swan Sect take? This was the real test for Fei Shi Daoist Master and Wu Mingwei Daoist Master.

The two of them had discussed this matter a long time ago. During the gathering of everyone, they had also communicated privately before finally making their decision.

Fei Shi Daoist Master's attitude was resolute. Everyone in Flying Swan Sect was born and raised in the Endless Sea of Sand. Even if they were to die, they wanted to die here in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Of course, Fei Shi Daoist Master's words sounded noble, but he naturally had his considerations and judgments. As they were unaware of True Monarch Tian Zhu's fate, True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind would not dare to enter the Endless Sea of Sand in the short term, even after recovering from their injuries. At most, they would send controlled cultivators to slowly probe the situation.

As long as the Primordial Spirit True Monarchs didn't directly intervene, Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect combined should be able to resist. As for the possibility of the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs becoming suspicious about True Monarch Tian Zhu's life and death, that might be a matter for much later.

Whether Flying Swan Sect decided to leave or stay in the Endless Sea of Sand, they needed to temporarily settle down and handle various affairs. Even if they planned to escape in the future, it would take a lot of time to make preparations before leaving.

If Flying Swan Sect chose to stay, Meng Zhang would naturally be very pleased. However, the problem was how to accommodate all of Flying Swan Sect's members, which was a bit troublesome.

Finding a Third Rank spirit vein for the long-term residence of Gold Core Daoist Masters would be ideal. But Taiyi Sect's Grand Lion Ridge, with its Third Rank spirit vein, was already unable to support even two Gold Core Daoist Masters. Now that Taiyi Sect had four Gold Core Daoist Masters, there was no surplus energy to help Flying Swan Sect.

After reaching the Gold Core late stage, Gold Core Daoist Masters could ascend to Nine Heavens to collect Nine Heavens Refined Essence for absorption and refinement. Their demand for a spirit vein would be greatly reduced.

Jin Li Daoist Master himself didn't really need a Third Rank spirit vein, but he could understand the predicament of Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect. Flying Swan Sect had lost even Yellow Sand Ridge this time, and they truly had nowhere to go.

Jin Li Daoist Master took the initiative to ask, "Where do you plan to settle down next? Do you have any ideas?"

Fei Shi Daoist Master bowed to Jin Li Daoist Master, Meng Zhang, and Yang Xueyi, and politely said, "Please assist me in taking down Qi Family's mountain gate."

Northern Desert's Qi Family, they almost forgot about them. Although Qi Family was in a remote and impoverished area of the Northern Desert, their base did indeed possess a Third Rank spirit vein.

Regardless of how Qi Nanfei Daoist Master, the current head of Northern Desert's Qi Family, felt, due to the actions of Qi Family's elder Qi Mingyun, they had become enemies of Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect.

If there were no conflicts of interest, Meng Zhang and the others might not have bothered with Qi Family. However, since Flying Swan Sect had set their sights on the Third Rank spirit vein at Qi Family's mountain gate, and Taiyi Sect welcomed it, Qi Family was in trouble this time.

Meng Zhang and the others agreed to Fei Shi Daoist Master's request. Jin Li Daoist Master was the most decisive. "Since we have decided to deal with Qi Family, the sooner, the better. We should act as soon as possible to avoid any other complications."

Meng Zhang nodded in agreement. Qi Nanfei Daoist Master had fled in a hurry before and didn't even have time to join his own army. If they suddenly launched an attack now, they could catch him off guard.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters briefly discussed their plan and immediately set it in motion. Leaving their respective forces behind, they flew together towards the Northern Desert.

Qi Family's mountain gate was located to the north of the Endless Sea of Sand, near the border with the Deadly Sea of Sand. It wasn't too far from their current location, about 5,000-6,000 li at most.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters swiftly flew over the desert, entering the territory of Northern Desert's Qi Family.

Northern Desert's Qi Family's territory was not small, covering an area of over a thousand li. However, this region was too barren and far less fertile than the core area of the Endless Sea of Sand. If it weren't for possessing a Third Rank spirit vein, the environment here wouldn't even compare to Twin Success Valley's territory from before.

Within this area of over a thousand li, there were only a few oases. Each oasis was not large and could only accommodate a small number of people.

Meng Zhang had never been to Northern Desert's Qi Family's territory before, but he had heard about it. Now that he was here in person, he was a little surprised by its desolation.

In such a place, it was indeed not easy for a Gold Core family like Northern Desert's Qi Family to survive, reproduce, and continue their legacy.

Qi Nanfei Daoist Master witnessed how True Monarch Tian Zhu had easily defeated Qi Family's elder brothers, which frightened him. He abandoned everything and quickly fled back to Dustfall Mound.

After returning to the family's mountain gate, Qi Nanfei Daoist Master did not relax. Knowing that True Monarch Tian Zhu would undoubtedly take revenge on Northern Desert's Qi Family, they had to plan ahead while they still had time.

Qi Nanfei Daoist Master had some understanding of the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs of his family. After experiencing this defeat, they would most likely directly escape back to Middle-Earth Continent.

Qi Family was a first-rate cultivation family in Middle-Earth Continent, but the distance between Middle-Earth Continent and the Endless Sea of Sand was too far, making it difficult for Qi Family's power to reach this area.

Qi Mingyun and Qi Mingyuan True Monarchs would not have come to this place if it hadn't been for a fortuitous encounter. As for facing True Monarch Tian Zhu's future revenge, they couldn't rely on the family's power.

The only thing Qi Nanfei could do was to early prepare to lead his clan members to escape far away from the Endless Sea of Sand.

Since Qi Mingyun and Qi Mingyuan True Monarchs had already fled, Qi Nanfei no longer cared about the tasks they left behind. There were very few people left in Qi Family's mountain gate, and they were mostly the elderly, weak, sick, and disabled.

Qi Nanfei directed them to move the treasury, pack their belongings, and make preparations to escape.

Chapter 562: New Situation

Qi Nanfei, who was commanding his clan members to start relocating, never expected that five Gold Core Daoist Masters would arrive so quickly and attack the mountain guarding formation outside the Qi Family gate without any hesitation.

Feeling unjust, Qi Nanfei had no knowledge that his two brothers from the Qi Family had dealt with True Monarch Tian Zhu. He thought that if True Monarch Tian Zhu sought revenge, he should first retaliate against the traitorous True Monarch Mountain Peak, right?

Having fled the battlefield early on, Qi Nanfei was completely unaware of what had happened afterwards. He only saw True Monarch Tian Zhu's overwhelming power, shattering the physical bodies of his Qi Family brothers.

Believing that the five Gold Core Daoist Masters were sent by True Monarch Tian Zhu to attack the Qi Family, Qi Nanfei had no fighting spirit. Facing them, he knew he couldn't resist and that the mountain guarding formation was not enough.

He struggled to maintain the formation, trying to block the enemy's attacks while constantly begging for mercy. He offered to make a solemn oath to serve True Monarch Tian Zhu faithfully from then on.

Meng Zhang wanted to save some energy, so he agreed to Qi Nanfei's plea, allowing him to release the formation and surrender voluntarily.

Qi Nanfei was clever when it came to matters of life and death. He insisted on sufficient guarantees from Meng Zhang before he would surrender.

Listening to Meng Zhang and Qi Nanfei's banter, Jin Li Daoist Master had long grown impatient. With her cultivation base, she could break the guarding formation on her own, even without anyone's help.

Jin Li Daoist Master made her move, and the other four Gold Core Daoist Masters followed suit, launching a fierce attack. Despite Qi Nanfei's full effort to activate the formation, he couldn't stop the enemy's assault.

The five Gold Core Daoist Masters broke the guarding formation, stormed into the Qi Family gate, and not only killed Qi Nanfei on the spot but also slaughtered all the Qi Family members.

Jin LiDaoist Master, Meng Zhang, and Yang Xueyi had no interest in massacring the weak. However, the two Gold Core Daoist Masters from Flying Swan Sect had no qualms and personally participated in the massacre.

Flying Swan Sect had already fallen to such a state that they had completely torn off the facade of a righteous sect. They had no more scruples in their actions and were no longer concerned with appearances.

Dustfall Mound was the most crucial location in the Qi Family's territory. Although the Qi Family territory was extremely poor, this Third Rank Spirit Vein in Dustfall Mound was very precious and could compensate for all the defects in their territory.

Meng Zhang didn't carefully assess the size and quality of this Third Rank Spirit Vein, but since it could support the cultivation of the Qi Family's Gold Core Daoist Masters for hundreds of years, it was likely not inferior to the one in Grand Lion Ridge.

Meng Zhang felt a bit envious and wanted to claim this place for himself. However, he knew that if he did so, it would certainly cause a complete rift with Flying Swan Sect, losing their only ally and offending Jin LiDaoist Master.

Given the current situation, Taiyi Sect truly needed Flying Swan Sect as an ally to help share the external pressure. At the same time, Flying Swan Sect also relied on Taiyi Sect to continue standing firm in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Having aided in breaking the Qi Family gate, Jin LiDaoist Master, Meng Zhang, and Yang Xueyi were entitled to compensation. Fei ShiDaoist Master generously opened the Qi Family treasury in front of everyone.

Qi Family had been a Gold Core family with a history of hundreds of years, so their treasury still contained valuable items despite their past struggles. However, Jin LiDaoist Master did not find anything valuable to her and said that everything should be used to rebuild Flying Swan Sect since they had lost their gate.

Meng Zhang also declined taking any spoils of war, only requesting copies of all the scriptures in the Qi Family's Hidden Scripture Pavilion.

Fei Shi Daoist Master didn't refuse this request and agreed readily. The five Gold Core Daoist Masters occupied the Qi Family gate, and soon, the cultivator army of Flying Swan Sect followed and settled in the area.

They had to rebuild the gate and clean up the surroundings, keeping the Flying Swan Sect cultivators busy.

Meanwhile, the Taiyi Sect cultivator army, led by Niu Dawei, returned directly to Grand Lion Ridge. After obtaining what he wanted, Meng Zhang prepared to leave with Yang Xueyi.

Meng Zhang knew that if he carefully searched the Qi Family gate, there would probably be more spoils of war. However, under the current circumstances, it was not appropriate to compete with Flying Swan Sect. Moreover, Flying Swan Sect was currently in dire straits and needed time to recover.

Before leaving, Jin Li Daoist Master organized a few Gold Core Daoist Masters to make a solemn pledge that the fate of True Monarch Tian Zhu must not be leaked to the outside. At most, only the trusted high-level members or close disciples of their respective sects should be informed.

Everyone sincerely wished to keep the news of True Monarch Tian Zhu's death a secret, as it was in everyone's interest.

After making the oath, the two Gold Core Daoist Masters from Flying Swan Sect stayed behind to arrange the disciples, while Jin Li Daoist Master and Meng Zhang left together.

On their way back, when they were close to Grand Lion Ridge, Jin Li Daoist Master and Meng Zhang parted ways. Before they separated, Jin Li Daoist Master told Meng Zhang that she would have an important matter to discuss with him later.

Upon their return to Grand Lion Ridge, the cultivator army had already arrived at the sect gate. Wen Qiansun and Delicate Water Spirit General, who had been guarding the gate, came out to greet Sect Master Meng Zhang and reported everything that had happened within the sect in the past few years.

Even while the army was away, Meng Zhang had maintained contact with the sect and was relatively informed about the various situations. He was also reassured about the high-level members who remained in the sect.

He mainly inquired about the current situation in the Endless Sea of Sand.

Since the joint invasion of Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch, Taiyi Sect's Secret Hall had been closely monitoring the enemy's movements. The two sects' alliance had seized all of Flying Swan Sect's territories, occupying most of the Endless Sea of Sand.

Due to Taiyi Sect's display of formidable strength, the allied forces did not dare to invade Taiyi Sect's territory easily. Fire Cloud Sect, learning from their previous failed invasion, first cleared the surrounding areas and eradicated the remnants of Flying Swan Sect, even ruthlessly attacking those who were formerly affiliated with Flying Swan Sect, not accepting their surrender.

Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch did not participate in the cleansing but focused on plundering war spoils and various cultivation resources. These individuals were like a pack of ferocious wolves, lacking any scruples in their actions.

Chapter 563: Rumor

Originally, the ruling territory of Flying Swan Sect was now a scene of devastation and despair. Due to the recklessness of Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch, various cultivation forces were completely destroyed. The lucky survivors couldn't continue living there and had to scatter in all directions, seeking new opportunities.

Fire Cloud Sect focused on consolidating their rule, while Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch busied themselves with plundering, leaving them no time to chase down the fleeing cultivators. As a result, many of them managed to escape.

A significant portion of these fleeing cultivators sought refuge in the nearby territory of Taiyi Sect.

After hearing the reports from his disciples, Meng Zhang made a new judgment: for the time being, Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch should be too preoccupied to invade Taiyi Sect's territory.

During the recent expedition to the Endless Sea of Sand, Taiyi Sect and the Hanhai Alliance mobilized elite disciples, forming a large cultivator army. Now that the war was over, Meng Zhang

ordered the army to disband. The cultivators from various Hanhai Alliance members returned to their homes.

Then, he had Delicate Water Spirit General and Yang Xueyi lead a capable force to the border of Taiyi Sect's territory to set up defenses against potential attacks from the two sects.

The rest of the cultivators in the sect were given time to recuperate and prepare for the next major battle.

On the side of Flying Swan Sect, they quickly gained control of Northern Desert Qi Family's territory and established effective rule. To defend against potential invasions from the two sects, Fei Shi Daoist Master also led a capable force to the border and guarded against enemy incursions.

Regardless of the past conflicts and calculations between Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect, they currently needed each other. The two sects maintained communication and mutual support. If Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch showed any unusual movements, both Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect would respond immediately.

Though Flying Swan Sect had weakened, Taiyi Sect had risen again. Taiyi Sect's current strength was not much inferior to Flying Swan Sect's peak.

With Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch occupying such a large territory and seizing vast benefits, they no longer had the motivation to continue expanding. Digesting the spoils and developing such a vast territory would require an enormous amount of manpower and resources.

Moreover, True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak had been in seclusion, recovering from their injuries, ever since they fled from the Deadly Sea of Sand. Without the pressure from Primordial Spirit True Monarch, Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch could finally prioritize their own interests and not rush into unnecessary battles.

Although Fire Cloud Sect and Flying Swan Sect had deep enmity and had accumulated centuries of grievances with Taiyi Sect, when enough benefits were at stake, hatred could be temporarily set aside to reap the gains first.

As a result, the Endless Sea of Sand fell into silence after the recent upheaval and the change in rulership.

The cultivators stationed at the borders of Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect intensified patrols and carefully screened the incoming fleeing cultivators. Both sects needed external cultivators, especially Taiyi Sect, which had occupied the vast Demon Wind Gobi and urgently required more cultivators to join in its development.

However, among the incoming fleeing cultivators, there were undoubtedly spies from Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch. How to distinguish and find out the malicious spies would pose a challenging problem for the low-level cultivators of Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect.

The number of incoming fleeing cultivators was less than two thousand, and with some effort, Meng Zhang could complete the screening process in a short time. However, why should all this work fall on him as the Sect Master? What were the disciples in the sect doing?

In a normal sect, low-level cultivators surrounded and served the high-level cultivators, with a vast number of low-level cultivators supporting a few high-level ones. It shouldn't be the other way around, with high-level cultivators monopolizing everything and the low-level cultivators just enjoying the benefits.

In fact, since returning to the sect, Meng Zhang had been extremely busy. He had not casually spread the news about True Monarch Tian Zhu's situation, only informing the Gold Core cultivators and a few Guardian Spirit Generals in the sect. Other than that, only his senior disciple Niu Dawei knew.

True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak must be curious about the final outcome of that battle. They feared True Monarch Tian Zhu and dared not personally explore the Deadly Sea of Sand, so they probably sent their subordinates to investigate.

The last battlefield of True Monarch Tian Zhu and the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit was full of strange phenomena, diffusing the power of the Grand Dao. Ordinary Gold Core Daoist Masters couldn't approach the area for a short time.

With time passing, the power of the Grand Dao would gradually dissipate, and only then would it be possible to enter the battlefield.

Before others entered the battlefield for investigation, Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect needed to take the initiative.

Soon, a series of rumors about True Monarch Tian Zhu spread from Taiyi Sect's territory and gradually expanded throughout the entire Endless Sea of Sand, reaching Jiuqu League.

These rumors varied greatly, with some sounding obviously false and others appearing credible. True and false rumors were mixed together, making it difficult to discern the truth.

Some rumors claimed that True Monarch Tian Zhu had completely devoured the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit's body and soul, currently in seclusion to digest them. Once the digestion was complete, True Monarch Tian Zhu would advance to the Return to Emptiness realm.

After achieving Return to Emptiness, True Monarch Tian Zhu would sweep everything, seeking revenge and settling grievances.

On the contrary, another rumor claimed the opposite, stating that True Monarch Tian Zhu failed in the battle with the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit and was instead devoured by the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit's Primordial Spirit and physical body.

After the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit completed the digestion, it would fully recover, leading to untold calamities throughout the Grand Dust World.

The most reliable-sounding rumor said that True Monarch Tian Zhu failed to devour the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit and had to kill the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit entirely. After tapping into his potential using secret methods during the battle, True Monarch Tian Zhu couldn't sustain it afterward and had to retreat to recover from his injuries.

Rumors of True Monarch Tian Zhu being severely injured and on the verge of dying during meditation, or his foundation being damaged and his Cultivation Base declining, spread with vivid details.

Within a short period, the rumors had thoroughly spread, reaching countless ears.

For the cultivators in the Cultivation World, besides gossip about romance, they loved to hear gossip about top-level cultivators.

The conflict between True Monarch Tian Zhu and the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit was originally a relatively secretive matter known only to high-level cultivators in the Cultivation World. The

cultivators who knew about it never dared to spread the information randomly, fearing the wrath of the powerful True Monarch Tian Zhu.

Now, not only had the rumors become widespread, but they had also become the topic of discussion for numerous cultivators.

In Jiuqu League, there were even audacious storytellers who turned these rumors into stories and began telling them everywhere, making it quite lively.

Chapter 564: Dealing

From the Endless Sea of Sand to the nearby Great Wind City, and even throughout the entire Jiuqu League, countless cultivators were eagerly discussing the rumors about True Monarch Tian Zhu. Even beyond Jiuqu League, these rumors reached the ears of True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak, who were still in seclusion recovering from their injuries.

Based solely on these rumors, which were difficult to distinguish as true or false, it was impossible to determine True Monarch Tian Zhu's current situation. However, the existence of these rumors itself showed disrespect towards True Monarch Tian Zhu, a lofty Primordial Spirit True Monarch who was not someone to be casually discussed or entertained.

The origin of these rumors started from the Endless Sea of Sand, where True Monarch Tian Zhu did not react to them, allowing them to spread unchecked. There must be some problem with this situation.

True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak were not daring to guess that True Monarch Tian Zhu might have died. They assumed that he was seriously injured during the battle with the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit, and his condition was not good, leaving them with no strength to inquire about other matters.

But they couldn't be certain of their assumptions and had no way to discern the truth. If they dared to investigate in person, it might be a true gamble for their lives, especially considering True Monarch Mountain Peak's understanding of True Monarch Tian Zhu. He could indeed be setting a trap to lure them in.

In the recent battle, although True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind managed to escape, True Monarch Tian Zhu had broken True Monarch Mountain Peak's spine, filling them both with fear and dread.

Even if their injuries had healed, they still wouldn't dare to face True Monarch Tian Zhu again.

However, they couldn't simply ignore True Monarch Tian Zhu's situation. They needed to know his current state to make proper preparations and find an exit strategy.

Therefore, both True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind sent their subordinates' Gold Core Daoist Masters to secretly go to the battlefield in the Deadly Sea of Sand to investigate the situation.

This kind of reconnaissance mission was extremely risky and equivalent to placing their lives on the line. If True Monarch Tian Zhu was in good condition and confronted them despite their senior status, those Gold Core Daoist Masters who went to investigate wouldn't have a good ending, and their lives might be at risk.

Even the most loyal subordinates to the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs held resentment towards being forced to dance on the edge of a knife like this.

Of course, the will of a Primordial Spirit True Monarch could not be disobeyed. Several Gold Core Daoist Masters were forced to embark on this journey.

Their first target of investigation was the battlefield from the recent battle. To avoid trouble, they deliberately avoided Taiyi Sect's territory and sneaked into the Deadly Sea of Sand from another direction.

When they arrived near the recent battlefield, the remaining power of the Grand Dao was still surging and colliding there. This kind of power belonged to the level of Primordial Spirit True Monarchs and was not something a group of Gold Core Daoist Masters could contend with. Even if they were daring enough to risk their lives and approach for inspection, they were quickly injured by the residual power of the Grand Dao and had to retreat temporarily.

During this time, Jin Li Daoist Master often roamed around this battlefield. Whenever she encountered these Gold Core Daoist Masters trying to investigate, she didn't bother to talk and directly attacked.

With her Gold Core completion level of Cultivation Base, unless facing a Primordial Spirit True Monarch, she could be said to be invincible among Gold Core cultivators. Even when outnumbered, she still had the upper hand, killing the Gold Core Daoist Masters and forcing them to flee in a miserable state.

At this rate, in a short period, the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs had no way to obtain any intelligence about True Monarch Tian Zhu's true condition.

As long as the Primordial Spirit True Monarchs didn't directly take action, Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect could still hold on and temporarily avoid being destroyed.

Meng Zhang had discussed with the higher-ups in the sect, and they believed that the truth about True Monarch Tian Zhu's condition would eventually be exposed. Taiyi Sect couldn't sit and wait for their doom; they had to take advantage of the current rare breathing space to plan ahead and find another way out.

After a thorough discussion, they felt that, considering the current situation in the surrounding area, the best choice for Taiyi Sect was to find a way to join Jiuqu League and become a member, obtaining the protection of the league.

After confirming the plan with the others, Meng Zhang left Grand Lion Ridge alone and headed to Great Wind City to visit Gu Yue Family.

Although Meng Zhang had already developed a rift in his heart, on the surface, Taiyi Sect and Gu Yue Family were still very close friends.

He didn't rashly visit Gu Yue Huaidie. As the strategist of Gu Yue Family, Gu Yue Huaidie was astute, sensitive, and a Diviner. Meng Zhang was afraid that if he discussed Taiyi Sect joining Jiuqu League with her, she might be able to draw information out of him and expose the true and false aspects of Taiyi Sect.

This time, Meng Zhang intentionally chose a time when Gu Yue Huaidie was absent to visit Gu Yue Family.

After arriving at Gu Yue Family, he received a warm welcome from the members of Gu Yue Family. The business between Taiyi Sect and Gu Yue Family had grown bigger and everyone had gained many benefits from it.

Although True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind's defeat in the Deadly Sea of Sand was kept secret, the well-informed Gu Yue Family still managed to obtain some relevant information.

Gu Yue Family couldn't help but admire True Monarch Tian Zhu's strength, and they also couldn't help but take a closer look at Taiyi Sect. After all, Taiyi Sect served under True Monarch Tian Zhu, participated in several major battles, and made significant contributions.

Gu Yue Family sent their elders to receive Meng Zhang and many other cultivators from the sect, actively participating in the reception. They either directly asked or beat around the bush, trying to get detailed information from Meng Zhang about the battle that day and the current situation of True Monarch Tian Zhu.

Before coming to Gu Yue Family, Meng Zhang had already considered being asked this question and had prepared how to respond.

Meng Zhang's answer was straightforward. He only participated in the first half of the battle. After all the foreign enemies were driven away, True Monarch Tian Zhu engaged in a one-on-one battle with the Fifth Rank Earth Spirit.

The power of the two figures was too overwhelming, directly mobilizing the power of the Grand Dao to confront each other. They didn't like having others watching from the side, and when they started, they had no scruples.

Meng Zhang and the others didn't dare to stay nearby, fearing they would be injured by the aftermath of their battle. They fled far away from the battlefield to avoid the sharpness of the Grand Dao.

As for the outcome of the battle, Meng Zhang and the others had no idea.

They hadn't witnessed the scene of the battle, nor did they dare to approach the battlefield entangled with the power of the Grand Dao.

As for whether True Monarch Tian Zhu won or lost, whether he was alive or dead, or where he went, it was not something a group of Gold Core Daoist Masters like them could find out.

Meng Zhang's lie didn't deceive the people of Gu Yue Family, and he never expected that the lie could solve all the problems.

Although they knew that what Meng Zhang said was not entirely true, the people of Gu Yue Family didn't push too much due to concerns about the presence of True Monarch Tian Zhu. They also didn't want to provoke a confrontation with Meng Zhang over it.

Chapter 565: Unsuccessful

Meng Zhang and Gu Yue Huaidie had been acquainted for many years, and there were extensive business dealings between Taiyi Sect and Gu Yue Family. Including Sect Master Meng Zhang, many members of Taiyi Sect had close friends and allies among Gu Yue Family members.

Meng Zhang's visit to Gu Yue Family this time was not an official visit but rather a friendly call to visit many friends. Despite being a Sect Master and a Gold Core Daoist Master, he didn't carry any airs. He treated people with courtesy and equality, not looking down on anyone, including those who were his friends back during the Foundation Building period.

As for the progress of Meng Zhang's cultivation base, it had improved too quickly. Many cultivators from Gu Yue Family, who were at the same Foundation Building level as him in the past, were still lingering in the Foundation Building period, while he had already formed his Core for many years.

Meng Zhang was amiable, but Gu Yue Family couldn't afford to underestimate him. They assigned Gold Core stage elders to accompany him throughout his visit, satisfying all his needs.

Some members of Gu Yue Family, in various ways, tried to obtain information about True Monarch Tian Zhu from Meng Zhang. Even if they didn't get the answers they wanted, they didn't pester him about it.

Although True Monarch Tian Zhu's situation greatly affected the surrounding situation, it didn't have any direct impact on Gu Yue Family. Rumors about True Monarch Tian Zhu about to break through to the Return to Emptiness stage were something families like Gu Yue, with extensive knowledge, wouldn't believe.

Not to mention Jiuqu League and its surrounding regions, even in the Middle-Earth Continent, where the cultivation civilization was exceptionally developed, with many cultivation Holy Lands and exceptional talents, there were very few Great Powers at the Return to Emptiness stage.

Even if True Monarch Tian Zhu had a great reputation, he was still a loose cultivator. How could he break through to the Return to Emptiness stage without a solid foundation?

If devouring a Fifth Rank Earth Spirit was enough to break through to the Return to Emptiness stage, there would have been major sects and even cultivation Holy Lands rushing to compete for it.

Only someone like True Monarch Tian Zhu, who came from the loose cultivator background and lacked knowledge, would have such delusions and desperately cling to a useless lifeline.

Although Gu Yue Family was only a Gold Core family, they had a mysterious origin and an extraordinary background, giving them the confidence to disdain True Monarch Tian Zhu. As long as True Monarch Tian Zhu hadn't broken through to the Return to Emptiness stage, he couldn't shake the rule of Jiuqu League or affect Gu Yue Family.

Before any conflicts of interest arose, Gu Yue Family still valued their friendship with Taiyi Sect. They would secretly probe Taiyi Sect's secrets but wouldn't openly have a dispute with them to avoid losing an increasingly important business partner.

When talking with Gu Yue Family's cultivators, Meng Zhang casually asked many questions about Jiuqu League, including how to become a member of Jiuqu League. Gu Yue Family had a long heritage, and not only did they jointly rule Great Wind City with Lu Family, but they also held considerable influence among the high-ranking members of Jiuqu League.

If it weren't for the lack of a Primordial Spirit True Monarch in the family, Gu Yue Family would probably have become a core family of Jiuqu League.

Gu Yue Family's cultivators were very familiar with various information about Jiuqu League, the public rules, and the secret rules. They freely shared this information with Meng Zhang when he asked.

On the surface, Jiuqu League appeared to be an alliance of orthodox sects, although there were constant internal disputes, they managed to maintain overall peace and unity. When dealing with external matters, they generally presented a united front.

However, if one could delve deeper into the internal workings of Jiuqu League, they would realize that the intrigues and struggles for power within the Cultivation World were not scarce within Jiuqu League either.

Details of various conflicts and dark histories need not be mentioned. Based on the information Meng Zhang obtained from the others, he summed up the various challenges that Taiyi Sect would face if they wanted to join Jiuqu League.

Jiuqu League's higher-ups naturally welcomed the absorption of new forces and expanding their influence. In general, it wasn't difficult for new sects and families to join Jiuqu League.

However, Taiyi Sect's situation was quite special.

Taiyi Sect originated from the Endless Sea of Sand and, at least on the surface, was considered a loyal subordinate of True Monarch Tian Zhu.

If Taiyi Sect were to join Jiuqu League, it would lead to a conflict between Jiuqu League and True Monarch Tian Zhu.

The high-ranking members of Jiuqu League wouldn't offend a late-stage Primordial Spirit True Monarch for the sake of just one Taiyi Sect.

Even if True Monarch Tian Zhu didn't care about Taiyi Sect and allowed them to join Jiuqu League, Jiuqu League wouldn't readily accept them. Who knew if Taiyi Sect was an undercover agent sent by True Monarch Tian Zhu to sabotage Jiuqu League from within?

This was the inevitable choice that Jiuqu League's higher-ups would make, considering that they were unaware of True Monarch Tian Zhu's life or death.

If Meng Zhang confessed everything to the high-ranking members of Jiuqu League and revealed True Monarch Tian Zhu's fate, would Taiyi Sect be allowed to join Jiuqu League?

The answer was very difficult.

Let's not forget that Taiyi Sect was previously an enemy of True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak.

The high-ranking members of Jiuqu League wouldn't disregard the thoughts of their own Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

In such a powerful force as Jiuqu League, Primordial Spirit True Monarchs held absolute authority and power.

Even if True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind put aside their past grievances and agreed to let Taiyi Sect join Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect would still face many problems.

For a Primordial Spirit True Monarch to make things difficult for a Gold Core sect, unless that Gold Core sect could obtain the protection of another Primordial Spirit True Monarch, their days would be tough.

In short, considering the current situation of Taiyi Sect, it was extremely difficult for them to join Jiuqu League.

The only way out was to obtain the protection of another Primordial Spirit True Monarch within Jiuqu League.

However, for a Primordial Spirit True Monarch to risk offending cultivators of the same level by providing protection to Taiyi Sect, the cost would be something

that Meng Zhang could never accept.

Despite these high and mighty Primordial Spirit True Monarchs appearing righteous on the surface, they were also individuals who didn't shy away from eating others, having enormous appetites.

Even if Taiyi Sect were to sacrifice its entire sect, it still might not be able to fill that insatiable black hole.

Meng Zhang was deeply disappointed, realizing that the path for Taiyi Sect to join Jiuqu League was temporarily impassable.

He kept his composure on the surface, continuing to visit his friends in Gu Yue Family and exploring Great Wind City.

To avoid exposing his true intentions, Meng Zhang had to act as if he didn't care about these rumors and also find ways to divert the attention of Gu Yue Family cultivators.

He informed them that Taiyi Sect would increase its investment in Great Wind City and develop extensively there.

As one of the rulers of Great Wind City, Gu Yue Family naturally welcomed this. The better the development of Great Wind City, the more prosperous it became, the more benefits Gu Yue Family would gain from it.

Chapter 566: Hundred Grass Slope

After True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind retreated from the Deadly Sea of Sand and went into seclusion to heal their injuries, the official attitude of Great Wind City towards Taiyi Sect began to quietly change. The previous ban on Taiyi Sect was lifted without any fanfare, and the boundaries between the two factions were no longer closed off. Normal trade and commerce resumed between them, and numerous caravans could now travel openly between the two locations.

With Taiyi Sect's further development in Demon Wind Gobi, more and more resources were unearthed, leading to an expansion in the scale of trade between the two factions. Caravans came and went without interruption.

Having four Gold Core Daoist Masters and an increasingly thriving appearance, Taiyi Sect had become a force with great potential in the eyes of Great Wind City, despite the enmity between a few Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. Establishing good relations with Taiyi Sect could be profitable.

Meng Zhang spent quite some time in Great Wind City, not only visiting the Gu Yue Family but also being introduced to the City Lord's Mansion by a cultivator from Gu Yue Family. The power structure in Great Wind City consisted of the Lu Family as the main faction, supported by the Gu Yue Family, while other clans served the two major families.

The position of City Lord in Great Wind City had always been filled by a Gold Core Daoist Master sent by Lu Family. In external affairs, Lu Family acted as the official representatives of Great Wind City and took the lead in various matters.

During Meng Zhang's visit to the City Lord's Mansion, he did not meet the City Lord himself but was courteously received by a cultivator from Lu Family, who kept a polite distance. The relationship between Lu Family and Gu Yue Family in Great Wind City was somewhat delicate. Though Gu Yue Family was content to play a subordinate role, it presented itself as being under the leadership of Lu Family. However, Lu Family could not look down on Gu Yue Family; they had to treat them as partners rather than subordinates. Both families had always respected each other and had good understanding in many affairs.

Since Taiyi Sect was a friend of Gu Yue Family and entered Great Wind City through them, Lu Family naturally kept its distance from Taiyi Sect to show respect for Gu Yue Family. Meng Zhang's visit to the City Lord's Mansion was also a gesture of respect towards the ruling Lu Family of Great Wind City.

Meng Zhang only outlined some rough development directions while in Great Wind City; the specific execution was left to the disciples of Taiyi Sect. Not only in Great Wind City, but Taiyi Sect also began to establish various overt and covert bases and stationed many cultivators throughout the entire Jiuqu League. As it involved the major interests of the sect, Taiyi Sect was willing to invest a considerable amount of spiritual stones and resources.

Over the years, there had been some results, and Taiyi Sect had somewhat managed to establish itself within the Jiuqu League. After dealing with the affairs in Great Wind City, Meng Zhang returned to the Grand Lion Ridge in Demon Wind Gobi.

While passing over Demon Wind Gobi, Meng Zhang slowed down his flight from time to time to carefully observe the progress of Taiyi Sect's development in the area. Demon Wind Gobi was rich in resources, far wealthier than the Endless Sea of Sand. Without a series of coincidences, Taiyi Sect would not have been able to occupy such an extensive territory.

Even now, if it weren't for the complex surrounding situation and the lingering influence of True Monarch Tian Zhu, relying solely on Taiyi Sect's strength would be difficult to hold onto this territory.

Looking at the vibrant oases below with people coming and going and various caravans shuttling through, Meng Zhang couldn't help but smile. Demon Wind Gobi was indeed a treasure trove. If Taiyi Sect could fully develop the area, it would significantly enhance their power.

However, Taiyi Sect currently faced several problems, one of which was the insufficient number of Third Rank spirit veins. The Grand Lion Ridge's Third Rank spirit vein could support at most 1-2 Gold Core Daoist Masters, but Taiyi Sect had a total of four.

This time, they obtained a batch of spiritual marrow from the Deadly Sea of Sand, which could support them for a period, but once the spiritual marrow was exhausted, they would have to consume a vast amount of high-grade spirit stones.

Neither Endless Sea of Sand nor Demon Wind Gobi had large-scale spirit stone mines. There were some scattered low-grade mines that produced few low-grade spirit stones and occasionally a small amount of middle-grade spirit stones. To acquire high-grade spirit stones, Taiyi Sect either had to

endure huge price differences and exchange with middle-grade and low-grade spirit stones or sell a large number of precious resources for a slow exchange.

Over the years, the frequent warfare in Endless Sea of Sand had led to many Gold Core Daoist Masters spending short periods of time at the Third Rank spirit vein and consuming a large number of high-grade spirit stones while on external missions. In the Jiuqu League, the exchange price for high-grade spirit stones had been continuously rising, and it was even difficult to find them on the market. Many times, even if enough middle-grade and low-grade spirit stones were provided, it was challenging to obtain large quantities of high-grade spirit stones.

After thinking about these issues along the way, Meng Zhang quickly returned to the Grand Lion Ridge. Not long after his return, Deep Earth Spirit General, who hadn't shown up in front of him for a long time, appeared with good news.

After years of effort and a massive investment of resources, Deep Earth Spirit General had finally managed to repair the spirit vein at the Yaceng location. The repaired Third Rank spirit vein could not only accommodate the space magic tool "Hundred Grass Pavilion" and provide sufficient spiritual energy for growing spiritual herbs but also support the cultivation of a Gold Core Daoist Master in the vicinity.

The repair of the spirit vein wasn't entirely complete; it was still far from its previous state, but Deep Earth Spirit General had already pushed his abilities to the limit. Although he was an extremely talented Geomancer with extraordinary abilities, his cultivation base had not fully recovered, and many of his techniques couldn't be performed. Being able to repair the severely damaged Third Rank spirit vein to its current state was already an exceptional feat.

Seeing the somewhat embarrassed Deep Earth Spirit General, Meng Zhang comforted him warmly. Deep Earth Spirit General had worked hard and made significant contributions to the entire sect. Meng Zhang was sincerely grateful to him.

With the Third Rank spirit vein repaired, Taiyi Sect's urgent problem was resolved, greatly alleviating the difficulty of cultivation for Gold Core Daoist Masters. That place used to be Dark Crow Demon General's lair and was called Yaceng. Now that Dark Crow Demon General had been dead for many years, Taiyi Sect had completely occupied the area. After the repair of the Third Rank spirit vein, it would undoubtedly become an essential stronghold for Taiyi Sect, and it would need a new name, signifying a fresh start.

Thus, Meng Zhang named it Hundred Grass Slope.

Chapter 567: Burdened with Troubles

The place known as Hundred Grass Slope was originally a continuous range of mountains. However, due to the explosion of the magic tool Myriad Layers Peak, a massive explosion destroyed many peaks and disrupted the earth's veins, causing drastic changes in the terrain. When Deep Earth Spirit General organized manpower to repair the Third Rank spirit vein there, he also modified the local terrain to facilitate the next stage of development.

Now, the main terrain in that area consisted of rolling and undulating slopes. With the magic tool Hundred Grass Pavilion placed there, Meng Zhang chose this name for the place. He regarded Hundred Grass Slope as a crucial stronghold, second only to the sect's main gate, and worked hard on its construction. Besides setting up the Third Rank Mountain Protection Great Formation, he also planned to have the Gold Core Daoist Masters from the sect take turns guarding the place.

While Wen Qiansun was arranging the Third Rank Mountain Protection Great Formation at Hundred Grass Slope, Meng Zhang remained at the Grand Lion Ridge. Apart from his daily cultivation, he accumulated calculation tallies to use for the Grand Evolving Fortune.

Meng Zhang became a Grand Master of Heavenly Calculation after entering the Gold Core stage for a long time. After upgrading the Grand Evolving Fortune, it took almost half a year to accumulate a single calculation tally, and the number of tallies required varied based on the complexity of the matter being calculated.

In times of insufficient calculation tallies, Meng Zhang could also use his own life force as a substitute. As a mid-stage Gold Core cultivator, he had at least six to seven hundred years of lifespan. During critical moments, sacrificing a little life force was acceptable.

Currently, Taiyi Sect was in a standoff with Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch, while Flying Swan Sect joined forces with Taiyi Sect. The situation appeared stable, but Meng Zhang still had hidden concerns.

He was not yet worried about True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak. What concerned him most was whether Flying Swan Sect would actively try to join True Monarch Profound Wind or True Monarch Mountain Peak.

In fact, when Meng Zhang realized it was difficult to join the Jiuqu League in Great Wind City, he also entertained thoughts of joining True Monarch Profound Wind or True Monarch Mountain Peak. After all, there were no unresolvable deep-seated grudges between Taiyi Sect and the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs. If he could use True Monarch Tian Zhu's true situation as leverage, perhaps he could gain acceptance from the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

As for violating the Heart Demon oath made in front of Jin Li and others, Meng Zhang believed he could find a way to bypass it sooner or later.

However, after he had these thoughts, his Diviner's Spiritual Awareness stopped him in time. He had a foreboding feeling that if he really went through with it, he would face a terrible outcome.

As a Grand Master of Heavenly Calculation, his Spiritual Awareness was keen and often more reliable than rational analysis and inference. Meng Zhang chose to trust his Spiritual Awareness and dispelled the idea of joining True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak.

After returning to the sect's main gate, he calmed down and thought about the situation. If he could entertain the thought of joining another faction, Flying Swan Sect, which was in a similar situation to Taiyi Sect, might also consider such a move.

Flying Swan Sect had ruled the Endless Sea of Sand for many years and had a deep enmity with Fire Cloud Sect, but with True Monarch Mountain Peak, in particular, it seemed that there was no significant grudge. Apart from strengthening the monitoring of Flying Swan Sect in Secret Hall, after accumulating a sufficient number of calculation tallies, Meng Zhang used the Grand Evolving Fortune to conduct a calculation.

The result was not very clear, but it indicated that Flying Swan Sect had not made any moves to join True Monarch Mountain Peak or True Monarch Profound Wind. Regardless of Flying Swan Sect's reasons, choosing to maintain the status quo and not joining True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind was good news for Taiyi Sect.

Although most of the Endless Sea of Sand had fallen into the hands of the enemy, the situation in Demon Wind Gobi remained relatively stable. With Flying Swan Sect holding their original territory and both sects covering for each other, there was no immediate threat of invasion from external enemies.

Taiyi Sect also would not actively provoke war and disrupt the rare stability. Time passed quickly, and it had been over three years since True Monarch Tian Zhu's death.

While Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect faced no particular issues, Jin Li Daoist Master was entangled in troubles. Huang Family's Patriarch, Huang Tannian, led a large army of Huang Family cultivators and joined the war under the pretext of clearing demonic cultivators and Demonic Cultivation forces. As a result, not only did Huang Tannian die in the Deadly Sea of Sand, but many Huang Family cultivators also failed to return alive to Great Wind City.

Jin Li Daoist Master and the others had previously agreed on a unified statement to the outside world, claiming that all Huang Family cultivators died at the hands of Demonic Cultivation forces. However, the Huang Family members were unwilling to accept such a simple explanation. With their Gold Core Patriarch dead and the elite cultivators suffering heavy casualties, the result was too tragic for them to bear.

Huang Family was, after all, a member of the Jiuqu League and not a rootless, insignificant family. A group of Huang Family cultivators went to the higher-ups of the Jiuqu League to complain, and the higher-ups, bound by the alliance, couldn't turn a blind eye to the matter.

Since Huang Family was stationed in Great Wind City, the higher-ups of the Jiuqu League handed the troublesome matter over to Lu Family to handle. Since Huang Family had joined the war under Jin Li Daoist Master's command, Jin Li Daoist Master naturally bore the greatest responsibility.

The three forces that joined the war together, namely Northern Desert Qi Family, had been exterminated, while Flying Swan Sect now held their territory and had limited interactions with Great Wind City. As Taiyi Sect had a close relationship with Gu Yue Family, Lu Family had to give some face to Gu Yue Family.

Lu Family's cultivators approached Jin Li Daoist Master and asked for an explanation. Jin Li Daoist Master stuck to her original statement: all Huang Family cultivators died at the hands of Demonic Cultivation forces, bravely and gloriously. As for the specific details of the cultivators' deaths, she kept it vague.

This explanation was obviously unsatisfactory to the Huang Family members, who were unwilling to let the matter go. Lu Family couldn't just drop it due to their alliance with Taiyi Sect.

Lu Family gradually sent several Gold Core Daoist Masters to create trouble for Jin Li Daoist Master under the pretext of exchanging experiences. They were not a match for Jin Li Daoist Master alone but relied on their numerical advantage, ganging up to bully her.

Chapter 569: Attack

Even without Jin Li Daoist Master's persuasion, Meng Zhang had already weighed the pros and cons and decided to wholeheartedly help Jin Li Daoist Master achieve Primordial Spirit. Jin Li Daoist Master was quite satisfied with Meng Zhang's attitude, and she assured him that once she achieved Primordial Spirit, Taiyi Sect would have her support.

However, relying solely on Taiyi Sect's strength didn't entirely reassure Jin Li Daoist Master. She decided to involve the Flying Swan Sect as well. Especially Fei Shi Daoist Master of the Flying Swan Sect, an experienced Gold Core cultivator, who was much older than Jin Li Daoist Master and had a reliable mid-Gold Core cultivation base.

After leaving Grand Lion Ridge, Jin Li Daoist Master went to Dustfall Mound to discuss with the two Gold Core Daoist Masters from the Flying Swan Sect. Fei Shi Daoist Master, having a clear view of the current situation, was also willing to fully support Jin Li Daoist Master in achieving Primordial Spirit.

With the support of both Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect, Jin Li Daoist Master had a greater chance of defeating True Monarch Vermilion's wisp of soul. Jin Li Daoist Master was eager to act promptly, but Meng Zhang and Fei Shi Daoist Master needed to consider the interests of their sects.

Both Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect would be left vulnerable if they dispatched their Gold Core Daoist Masters to accompany Jin Li Daoist Master, which could give the enemy an opportunity. After discussing it, they decided to launch a counterattack on the Endless Sea of Sand before entering Purple Gold Sect's small world. Even if they couldn't completely defeat the invaders and reclaim lost territory, they aimed to inflict substantial damage and deter the enemy from acting rashly.

Although Jin Li Daoist Master felt a bit urgent, she understood that she still needed the help of Meng Zhang and the others, so she agreed to their proposal.

After making preparations, the Gold Core Daoist Masters of the Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect mobilized together and flew towards their target, the Flying Swan Sect's former mountain gate on Feihong Mountain in the Endless Sea of Sand.

To achieve a surprise attack, the Gold Core Daoist Masters were the first to move lightly, while only a select group of elite cultivators from Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect followed behind in flying boats, ready to act at any time.

The group of flying boats took off after the Gold Core Daoist Masters set off and flew towards the Endless Sea of Sand, paying no attention to other strongholds along the way. Their goal was to strike directly at the enemy, not to engage with minor forces.

The invasion of the Endless Sea of Sand by Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch was under the command of a Primordial Spirit True Monarch from behind the scenes. True Monarch Profound Wind secretly contacted other Primordial Spirit True Monarchs to plot against

True Monarch Tian Zhu, and they used Fire Cloud Sect to attack Feihong Mountain and occupy the Endless Sea of Sand while the main forces of the Flying Swan Sect were absent.

Although they suffered heavy losses in the previous battle and had not fully recovered, they had to obey True Monarch Profound Wind's orders. Fire Cloud Sect had benefited from serving under True Monarch Profound Wind for many years.

With True Monarch Profound Wind's help, Fire Cloud Sect also had a successful Gold Core completion cultivator in recent years, Daoist Master Green Flame. This time, Daoist Master Green Flame, Daoist Master Scarlet Flame, and Daoist Master Dark Cloud participated in the invasion of the Endless Sea of Sand.

To strengthen their invasion, True Monarch Mountain Peak also mobilized the forces of Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch to participate in the operation.

East River Branch had no choice but to submit to True Monarch Mountain Peak's will and coveted the vast territory of the Endless Sea of Sand. They sent their top cultivator, Gold Core late stage Daoist Master Smiling Lotus, along with Gold Core initial stage cultivator Hong Siming and his brother, to lead a large army of cultivators in the invasion.

After both sects joined forces, they easily captured important strongholds such as Feihong Mountain and Yellow Sand Ridge, occupying more than half of the Endless Sea of Sand. If it weren't for the failed sneak attack on Grand Lion Ridge by Hong Siming and Daoist Master Green Flame, they might have completely defeated Taiyi Sect and even claimed Demon Wind Gobi.

Fortunately, Wen Qiansun and Delicate Water Spirit General displayed their strength, making the invaders fearful. After True Monarch Profound Wind and True Monarch Mountain Peak retreated from the Deadly Sea of Sand, Fire Cloud Sect and East River Branch cultivators were initially panicking.

However, the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs quickly reassured them, claiming that True Monarch Tian Zhu was severely injured and unable to take action. They said their focus should be on preparing for a possible counterattack from the Flying Swan Sect and Taiyi Sect and not worry about anything else.

In truth, True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind did not know True Monarch Tian Zhu's true condition. They had their respective intentions: to test the truth of True Monarch Tian Zhu's situation and strength. They wanted to see if True Monarch Tian Zhu would take action against the allied forces of both sects. If he did, they would retreat immediately and not dare to approach the Endless Sea of Sand again.

If True Monarch Tian Zhu ignored the allied forces of both sects, True Monarch Mountain Peak and True Monarch Profound Wind would need to reconsider their approach. Whether True Monarch Tian Zhu's condition was inadequate to act or she intentionally left the forces of both sects there to lure the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs closer to the Endless Sea of Sand.

Regardless, both Primordial Spirit True Monarchs saw the cultivators from Fire Cloud Sect and Yellow Lotus Sect East River Branch as expendable. Especially East River Branch, who may have submitted on the surface but had been making secret moves to break free from True Monarch Mountain Peak's control.

They needed to teach East River Branch a lesson and make them obedient. Whether the high-ranking members of both sects saw through the intentions of the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs or not, they had no power to resist and could only obey.

After occupying the Endless Sea of Sand, both sects fully exploited its resources and gained various benefits. Even if they encountered a setback, they could still recover some losses.

With this mindset, neither sect was willing to continue expanding and proactively attacking Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect. However, today, Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect were the ones to strike first.

Under Fire Cloud Sect's insistence, both sects had taken turns sending Gold Core Daoist Masters to monitor the movements of Taiyi Sect and Flying Swan Sect. Today, it was Daoist Master Dark Cloud of Fire Cloud Sect who was responsible for monitoring the enemy's movements near the border. When he saw a large group of enemy Gold Core Daoist Masters mobilizing, he didn't dare to delay for even a moment. He immediately rushed towards Feihong Mountain and sent out a transmission flying sword to warn his side.