

Sect Master 641

Chapter 641: Storm

After both sides reached an agreement, the remaining task was how to implement it. Jin LiTrue Monarch sent a message talisman, detailing the causes and consequences of the matter and the content of the agreement, to Meng Zhang.

Meng Zhang, who was stationed in Red Rock Valley, successfully received Jin LiTrue Monarch's message talisman. After reading its contents, he first wore a wry smile on his face, followed by a wave of fear.

For many years, he had dominated the region, personally developing Taiyi Sect to its current state. It would be a lie to say that he wasn't proud and complacent. But because of his inflated ego, feeling extraordinary and looking down on everything, Meng Zhang made a grave mistake this time.

He failed to thoroughly investigate the Sea Clan's military situation before taking the initiative to mobilize the entire sect's strength for battle. What's even more unforgivable is that he didn't communicate with Jin LiTrue Monarch beforehand.

In the message talisman, Jin LiTrue Monarch didn't hide her discontent. She was the biggest supporter of Taiyi Sect at present, and losing her support would be catastrophic for the sect. If her dissatisfaction escalated, it would be a major disaster for Taiyi Sect.

Meng Zhang warned himself inwardly that he must learn from this lesson and never be so careless in the future.

Of course, he wouldn't dwell on past mistakes any longer. His immediate task was to defend Red Rock Valley with all his might. The agreement among the several powerful figures made Meng Zhang furious.

Since when did Taiyi Sect become someone else's bargaining chip? It seemed obvious to True Monarch Azure Mist and other Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, but it infuriated Meng Zhang.

Outsiders would always be outsiders, and they couldn't be relied upon forever. As long as Taiyi Sect didn't have its own Primordial Spirit True Monarch, it would be under someone else's control.

Meng Zhang suppressed his anger and convened several Gold Core Daoist Masters within Red Rock Valley. He laid out the agreement between the powerful figures without any reservations.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters were all dissatisfied, but they were all people who knew what was important. After a few complaints, they quickly put this matter aside and discussed how to deal with the current situation together.

Regardless, Taiyi Sect couldn't afford to fail; they must hold onto Red Rock Valley. Otherwise, the cost of failure would be too high, and Taiyi Sect would undoubtedly suffer severe damage.

Since defending Red Rock Valley became a consensus, they began strategizing and decided to utilize the entire sect's resources for the defense. This crucial battle would leave no room for reservations. Besides the existing defensive measures, they would continue to strengthen their defenses. They would use all the treasures in the sect's treasury that could be of use.

While Jin LiTrue Monarch transmitted the message to Meng Zhang, the Sea Clan side also conveyed the latest information to the nearby Sea Clan army near Red Rock Valley.

After arriving near Red Rock Valley, the Sea Clan army had been reinforced by several Third Rank experts who arrived from various places, which significantly boosted their strength.

However, seeing that the Human Clan cultivators had already set up a Third Rank protective great formation and had a tight defense, Hai Pofeng, the commander of the Sea Clan army, did not act rashly.

Shortly after, Niu Dawei led the Hanhai Daoist League cultivator army and joined forces with the cultivators from Beast King Mountain, forming a coalition army. They followed closely and established their formation less than a hundred miles away from the Sea Clan army, waiting vigilantly.

Seeing that the cultivators in Red Rock Valley were not making any moves and had no intention to attack, Hai Pofeng originally planned to leave a detachment of troops to monitor Red Rock Valley's actions and concentrate the main force of the army to eliminate the Human Clan cultivators following them.

However, Ying Gaofei's order was for him to concentrate all his strength and quickly capture Red Rock Valley. As a noble True Dragon, Ying Gaofei was exceedingly proud. This time, he not only wanted to win but to win in a spectacular fashion.

The agreed-upon time was two years, but Ying Gaofei hoped that the Sea Clan army would take Red Rock Valley immediately and crush the two Human Clan Primordial Spirit True Monarchs with full force.

Hai Pofeng did not dare to disobey Ying Gaofei's command, so he had to abandon his original plan. However, with the Human Clan cultivator army so close, he couldn't just leave them be.

He drew some troops to form a detachment, many of whom were soldiers injured in previous battles with the beasts. He ordered this detachment to stay not far from the Human Clan cultivator army and closely monitor their movements. If the Human Clan cultivator army showed any signs of action, they were to promptly alert the main force and delay the enemy as much as possible.

Afterward, Hai Pofeng gathered the main strength of the Sea Clan army and surrounded Red Rock Valley.

Ying Gaofei was in a hurry, and the high-ranking Sea Clan members gathered to discuss the plan briefly. They decided not to make things too complicated and instead rely on the advantage of their numerical strength to attack forcefully and crush the enemy all the way.

The battle quickly commenced, and the Sea Clan army didn't waste time slowly investigating the enemy's situation or testing their defenses. They launched a full-scale attack right away.

In front of Red Rock Valley, a Sea Clan army numbering over thirty thousand formed numerous army formations. Almost every army formation had at least one Third Rank expert in charge.

The Jiao Human Clan and the Sea Patrolling Yaksha clan were superior races, but their numbers in the army were limited. Most of their people served as officers at various levels or formed supervisory teams. The majority of the army was composed of lower-ranked races like fishermen, shrimp men, and crab men.

During major battles, these lower-ranked races were often the first to be sent as cannon fodder. Since their numbers were abundant and their reproduction rates strong, if they didn't consume a portion of them on the battlefield, they couldn't sustain their entire population.

However, the current Sea Clan army, having left the ocean and fighting on unfamiliar land, had carefully selected elites from various races. Compared to ordinary Sea Clan members, they were stronger in every aspect.

At Hai Pofeng's command, army formations approached Red Rock Valley from all directions and began their attack.

The Sea Clan army did not distinguish any specific key areas or directly search for weaknesses in Red Rock Valley's defenses. Instead, they relied on their absolute numerical advantage and launched a comprehensive assault from all directions, each attack being extremely fierce.

As the Sea Clan's Jiao Human Clan sorcerers started casting their spells, dark clouds immediately covered the sky, followed by a heavy downpour. The pouring rain drenched every member of the Sea Clan army, but it boosted their morale and significantly increased their strength.

Vast water waves surged above almost every army formation, sweeping directly towards Red Rock Valley. Countless water dragons soared into the air, crazily pouncing forward.

Sect Master Meng Zhang sat at the center of the great formation, overseeing the entire situation. Yang Xueyi, Zheng Chao, and the four Guardian Spirit Generals, along with six Gold Core cultivators, each guarded one of the Six Spirits Golden Light Formation's six eyes. Numerous elite Taiyi Sect cultivators spread out and stationed themselves at various points within the great formation.

Facing the fierce attack of the Sea Clan army, Taiyi Sect remained undeterred and systematically empowered the great formation, using its force to counter the onslaught.

The golden light surrounding Red Rock Valley became even more intense, almost as substantial as solid gold. From a distance, it seemed as if the entire Red Rock Valley had been cast in gold.

The surging giant waves and the descending water dragons directly collided with the golden light, shaking it for a moment, but it held firm. The waves and water dragons dispersed into a downpour.

Hai Pofeng, observing from afar, had no expression on his face. This was just the first wave of attack, and the Sea Clan army had even more powerful means to use.

Next, the Sea Clan army launched one tactic after another, launching a relentless assault on Red Rock Valley.

The Six Spirits Golden Light Formation was originally a Third Rank defensive great formation, and now it not only had enough Gold Core Daoist Masters presiding over it but also numerous Taiyi Sect cultivators working together within the formation.

No matter what tactics the Sea Clan employed or how fierce their attacks were, they couldn't fundamentally shake the great formation.

Taiyi Sect wasn't just sitting back and taking hits; the Six Spirits Golden Light Formation had some means of counterattacking, even though its offensive power was ordinary.

The Gold Core Daoist Masters guarding the formation's eyes seized opportunities to unleash the power of the great formation, releasing bursts of golden light that directly targeted nearby Sea Clan army formations.

Two of the closest army formations directly suffered the impact of the great formation's attack. The protective water screens outside the formations were shattered, and the golden light momentarily enveloped the Sea Clan soldiers. Many of them fell to the ground, spewing blood, their lives hanging in the balance.

This counterattack from the great formation was already anticipated by the Sea Clan's high-ranking members, and this small number of casualties was negligible.

The subsequent army formations reinforced their defenses, easily blocking the great formation's counterattacks.

The Sea Clan army formations took turns advancing and continuously launched attacks on Red Rock Valley, maintaining constant pressure on them.

Taiyi Sect was well-prepared for the fierce Sea Clan attacks, and relying on the power of the great formation, they were not worried at all.

The morale of the spirited Taiyi Sect cultivators was high, and with the great formation's protection, they engaged in a heated battle with the Sea Clan army.

On the first day of the battle, the Sea Clan army suffered numerous casualties, while the Taiyi Sect cultivators remained unharmed, sheltered behind the great formation.

However, as the war continued and the intensity of the battles increased, Taiyi Sect cultivators could not continue to remain unscathed. Before long, they started feeling the heavy pressure.

Chapter 642: Crosscut saw

As the battle continued, the Sea Clan army brought out more and more killer moves. The various army formations of the Sea Clan began to exert their power, and with the spellcasting of the Sea Human Clan wizards, thunderclouds gathered in the sky with rumbling thunder. Amidst the surging waves, green thunderballs coalesced.

Tenth Water Divine Thunder, this was an extremely advanced secret art in water-system magic. Thunder magic was originally fierce and powerful, and the Tenth Water Divine Thunder condensed the power of the Tenth Water with special attribute enhancements.

The Sea Clan, growing up in the sea, effortlessly summoned numerous Tenth Water Divine Thunders. Each Tenth Water Divine Thunder descended from the sky and heavily bombarded the Six Spirits Golden Light Formation.

This Third Rank defense great formation finally faced a severe test. The seemingly indestructible golden light screen finally disintegrated under the continuous bombardment of Tenth Water Divine Thunders, revealing the Taiyi Sect disciples behind it.

Without Hai Pofeng needing to give orders, the two nearest army formations quickly rushed forward. Fortunately, before the battle began, Taiyi Sect had made ample preparations and had left many aces up their sleeves.

As the Sea Clan armies of the two formations hadn't yet approached, gusts of strong wind swept through, accompanied by silver raindrops falling from the sky. The protective water screens around the army formations were easily turned into useless rainwater by the strong winds. The silver raindrops falling from the sky seemed harmless and looked radiant and lovely, but they were unquestionably deadly means.

The countless silver raindrops resembled flying swords and landed in the Sea Clan army formations, causing the Sea Clan soldiers inside to be in a miserable state. Even the elite Sea Clan soldiers, once hit by the silver raindrops, were either left with a pile of limbs or directly died on the spot.

The Heavenly Wind Silver Rain Great Formation, another Third Rank defense great formation, was activated and dealt a heavy blow to the Sea Clan army that charged forward. The army formation

was dispersed by the silver raindrops, and only a few scattered Sea Clan soldiers managed to break through the outer defense of Red Rock Valley and approach the Taiyi Sect disciples.

The prepared Taiyi Sect disciples swiftly used various means to slaughter these scattered Sea Clan soldiers. While the Heavenly Wind Silver Rain Great Formation dealt a blow to the Sea Clan army, it bought some time for the cultivator in charge of the Six Spirits Golden Light Formation to quickly restore its defensive power.

The two Third Rank defense great formations complemented each other, making up for each other's shortcomings, and the Taiyi Sect disciples in charge of the formations gave it their all.

For a moment, the Sea Clan army displayed many techniques but couldn't break the great formations; instead, they suffered considerable casualties.

Hai Pofeng, who commanded the Sea Clan army, felt a bit anxious but concealed it well. He focused on calmly mobilizing the Sea Clan army and launching a continuous attack on Red Rock Valley.

Since the beginning of the attack and defense battle in Red Rock Valley, the strong individuals from both tribes who had agreed on the alliance didn't move far away. They stayed high in the sky not too far from Red Rock Valley to observe the battle.

The Sea Clan army besieging Red Rock Valley was wise enough not to approach or disturb Ying Gaofei and the others when they saw them in the vicinity.

Whether it was Ying Gaofei or the two Fourth Rank Sea Clan experts, since they had entrusted the command to Hai Pofeng, they showed no intention of interfering with his tactics.

The Sea Clan army was numerous and formed several army formations, taking turns to attack Red Rock Valley and continuously consuming the Taiyi Sect disciples.

Due to the considerable movement of the Sea Clan army attacking Red Rock Valley, it naturally couldn't escape the attention of Niu Dawei and his group, who were within a hundred miles from there.

Before the war began, Meng Zhang had communicated the entire situation through talismans to Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun. They knew that this battle involved Primordial Spirit True Monarch-level experts and directly affected the development of Taiyi Sect, so their moods were very solemn.

Regardless of the cost, they couldn't afford to lose this battle. This was the consensus of Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun.

Relying solely on the forces of the Cultivator Army of the Hanhai Alliance had its limitations. After discussing, Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun sought out Qiu Mingze from the Beast King Mountain.

Niu Dawei didn't beat around the bush and directly told him that True Monarch Azure Mist from the Azure Origin Sect and Jin Li True Monarch from Taiyi Sect had already arrived nearby. They had seen through the intentions of the Beast King Mountain.

The small advantages Beast King Mountain had gained earlier might be forgivable, but if they wanted greater rewards, they must contribute now.

As Taiyi Sect's Sect Master's senior disciple, Niu Dawei guaranteed that if Beast King Mountain wholeheartedly helped Taiyi Sect to resist the Sea Clan army, they would undoubtedly gain benefits in the Demon Wind Gobi's western region.

After Niu Dawei laid everything out, Qiu Mingze didn't immediately respond. Instead, he discussed the matter with the Gold Core Daoist Master from their sect who had also joined the expedition.

On the one hand, they coveted the benefits of the Demon Wind Gobi, and on the other hand, the prestige of True Monarch Azure Mist and Jin Li True Monarch intimidated them. In the end, Qiu Mingze agreed that Beast King Mountain cultivators and Taiyi Sect would work together and cooperate in this battle.

Not long after, the Beast King Mountain cultivators who were originally stationed at Grey Horse Plain arrived and joined the main force.

As a result, the joint forces now had six Gold Core Daoist Masters and several thousand low-level cultivators.

Although the Beast King Mountain cultivators were not necessarily going to obey Niu Dawei's command, they agreed to cooperate in the battle.

Niu Dawei didn't act rashly but chose a good opportunity. During the Sea Clan's siege of Red Rock Valley, he directly commanded the Cultivator Army of the Hanhai Alliance to advance and launch an attack on a Sea Clan detachment that was monitoring them.

The Human Clan cultivator army launched the surprise attack, which didn't catch Hai Pofeng off guard as he had already prepared countermeasures.

An already prepared Sea Clan army immediately left the Red Rock Valley battlefield and rushed towards Niu Dawei's attacking position.

Seeing the Sea Clan reinforcements arriving, Niu Dawei didn't linger and directly commanded the army to retreat and regroup with the Beast King Mountain cultivators.

After the Sea Clan reinforcements arrived, a fierce battle ensued between the joint forces of the Cultivator Army of the Hanhai Alliance and Beast King Mountain against the Sea Clan.

The Sea Clan army indeed proved too strong, even though they only deployed a portion of their forces, their combat strength exceeded that of the Human Clan cultivator army.

While Beast King Mountain agreed to cooperate with Taiyi Sect and did their best in the battle, they lacked the spirit to fight to the death.

Niu Dawei didn't force the issue and, seeing that they were at a disadvantage, he commanded the army to retreat slowly in a direction far from Red Rock Valley.

This Sea Clan detachment was strong, but they couldn't completely contain the enemy, and they helplessly watched as the enemy successfully retreated.

With the enemy retreating, the previously withdrawn Human Clan cultivator army, under Niu Dawei's command, slowly returned from afar to harass the Sea Clan forces once again.

Niu Dawei played the essence of guerrilla warfare - attacking and retreating, annoying the enemy but avoiding direct confrontation with the Sea Clan army. He focused on harassing the enemy, diverting their attention, and preventing them from fully concentrating on besieging Red Rock Valley.

Some brilliant minds within the Sea Clan army easily saw through Niu Dawei's strategy.

While the Red Rock Valley cultivators defended with all their might, Hai Pofeng left a portion of his forces to continue the siege of Red Rock Valley while he concentrated his main force to counterattack Meng Zhang and his group.

Meng Zhang led the Taiyi Sect cultivators to make several attempts, but they were repeatedly blocked and forced to retreat.

The remaining Sea Clan soldiers, with the support of the Third Rank warships, displayed great combat power and made Meng Zhang's group helpless.

Taking advantage of this situation, Hai Pofeng personally led the main Sea Clan force and launched a direct assault on the joint forces of the Cultivator Army of the Hanhai Alliance and Beast King Mountain.

The Sea Clan army acted swiftly, and Niu Dawei and his group had no time to retreat, so they had to stand their ground and fight.

After an intense battle, the Human Clan cultivator army suffered a devastating defeat. The Cultivator Army of the Hanhai Alliance was almost completely wiped out, with only a small remnant managing to escape.

Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun were seriously injured, and it was not easy for them to escape the pursuit of the Sea Clan army.

Beast King Mountain suffered heavy losses as well. Not only were most of their low-level cultivators casualties, but even one Gold Core Daoist Master was killed in action. The remaining three Gold Core Daoist Masters fled with injuries, losing their courage and never daring to return to the area.

Chapter 643: Selects only

After thoroughly defeating the joint forces of the Ocean Alliance and Beast King Mountain, Hai Pofeng finally resolved his worries and could concentrate his full strength to besiege Red Rock Valley without any distractions.

Hai Pofeng's seemingly simple actions were well-timed and executed with great speed, earning praise from the venerable ancestor of the Merfolk Human Clan, Hai Duomou, who couldn't help but admire him. This time, the Sea Clan deployed all its hidden cards.

The Third Rank warships, these Mechanical Creations, are not commonly seen among the Sea Clan. If it weren't for this operation, Hai Pofeng would be reluctant to use so much of their reserves. In a one-on-one battle, a Third Rank warship would definitely not be a match for a Gold Core Daoist Master.

However, in large-scale battles, especially sieges like this, the Sea Clan's forces, relying on the Third Rank warships, could exert tremendous power. The Third Rank warships launched a relentless bombardment on the defensive great formation of Red Rock Valley from the sky, while the ground forces fiercely charged forward.

Despite lacking external reinforcements, the disciples of the Taiyi Sect within the great formation still maintained high morale. As a rapidly rising sect, the disciples were filled with confidence and not so easily suppressed.

Meng Zhang began mobilizing Taiyi Sect cultivators and gradually brought out various precious cards from their collection. Thanks to the Mother-Child Transmission Disc connecting Red Rock Valley and Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, Hundred Grass Slope, Red Rock Valley could be promptly supplied with both manpower and resources.

Taiyi Sect not only opened their large arsenal but also provided various combat supplies to the disciples defending Red Rock Valley. Additionally, the businesses established by Taiyi Sect in the Jiuqu League continuously delivered supplies and resources to Taiyi Sect.

After Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun fled the battlefield, they were heavily injured and couldn't recover in a short time. The cultivator army of the Ocean Alliance had already dispersed, and the surviving remnants had lost their fighting spirit. Even if they were forcibly organized, they would not be able to contribute significantly.

As for Beast King Mountain, they were even less reliable. After suffering heavy casualties, Beast King Mountain didn't dare to engage in a major battle with the Sea Clan's army.

According to the agreement between Human Clan's Primordial Spirit and Sea Clan's Fourth Rank experts, the Human Clan side could not call for reinforcements from outside Demon Wind Gobi.

Now, they could only rely on the strength of Taiyi Sect alone to hold on.

The brutal war continued, and while Red Rock Valley appeared on the verge of collapse, it persisted. Every time the Sea Clan thought that Taiyi Sect could no longer hold on and that Red Rock Valley was about to be captured, Meng Zhang always surprised them, driving them back outside the gates.

Taiyi Sect was not passively defending; when the time was right, their Gold Core Daoist Masters would lead elite cultivators to launch counterattacks, repelling the enemy's relentless offensives.

Both the Sea Clan's army and Taiyi Sect suffered heavy casualties. Batch after batch of Taiyi Sect disciples were sent to Red Rock Valley, and many of them would never return.

After Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun were injured, they did not linger outside and instead returned directly to the sect's mountain gate. After their return, they disregarded their future cultivation and forcefully took the Tiger-Wolf Medicine, temporarily suppressing their injuries using secret techniques. At this moment, Hu Jing, who had been guarding the sect's mountain gate, had already been teleported to Red Rock Valley and joined the great battle.

During the prolonged war, Taiyi Sect not only suffered heavy losses among its low-ranking disciples but even its Gold Core Daoist Masters were wounded one after another. Although there were no casualties among the Gold Core Daoist Masters for now, most of them were severely injured.

At this point, Red Rock Valley also appeared to be on the verge of exhaustion. The remaining Taiyi Sect disciples were almost all injured and exhausted.

Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun tried various methods, resorting to both threats and temptations, and finally managed to gather a batch of cultivators from Demon Wind Gobi again.

If not for considering True Monarch Jin Li's opinion, Niu Dawei would have thought about calling for Jin Qiao'er's help. Jin Qiao'er was True Monarch Jin Li's most beloved disciple, and involving her in such a bloody battle would surely upset True Monarch Jin Li. If anything happened to Jin Qiao'er during the fight, the enraged True Monarch Jin Li would undoubtedly direct her anger towards Taiyi Sect. Even if Taiyi Sect somehow won this battle, it would not be worth the cost.

As someone who had received training from the Sect Master, Niu Dawei understood various social intricacies very well. He not only refrained from seeking help from Jin Qiao'er but also did not mobilize too many cultivators from Qiaoshou Sect.

However, other forces within the Ocean Alliance were not so lucky. Their elite cultivators were almost completely conscripted, depleting the entire foundation of the Ocean Alliance.

At this critical moment in Red Rock Valley, Niu Dawei and Wen Qiansun led this group of cultivators and teleported them over. With the support of this fresh reinforcement, the morale of the Taiyi Sect cultivators soared, leading to a powerful counterattack that not only repelled the Sea Clan's attacking forces but also allowed them to launch a retaliatory strike.

By this point in the battle, the Taiyi Sect's side had already shown signs of decline and exhaustion, and even the Sea Clan's army had suffered considerable damage, affecting their vitality.

Five Third Rank warships were present, with three destroyed by Meng Zhang and his disciples, and the other two were also damaged and had to temporarily retreat.

The tremendous losses suffered by the Sea Clan's army made the faces of the two venerable ancestors twitch uncontrollably, revealing an expression of pain. The casualties were all elite fighters, and they were losing their own strength and foundation.

The sea was not a peaceful paradise; it also had cruel battles. If their army suffered heavy losses, it would undoubtedly affect the survival of the Merfolk Human Clan and the Sea Patrolling Yaksha.

As a proud Dragon Clan member, Ying Gaofei had never put the lives and deaths of these lower races in his eyes. However, he relied on the two venerable ancestors in many places and had to consider their feelings. Moreover, this Sea Clan army was also the capital he relied on for future rise. Suffering such heavy losses here would undoubtedly hinder his grand plans.

The siege of Red Rock Valley had been going on for over a year, and it seemed that the day of success was still distant. Due to the concealment of the defensive great formation, Ying Gaofei couldn't yet determine the situation inside Red Rock Valley. He only knew that Taiyi Sect's reinforcements seemed to be continuous, never ceasing.

Every time Taiyi Sect lost a batch of disciples, new ones arrived to replenish their numbers. At this rate, it was difficult to see an end.

Unbeknownst to Ying Gaofei, who was also nearing exhaustion, he overestimated Taiyi Sect's strength at this moment. After Taiyi Sect repelled another wave of attacks from the Sea Clan's army,

during a lull in the battle, Ying Gaofei flew over Red Rock Valley and directly challenged the Taiyi Sect cultivators below.

He proposed a one-on-one duel with the Taiyi Sect cultivators in the valley. If the Taiyi Sect cultivators won, then this battle would be considered a victory for Taiyi Sect, and the Sea Clan's army would stop the siege and immediately retreat. However, if Ying Gaofei emerged victorious, then the Sea Clan would be considered the winner of this battle, and Taiyi Sect would not only have to withdraw from Red Rock Valley but also provide compensation according to the agreement.

Chapter 644: Win

Ying Gaofei flew beyond the Red Rock Valley and issued a challenge for a one-on-one duel. However, he didn't believe that anyone from the Taiyi Sect would dare to face him alone.

As a Third Rank late-stage expert, he had mastered several secret arts and divine abilities of the True Dragon clan and possessed life-saving techniques bestowed by senior members of his clan. Not long ago, he even participated in a battle among Fourth Rank experts and played a crucial role.

In his eyes, any Human Clan cultivator below the level of Primordial Spirit True Monarch was nothing more than insignificant beings. He stepped forward to issue the challenge, partly because he was frustrated by the unfavorable situation in the ongoing conflict and wanted to vent his emotions. Moreover, he saw it as an opportunity to undermine the morale of the Taiyi Sect.

If no one from the Taiyi Sect dared to accept the challenge, he could unleash his anger in front of two Human Clan Primordial Spirit True Monarchs.

After Ying Gaofei's loud shout, there was no response from within the Red Rock Valley. He smirked and laughed heartily toward the two Human Clan Primordial Spirit True Monarchs in the sky.

Jin Li True Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist felt displeased by the offense, but they knew not to underestimate this young True Dragon. Gold Core Daoist Master-level cultivators were no match for him.

Though they understood that Taiyi Sect's silence was a rational response, Jin Li True Monarch couldn't help but grumble inwardly about the sect's cultivators not being up to the task, leaving her with this vexation for no reason.

Just as Ying Gaofei was feeling triumphant, a lazy voice echoed from within the Red Rock Valley.

"Who do you think you are? Just because you challenged someone to a duel, does that mean your words hold any weight?"

Through Jin Li True Monarch's communication talisman, Meng Zhang deliberately pointed out Ying Gaofei's background before speaking.

Ying Gaofei's expression darkened when he was questioned. "Do you even know my identity? How dare a mere Human Clan junior doubt me?"

"If you truly have the ability to defeat me, then come at me openly, don't hide like a chattering mouse in its hole."

After Ying Gaofei issued the challenge, several Gold Core Daoist Master cultivators from the Taiyi Sect in the Red Rock Valley realized that this was their only chance to resolve the current predicament. If Ying Gaofei won the one-on-one duel, Taiyi Sect could end the war and claim victory.

They didn't respond immediately, as they were discussing who should step up to fight. The four Guardian Spirit Generals had greater experience and combat expertise compared to Meng Zhang, but their cultivation base was only at the early stage of Gold Core, and it was impossible for them to challenge across such a huge cultivation base difference.

In the end, Taiyi Sect's highest-ranked cultivator, Meng Zhang, who was at the late stage of Gold Core, personally decided to take on the challenge.

Hearing Ying Gaofei's disdainful words, Meng Zhang responded with a relaxed tone, "Since you insist on a one-on-one duel, we naturally need to agree on the rules beforehand."

Seeing that someone from the Taiyi Sect was willing to face him in a duel, Ying Gaofei became interested. If this simple way could truly end the war, it would be beneficial for him.

He called upon two Sea Clan elders and two Human Clan Primordial Spirits to act as witnesses, fearing that the Taiyi Sect might go back on their word.

Meng Zhang also flew out from the Red Rock Valley and stood before everyone. After a brief negotiation, they settled on the specific rules.

Three days later, Meng Zhang from Taiyi Sect and the True Dragon Ying Gaofei would have a one-on-one duel outside the Red Rock Valley.

At the scene, the Fourth Rank experts from the Sea Clan and the Primordial Spirit True Monarchs from the Human Clan ensured the fair conduct of the duel, without interference from external forces. They accepted that casualties on both sides were unavoidable, and neither the Sea Clan nor the Human Clan would seek revenge for the injuries sustained during the duel.

After the duel, the result would determine the outcome of the ongoing war. Although they didn't swear a Grand Dao oath, both sides had no intention of breaking their agreement and were genuinely willing to end the conflict here.

Of course, both sides shared a common sentiment of not holding high expectations for Meng Zhang. Jin Li True Monarch remembered their past friendship and felt a bit reluctant to say anything, but in the current situation, there was no room for regret. He could only hope that Meng Zhang would be wise enough to surrender promptly when unable to withstand the pressure and save his life.

Setting the duel three days later allowed Meng Zhang time to recover from his injuries and adjust his condition. After so long engaged in defensive warfare, his situation was far from ideal, and three days might not be enough for him.

If it weren't for Ying Gaofei's arrogance, the two Sea Clan elders might not have been willing to grant him this three-day respite. At their age, practical benefits outweighed matters of face.

Following this agreement, the Sea Clan army and Taiyi Sect cultivators temporarily ceased their hostilities and awaited the outcome of the duel after three days.

Three days later, at dawn, Meng Zhang and Ying Gaofei ascended into the sky, flying to a height of thousands of feet above the Red Rock Valley.

Without wasting any words, they immediately began the fight.

Despite Ying Gaofei's prideful nature due to his background, he wouldn't make the mistake of underestimating his opponents in a battle. The brutal and efficient combat training of the True Dragon clan ensured that only exceptional individuals like Ying Gaofei could stand out among numerous Third Rank True Dragons.

At the start of the battle, Ying Gaofei transformed into a fierce hundred-foot dragon, ferociously attacking Meng Zhang.

This fight was of great significance, as the opponent was a Sect Master, and there might be some hidden killer moves up his sleeve. While he could look down on his opponents, he would never underestimate them.

Meng Zhang employed the Strange and Upright Sword Art, wielding both the Fierce Yang Sword and the Shadow Killing Sword. However, after a brief exchange, Ying Gaofei disabled both flying swords.

Meng Zhang then wielded the Spiritsnake Spear, barely blocking the True Dragon's assaults.

Ying Gaofei continuously utilized various secret arts and divine abilities while fully unleashing the formidable physical talents of the True Dragon clan, actively engaging in close combat with Meng Zhang.

If it weren't for the fear of the Spiritsnake Spear's lethality, Ying Gaofei might have torn Meng Zhang apart already.

After a while, Ying Gaofei realized that the Human Clan Gold Core in front of him was truly extraordinary. If he hadn't taken action himself, there probably wouldn't have been anyone in the Sea Clan army below who could match him.

Filled with a surge of killing intent, Ying Gaofei held nothing back and used his most potent killer move. A dragon-shaped phantom flew from the top of his head and struck Meng Zhang like lightning. Unable to dodge, Meng Zhang was hit by the dragon-shaped phantom and disintegrated without any resistance.

The method left behind by a Fourth Rank True Dragon was undoubtedly overkill for Meng Zhang. Ying Gaofei, however, had to use this move sparingly. In the past, he had wounded a Fourth Rank expert, the Long-nose Monster King, with this technique. Meng Zhang being hit this time meant his life was in grave danger.

Just as Ying Gaofei relaxed his guard, Meng Zhang's figure appeared above him, and he threw the Spiritsnake Spear heavily. The spear effortlessly pierced through Ying Gaofei's protective spells and thick scales, deeply stabbing into his body.

Chapter 645: After the war

Since the moment Ying Gaofei was stabbed by the Spiritsnake Spear, the outcome of this battle had already been determined. Meng Zhang won this time, but it was a close call, and he almost lost his life. This was undoubtedly the most dangerous battle he had encountered since embarking on his cultivation journey. Despite using all his abilities and most of his trump cards, he could do nothing against Ying Gaofei.

When Ying Gaofei struck him, he thought he was doomed. Fortunately, during his previous deep exploration of the Yuantu Great Prairie in the Dark Alliance's treasure trove, he obtained several valuable items. Among them, the most powerful was the Fourth Rank talisman. Due to his cultivation base, he hadn't fully refined the talisman yet, so he couldn't easily utilize it. However, the most significant contribution came from the substitute puppet. This extremely rare treasure in the Cultivation World saved Meng Zhang's life at a critical moment.

Long before the duel, Meng Zhang had already refined the substitute puppet. When struck by Ying Gaofei, the puppet's substitution technique automatically activated, taking the fatal blow in his stead. The puppet's effectiveness greatly exceeded Meng Zhang's expectations. After using the substitute puppet this time, it was significantly damaged, but it seemed it could still be used two more times.

Ying Gaofei, thinking he had killed Meng Zhang, let his guard down completely, which allowed Meng Zhang to strike him with the Spiritsnake Spear. The Spiritsnake Spear truly lived up to its reputation as a killing weapon passed down by the Taiyi Sect. Once it hit Ying Gaofei, it rooted itself within him. No matter how he struggled and used all his means, he couldn't force it out. The ferocious killing aura ravaged Ying Gaofei's dragon body, constantly eroding his vitality. If left untreated, Meng Zhang could easily end Ying Gaofei's life by continuing to activate the Spiritsnake Spear.

However, Meng Zhang had no intention of doing so. Although both sides had agreed to accept the fate of life or death before the duel, Meng Zhang did not take those words seriously. Humans and dragons, especially True Dragon descendants like Ying Gaofei, had different values, and their lives were more precious. Killing Ying Gaofei would not only lead to retaliation from the True Dragon clan but also provoke the two Sea Clan elders present, who might turn against him.

Seeing that Ying Gaofei was hit by the Spiritsnake Spear, the two Sea Clan elders were extremely anxious, with panic written all over their faces. If it weren't for the two Human Clan Primordial Spirits stopping them, they would have already attacked. While the two Human Clan Primordial Spirits could protect him temporarily, they couldn't do so forever. The Sea Clan's Fourth Rank expert was determined to take the life of a Gold Core cultivator and would find an opportunity to strike.

If Meng Zhang died, aside from the members of Taiyi Sect, few outsiders would care, and nobody else would speak up for him. Sighing with a sense of helplessness, Meng Zhang suppressed that feeling. With a single gesture, he recalled the Spirit Snake Spear.

Ying Gaofei's massive body fell towards the ground, but before he could hit the ground, the two Sea Clan elders used magic to catch him. They carefully examined his body and confirmed that although his injuries were severe, his life was not in danger, which relieved them.

After stabilizing Ying Gaofei's injuries with magic, the two Sea Clan elders didn't waste time on small talk. They shot Meng Zhang a stern look and flew away directly. Witnessing the outcome of the battle, Hai Pofeng, despite feeling extremely unwilling, had to command the entire army to prepare for retreat.

Meng Zhang's hard-fought victory finally came to an end. As the victorious Taiyi Sect, they had no time to savor the taste of victory; there was still a lot to do. They needed to clean up the battlefield, tend to the wounded, and organize their cultivation forces.

Meng Zhang didn't bother with these trivial matters, believing that the higher-ups in the sect would handle them appropriately. He proactively flew to the side of Jin Li True Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist, paying his respects.

Jin Li True Monarch's attitude was lukewarm, but True Monarch Azure Mist spoke kindly and praised him warmly. After a few words, Jin Li True Monarch didn't explicitly state anything but reminded Meng Zhang not to forget the great favor True Monarch Azure Mist had shown him this time. Meng Zhang understood and sincerely thanked True Monarch Azure Mist for his assistance, promising to express his gratitude in the future.

True Monarch Azure Mist believed that Meng Zhang would definitely remember to reward him appropriately. He appreciated Meng Zhang's understanding and clear expression of his intentions, which made him quite satisfied. Senior figures of major sects needed to maintain their dignity and consider their reputations, so he didn't immediately demand rewards from Meng Zhang. Instead, he hinted that someone would contact him in the future to discuss the matter, and Meng Zhang should first handle post-war affairs.

After bidding farewell to the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs, Meng Zhang returned to Red Rock Valley. At this moment, the Sea Clan army, under Hai Pofeng's command, began to slowly withdraw from the battlefield.

According to the previous agreement, the Sea Clan army will not invade here again. The vast territory from Red Rock Valley to two thousand miles west of it, including the original land of Red Rock Valley and Taiyi Sect, now all belong to Taiyi Sect's territory.

However, Taiyi Sect alone cannot swallow such a large benefit. Both the two Primordial Spirit True Monarchs and Beast King Mountain must be compensated generously. Meng Zhang's task is to do his best to retain Red Rock Valley and allow Taiyi Sect to enjoy the most delicious piece of the fruit.

Next, from top to bottom, Taiyi Sect becomes busy with post-war affairs, including rewarding internal disciples for their contributions and appeasing members of the Jiuqu League.

Additionally, there are large numbers of escaped demons and beasts in the newly acquired western territory of Demon Wind Gobi, which need to be dealt with gradually.

It takes three months for Taiyi Sect to handle the aftermath and for the injured cultivators to control their injuries.

At this time, an envoy from True Monarch Azure Mist arrives at the Hundred Grass Slope, Taiyi Sect's mountain gate, to negotiate with Meng Zhang. Beast King Mountain had sent cultivators here even earlier.

Beast King Mountain also suffered heavy losses, with many cultivators injured or killed, including the death of a Gold Core Daoist Master. Having put in so much effort and paid such a price, Beast King Mountain naturally expects compensation.

In addition, although Jin Li True Monarch did not attend, as Taiyi Sect's protector, she naturally deserves a substantial share.

Meng Zhang works hard and persuades them with great effort to come up with a final distribution plan that barely satisfies Beast King Mountain and True Monarch Azure Mist's envoy.

During this process, Meng Zhang doesn't hesitate to use the names of Jin Li True Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist to suppress the Beast King Mountain cultivators.

In the end, Taiyi Sect retains ownership of all the territory within two thousand miles of Red Rock Valley. A corridor-shaped passage is specially left open, connecting Taiyi Sect's existing territory to Red Rock Valley.

True Monarch Azure Mist receives the largest share of the remaining territory, which they will take over in the future.

Beast King Mountain also receives a significant share, which they will likewise take over later.

Jin Li True Monarch gains a large piece of territory, but she lacks manpower to manage it, so it will temporarily be under Taiyi Sect's control. All the profits from this territory will be regularly given to her by Taiyi Sect.

With this major issue settled, Meng Zhang finally breathes a sigh of relief.

Although Sea Clan's army failed this time, it doesn't mean they are weaker. Meng Zhang's victory against Ying Gaofei was also due to some luck. It's likely that both the high-ranking Sea Clan members and Ying Gaofei himself won't be convinced of their defeat.

However, Sea Clan should not cause trouble again in the short term. Ying Gaofei's injuries are severe and need time to heal. Moreover, he is proud and may not want to make trouble in public after suffering such a big loss.

The Sea Clan army also suffered heavy losses and needs time to recover.

With two Human Clan Primordial Spirit True Monarchs witnessing the ceasefire, Sea Clan's high-ranking members might not care about their reputation, but they cannot ignore the True Monarchs' attitude. If they overturn the agreement and invade again in the short term, it would be like slapping the faces of Jin Li True Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist. If they want to maintain their reputation in the Jiuqu League, they will not ignore it.

For the time being, Sea Clan is not a concern, and Beast King Mountain has been appeased. Taiyi Sect finally has a peaceful external environment.

For a long time to come, Taiyi Sect must focus on recuperating and slowly regaining their strength. Especially after losing so many disciples in this battle, it will take time to recover from such significant human losses. In comparison, the material losses seem more acceptable.

Taiyi Sect has indeed gained a lot, not to mention the newly acquired vast territory. Just the Red Rock Valley alone is worth Taiyi Sect's desperate efforts. Red Rock Valley is an extremely rare and wealthy place in the Demon Wind Gobi, with a Third Rank spirit vein and abundant resources. It will not only provide a substantial income for Taiyi Sect but also support more Gold Core Daoist Masters.

Meng Zhang's main purpose in initiating this war was to eliminate the threat from the Sea Clan and prevent their further expansion. He values the lives of Taiyi Sect's disciples far more than acquiring new territories. If it were merely for territorial gains, he would never sacrifice so many disciples.

The result of the great battle not only achieved Taiyi Sect's goal of stopping Sea Clan but also brought tremendous gains. However, besides dealing with the significant losses of the disciples and offering more benefits to appease other forces, Secret Hall also needs to strengthen investigations to prevent these forces from undermining Taiyi Sect's interests in secret.

In summary, although the great battle was won, many troubles have just begun. Taiyi Sect is currently far from internal and external difficulties, but it is also not the time to enjoy the fruits of victory peacefully. Meng Zhang will need to work hard for a long time to solve various internal and external troubles.

Chapter 646: Insufficient

Time flies, and the passing of time is swift. In the blink of an eye, it has been almost twenty years since the truce between Taiyi Sect and Sea Clan. During these two decades, Taiyi Sect has slowly licked its wounds and regained its strength. As the Gold Core cultivators did not suffer losses in the great war, though the lower-ranking disciples suffered many casualties, these losses can gradually be replenished given enough time.

With the vast territory currently under Taiyi Sect's control, the number of ordinary people born and awakened with spiritual roots is increasing. Moreover, following the customary practices of the Cultivation World, when major losses are suffered and there is an urgent need for personnel, the sects tend to consciously or unconsciously lower their entry requirements to recruit more disciples. Although doing so may temporarily lower the overall quality of the disciples, it is an effective way to quickly replenish manpower. Once the immediate crisis is resolved, any issues can be adjusted in due course.

The newly acquired extensive territory of Taiyi Sect has not yet had the chance for extensive development. They have merely done some basic construction in Red Rock Valley, with the main focus on reinforcing its defenses and establishing some permanent defense structures.

Beast King Mountain, having gained a large piece of territory in Demon Wind Gobi, quickly put in manpower and resources for extensive development. Demon Wind Gobi itself is highly suitable for the breeding and survival of demon beasts, and countless demon beast clans have lived here for thousands of years.

Beast King Mountain has not destroyed the original environment but instead invested considerable effort in improving various conditions and constructing breeding grounds for demon beasts. Due to its background, Beast King Mountain used to remain low-key within the Jiuqu League and missed out on many benefits. Now that they finally have the opportunity to expand, they naturally won't let it slip away easily.

Meng Zhang initially thought that such a small territory in Demon Wind Gobi would not matter much for a Primordial Spirit sect like Beast King Mountain. However, he was unaware of the specific situation of Beast King Mountain. Such a vast territory is a rare and valuable tonic for Beast King Mountain. Especially with the abundant resources of demon beasts here, it's like a heaven-sent treasure trove.

If it weren't for the involvement of Jin LiTrue Monarch and True Monarch Azure Mist in this matter, Beast King Mountain might have indeed relied on the power of the Primordial Spirit sect to forcibly claim more territory from Taiyi Sect.

The western part of Demon Wind Gobi, where Jin LiTrue Monarch is based, is far more suitable for the survival of demon beasts than the eastern part currently occupied by Taiyi Sect, and naturally, it possesses more demon beast resources.

Jin LiTrue Monarch has also claimed a significant portion of the newly acquired territory in name. In order to repair and improve their relationship with her, Taiyi Sect has not only increased offerings over the years but also, in a situation where they lack manpower and can't even manage their own territory, sent people to prioritize the development of Jin LiTrue Monarch's territory and submitted all the resources they obtained.

If there are any shortcomings in the development or a bad harvest, Taiyi Sect will even use its own resources to make up the difference, ensuring that Jin LiTrue Monarch receives all the expected profits.

This incident has made Meng Zhang and the high-ranking members of Taiyi Sect fully realize the importance of having a Primordial Spirit realm powerhouse as a backer. If Jin LiTrue Monarch no longer shelters Taiyi Sect, not to mention external enemies, even the forces within the Jiuqu League could devour Taiyi Sect entirely. Of course, Jin LiTrue Monarch is ultimately an outsider, and even with a good relationship, they cannot rely on her indefinitely.

Currently, Taiyi Sect's most urgent need is to have its own Primordial Spirit True Monarch. Among the many Gold Core Daoist Masters of Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang, the Gold Core late stage Sect Master, is the most likely to break through to the Primordial Spirit realm. Meng Zhang himself is well aware of this, and he has devoted more time to cultivation.

Over these years, he has acted alone, taking significant risks by flying to the Nine Heavens multiple times to collect Nine Heavens Refined Essence for his own cultivation. As a Diviner, his Spiritual Awareness is remarkable. He acts according to the guidance of Spiritual Awareness, which allows him to avoid most dangers and achieve certain gains almost every time.

However, the Nine Heavens Refined Essence obtained from these gains is still insufficient to meet his cultivation needs. At this point, Meng Zhang feels the disadvantage of starting from scratch in certain aspects. Without a powerful elder's help, he relies solely on self-reliance, resulting in low efficiency and greatly slowing down his cultivation speed.

It is said that major sects with Primordial Spirit True Monarchs let their Gold Core late stage disciples enter the Nine Heavens primarily for training. The Nine Heavens Refined Essence needed for the true focus of cultivation, the Primordial Spirit seeds, is often collected by Primordial Spirit stage elders.

In this regard, Meng Zhang has no Primordial Spirit stage elders to rely on. If he wants to obtain a large amount of Nine Heavens Refined Essence, he must find another way. He once tried to use the Grand Evolving Fortune and perform a Calculated, but the results were vague, only receiving a message that the opportunity had not yet arrived. The higher his skill in Divination, the more he realizes the limitations of divination techniques. Strong practitioners at the Primordial Spirit level cannot be divined, nor can Fourth Rank Heaven and Earth Spiritual Objects. The Nine Heavens Refined Essence falls somewhere in between Third Rank and Fourth Rank. While small quantities can be obtained without Calculated, attempting to acquire large quantities, even with active use of divination, yields little useful information.

Nonetheless, Meng Zhang's current cultivation speed and the amount of Nine Heavens Refined Essence he acquires far surpass that of ordinary loose cultivators, and even within the major sects, only the conditions of certain elite disciples are better than his own. After all, he is the Sect Master and, in addition to cultivation, must allocate some time to handle important sect matters.

Red Rock Valley is not only a valuable place but also an important defense position for Taiyi Sect against potential Sea Clan invasions. Despite Sea Clan not causing any trouble in recent years, Meng Zhang has arranged strong defensive forces there. Gold Core Daoist Masters from the sect take turns to guard the valley, ensuring sufficient Gold Core-level strength to respond to any threats.

Niu Dawei suffered severe injuries in the last major battle, and although he later used secret methods to suppress the injuries, they left significant after-effects. Even after so many years of recuperation, the injuries have not fully healed. To help Niu Dawei's recovery, Meng Zhang sent him to the Jiuqu League headquarters, Jiuqu City, to serve as a Taiyi Sect elder within the league. This allows Niu Dawei to interact with various forces, expand Taiyi Sect's network, and weave larger relationships while also seeking opportunities for his own treatment in the prosperous, resource-rich, and powerhouse-filled city.

With Niu Dawei leaving the sect and heading to Jiuqu City, Meng Zhang assigned several Gold Core stage elders to handle the daily affairs of the sect that Niu Dawei used to be in charge of. Given Taiyi Sect's current structure, as long as no major events occur, the various elders and Hall Masters can handle day-to-day matters efficiently.

Chapter 647: Reorganization

In these years, there has been one thing that gave Meng Zhang, a powerful expert at the Gold Core stage and a Sect Master, a bit of a headache. It happened after True Monarch Azure Mist put in a lot of effort and, as a result, not only received substantial resources from the Taiyi Sect but also occupied a large territory in the western region of Demon Wind Gobi.

As a Primordial Spirit True Monarch and the Elder of Azure Origin Sect, he naturally didn't have the time and energy to manage such a vast territory. Therefore, he arranged for some small sects and clans to gradually move to this area and establish their gates, engaging in extensive development.

These sects and clans were all part of the vassals of Azure Origin Sect, attached to the faction led by True Monarch Azure Mist. In the past, the main family of Taiyi Sect, Twin Success Valley, a mere Foundation Building sect, could have a large number of vassal forces. Gold Core sects like Flying Swan Sect had even more numerous vassals.

Azure Origin Sect, being a Primordial Spirit sect, also had many vassals, and it even had vassals of its vassals. While presenting a united front to the outside world, it was not without internal conflicts and factional struggles.

True Monarch Azure Mist had a large group of followers, including disciples, descendants of his family bloodline, and many others, forming a vast network that wielded significant influence. Although it was not his original intention, a considerable number of cultivators attached themselves to him, seeking his protection and offering him offerings.

As the undisputed leader of this force, he naturally had to consider the well-being of the sect when enjoying the benefits and offerings brought by its influence. The newly acquired territory was meant to be a good place to settle his followers.

The sects and clans that attached themselves to True Monarch Azure Mist either moved directly to this territory or established branches there. In less than twenty years, many cultivators had migrated, leading to prosperous development.

Initially, these sects and clans were relatively well-behaved and focused on peaceful development. However, over time, some of them started causing trouble, especially the indulgent and troublemaking members within these sects and clans. They would often rely on their backing to stir up troubles, even using the name of True Monarch Azure Mist, causing disturbances and turmoil in the once peaceful Demon Wind Gobi.

While it might have been tolerable if these people caused trouble only in their own territory, the problem was that they also caused incidents in the surrounding territories, primarily those controlled by the various powers of the Hanhai Alliance. As the largest force in Demon Wind Gobi, Taiyi Sect was the leader of the Hanhai Alliance. If they ignored such matters, it would severely impact their reputation and credibility.

However, dealing with these troublemakers and their backers, who might be connected to True Monarch Azure Mist, was also a troublesome task. In reality, as Demon Wind Gobi became more prosperous and attracted more foreign cultivators, the public order in the area gradually deteriorated. Meng Zhang had long intended to rectify the situation but was hindered by various entanglements, making it difficult to take action.

The development and prosperity of Demon Wind Gobi were a millennium-long plan of Taiyi Sect, critical to their future. Meng Zhang was determined to clean up and reorganize the area, even if it meant offending some people, in order to restore order in Demon Wind Gobi.

Before taking action, Meng Zhang sought the opinions of the elders in Taiyi Sect. The female elder, Hu Jing, came up with an idea that could alleviate much of the external pressure and avoid offending too many people. After some hesitation, Meng Zhang decided to adopt her suggestion.

Within the Hanhai Alliance, besides Taiyi Sect cultivators, the only Gold Core Daoist Master was Jin Qiao'er from the Qiaoshou Sect. Meng Zhang appointed Jin Qiao'er as the enforcer elder of the Hanhai Alliance, giving her full authority over law enforcement within the sect. Additionally, she was entrusted with maintaining the discipline and order of the Hanhai Alliance.

Meng Zhang's appointment of Jin Qiao'er was not solely based on her Cultivation Base; it was primarily due to her status as the beloved direct disciple of Jin Li True Monarch. True Monarch Azure Mist had numerous descendants and people associated with him, but not all of them had the privilege to meet him personally. Jin Qiao'er, being a direct disciple, could enforce punishment if necessary, and even if any rumors reached True Monarch Azure Mist, he would not likely intervene.

Although Meng Zhang might be accused of exploiting Jin Qiao'er, it was a win-win solution. Over the years, Jin Qiao'er and Qiaoshou Sect had received many benefits from Taiyi Sect and were always treated with special care. Now, it was their turn to contribute when needed.

Jin Qiao'er readily accepted Meng Zhang's appointment and took on the responsibility without hesitation. Despite her usual seclusion and disinterest in external affairs, she was well aware of the recent developments in Demon Wind Gobi. She had long been dissatisfied with the unruly behavior of these foreign cultivators.

With Meng Zhang's appointment, Jin Qiao'er could now lawfully restore order in Demon Wind Gobi. She selected a group of cultivators from Qiaoshou Sect and Taiyi Sect to serve under her command. Although she was a female cultivator, she showed no mercy when dealing with the troublemakers and soon had them under control.

In addition to Jin Qiao'er's actions, Meng Zhang also made significant efforts to ensure the smooth development of Demon Wind Gobi. After years of development, Demon Wind Gobi had grown increasingly prosperous, surpassing Endless Sea of Sand in both cultivation forces and the number of cultivators.

Although Taiyi Sect appeared to be at odds with Endless Sea of Sand on the surface, many cultivation forces, including Fire Cloud Sect, had various secret dealings with Taiyi Sect. Cultivators from Endless Sea of Sand also showed a growing interest in visiting and gaining experience in Demon Wind Gobi.

Meng Zhang had ambitious plans and intended to build Grand Lion Ridge into a large trading city similar to Great Wind City. Grand Lion Ridge sat on a Third Rank spirit vein, located in the southwest direction of Demon Wind Gobi, not too far from Great Wind City and Endless Sea of Sand. This location had immense potential and attracted more and more cultivators.

The construction of the grand city was not an overnight task. Apart from building the city itself, attracting various Shang Families to settle in and drawing a steady stream of cultivators required considerable effort. Meng Zhang saw this as a crucial objective for Taiyi Sect's future development and invested significant resources to gradually start the construction.

Regardless of the manpower, resources, or time required, if Grand Lion Ridge were to become a thriving trading city, it would bring enormous benefits and opportunities to Taiyi Sect.

Chapter 648: Situation

Jin Qiao'er not only possesses a profound Cultivation Base but is also highly capable and proficient in various methods. She acts with a firm hand and has quickly brought order and peace to the entire Demon Wind Gobi shortly after assuming her position. Though it may not be completely pristine like the Haishan River, there has been a significant reduction in forced transactions, robberies, and ruthless acts in the entire Demon Wind Gobi and its nearby areas. The heinous acts of killing for treasure and provoking deadly battles have mostly disappeared.

It's not just those who are nominally associated with True Monarch Azure Mist who fear her, even those who are merely tangentially related to him from a distance of ten thousand miles are not spared if they fall into her hands. Jin Qiao'er is fair and strictly enforces the law, showing no favoritism or corruption.

Even the cultivators from Beast King Mountain, who initially acted audaciously due to their Primordial Spirit sect background, were brought to order by Jin Qiao'er after being disciplined a few times, and they refrained from causing further trouble.

Meng Zhang fully approves of Jin Qiao'er's approach. Taiyi Sect is, after all, a so-called orthodox sect, and they must maintain a good image externally. Apart from adhering to Taiyi Sect's rules, the disciples must also follow the regulations of the Hanhai Dao Alliance.

Meng Zhang doesn't expect all the disciples of the sect to be completely free of wrongdoing. However, at least within the Demon Wind Gobi and on Taiyi Sect's territory, they must behave properly and avoid any incidents of forceful acquisitions, killings for treasures, or similar actions.

Especially since Meng Zhang is currently working hard to improve the environment in the Demon Wind Gobi and has ambitions to develop Grand Lion Ridge into a major trading city. They cannot afford any incidents that might damage the sect's reputation while attracting merchants and cultivators from all walks of life.

As for what these disciples might do outside these territories, Meng Zhang's control is limited. As long as they don't cause major trouble and bring disasters to the sect, even if they engage in some misdeeds, the higher-ups of the sect will turn a blind eye and pretend not to see.

Of course, regardless of their actions, the facade of a prestigious orthodox sect must not be compromised, and the identity of a righteous cultivator must be maintained.

Another five years have passed, and all the affairs in the Demon Wind Gobi have proceeded smoothly according to Meng Zhang's arrangements. Taiyi Sect has been rapidly developing, and the vitality lost in the previous great battle is gradually recovering. Some disciples have even broken through to the Gold Core stage.

One such disciple who advanced to the Gold Core stage is named Fang Hanyu, a true disciple of the sect. However, Meng Zhang is not very familiar with him.

Currently, Taiyi Sect's system for cultivating disciples is well-established. Refining Qi stage disciples are mostly outer sect members, and only after advancing to the Foundation Building stage can they become Inner-Sect Disciples.

Those who consume Lesser Foundation Building Pills or use similar methods to reach the Foundation Building stage but lose the potential for further advancement can become at most sect officials but not Inner-Sect Disciples.

To reach the Foundation Building late stage with excellent overall performance and have a higher chance of advancing to the Gold Core stage, disciples must undergo layers of selection within the sect to become true disciples.

True disciples not only receive special attention and training from the sect but also become the core of the sect, gaining access to many sect secrets and profound inheritances.

Taiyi Sect has several thousand disciples, but only a few, around a dozen, can become true disciples. Though each true disciple requires Meng Zhang's approval after being selected, his time is limited, and he cannot deeply understand all these disciples.

A disciple whom Meng Zhang was not very familiar with before has become the new Gold Core Daoist Master, and he is not displeased; rather, he feels gratified. This indicates that the sect's cultivation system has matured, and the disciples' growth is very healthy. Even without his special attention, truly outstanding disciples can still stand out.

As for the disciples who receive Meng Zhang's special attention, their growth is even more pleasing. Meng Zhang's senior disciple, Niu Dawei, has already formed the core, and his second disciples, An Xiaoran and An Moran, are also on the right path and not far from breaking through to the Gold Core stage.

While Taiyi Sect is flourishing, there have been quite a few changes in Jiuqu League. In recent years, the overall situation in Jiuqu League has taken a downturn in some respects. Many aspects have started to decline.

The Three Sects Alliance, which had a good relationship with Jiuqu League, is facing increasing pressure due to the relentless attacks from the Dali Dynasty. They are feeling overwhelmed. Given Dali Dynasty's expansion, after eliminating the Three Sects Alliance and occupying the Crossing Severing Mountain Range, their next target will undoubtedly be Jiuqu League. More and more forces within Jiuqu League feel uneasy about this. Far-sighted high-level members are aware that Dali Dynasty will be a formidable enemy to Jiuqu League.

In theory, Jiuqu League should try its best to assist the Three Sects Alliance and help them resist Dali Dynasty's attacks. If possible, they could even send troops to aid in the war directly.

However, Jiuqu League has faced significant troubles in recent years. The extraterritorial Barbarian Clans, occupying most of the Yuantu Great Prairie, have become unusually active. Originally, the joint efforts of the Three Sects Alliance and Jiuqu League kept the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans at a disadvantage and firmly suppressed them in Yuantu Great Prairie.

But now, the Three Sects Alliance has withdrawn all its cultivator teams due to Dali Dynasty's invasion, leaving Jiuqu League to face the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans alone. To everyone's surprise, the strength of the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans has surged, and they have launched counteroffensives one after another.

As a result, Jiuqu League is facing increased pressure in Yuantu Great Prairie, and the situation has changed dramatically. Within Jiuqu League, the Jade Sword Sect, which advocates taking the initiative to attack Dali Dynasty as soon as possible, has been the main force resisting the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans for many years. In Yuantu Great Prairie, it is mainly the Jade Sword Sect leading a coalition of various forces within Jiuqu League to confront the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans.

Now, with the massive offensive of the extraterritorial Barbarian Clans, Jade Sword Sect has been heavily engaged, and it temporarily has no time for anything else. The faction within Jiuqu League that advocates taking the initiative to attack Dali Dynasty is thus frustrated and has lost a lot of influence.

Moreover, most importantly, facing the large-scale attack of the Barbarian Clans, even though Jiuqu League is not exactly self-sufficient, it has no choice but to divert more forces to Yuantu Great

Prairie. They cannot concentrate too much strength even if they want to start a war with Dali Dynasty.

As a member of Jiuqu League, Taiyi Sect is obliged to contribute a certain amount of cultivation resources to the alliance. With the huge consumption of the war in Yuantu Great Prairie, the share of contributions assigned to Taiyi Sect is also increasing.

If the war continues to escalate, the Jiuqu League's higher-ups may even conscript Taiyi Sect cultivators to participate in the battle in Yuantu Great Prairie.

Chapter 649: Going abroad on a diplomatic mission

If you were to say that the high-level members of the Jiuqu League are indifferent and do nothing about the current situation they are facing, it would be underestimating them. Those cultivators who have reached such a level and hold such positions are definitely not fools; their intelligence is at least above average. In fact, each of these old folks is a seasoned strategist, skilled in scheming and cunning.

Though they may have conflicts due to differing perspectives and sometimes engage in foolish opposition for the sake of opposing, it hasn't made them foolish. These perceptive old foxes remain alert before the crisis strikes.

One reason for this alertness is the significant internal disagreements within the Azure Origin Sect and their ongoing rivalry with the Jade Sword Sect, causing major divisions among the Jiuqu League's high-level members. Another reason is that the Jade Sword Sect, which advocates for war, has been occupied with confronting the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan on Yuan Tu Great Prairie. Previously, the Jiuqu League had been hesitant to initiate an all-out war against the Dali Dynasty, and now the situation does not permit the Jiuqu League to rashly open a new warfront.

Even so, faced with the impending worsening situation, the Jiuqu League's high-level members have taken proactive measures as a remedy. On one hand, they have started supplying various war materials to the Crossing Severing Mountain Range to support the Three Sects Alliance. Additionally, the Jiuqu League is helping the Three Sects Alliance recruit loose cultivators from within their territory to go to the Crossing Severing Mountain Range to participate in the war. Moreover, if cultivators from the major forces within the Jiuqu League go to participate in the war as individuals, the Jiuqu League's high-level members will not only not obstruct them but also secretly encourage them.

In reality, the Three Sects Alliance, facing a battle that concerns the life and death of their sects, has already brought out all their resources and, with the support of the Jiuqu League, offered high rewards to recruit cultivators from all over to aid them in countering the Dali Dynasty.

On the other hand, the expansion of the Dali Dynasty is incredibly strong. In less than a thousand years, it has annihilated many cultivation forces and dominated the region, with no signs of slowing down its expansion.

The Dali Dynasty poses a threat not only to the Jiuqu League but also to all the surrounding cultivation forces, making it the common enemy of the Cultivation World. Since the Jiuqu League lacks the strength to confront the Dali Dynasty, it naturally seeks external assistance and allies.

The Dali Dynasty is located south of the Jiuqu League, separated by the Crossing Severing Mountain Range. Beyond the Dali Dynasty lies the border region of the Middle-Earth Continent. Instead of causing trouble in the Middle-Earth Continent's direction, the Dali Dynasty is expanding towards the north, seizing the peripheral regions of the Grand Dust World to enhance its own power.

To the east of the Jiuqu League is Yuan Tu Great Prairie, where the flames of war are currently raging, requiring continuous investment of resources from the Jiuqu League.

To the north of the Jiuqu League are the Endless Sea of Sand and the Demon Wind Gobi. These two major regions are barely under the control of the Jiuqu League. The Fire Cloud Sect and the Yellow Lotus Sect's East River Branch, which occupy most of the Endless Sea of Sand, have been required to pay tribute.

Taiyi Sect, as a newly joined member of the Jiuqu League, aside from the initial years, has been required to pay tributes regularly. Fortunately, Taiyi Sect is protected by True Monarch Jin Li and is also in good terms with True Monarch Azure Mist from the Azure Origin Sect. The amount of tribute shared by Taiyi Sect is not substantial, so the burden is not heavy on them.

Since the intensification of the war on Yuan Tu Great Prairie, the Jiuqu League has had to support the Three Sects Alliance. While the major forces within the Jiuqu League are strong and wealthy, their resources are limited. All major forces have been asked to provide more supplies to support the two battlefronts.

Taiyi Sect is no exception to this matter, as no one's face carries much weight in such a major event. At most, Taiyi Sect can expect relatively fair treatment and not suffer from harsh exploitation. The pressing attacks from the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan have prompted discussions about conscripting Taiyi Sect and other rear-guard sects to participate in the war.

Apart from tapping into their own potential and gaining more strength internally, the Jiuqu League also actively seeks allies from outside. To the southwest of the Jiuqu League lies the sprawling Grand Crossing Mountain Range, which, along with the Crossing Severing Mountain Range,

constitutes the two largest mountain ranges to the north of the Grand Dust World. Though they are not directly connected, their mountain ranges are not too far apart, and from a high-altitude perspective, they can be easily seen as one.

The Crossing Severing Mountain Range and the Grand Crossing Mountain Range differ significantly, with the Crossing Severing Mountain Range being located below. The name "Crossing Severing Mountain Range" is related to the Grand Crossing Mountain Range. Near the Grand Crossing Mountain Range, numerous powerful cultivation forces exist, and the number of cultivators is as abundant as stars in the Ganges River. In the surrounding regions, there are even mentions of the "Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle."

The overall strength of the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle is extremely strong, surpassing that of the Jiuqu League and the Three Sects Alliance. If it weren't for a demonic calamity that caused heavy losses to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle in the past, the major forces within the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle might have extended their influence to other regions.

Given the expansion trend of the Dali Dynasty, after annihilating the Three Sects Alliance and occupying the Crossing Severing Mountain Range, their next target is likely to be the Jiuqu League. If the Jiuqu League cannot resist the Dali Dynasty, the Dali Dynasty will then target only the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle.

Any cultivator with some foresight within the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle should be able to see this point. Now, what the Jiuqu League needs to do is send envoys to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, visit various major cultivation forces, and earnestly explain the situation, seeking their support and assistance to confront the Dali Dynasty.

This is not an easy task; it comes with high risks. The Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle is over ten thousand miles away from the Jiuqu League, with a long and perilous journey. Given the intelligence capabilities of the Dali Dynasty, the movements of the Jiuqu League are unlikely to go unnoticed. The situation in the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle is complex, and distinguishing friend from foe is challenging.

Nobody knows for sure if there are cultivation forces secretly cooperating with the Dali Dynasty, even among those forces not related to the Dali Dynasty. It's uncertain whether these cultivation forces would harbor goodwill towards the Jiuqu League.

Though unofficial exchanges and trade between the Jiuqu League and the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle have never ceased, there seems to have been no formal official communication between the two major forces in the past. However, regardless of the situation, the high-level

members of the Jiuqu League must firmly execute their plan and send an envoy to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, striving to gain assistance from there.

In the worst-case scenario, even if the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, like the previous Jiuqu League, is unwilling to rashly offend the Dali Dynasty and become embroiled in disputes, the Jiuqu League should seek their assistance as a second option to confront the extraterritorial Barbarian Clan on Yuan Tu Great Prairie. Confronting invaders from beyond the heavens not only carries a sense of righteousness but also offers many tangible benefits. Any cultivation force within the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle with sound judgment should readily agree to help.

Chapter 650: Intent Moves

In recent years, there have been various changes within the Jiuqu League. All sorts of intelligence and information are transmitted back to the sect through Taiyi Sect's outpost stationed in the Jiuqu League. They leave no detail unreported.

Not to mention anything else, since Taiyi Sect joined the Jiuqu League, they have been qualified in gathering various information. As long as the information is not too highly classified, it is made public to the sect's disciples. Any disciple interested can freely inquire about it. If there are specific special needs, they can even use the sect's good deeds to exchange for more detailed intelligence.

The Jiuqu League has increased the demands for contributions from its members, and Taiyi Sect also needs to submit more cultivation resources and spirit stones. However, with Taiyi Sect's current financial strength and income situation, they can manage it without feeling too much pressure.

What Sect Master Meng Zhang truly cares about is when Taiyi Sect disciples will be summoned to participate in the war at Yuantu Great Prairie.

As for the news that the Jiuqu League is preparing to send an envoy to the Grand Crossing Mountain Range, he has naturally heard of it but hasn't paid much attention, thinking it has nothing to do with himself.

Shortly after this information was transmitted back to the sect, the elder of the sect, Extreme Sword Spirit General, took the initiative to visit.

With Extreme Sword Spirit General's status, he easily met with Meng Zhang. After the proper courtesy of meeting the Sect Master, Extreme Sword Spirit General went straight to the point.

It turns out that his main purpose for visiting Meng Zhang this time is to ask him to find a way to join the Jiuqu League's envoy heading to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle and go to the Grand Crossing Mountain Range together.

Facing Meng Zhang's puzzled expression, Extreme Sword Spirit General explained carefully.

This dispatch of the Jiuqu League's envoy to the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle is of great significance, as it relates to their plan to counter the Dali Dynasty. To prevent any accidents during the mission, the escorting force of the envoy will undoubtedly be strengthened.

If Meng Zhang can accompany the envoy on the journey, the safety along the way will be guaranteed. After arriving at the Grand Crossing Cultivation Circle, as a member of the Jiuqu League envoy, Meng Zhang's status will be special, and he will receive preferential treatment from many local cultivation forces, which will facilitate his future actions.

If there are any hiccups in Meng Zhang's actions, with his identity, it will also be easier for him to pass through without arousing suspicion.

As for why Extreme Sword Spirit General is insisting on Meng Zhang taking this opportunity to go to the Grand Crossing Mountain Range, he doesn't need to explain much, as Meng Zhang is already well aware.

After Taiyi Sect's mysterious annihilation on the Middle-Earth Continent, some survivors escaped to the Grand Crossing Mountain Range and rebuilt Taiyi Sect there. Later, during the demonic calamity, Taiyi Sect was once again destroyed, and only a few disciples managed to escape. Everything at the sect's gate had to be abandoned.

Although demons occupied the Taiyi Sect's gate, given their intelligence, they might not be able to completely loot the place. Especially locations like the Hidden Scripture Pavilion, which contain invaluable legacies and scriptures for cultivators, are of no interest to demons.

Moreover, even if there were some exceptionally intelligent demons among them who knew how to collect the legacies of human cultivators, during the sect's annihilation, the remaining disciples would not have left everything unattended. Anything truly valuable and related to the sect's inheritance would have been carefully concealed.

Even if a cultivator were to arrive there, it would be extremely challenging to find these hidden treasures.

And the four Guardian Spirit Generals, being the most trusted dao soldiers of the sect, are well aware of many of the sect's secrets. If they were to return to the Taiyi Sect gate, they would likely be able to find clues to those hidden items.

As for why it is necessary for Sect Master Meng Zhang to personally go instead of delegating the task to a Gold Core cultivator under him, it's because certain secrets within the sect's gate can only be accessed by the Taiyi Sect Sect Master. Although Taiyi Sect has experienced several annihilation events and subsequent rebuildings, its lineage and traditions have remained unbroken.

The current Taiyi Sect is indeed a continuation of the flourishing Taiyi Sect from the past, and Sect Master Meng Zhang's identity has been passed down through generations, in accordance with the Taiyi Sect's rules. Despite the vast difference in the disciples' cultivation bases and the sect's overall strength, this Taiyi Sect of today maintains a legitimate and rightful succession from its heyday.

Even if the Primordial Spirit ancestors were still present, they would have to acknowledge Sect Master Meng Zhang's identity as completely reasonable and lawful. Within the rebuilt Taiyi Sect gate, there naturally exists a mechanism to confirm Meng Zhang's identity as Sect Master and recognize his authority.

To be honest, Meng Zhang has long been interested in the rebuilt Taiyi Sect gate. When he took over Taiyi Sect, it was impoverished and lacked everything. If it weren't for obtaining some of the legacies at the heritage grounds, he might not have made it to this point today.

However, the legacies obtained from the heritage grounds were not of a high enough level, limited to the Gold Core stage and below. Now that he has reached the Gold Core late stage and faces the problem of breaking through to the Primordial Spirit stage, he not only lacks complete cultivation techniques but also lacks the experiences and lessons of his predecessors on how to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage. He knows very little about many critical thresholds and barriers.

While Meng Zhang has referenced many other cultivation techniques and indeed gained a lot, if he truly wants to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage, he needs the inheritance of his own sect to have the greatest certainty.

According to the words of the Guardian Spirit Generals, although no Primordial Spirit cultivators emerged from the rebuilt Taiyi Sect, there is no lack of records on how to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage. Especially the core inheritance techniques within the sect still have complete records, enabling cultivation from the Refining Qi stage all the way to the Primordial Spirit stage.

During Taiyi Sect's heyday, the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra" was renowned as an extraordinary superior scripture. As a core inheritance of the sect, many true disciples have practiced it. Numerous predecessors advanced through the stages, leaving behind their experiences, insights, and realizations of breaking through. For Meng Zhang, this knowledge would undoubtedly be of great use.

Although Meng Zhang's primary cultivation focus is on the "Sun-Moon Wheel Turning Sutra," he lacks guidance from senior disciples and has no same-level peers to exchange experiences with. He has relied solely on his exceptional comprehension and talent to progress to the Gold Core late stage.

However, if Meng Zhang wishes to advance further, he needs complete scriptures to study and preferably gain the experiences and lessons of his predecessors.

To solve this issue, it seems that the only hope lies in entering the gate occupied by demons and obtaining the inheritance left behind by Taiyi Sect. Especially with the changing circumstances in the surrounding areas and the deteriorating situation of the Jiuqu League, Meng Zhang needs to break through to the Primordial Spirit stage as quickly as possible to protect himself and safeguard the sect's power in the upcoming upheaval.

Only as a Primordial Spirit True Monarch can he have a place within the Jiuqu League and have a certain degree of influence. In such dire circumstances, relying on others' protection is unreliable, and he must stand on his own and strive for self-reliance.