

A Record 101

Chapter 101: The Transient Guild

Luo Meng shuddered slightly at the sight of the change in Han Li's demeanor, and he sighed, "Please don't be angry, Fellow Daoist. Truth be told... even I'm not very sure of how this happened myself..."

"All I remember is that my injuries had become too severe, and I fell unconscious after I left behind my final words... Only several days ago did I suddenly awaken and realize that I had already perished, with only this wisp of my soul's aura remaining in this Soulbirth Flower..."

"If you already woke up several days ago, then why didn't you reveal yourself? Why did you continue to hide in this Soulbirth Flower?" Han Li asked.

"Well... The first reason for this is that I'm too weak in my current form, and I ran the risk of instantly disintegrating out of existence if I left the Soulbirth Flower. As for the second reason... that's because I was wary of your existence," Luo Meng replied in a rather hesitant voice.

"You recognize me?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"Truth be told... After I awakened, I was able to use the feeble connection I still had with the statues on the island to see what's recently been happening on the island during my descendants' prayer sessions... Hence, I did find out about the efforts you made to protect our Dark Veil Island," Luo Meng replied after a brief hesitation.

Han Li fell silent as he watched the miniature black figure before him with a cold expression.

Judging from the circumstances, Luo Meng was most likely telling the truth. Following his demise, some of his soul's aura was somehow drawn into the Soulbirth Flower, which had the ability to give rise to souls. After that, the wisp of soul's aura became one with the flower, and that was how it had managed to escape Han Li's detection.

Now that the flower had been matured to a certain extent, its soul-gathering ability had been enhanced, thereby allowing this wisp of soul aura to form a temporary soul fragment. Even though the temporary

soul fragment had been bolstered by Han Li's incantation seals, judging from its stuttering speech, it most likely wasn't going to be able to maintain this form for much longer.

Luo Meng was growing a little uneasy in the face of Han Li's silence, and he said in a sheepish voice, "Please forgive me for remaining hidden and trying to fool you, Fellow Daoist... I'm aware that you also wish to pursue the path of the Earth Immortal... so I harbor no delusions that you may help me regain a physical body. As long as you promise me to continue protecting my people, I'm willing to answer all of your questions to the best of my abilities."

"Rest assured, I'm somewhat indebted to your Luo Clan, so I will protect your people as long as the circumstances permit me to do so," Han Li replied.

"I believe you, Fellow Daoist Liu. If you have any questions, then go ahead and ask them. I'll be sure to tell you everything that I know," Luo Meng said with a firm nod.

"First, let's talk about the Transient Guild that this mask just mentioned. What is that all about?" Han Li asked as he took a glance at the cow mask, which was still suspended in mid-air.

"Let's see, how do I put this... The Transient Guild is a very mysterious organization, so I don't know too much about it, and I only joined the organization by chance... However, it was all thanks to this guild that I was able to achieve everything that I went on to achieve..." Luo Meng replied after a brief hesitation.

"Oh? Would you care to elaborate?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"In the past, my cultivation aptitude was quite ordinary. Even though I encountered some opportunities and stumbled my way to the Body Integration Stage, I was perpetually stumped by a cultivation bottleneck and had no hope of further progression...

"After that, I received all types of cultivation resources and guidance in cultivation arts from the Transient Guild, and as a result, I was able to make rapid progress in my cultivation, breaking through to the Grand Ascension Stage before ascending to immortality...

"After that, I continued to cultivate for countless years without being able to manifest any powers of laws, and it was only through the help of the guild again that I was able to become an Earthly Immortal."

"Surely the Transient Guild wouldn't have just provided you with all this assistance free of charge," Han Li said as he raised an eyebrow.

"Of course not... After I became an immortal, I had to return all of the cultivation resources that I used up. For that, I had to serve the Transient Guild for tens of thousands of years without compensation before I was finally able to return my debt... However, after that, I chose to stay in the guild so that I could retain my membership status," Luo Meng explained.

"Is there some type of benefit that you can derive from being a member of the guild even after you become an immortal?" Han Li asked.

"Indeed, Fellow Daoist Liu. The Transient Guild is a far more mysterious and powerful organization than the average person can even begin to fathom... On top of that, the guild champions a policy of equality, where anyone can exchange for anything with one another... After I sustained my severe injuries 10,000 years ago, I was able to exchange for a Soulbirth Flower from the guild in order to reform an Earthly Deity Avatar," Luo Meng explained.

"That's quite interesting," Han Li mused as he stroked his chin in contemplation.

"It's no exaggeration to say that you can obtain virtually anything you want from the Transient Guild as long as you can afford it... You can even recruit powerful allies from the guild to help you kill enemies." Luo Meng seemed to have recalled some past memories, and a hint of excitement had crept into his voice.

"Surely all things must be balanced. If there are so many benefits to staying in the Transient Guild, then I'm sure you have to pay a hefty price to remain in the guild, right?" Han Li asked.

"Indeed... The Transient Guild isn't an organization that you can remain in as you please. The guild has very strict rules, and at the lower levels, in order to maintain membership status, one has to either periodically offer up large quantities of resources to the guild... or complete missions released by the higher-ups..."

"Otherwise, not only will you be evicted from the guild, you'll also have to pay an unimaginable price..." Luo Meng replied with a wry smile.

"What kind of missions do they release?" Han Li asked as a hint of intrigue appeared in his eyes.

"I'm a bit embarrassed to admit this, but I've actually only gone on one mission released by the guild... and it was extremely perilous. It was during that mission that my Earthly Deity Avatar was destroyed while shielding me from a fatal blow, leaving only its head behind. My main body was also severely wounded, but I was fortunate enough to have been able to escape with my life," Luo Meng replied.

"You must've gone into seclusion in this secret area to recover while nurturing this Soulbirth Flower after that mission, right?" Han Li asked.

"That's right... It was also from that point that I never participated in any of the guild's other missions... During the following several thousand years, I had always maintained my membership status in the guild by scraping together resources for offerings..." Luo Meng replied.

"In that case, how did you perish in the end? Even if your Earthly Deity Avatar was completely destroyed, surely that wouldn't pose any threat to your life. Besides, the head of your Earthly Deity Avatar still remains intact, so you can continue to harness the power of faith," Han Li said in a puzzled voice.

Luo Meng fell silent upon hearing this, seemingly lost in past memories.

Only after a long while did he shake his head as he replied in a forlorn voice, "I had already recovered from my injuries, but due to the destruction of my avatar, the power of laws that I was able to wield was very limited. Hence, I hid in this secret area for over 8,000 years... But all of a sudden, an enemy of mine somehow managed to track me down.

"As a result, I had no choice but to emerge from this secret area and face him with my true body. In the end, I was able to kill him, but I had also sustained severe injuries during the battle... After that, I was able to return to this secret area, but my old injuries were compounded by new ones, and I was unable to recover..."

"If the missions are so dangerous, surely the guild wouldn't just send anyone to complete them. Could it be that all low-level members of the Transient Guild are beings of the same caliber as Ancestral Gods like yourself?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"I'm afraid I don't know that..." Luo Meng replied with a shake of his head.

"You may not have any acquaintances in the guild, but seeing as you've gone on a mission, surely you've met some of the guild's other members," Han Li said.

"Allow me to explain, Fellow Daoists... The members of the Transient Guild will only meet while on missions, and no contact is made outside of that... On top of that, during gatherings of guild members, everyone must wear special masks handed down by the guild," Luo Meng explained.

"This is the mask that you're talking about, right? This is indeed quite a special mask. You've already perished long ago, and all that remains is a wisp of your soul's aura. I would say that my spiritual sense is more powerful than the average immortal of my level, but even I was unable to detect anything, yet it was still able to detect your existence," Han Li said as he pointed at the cow mask.

"That's not the only remarkable thing about the mask... Not only is it able to completely conceal its wearer's appearance and aura, it also acts as a treasure to facilitate communication between guild members... As soon as someone loses their membership rights, the mask will immediately self-destruct," Luo Meng replied.

"What do you plan to do about the matter that the mask just spoke of?" Han Li asked.

"What can I possibly do? In my current state, there's no way I can do what the mask asks of me... Even if the guild sends people to investigate, by the time they get here, I will have completely disappeared off the face of this realm... However, if they try to punish my people for my transgressions, I hope that you can keep your promise and help my people avert that crisis," Luo Meng replied with a concerned look on his face.

"You make it sound so easy. If the Transient Guild really is as powerful as you claim, how will I possibly be able to protect this Dark Veil Island on my own?" Han Li asked in a cold voice.

"I naturally wouldn't dare to ask you to directly oppose the guild, but I would be eternally grateful if you could save some of my people and preserve the bloodline of my Dark Veil Island," Luo Meng implored in a desperate voice.

"Perhaps there's another way, but I'm not sure if it'll work," Han Li said as a thoughtful look appeared in his eyes.

"What is it?" Luo Meng hurriedly asked.

"How about I go on this mission in your stead?" Han Li asked.

Luo Meng faltered slightly upon hearing this, following which an incredulous look appeared on his face. "As I already mentioned, all of the missions released by the guild are extremely perilous... Are you sure you want to go, Fellow Daoist Liu?"

Han Li was silent for a moment before replying in a truthful manner, "Truth be told, after hearing your description of the Transient Guild, it seems like this organization will be very useful to me. Hence, I require an identity that'll allow me to remain in the guild. If this mask can completely conceal my aura and appearance, then I'm sure no one will notice even if I go in your place, right?"

Chapter 102: Late

"That would be perfect... The members of the Transient Guild only care about the mask, not the person, anyway... Even if they know that there's a different person under the mask, as long as the mask hasn't been destroyed, they would still accept the substitute...

"Also... it's strictly prohibited to leak the identities of guild members... so that makes it even more difficult for anyone to find out that I've been replaced..." Luo Meng said with a relieved smile, but his words were cutting off intermittently, and he seemed to be in a very feeble state.

An extremely thin wisp of black mist slowly seeped out of his shoulder, then began to sway from side to side like a strand of seaweed.

"I can't maintain this form much longer... Fellow Daoist Liu. If you have any other questions... then ask them now before it's too late..." Luo Meng said with a wry smile as he turned to glance at the wisp of black mist emerging from his shoulder.

Another wisp of black mist began to seep out of his calf as he spoke.

"There's nothing more I want to ask you. If you have dying wishes, then go ahead and tell me. I won't turn them down as long as they're within the realm of my capabilities," Han Li said with a shake of his head.

Luo Meng looked up at the heavens as he murmured, "Just keep your promise to protect my people... I wouldn't dare to ask anything more of you... If my Luo Clan can make a resurgence someday, I would be... ecstatic..."

His voice gradually grew feebler and feebler, and his body also began to warp and fade, dissipating into wisps of black mist that quickly disappeared.

Han Li was a little dazed as he stared at the spot where Luo Meng's soul had just vanished. He couldn't help but be moved by Luo Meng's devotion to his people, even in death.

Only after a long while did he return to his senses, and he made a grabbing motion to draw the cow mask into his grasp.

This time, the mask maintained its substantial form and obediently flew into his hand.

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face as he inspected the strange patterns on the mask in a slightly absentminded manner.

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Close to a month later.

In a region of the sea countless kilometers away from Dark Veil Island, dark gray clouds filled the entire sky, and ferocious gusts of wind were howling incessantly, sweeping up enormous waves.

A streak of azure light pierced through the waves like a peerlessly sharp sword, slicing the waves apart and sending large volumes of water splashing in all directions.

Within the streak of azure light was Han Li, whose facial features were concealed behind the blue cow mask that he was wearing, but his sharp and piercing eyes were visible through the eye holes on the mask.

On the surface of the sea several dozen kilometers up ahead was a round island with a radius of no more than half a kilometer. Looking at the island from afar, it resembled a green leaf that was bobbing up and down in the waves, and that was his destination.

Han Li slowed down slightly, and after flying for close to another 10 kilometers, the island gradually became clearer in his field of view.

There were many sea fig trees growing all over the island, forming a vast expanse of lush greenery. The massive canopies of the trees were intertwined together to form a giant canopy over the entire island, with countless branches that were as thick as adult human arms layering on top of one another to form a sturdy wooden wall.

Countless thin and long lateral roots were trailing down from these dense masses of branches, and they resembled the beard of an elderly man as some of them extended into the soil down below, while others trailed down into the seawater.

Han Li flew over the island before drawing to a halt in mid-air and inspecting the island from afar. The ground on the island was littered with gray bird feces, but not a single seabird could be seen in the forest.

Furthermore, the only sound that he could hear came from the whistling of the wind through the branches of the sea fig trees, and the entire island was abnormally quiet.

Right at this moment, a cold voice rang out beside Han Li's ears.

"Wyrm 15, why are you entering the island?"

Han Li was slightly taken aback by this voice as it had come from the mask that he was wearing rather than from the island.

He didn't delay any further as he descended onto the island.

The soil on the island was very soft and loamy, and each step that Han Li took would leave a footprint beneath him. He traversed through the gaps in the dense forest to arrive at the center of the island, leaving a trail of footsteps in his wake.

At the center of an island was a massive sea fig tree that three people could link their arms around. All of the lateral roots hanging down from its branches had been cleared away to vacate a rather spacious area.

There were several figures in the area, and they were either standing or seated around the trunk of the tree.

Han Li cast his gaze toward the group, and his attention was immediately drawn to the red-robed man seated directly in front of the giant tree.

The man was wearing a crimson dragon mask that also had many strange runes engraved onto its surface, and the number "3" was engraved onto the glabella of the mask in strange characters.

This man was Wyrm 3.

Han Li's heart stirred slightly as he made this realization, but he didn't say anything.

Wyrm 3 only took a casual glance at Han Li before withdrawing his gaze, displaying no intention to speak with him.

Han Li naturally wasn't going to initiate any conversation, either, and he turned his gaze toward the others.

One of the figures gathered around the tree was slightly hunched over and was wearing a loose-fitting purple robe and a blue goat mask, upon which was engraved the number "9".

The figure was resting on their haunches, staring at something on the ground, not even bothering to cast a single glance in Han Li's direction.

Standing not far away from the purple-robed figure was a tall and broad man wearing a blue tiger mask, but he seemed to be more approachable and gave Han Li a slight nod.

Han Li didn't say anything as he cast his gaze toward the number "6" on the man's mask, and he returned the nod of acknowledgment.

To the left of the tree was an elegant woman in a mesh dress with an owl mask on her face. She was leaning against the trunk of the sea fig tree with her slender arms crossed in front of her chest, and as she turned to glance at Han Li, he caught a glimpse of the numbers "2" and "1" on her mask.

Behind her, on the other side of the sea fig tree, a head that was wearing a blue eagle mask that bore the numbers "2" and "5" poked out from behind the tree to take a glance at Han Li, then promptly ducked back behind the tree again.

There was also a thin figure hanging off a branch on the right side of the sea fig tree, and they were wearing a monkey mask with the number "8" engraved upon it.

Upon sensing Han Li's gaze, the thin figure also turned to look at Han Li with their yellow eyes through the holes on their mask.

Below the monkey-masked figure was a thin man wearing a blue robe and a bear mask. He was seated in an upright position, meditating with his eyes closed, and the numbers "1" and "3" were engraved onto the glabella of his mask.

Perhaps it was due to the rules of the Transient Guild or for some other reason, but no one was conversing with anyone else, and even Wrym 3 wasn't saying anything to anyone.

Han Li quickly picked a spot to sit at, then closed his eyes and began to meditate.

Eight days passed by in the blink of an eye, and no one else turned up during this time, but neither did anyone leave or speak.

The atmosphere was a very strange one.

On the morning of the eighth day, right as the first ray of light from the rising sun shone down upon the island, Wrym Three suddenly raised his head slightly, then stood up from the ground as he declared in a rather rigid voice, "Time's up..."

Everyone quickly also stood up upon hearing this, and the thin monkey-masked man who had been seated on the tree branch this entire time immediately jumped down as well.

Right at this moment, a streak of light suddenly sped toward the island from afar, then plummeted out of the sky like an asteroid before crashing down onto the island.

The entire island shuddered violently, and all of the tree branches rustled incessantly.

The streak of light faded to reveal a burly figure wearing a boar mask.

As soon as he set foot on the island, he immediately rushed urgently toward the center of the island, snapping all of the branches and lateral roots in his path like a wrecking ball.

After arriving in the clearing, the man briefly inspected his surroundings, then yelled at the top of his lungs, "Which one of you is Wrym Three?"

He then swept his gaze across everyone present without any inhibitions before his gaze finally settled on the red-robed man.

"So you're Wyrms Three. Hurry up and announce the mission, I still have things to do after this," the boar-masked man said in a loud voice.

"You're late, Wyrms 32," Wyrms 3 declared in a cold voice.

"Give it a rest, I'm only late by a few minutes. Hurry and announce the mission. I don't have any time to waste here," the boar-masked man said in an impatient voice with a dismissive wave of his hand.

All of a sudden, a sense of foreboding welled up in Han Li's heart, and he reflexively took a step backward.

In the next instant, a layer of red light suddenly appeared over Wyrms 3's body, then transformed into a crimson inferno that enveloped him from head to toe. A scorching heatwave then erupted from his body, forcing everyone to rush back in retreat.

Immediately thereafter, he abruptly lunged forward with his one hand outstretched before him like a blade, aimed directly at the boar-masked man's chest.

In the face of Wyrms 3's abrupt attack, the boar-masked man reacted extremely quickly, taking a step back as he made a hand seal to conjure up a layer of white light over his body.

At the same time, a white octagonal shield appeared before him.

The shield was riddled with rhomboid patterns, and there was a layer of dazzling white light radiating from its surface, giving off bursts of law fluctuations.

Even though the boar-masked man was quite rushed in the defensive measures that he was adopting, Han Li noticed that the law fluctuations emanating from his shield were even more powerful than what Han Qiu had been able to muster up.

A dull thump rang out, and to everyone's surprise, there was no resounding clash. Instead, the outcome of the battle was decided after just that single clash.

To everyone's shock and horror, Wyrms 3's hand had already pierced through the octagonal mask and plunged straight into the boar-masked man's heart.

Plumes of white smoke were rising up from the hole on his chest, and the muscles around it had already been completely liquefied, dripping down from his body like molten lava.

"For openly defying the guild's orders and arriving late, Wyrms 32's membership status has been revoked," Wyrms 3 said in a cold voice as he slowly withdrew his hand.

As soon as his voice trailed off, the runes on the boar mask began to glow with dazzling light, following which the mask disintegrated into powder before dissipating into nothingness.

A face that was twisted in shock and agony was revealed beneath the mask, and it seemed that even up to the instant that the boar-masked man met his demise, he was still unable to believe that he had been unable to withstand even a single attack from his assailant.

Chapter 103: Master of Red Moon Island

The top of the boar-masked man's head suddenly sprang open, and a blue nascent soul with a horrified look on its face flew out before attempting to flee into the distance.

Wyrms 3 flicked a finger through the air without even taking a single glance at the nascent soul, releasing a ball of fire that instantly vanished into thin air.

Close to 10 kilometers away, a streak of fire caught up to the blue nascent soul in an instant.

A dull thump rang out, and Wyrms 32's nascent soul exploded into a burst of blue light before vanishing out of existence.

Everyone fell silent upon hearing this, but no one was able to see anyone else's expression due to the fact that they were all wearing masks.

Wyrms 3 swept his gaze over everyone, and there was no intimidation in his eyes. Instead, his eyes were completely aloof and apathetic, as if he were looking at a bunch of inanimate objects.

It was as if in his eyes, the people around him were no different from the rocks and trees on the island, or were simply tools at his disposal.

"The mission you'll be carrying out is to kill the master of Red Moon Island, Gong Shuhong," Wyrms 3 declared in a cold voice.

This announcement was immediately met with a surprised reaction, and several people in the group clearly had their reservations about this mission target.

Han Li's brows also furrowed slightly beneath his cow mask. He had heard about Gong Shuhong from Luo Feng before, and this was certainly not going to be an easy target to assassinate.

According to Luo Feng, Gong Shuhong was a powerful Earthly Immortal with a mid-True Immortal Stage cultivation base. He cultivated the laws of blood, which were an extremely rare branch of the laws of water, and he was renowned all over the Black Wind Sea for his brutality and bloodlust.

Given how vicious and violent he was, he definitely had a great number of enemies, but not only was he extremely formidable, the power of laws that he cultivated was also extremely troublesome to deal with, so no one dared to go after him. Han Li certainly wasn't expecting such a fearsome character to be the target of their mission.

"Wyrms 3, with all due respect, Red Moon Island has always been a very mysterious place and very rarely interacts with the other islands.

"On top of that, for some reason, the island went into isolation several thousand years ago, and all outside cultivators are prohibited from setting foot on the island unless their presence on the island is considered to be necessary by the island master.

"It's said that all trespassers are executed without exception..." the goat-masked Wyrms 8 said in a rather hesitant manner.

"There's no need for you to worry about that. The guild has previously already sent people to infiltrate the island, and they've brought back a great deal of information. We would've waited until we managed to learn more about the island before releasing this mission, but half a month ago, the higher-ups in the guild passed down an order for Gong Shuhong to be killed as soon as possible," Wyrms 3 said as he took a glance at Wyrms 8.

"According to what I've heard, Gong Shuhong ranks near the top among all island masters in the entire Black Wind Sea, only below the masters of the central islands. On top of that, he has many Layman Immortals serving him, so he's not to be taken lightly," the tiger-masked Wyrms 16 said in a grim voice.

His sentiment was immediately supported by the owl-masked woman, who said, "Indeed. On top of that, as an Earthly Immortal, he'll be at the height of his powers on the island that he rules over. If we venture onto his island recklessly, we could..."

"What nonsense! Those so-called Earthly Immortals are just failed immortals who don't possess the aptitude to pursue any other paths of cultivation! Only in a pitiful place like your Black Wind Sea is someone like him considered to be a formidable target," Wyrms 3 scoffed with more than a hint of ridicule in his voice.

Han Li had been observing in silence this entire time, and he noticed that both Wyrms 8 and Wyrms 9 displayed very slight reactions to what they had just heard, seemingly taking objection to Wyrms 3's derogatory words.

However, neither of them expressed their displeasure beyond that.

"Let me make this clear. If there are any deserters or cowards who are constantly hanging back on this mission, you'll meet the same fate as Wyrms 32," Wyrms 3 warned in a cold voice.

Even though everyone was wearing masks, a few of them couldn't help but exchange a few glances, and through their non-verbal communication, it was clear that they were all praying for the best.

Wyrms 3 paid no heed to everyone's reactions as he swept a hand through the air, and a burst of red light instantly appeared in the sky.

A draconic roar rang out from within the light, and a dragon-shaped flying ark that was rough 200 to 300 feet in length emerged.

The entire was fiery red in color, and at the front of the ark was a figurehead carved in the form of a dragon's head. The entire ark was riddled with smooth golden spirit patterns, as well as engravings of fiery clouds, indicating that it was no ordinary treasure.

Wyrms 3 leaped up into the air before landing at the front of the spirit ark, following which his slightly rigid voice rang out again. "What are you all waiting for?"

"This is... an Acquired Immortal Treasure! As expected of an immortal of his caliber..." the goat-masked Wyrms 9 couldn't help but praise as he looked up at the fiery red spirit ark, then leaped onto it behind Wyrms 3.

Everyone else also rose up into the air, and a hint of envy appeared in the eyes of many of them upon hearing what Wyrms 9 had just said.

Most of the people gathered here were Layman Immortals, and not only did they not have a single immortal treasure to share between them, barely any of them had ever even seen one before.

Han Li was also rather taken aback, and he couldn't help but take a few extra glances at the spirit ark.

After everyone had jumped aboard, Wyrms 3 made a hand seal before casting a series of incantation seals into the spirit ark, and the entire ark instantly lit up with bright red light as scorching crimson flames appeared over its surface, resembling several soaring fiery dragons that carried the ark rapidly into the distance.

The speed at which the ark was moving was truly astonishing.

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Several days later.

A streak of fiery red light sped across the sky above a turbulent blue sea, then suddenly stopped in mid-air, revealing a dragon-shaped flying ark inside.

Atop the ark stood several masked figures, and they were none other than the members of the Transient Guild who were traveling toward Red Moon Island.

At this moment, Han Li was standing on one side of the ark, casting his gaze toward a large island close to 100 kilometers away.

To call it an island was a bit of an injustice as it was countless times larger than Dark Veil Island and resembled a huge continent.

"Here's some information regarding Red Moon Island. Take a look for yourselves," Wyrms 3 said in an emotionless voice.

He then swept a hand through the air, releasing several white jade slips that flew toward Han Li and the others.

Han Li accepted one of the jade slips, then took a glance at everyone around him, upon which he saw several people pressing their jade slip against the glabella of their mask.

He did the same thing, and sure enough, once the jade slip was pressed against his mask, a series of images and text instantly appeared in his mind.

After inspecting the contents of the jade slip for a moment, Han Li's brows furrowed slightly as he discovered Red Moon Island was even larger than he had anticipated. It was truly like a continent.

"Wyrms 3, I'm assuming those six or seven locations annotated on the map in the jade slip must be the places where Gong Shuhong is most likely to appear. Which one should we go to first?" the goat-masked Wyrms 9 asked.

"In order to ascertain his location as soon as possible, we're going to split up into three groups and infiltrate the island from the east, the west, and the south. Each group will explore the annotated points closest to them first, then gradually advance toward the center of the island until we track him down," Wyrms 3 replied without any hesitation.

Han Li's heart stirred slightly upon hearing this. He had already anticipated this type of arrangement, and in reality, he wanted nothing more than to be split up. In fact, the ideal situation would be for him to go off on his own, but clearly, that wasn't going to be possible.

Sure enough, Wyrms 3 continued, "Wyrms 8, Wyrms 13, Wyrms 21, the three of you will form a group led by Wyrms 8, and you'll enter the island from the east to explore the annotated points on the eastern side."

The monkey-masked Wyrms 8 cupped his fist in a salute to accept the order.

The bear-masked man and the owl-faced woman also nodded in response before joining Wyrms 8 in silence.

Wyrms 3 then swept his gaze over the remaining guild members, and continued, "Wyrms 9, Wyrms 15, Wyrms 16, the three of you will form a group led by Wyrms 9, and you'll enter the island from the west."

"You can count on me, Wyrms 3," the goat-masked Wyrms 9 declared with a respectful salute.

Han Li and the tiger-masked man exchanged a glance with one another, then joined Wyrms 9.

Wyrms 3 didn't even bother to take a glance at Wyrms 9. Instead, he turned to the eagle-masked man as he instructed, "Wyrms 25, you can accompany me and enter the island from the south."

Wyrms 25 accepted the order in a slightly hoarse voice, then made his way over to Wyrms 3.

"Gong Shuhong is adept in the laws of blood, so he's extremely sensitive to auras. On top of that, there are surveillance restrictions set up all over the island. Under normal circumstances, we wouldn't have to

worry as our masks can conceal our auras, but if we're too careless with the use of our spiritual sense, then there's a very good chance that we could be discovered.

"Hence, do not use your spiritual sense after entering the island unless it's absolutely necessary to do so," Wyrms 3 said in a stern voice.

"Yes," everyone replied in unison.

"One last thing: if any of you find Gong Shuhong before I do, do not engage him in battle and immediately notify me using your mask. Even though it's very unlikely that he'll be able to detect us when we're using our masks, as a safety precaution, make sure to also only use your masks when absolutely necessary," Wyrms 3 continued.

"We'll be sure to keep that in mind, Wyrms 3," Wyrms 9 immediately said in a respectful voice.

Han Li placed a hand on his mask, and he suddenly recalled how Wyrms 3 had transmitted his voice to him through the mask upon his arrival on Sea Fig Island. It seemed that this mask was indeed quite a mysterious treasure.

"Let's begin!" Wyrms 3 declared, then stowed the spirit ark away with a wave of his hand.

He then reached out to grab onto Wyrms 25 before speeding away to the eastern side of the island.

Wyrms 8 and his group also departed as streaks of light.

Wyrms 9 took a glance at Han Li and Wyrms 16, then departed toward the west, followed closely by Han Li and Wyrms 16. However, what was worthy of note was that they were significantly slower than the others.

Chapter 104: Pilgrimage

It didn't take long before Han Li's trio arrived at their designated entry point, which was a certain beach on the western coast of Red Moon Island.

To their surprise, the area was completely barren and devoid of human population. However, they then recalled that Red Moon Island had been isolated from the outside world for thousands of years, so this wasn't all that surprising.

As for the alert restrictions set up here, they were concealed in a clever fashion, but for a trio of immortals like them, they were naturally able to avoid the restrictions with ease.

Even so, they didn't dare to let down their guard and made sure to keep their auras concealed as they traveled toward the first target on the map, a place by the name of Heavenly Water City.

At the moment, there was a dense blanket of clouds in the sky, allowing the trio to travel even more discreetly.

While flying through the air, Han Li was inspecting the environment on the island, and he discovered that the terrain in the western part of the island was quite flat, with very few hills or mountains.

Most of the terrain here consisted of plains, and there was lush greenery stretching as far as the eyes could see in all directions.

Perhaps it was due to the properties of the soil here, but all of the trees on the island were of a crimson color.

The leaves on the trees rustled incessantly amid the sea breeze, presenting a sight that resembled a flickering sea of fire.

After a while, the three of them finally flew out of the forest, and a plain appeared up ahead. Several dozen kilometers away from the forest was a large city, and even from afar, they could see the words "Maple Sea City" emblazoned onto the plaque above the city gates.

All of a sudden, Wyrms 9 raised a hand and stopped cold in his tracks.

Han Li and Wyrms 16 immediately followed suit.

"Did you see something?" Wyrms 16 asked as he inspected his surroundings.

"This is the first city that we've encountered after entering the island, so why don't we take this opportunity to ascertain our location? After all, the map provided to us by Wyrms 3 isn't accurate, so let's make sure we haven't gone off track," Wyrms 9 said.

"That's a good idea," Wyrms 16 replied with a nod.

Han Li naturally had no objections to this, either. They had been flying for close to a day up to this point, so there was indeed a need to ascertain their location.

Thus, the three of them descended onto the ground below before making their way toward the city.

However, upon arriving at the city, the three of them were surprised to find that not only were the city gates tightly shut, there was no sound coming out of the city at all. This certainly wasn't a small city, yet it seemed to be completely deserted.

"Keep your guard up, this could be a trap set by the enemy!" Wyrms 9 cautioned through voice transmission.

Han Li and Wyrms 16 nodded in response, and the three of them approached the city in a stealthy manner. After verifying that there were no restrictions set up outside the city, they leaped onto the city wall.

Due to what they had been told by Wyrms 3, they refrained from releasing their spiritual sense to inspect the state of the city. However, after inspecting the city through other means, they didn't notice anything abnormal.

"Looks like it really is just an empty city. It seems I was overly cautious," Wyrms 9 mused.

"How strange. This city doesn't look very old, so it should've been inhabited not long ago. It doesn't look like it's been attacked, either, so why is there no one here?" Wyrms 16 asked in a puzzled voice.

Han Li's brows also furrowed slightly in befuddlement.

Through the use of his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, he had seen that many of the houses in the city were empty, and some of the shops also had their doors tightly shut. However, there were many signs indicating recent human activity, so it did indeed seem like the residents of the city had only recently left.

The wind blew through the empty streets, causing some of the open doors and windows to creak and clatter incessantly. An occasional stray cat or stray dog would pass through the area, but those were the only signs of life in the city.

"In any case, what happened here has nothing to do with us. We've already confirmed our location, so it's time to leave. We have to prioritize our mission above all else," Wyrms 9 said, clearly not wanting to investigate what had happened here.

Han Li and Wyrms 16 nodded in response. They had no interest in such trivial matters, either.

Thus, the three of them departed from the city and continued onward.

After leaving the city, the terrain up ahead only became flatter and flatter, and it didn't take long before a lush grassland appeared up ahead. There were many cows and sheep roaming and grazing freely over the grassland, but there was still not even a single person to be seen.

In fact, they didn't even discover any people in the small villages littered across the grassland.

At the end of the grassland was another city, and after encountering the deserted Maple Sea City and all of those empty villages, the three of them had no intentions of stopping at the city, but they still reflexively took a glance down at it.

As a result, they were once again surprised to find that this city was also deserted.

"Why is this city completely deserted as well?" Wyrms 16 asked in a puzzled voice.

Wyrms 9 contemplated the situation for a moment before speculating, "Perhaps something recently happened in this area, so everyone has been evacuated."

"If the next city is also deserted, then I feel like there's a need to inform the others of what we've seen," Han Li said.

"Let's wait and see. According to the map, there's another large city less than 1,000 kilometers up ahead," Wyrms 9 replied with a nod.

Sure enough, it didn't take long before another city emerged up ahead.

This place was known as Calm Rest City, and it was quite a large city that was several hundred kilometers in size.

To the surprise of Han Li's trio, everything was normal in this city. Long lines of people were entering and exiting the city gates, and all of the shops in the city were open, presenting a lively and bustling sight to behold. Aside from mortals, there were also many low-grade cultivators here, presenting a stark contrast with the previous two deserted cities.

Wyrms 16 seemed to have relaxed a little upon seeing this, and he speculated in a joking voice, "There are quite a few people here. Could it be that everyone from the other two cities has come here?"

However, Han Li's brows were furrowed slightly in befuddlement. This city was not far away from the previous city, so why was the situation here so different?

"Those two previous deserted cities are very strange. There must be abnormal circumstances that led up to those two cities being deserted, so I think it's best to conduct a quick investigation. We have more than enough time on our hands at the moment, and we can also gather some information about the island from this city," Han Li suggested.

"Wyrms 15's right. It's better to be safe than sorry," Wyrms 16 chimed in in agreement.

"Alright, in that case, let's make a brief stop at this city, but make sure to keep your guard up at all times," Wyrms 9 said as he pointed at a plaza at the center of the city.

At the center of the plaza stood a crimson statue that was giving off faint crimson light, which encompassed an area with a radius of over 1,000 feet.

All of the people nearby, regardless of whether they were mortals or cultivators, regarded the statue with a great deal of reverence, bowing respectfully whenever they passed by. However, none of the cultivators in the city were very advanced in their cultivation base, with even the most powerful of them only at the Core Formation Stage.

Han Li had naturally also already noticed the statue, and it was a normal statue used by Earthly Immortals to collect the power of faith.

As an Earthly Immortal himself, it was nothing out of the ordinary to see that Gong Shuhong had set up statues like this on his island.

However, according to the information that the Transient Guild had collected, the cultivation art that Gong Shuhong was using was quite special, and it seemed to be able to allow him to conduct surveillance using these statues. As such, they were warned not to stir up any trouble in any of the island's cities to avoid alerting Gong Shuhong to their presence.

However, Han Li had always had his doubts about these claims.

Recently, he had read many scriptures about these statues, and according to everything that he had read, these ordinary statues were only special vessels for gathering the power of faith. They weren't Earthly Deity Avatars, so they didn't have any senses.

However, he naturally wasn't going to go against the instructions of the Transient Guild for no reason.

The three of them landed in a discreet location outside the city, then used the restrictions in their masks to alter their appearance, transforming into three completely unremarkable-looking merchants before entering the city with everyone else.

Even though their auras were concealed by their masks, they were still reining in their auras as much as possible.

Looking at the lively and bustling scene around him, Han Li couldn't help but think back to the time that he had spent traveling the Spirit Domain Realm with Liu Le'er.

At the time, he had still been in a mentally impaired state, but he was able to retain those memories.

In an environment as cruel as the cultivation world, it was very touching that a little girl like her truly cared for him and looked after him like her own brother, and in her, Han Li felt as if he could see a faint shadow of his little sister, the memory of whom had already become rather fuzzy in his mind.

Han Li couldn't help but wonder exactly where Liu Le'er had been taken.

All of a sudden, he was snapped out of his train of thought by the sound of Wyrms 16's voice.

"There's a restaurant up ahead. Why don't we go take a look there?"

Han Li immediately returned to his senses before casting his gaze forward to find a three-story restaurant that appeared to be thriving.

As soon as the trio entered the restaurant, they were immediately greeted by an energetic waiter.

"We would like some privacy, so get us a booth," Wyrms 16 instructed before the waiter had a chance to say anything.

"Sure thing! Please come with me," the waiter said as he led the trio into an elegant booth on the second floor.

"We'd like two flagons of warm wine and a few of your restaurant's best dishes, and make it snappy. Take this silver, you can keep the change."

After taking a seat, Wyrms 16 pulled out a silver ingot before tossing it at the waiter.

Both Han Li and Wyrms 9's attention were drawn to Wyrms 16 upon witnessing this interaction, thinking to themselves that he seemed to be a regular patron at restaurants like this.

The waiter gleefully accepted the silver ingot, then gave an affirmative response before quickly exiting the room.

Wyrms 16 was slightly embarrassed by the scrutiny directed his way from Han Li and Wyrms 9, and he said, "My apologies, fellow daoists. I've transcended beyond requiring food and drink for sustenance long ago, but I'm embarrassed to admit that I've never quite been able to get over my hankering for mortal food."

"There's no need to apologize, Fellow Daoist. Everyone has their individual preferences. Now that you mention it, I'm also beginning to miss the foods that I once enjoyed as a mortal, so this is a perfect opportunity to rekindle some of those past memories," Wyrms 9 chuckled.

The waiter quickly returned with a platter that was laden with all types of dishes and wine.

The food and drink served in the restaurant was quite appetizing, and both the wine and the dishes were giving off alluring aromas.

Wyrms 16 poured out cups of wine for everyone, then quickly downed two cups of wine in succession as a blissful look appeared on his face.

A faint smile also appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, and he also took a small sip of wine from his own cup.

"I'll leave you to enjoy your meal. Don't hesitate to call for me if you need anything." The waiter turned to depart as he spoke, but he was stopped by Wyrms 16.

"Hold on a second."

"Is there something else you need?" the waiter asked as he turned back around.

"The three of us are merchants who came from the south, and we passed by Maple Sea City and Inkface City on the way here, but both of those cities were completely deserted. Do you know why that's the case?" Wyrms 9 asked with a smile.

"All of the residents of those two cities were summoned to Red Moon City for the pilgrimage not long ago, so they're naturally deserted," the waiter replied with a smile.

Chapter 105: Linking Up

"Pilgrimage? What's that?" Wyrms 16 reflexively asked.

Wyrms 9's brows immediately furrowed slightly as he turned to Wyrms 16 with a displeased expression.

Wyrms 16 had also realized his mistake, and a sheepish look appeared on his face.

"The pilgrimage is..." The waiter was just about to reply when his expression suddenly changed drastically, and he yelled, "You don't know about the pilgrimage? You're outsiders..."

Two translucent threads of light shot into the waiter's head in a flash, and his voice immediately cut off as a dazed look appeared in his eyes.

Right before the waiter began yelling, Wyrms 9 had already conjured up a blue light barrier that encompassed the entire booth to prevent any sound from escaping.

"My apologies..." Wyrms 16 said with an embarrassed expression.

"It's fine. It's a good thing that Wyrms 15 was able to react so quickly," Wyrms 9 said with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"Go on, tell us what this pilgrimage is," Han Li prompted.

He had cast a small enchantment onto the waiter. The enchantment was very weak as he wasn't able to use any spiritual sense, but it was more than enough on a mortal like the waiter.

"The pilgrimage is a tradition that has been around since ancient times. Once every 60 years, the residents of each city would be taken in batches by their respective city lords to Red Moon City, where they would be preached to by the holy lord. The year of the pilgrimage is also known as the holy year," the waiter replied in a robotic manner.

"If they're only going to see the holy lord, then why do they have to pack all of their belongings as if they're relocating?" Han Li asked.

"Because everyone wants to be chosen. The holy lord will bestow his blessings upon the fortunate chosen ones, granting them more fertile land," the waiter replied without any hesitation.

"Who are the chosen ones? And what happens to those who aren't chosen?" Han Li asked.

"The ones who are chosen are all the most devout followers of the holy lord. It is the highest honor one can receive. As for those who aren't chosen, they can only return to their original cities," the waiter said as a hint of longing appeared in his eyes.

Han Li's trio exchanged a glance with one another upon hearing this, and all of them could see their own surprise mirrored in one another's eyes.

That explained the deserted cities, and as for the holy lord that the waiter was speaking of, that was almost definitely Gong Shuhong.

"What else do you know about the holy lord?" Wyrms 9 asked.

"The holy lord bestows upon us fertile land and protects us for generation after generation..."

The waiter rattled off a long list of things that this supposed holy lord did, but none of this information was useful to Han Li's trio.

Han Li shook his head as he interrupted the waiter's pointless rambling and asked, "You all seem to be very hostile toward outsiders. Is this a part of the holy lord's teachings?"

"That's right! All outsiders are sinister devils who covet the fertile land of our Red Moon Island. If we discover any outsiders, we are to inform our city lords right away and have those outsiders killed," the waiter replied with a dazed expression, but a cold and forbidding tone had crept into his voice.

Wyrms 16 gave a cold harrumph upon hearing this, while a contemplative look appeared on Wyrms 9's face.

Han Li's eyes narrowed slightly as he asked a few more questions regarding the holy lord, but unfortunately, the waiter was but a mere mortal who knew very little, so Han Li was unable to dig up much more information.

Thus, he indicated for Wyrms 9 to withdraw the blue light barrier in the booth, then chanted an incantation as a faint gleam appeared in his eyes before vanishing in a flash.

The waiter abruptly shuddered as a hint of clarity returned to his eyes, and he looked around with a slightly dazed expression.

"You can go now. We'll call for you if we need anything," Han Li said in a calm manner.

He had just wiped away the waiter's memories of the last few minutes.

"Enjoy your meal." The waiter's head was still feeling a little fuzzy, and he flashed an apologetic smile before exiting the booth.

"So that's why those cities were deserted. It seems like we were overthinking things," Wyrms 16 said with a smile.

"That may be true, but we did manage to get some rather interesting information out of him, nonetheless. Seeing as all of the residents of those two cities have been summoned for the pilgrimage, doesn't that mean that Gong Shuhong should currently be accepting the pilgrimage in that so-called Red Moon City?" Wyrms 9 mused.

Han Li nodded in response with a contemplative expression, and the information about Red Moon Island contained in the jade slips that Wyrms 3 had given them surfaced in his mind.

The map included in the jade slips was very basic, and there were very few cities marked out on them, but one of those cities was indeed one by the name of Red Moon City. However, it was quite some distance away from Heavenly Water City.

If these mortals were going to attend the pilgrimage, they most likely had to be taken to Red Moon City by high-grade cultivators through some special means. Otherwise, at the snail-like rate that mortals were capable of traveling at, there was no guarantee that they would be able to reach Red Moon City in this lifetime.

Wyrms 16's eyes suddenly lit up, clearly having also drawn the same conclusion, and he asked, "Should we communicate this information with the others?"

Han Li considered this notion for a moment before offering his opinion on the matter. "Given how we were able to obtain this piece of information so easily, I'm sure the scouts sent by the Transient Guild would've already been able to secure the same information.

"The list of locations that they proposed that Gong Shuhong could be at right now didn't include Red Moon City, and there had to have been a reason for that. Perhaps what the waiter just told us was nothing more than a circulating rumor."

Wyrn 9 nodded in agreement. "I think we should follow the original plan and travel to Heavenly Water City to link up with the members of the guild lurking in the city, then think about what to do next."

After arriving at a consensus, the three of them promptly departed from Calm Rest City.

After that, they passed through many more cities, towns, and villages, and around 20% to 30% of them were deserted.

Having already learned the reason why these places were deserted, the three of them made no further stops along the way.

Three days later, a majestic black city that was over 100 feet tall appeared on a set of vast plains that stretched for thousands of kilometers.

There were thousands of acres of lush fields outside of the city, and they were surrounded by several branches of a large river that flowed out to the sea, segregating the land into plots of farmland of different shapes and sizes.

The main branch of the river had been diverted by an artificial channel, which passed through a rice field before circling around the entire city to form a moat that was over 100 feet wide.

At the moment, it was early in the morning, and the drawbridge that led into the city hadn't been lowered yet. Countless mortals were gathered outside the city, carrying different wares in their hands, on their shoulders, or on carts, waiting for the city gates to open.

Among them were three completely unremarkable-looking figures in coarse linen clothes with conical hats on their heads. The trio looked no different from the average farmers here.

They were none other than Han Li's trio, who had arrived outside the city and adopted disguises for themselves.

The light of the rising sun illuminated the large characters that spelled out "Heavenly Water City" on the plaque above the city gates, and all of a sudden, the loud strike of a bell rang out from within the city.

Immediately thereafter, the sound of moving mechanical parts rang out, and the heavy drawbridge was slowly lowered while tethered to a pair of thick black chains.

Everyone outside the city had already been waiting for quite some time, and they began to enter the city along the drawbridge.

Stationed on either side of the city gates were several Nascent Soul cultivators standing on guard duty, and they were led by a Deity Transformation cultivator. All of them wore dark blue robes with a crimson crescent moon embroidered on each of their chests.

Han Li was unable to use his spiritual sense to examine the city, but he knew that there had to be even more powerful cultivators inside.

With the observation that they had made through visiting the previous few cities, they had discovered that Red Moon Island was the same as the other islands in the Black Wind Sea in that cultivators lived among the mortals in the cities, and the mortals seemed to be accustomed to the existence of the cultivators as well.

However, it seemed that all of the cultivators at or above the Nascent Soul Stage on the island were wearing these blue robes emblazoned with crimson moons, making it appear as if they all belonged to a certain sect.

After entering through the city gates, a faint burst of light appeared above Han Li. He raised his head slightly to discover an octagonal array diagram engraved onto the brick above his head, with a round copper mirror embedded at the very center of the diagram.

There was a beam of faint red light that was shining down from the copper mirror, encompassing everyone who made passed by beneath it.

With just a single glance, Han Li was able to figure out the purpose of the array. It was most likely an array that was designed to pick out cultivators who were intentionally posing as mortals to prevent them from sneaking into the city.

Given Han Li's current level of expertise in arrays, this array wasn't very complex or advanced. Anyone above the Grand Ascension would be able to easily pass through under it without being detected after making some simple preparations.

However, given how powerful the auras of cultivators above the Grand Ascension Stage were, if they didn't possess any special treasures to conceal their auras, they would've most likely already been detected upon entering the island, so they wouldn't even have made it to this point.

Han Li and the others were all above the Grand Ascension Stage, and with the aura concealment effect of these masks, they had nothing to worry about.

Thus, the three of them followed the crowd in a relaxed manner as they slowly drew closer and closer to the city, and while passing under the array, the light in the copper mirror only flashed briefly before returning to normal, clearly passing them off as mortals.

After entering the city, the crowds of people began to diverge in two separate directions, and the sights and scenes in the city were gradually laid out before them.

The street that was directly facing them was lined with shops and merchants, and different flags used to attract customers were hanging off all of the shop buildings.

However, it was still quite early, so quite a few of the shops still weren't open for business, and there weren't too many people on the bluestone streets aside from those who had just entered the city.

The only shops that were open were ones that were serving breakfast to the early risers.

This city was larger than any other city that Han Li's trio had passed through on Red Moon Island, and the entire city was split up into four major areas by two main streets, one that ran from northeast to southwest, and the other from northwest to southeast.

Han Li's trio followed one of the main streets to the southern area of the city, then branched off onto a smaller path. After walking for over an hour, taking many turns in the process, they arrived in a secluded alley.

The alley was extremely quiet, and the few courtyards inside all had their doors tightly shut. There was no sound to be heard coming from any alleys, and not a single person could be seen, either.

The three of them made their way to an ordinary-looking estate at the deepest point in the alley, then drew to a halt.

"This is the place," Wyrms 9 and 16 said as they took a glance at the dark red doors of the estate.

This estate was a secret stronghold established by the members of the Transient Guild who had already infiltrated Red Moon Island, and Han Li's trio had arrived here to link up with them and obtain intelligence.

Wyrms 16 and 9 made their way over to the doors of the estate, then knocked on them using the door-knockers just like any ordinary mortal would, employing a sequence of two short knocks followed by a long knock.

A few dull thuds rang out, but there was no response from inside.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he was just about to use his spiritual sense to assess the situation when he remembered the warning that Wyrms 3 and 4 had issued to them.

Wyrms 16 and 9 had naturally also realized that something seemed to be amiss, but they didn't use their spiritual sense, either, clearly harboring the same inhibitions as Han Li.

Wyrms 16 and 9 turned around to look at Han Li with a suspicious expression, and Han Li's eyes narrowed slightly in response, but he didn't say anything.

As for Wyrms 9 and 16, they were also silent for a moment before gesturing for the two of them to prepare for battle.

Right as the three of them were preparing to break in by force, a string of four bell chimes suddenly rang out from inside in the agreed-upon three short and one long sequence.

The three of them faltered slightly as they turned their attention back to the doors, and Wyrms 16 hesitated momentarily before quickly knocking on the door three more times, this time with more force.

Moments later, the dark red doors swung open to create a gap that could allow a person to pass through, and the head of a middle-aged man poked out from within.

"Come in," the man said in a low voice after taking a glance at Han Li's trio.

Chapter 106: Crimson Space

Han Li took a glance at the middle-aged man to find that his face had clearly also been manifested from one of the Transient Guild's masks.

The faces conjured up by the masks looked no different from normal faces, but the wearers of the masks could sense a faint connection between the masks, and that connection was what the members of the Transient Guild used to communicate with one another.

Wyrms 9 and Wyrms 16 had clearly also noticed this, and they stepped into the courtyard of the estate one after another.

Han Li hesitated momentarily before also following suit.

Once everyone had entered the courtyard, the middle-aged man took a quick glance outside before closing the doors again.

The courtyard was over 1,000 feet in size, and aside from a withered old tree, there was only a set of stone tables and stone stools inside, positioned at the foot of the tree.

The tree was growing on a patch of soil, but aside from that, the rest of the courtyard was paved with brand-new tiles that were spotlessly clean, without even a single fallen leaf on them.

Furthermore inside was a main room that was directly facing the doors of the estate, and on either side of the main room were several booths, all of which currently had their doors slightly ajar.

The middle-aged man led the way forward while turning back to Han Li's trio as he said, "I've heard that the higher-ups are sending more people here, and I've been waiting for quite some time. May I ask who it is that's leading this mission?"

Han Li had been constantly observing the middle-aged man ever since he entered the courtyard, and as soon as this question was raised, a cold light immediately flashed through his eyes as he threw a punch at the man from behind without any warning.

The man was quite alarmed by this abrupt turn of events, but he seemed to have already been prepared, and a burst of red light erupted from his back, forming a shimmering silver shield that appeared in the path of Han Li's fist.

A dull thump rang out, and the silver shield exploded violently, while the middle-aged man was sent flying through the air, crashing heavily onto the stone staircase in front of the main room. He immediately threw up several mouthfuls of blood in succession, and his aura became significantly diminished.

Wyrms 9 and Wyrms 16 had clearly also detected that something was amiss, yet right as they were also about to spring into action, a faint buzzing sound rang out, and the surrounding space suddenly began to warp and twist.

Bursts of red light erupted into the heavens in an area with a radius of several thousand feet around the courtyard, and a massive crimson array projection appeared in the sky with countless crimson runes surging over its surface.

Before Han Li's trio had a chance to react, red light flashed at the center of the array projection, and they appeared in a crimson space along with the middle-aged man.

This space didn't seem like it belonged to the real world, and there appeared to be no end to it in sight in any direction.

Above everyone was a dense layer of crimson yin clouds, while the ground down below was bright red in color, as if it had been soaked by blood. There was even a nauseating, bloody odor wafting through the surrounding air.

Right as Han Li's trio was inspecting their surroundings with bewildered expressions, the entire crimson space suddenly shuddered violently, and hundreds of rifts of different sizes instantly opened up on the ground to release bursts of viscous crimson mist.

A series of indistinct figures then crawled out of the mist amid a chorus of ghostly howls.

Those indistinct figures were humanoid blood ghosts that looked as if they had just been skinned, and they were crawling out in hordes from the rifts on the ground.

As soon as these sinister blood ghosts emerged from the ground, they immediately let loose a string of hoarse cries as they pounced on Han Li's trio.

"Be on your guard, fellow daoists. Not only do we have to pay attention to those blood ghosts, the aura of this place is also not quite right," Wyrms 9 cautioned as he took a glance at the blood ghosts, then looked up at the crimson clouds in the sky.

Han Li had naturally also noticed that the bloody odor wafting throughout this place seemed to contain a strange type of belligerent energy that could enter directly into one's consciousness, invoking a sense of frustration and agitation.

However, given his immense spiritual sense, this level of disruption wasn't worthy of concern.

After issuing those cautionary words to Han Li and Wyrms 16, Wyrms 9 flipped a hand over to produce a piece of white jade with a golden string passing through it. He then placed the string around his own neck to wear the piece of jade like a pendant, and it released a burst of translucent white light that encompassed his entire body.

Immediately thereafter, he swept a palm through the air, and a torrent of blue waves erupted in front of him amid a flash of blue light, instantly sweeping up around a dozen of the blood ghosts that were closest to him, pulverizing them into clouds of blood mist upon contact.

Wyrn 16 also pulled out a purple talisman before pressing it to his own glabella, and the talisman abruptly vanished amid a flash of purple light. Immediately thereafter, he let loose a low roar, and a string of cracks and pops rang out from within his body as his arms and torso began to rapidly expand.

In this new enlarged form, he leaped high up into the air before crashing down onto the army of blood ghosts up ahead like a giant asteroid, instantly pulverizing seven or eight of them.

In order to avoid arousing suspicion, Han Li also pretended to take a pill, then took a step forward before sending the two blood ghosts closest to him flying back with his fists.

While the two blood ghosts were flying back, they crashed into around a dozen more oncoming blood ghosts, all of which exploded into blood mist amid a string of dull thumps.

The three of them quickly discovered that these blood ghosts were quite fearsome in appearance, but they weren't very difficult to deal with at all. In fact, none of them could take even a single hit.

However, the problem was that there seemed to be no end to them, and after one horde was struck down, more would immediately emerge from the rifts on the ground to take their place. No matter how many were killed, there was always more to come, and Han Li's trio was quickly surrounded by hundreds of blood ghosts in a watertight encirclement.

Meanwhile, the eyes of the middle-aged man who had just been injured by Han Li had turned slightly bloodshot, and a horrified look had appeared on his face as he frantically summoned all types of treasures. First, he released a set of array flags that he set up in the surrounding area, then summoned a mirror that hovered above his head while a suit of crimson armor appeared over his body amid a flash of red light.

One protective light barrier after another appeared around him to shield him from all directions, and none of the surrounding blood ghosts were able to get close to him. All they could do was frantically swipe their ghostly claws at the protective light barriers, of which there were around seven or eight.

However, the middle-aged man still didn't seem to feel safe, and he was holding a crimson longsword as his eyes darted around in an anxious and uneasy manner.

It was clear that even though his treasures were capable of keeping the hordes of blood ghosts at bay, they were unable to prevent the bloody odor in the air from contaminating his sanity.

Sure enough, before long, he threw his head back and let loose a guttural roar with completely bloodshot eyes, looking as if he had completely lost his mind as he slashed his sword wildly through the air.

Without his control, the power of the surrounding treasures waned significantly, and the outermost light barrier was quickly torn apart by the blood ghosts.

Han Li was in the midst of fighting off blood ghosts himself when a thought suddenly occurred to him upon seeing this, and he hurriedly communicated a message to Wyrms 9 and 16 through voice transmission. "The more of these blood ghosts we kill, the more concentrated the blood in the air will become."

"Indeed. We have to get out of this place as quickly as possible. Otherwise, if this goes on for much longer, we can't guarantee that we won't also lose our minds," Wyrms 9 and 16 replied.

"Fellow daoists, I may have a way to break open this space, but I'll need you to protect me while I make some preparations," Wyrms 16 said in an urgent voice after forcing back several of the blood ghosts in front of him.

"Go ahead, Fellow Daoist," Han Li said as he reached out with his hands like lightning, grabbing onto a pair of blood ghosts before hurling them in Wyrms 16's direction, sending them crashing into a horde of blood ghosts to his left.

On the other side, Wyrms 9 sent all of the blood ghosts around him flying, then leaped up into the air before landing on Wyrms 16's right, upon which he made a hand seal and began to chant an incantation.

A burst of low rumbling rang out, and a cloud of blue water vapor emerged in front of Wyrms 9, releasing bursts of rich water-attribute spiritual power.

Immediately thereafter, he thrust his palms forward forcefully, and a draconic roar rang out as a blue water dragon rushed out of the cloud of vapor, flying directly at the horde of blood ghosts approaching from Wyrms 16's left.

Water splashed in all directions as dozens of blood ghosts were knocked over by the water dragon in the blink of an eye, plunging their formation into complete chaos.

At the same time, Han Li had already appeared on Wyrms 16's right, and he was traversing through the army of blood ghosts while lashing out with his fists, sending one blood ghost flying after another. However, while he was doing this, he was also constantly inspecting his surroundings with blue light flashing within his eyes.

With Han Li and Wyrms 9 covering him from the left and the right, Wyrms 16 immediately sat down on the spot with his legs crossed, then summoned a sharp spike in the shape of a narrow triangular pyramid with a wave of his hand. The sharp tip of the spike was pointed directly upward at the heavens.

There were circles of tiny and complex runes engraved all over the surface of the spike, and judging from the spatial fluctuations that it was giving off, it seemed to be an Acquired Immortal Treasure that possessed a hint of power of laws.

Both Han Li and Wyrms 9 were very surprised to see this.

There were very few people in the entire Black Wind Sea who were in possession of immortal treasures, and they certainly weren't expecting a layman immortal like Wyrms 16 to have one at his disposal.

After summoning the spike, Wyrms 16 folded his hands in front of him as he chanted an incantation in an unhurried manner.

Moments later, his chanting drew to a halt, and he reached out to brush his hand over the spike before him, instantly opening up a gash that began to bleed profusely.

After being stained with his blood, the spike instantly began to glow bright with crimson light as if it had been heated extensively in a furnace, and the spatial fluctuations that it was giving off also became stronger and stronger.

Right at this moment, an agonized howl suddenly rang out from a certain point in the crimson space, and Han Li and Wyrms 9 immediately turned toward the direction that the sound had come from.

As it turned out, all of the protective barriers around the middle-aged man had already been torn apart, and he was completely inundated by the hordes of blood ghosts around him.

However, in the next instant, a burst of red light suddenly appeared among the blood ghosts, then rapidly erupted up into the air, revealing itself to be the middle-aged man's nascent soul. The nascent soul was wielding a miniature crimson sword, and it was rising up into the sky with a deranged expression.

However, before it was able to get very far away, a rift suddenly opened up in one of the crimson clouds in the sky, following which a dark purple bowl flew out from within.

The bowl circled around momentarily in the sky, then released a burst of incredibly powerful suction force that instantly drew in the deranged nascent soul.

As soon as the nascent soul entered the bowl, a burst of strange force instantly converged upon it, destroying it in the blink of an eye, reducing it into a burst of red light that vanished into the bowl in a flash.

A series of glowing black runes then appeared on the surface of the bowl, and they appeared to have been engraved onto the bowl's surface.

Chapter 107: Escape

Almost as soon as the nascent soul was devoured by the bowl, a purple-robed elderly man suddenly flew out of the crimson bowl, then immediately pointed a finger at the bowl from afar.

All of the runes on the surface of the bowl instantly began to glow with dazzling black radiance while intertwining to form countless tiny patterns. Immediately thereafter, a thick beam of black light shot out of the bowl, hurtling directly toward Wyrms 16 down below.

The beam of light was traveling incredibly quickly, and having been preoccupied with the blood ghosts, it was too late for Han Li and Wyrms 9 to step in.

Wyrms 16 was at a crucial juncture in the ability that he was preparing, so he was also unable to take evasive measures.

In this dire situation, he had no choice but to adjust the angle of the spike before him so that it was pointed up at the oncoming beam of black light instead of its original target.

The spike had already turned a bright crimson color, and a burst of light had only just appeared on its tip. However, before the burst of light was able to erupt out of the tip, it was struck by the beam of black light, which exploded violently on contact.

It was as if a scintillating crimson sun had suddenly risen in front of Wyrms 16, sending bright crimson light and incredibly powerful shockwaves sweeping in all directions, forcing all of the surrounding blood mist to recede by several thousand feet.

Countless blood ghosts were sent flying by the powerful shockwaves, while Han Li and Wyrms 9 forced their way through the shockwaves as they rushed toward Wyrms 16.

However, before they were able to reach him, the crimson light faded to present a disturbing sight.

Wyrms 16 had slumped to the ground with his eyes tightly shut, seemingly having fallen unconscious. Several metal-skewer-like pillars of black light had pierced through his limbs and his torso, pinning him firmly to the ground while releasing bursts of faint law fluctuations.

Immediately thereafter, a string of rumbling thunderclaps rang out from high up in the sky, and Han Li and Wyrms 9 immediately stopped cold in their tracks before shooting back in retreat.

In the next instant, a series of millstone-sized balls of crimson lightningfire came crashing down from the heavens before exploding violently, completely inundating the spot where they had been standing just a moment ago in blinding lightning.

After steadying themselves, both Han Li and Wyrms 9 looked up in unison to find that the purple-robed elderly man was holding the dark purple bowl in his hand, while his face was concealed behind a layer of red light, and lightning was flashing wildly in the crimson clouds around him.

"I knew that those bastards would've definitely had more allies to come, but I didn't think that three True Immortals would arrive here at once. What an honor this is for me. If you don't want to completely lose your sanity, then surrender yourselves for capture right away!" the elderly man chuckled in a cold voice.

"If you don't want to die, then let us out right now!" Wyrms 9 countered in an unyielding voice.

"To think that you'd still be acting so cocky even when your deaths are imminent! Let me give you two a lesson in respect at the cost of your lives!" the purple-robed elderly man cackled.

As soon as his voice trailed off, the bowl in his hand flew out of his grasp before circling around in the air, and a string of rumbling thunderclaps instantly rang out within the surrounding crimson clouds. Immediately thereafter, hundreds of balls of crimson lightningfire came crashing down from the heavens like a meteor shower.

A string of deafening booms rang out one after another, causing the entire space to tremble and quake violently.

With each ball of lightningfire that crashed down onto the ground, a massive crater would be left in its wake, and huge bursts of crimson fire and lightning would erupt in all directions.

Before long, the entire area within a radius of several kilometers had been completely filled by countless bursts of crimson flames, which resembled a garden of crimson lotus flowers in full bloom, radiating astonishingly scorching temperatures.

It was unclear whether this was intentional or not, but none of the balls of lightningfire had fallen upon Wyrms 16. Instead, he was only splattered with traces of crimson flames, and the burning pain instantly roused him from his unconscious state, causing him to howl with agony.

Blue light continued to flash within Han Li's eyes as he constantly sprang from one spot to another, traversing through the blood ghosts and the storm of lightningfire, but he was still unable to avoid being struck by the haphazardly flying bursts of crimson flames.

Even with his current physical body, the flames were still causing him slight burning pain, and what was even more disturbing was that the flames also seemed to be capable of setting his blood alight, causing a sense of violent mania to well up in his heart.

However, a burst of cool and refreshing energy instantly rose up from his dantian at his behest, then circulated throughout his head to eradicate the sense of manic violence in the blink of an eye.

Not far away from Han Li, Wyrms 9 and 16 had summoned a blue gourd treasure, and bursts of watery blue light were gushing out from within to form a rippling blue light barrier around them. The barrier allowed them to ward off the crimson flames, but they were struggling to deal with the simultaneous assault from both the falling balls of lightningfire and the converging blood ghosts.

It had only taken a few seconds for the nearby space to be virtually completely inundated by crimson flames, leaving the two of them with less and less space to maneuver and evade.

During this time, more and more blood ghosts continued to rush out of the rifts on the ground, and not only did they not seem to be negatively affected by the crimson flames at all, their speed and power seemed to have been enhanced in this environment as they charged toward Han Li and Wyrms 9 and 16 with no regard for their own safety.

Wyrms 9 and 16 had only just barely dodged several balls of lightningfire when they were instantly surrounded by a horde of blood ghosts.

A grim look flashed through his eyes as he bit through the tip of his own tongue, then opened his mouth to release a burst of blood essence that vanished into the blue gourd in his hand in a flash.

The gourd instantly began to glow with dazzling blue radiance, and countless blue runes emerged on its surface while the sound of a rushing river rang out from within.

Immediately thereafter, a torrent of blue water came gushing out of the gourd's opening, then transformed into a series of blue-armored water warriors that charged toward the surrounding blood ghosts with their ice spears held aloft.

After doing all of that, he turned to Han Li before communicating a message to him through voice transmission.

"We can't let things continue like this, Wyrms 15! I'll find a way to keep that man occupied, you go and save Wyrms 16 and assist him in breaking open this space!"

As soon as his voice trailed off, a hint of red light appeared in his eyes, and he shot up directly toward the purple-robed elderly man as a streak of light.

However, Han Li offered no response to this, and he didn't even seem to have heard Wyrms 9 at all.

First, he threw several punches to send the blood ghosts around him flying back through the air, then dodged a few balls of lightningfire before suddenly changing directions and flying away in a certain direction at an incredible speed.

Wyrms 9 had only just reached the purple-robed elderly man when he saw this out of the corners of his eyes, and he immediately flew into a thunderous rage.

"Wyrms 15, where the hell are you going?"

Before he had a chance to do anything else, a beam of black light shot out of the bowl in the purple-robed elderly man's head, then came hurtling directly toward his head.

He hurriedly injected more power out of his blue gourd, which released several bursts of blue light that began swirling in front of him to form a massive blue vortex.

A dull thump rang out as the beam of black light fell directly upon the center of the vortex, resulting in an explosion of black light, while the blue vortex was also rapidly shrinking amid a burst of loud rumbling.

Right at this moment, several more beams of black light came shooting out of the bowl in the purple-robed elderly man's hand, and Wyrms 9 was forced to focus solely on defending himself as he forced the blue gourd to release more bursts of blue light. As a result, he was unable to go after Han Li.

At this point, the red light in his eyes was gradually growing brighter and brighter, while the piece of white jade hanging in front of his chest had turned rather dim and wasn't as glittering and translucent as before.

"Ha! Your companion has already abandoned you! But rest assured, there's no way he'll be able to break out of this space!" the purple-robed elderly man cackled without even taking a glance at Han Li.

Meanwhile, Han Li was already several thousand feet away, and he suddenly raised a fist before throwing an almighty punch through the air.

A resounding boom rang out, and the entire crimson space shuddered violently as a line of bright light appeared in front of Han Li's fist, then rapidly extended into a white rift that stretched for thousands of kilometers.

The sound of a shattering mirror then rang out as the entire crimson space crumbled away from the white rift, then disintegrated into countless fragments.

All of a sudden, everyone had returned to the sky above the secluded courtyard in Heavenly Water City. There were eight blue-robed cultivators laying on the alley outside the courtyard, and there were several array plates strewn on the ground next to them.

They were naturally the ones who had summoned and were controlling the crimson space, and what was quite surprising was that all of them were Body Integration cultivators. They seemed to have suffered some type of backlash from the destruction of the crimson space, and not only had they fallen unconscious, there was blood flowing out of all of their orifices, making them appear as if they were on the verge of death.

Inside the courtyard, Wyrms 16's entire body was charred black, and he was leaning against the withered old tree in a completely still manner.

The black skewers of light impaling his body had already disappeared, and his aura was rather unstable, but it seemed that he wasn't in any life-threatening danger.

All of a sudden, a burst of dazzling light erupted in the sky above the courtyard, and two figures emerged before shooting back in different directions.

One of those figures was Wyrn 9, and the red light in his eyes was gradually fading. As a result, clarity was restored in his mind, and an elated look appeared on his face.

In contrast, the purple-robed elderly man on the other side wore an extremely dark expression, and he turned to Han Li with intense resentment in his eyes.

Han Li appeared to be the weakest of the trio, so never did he think that Han Li would be able to identify the most fragile point in the array and destroy the entire array in a single strike.

The crimson space was far more stable than the average array, and even if an ordinary immortal could identify the fragile points within it, there was still no guarantee that they would be able to break the array open.

However, this wasn't the time to be pondering such matters. The purple-robed elderly man quickly thrust a palm against the bottom of the bowl in his hand, and waves of strange ripples that were visible to the naked eye rapidly spread through the area.

A string of dull thumps rang out from within the alley as the heads of all of the unconscious Body Integration cultivators exploded one after another.

Immediately thereafter, their nascent souls were drawn in by bursts of strange ripples, flying into the bowl as streaks of crimson light before being pulverized in the blink of an eye.

The only exception came in the form of one of the Body Integration cultivators, around whom a layer of white light had appeared. It seemed that he was carrying some type of treasure that was able to ward off the effects of those strange ripples, thereby preventing his head from exploding. The purple-robed

elderly man faltered slightly upon seeing this, but he had no time to dwell on such trivial matters as he quickly lashed out.

The black runes on the surface of the bowl began to glow brightly once again, and two even thicker beams of light erupted out from within, hurtling directly toward Han Li and Wyrms 9.

The spiritual patterns on the surface of the blue gourd in Wyrms 9's hand flashed for an instant, and a thick pillar of water erupted out of the gourd's opening.

A resounding boom rang out as the black light and blue water exploded violently, sending water splashing down in all directions.

Wyrms 9 was sent flying back several hundred feet by the resulting shockwaves before finally managing to steady himself, while Han Li was also forced to take evasive measures against the beam of black light directed at him.

By the time both of them had steadied themselves, the purple-robed elderly man was already nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 108: Strange

Han Li remained on the spot for a moment before quickly arriving beside Wyrms 16, then helped him into an upright position before feeding him a pill.

"Thank you, Fellow Daoist."

Wyrms 16's wounds were quite severe, and after giving Han Li a quick nod of gratitude, he immediately sat down with his legs crossed to digest the pill and recover from his injuries.

Meanwhile, following the disappearance of the purple-robed elderly man, Wyrms 9 suddenly flew down to the only surviving Body Integration cultivator in the alley next to the courtyard.

Before the Body Integration cultivator had a chance to say anything, Wyrms 9 and 16 reached out with one hand like lightning and grabbed onto the man's head with their fingers curled up into claws. Blue light flashed from the palms of their hands, and the Body Integration cultivator instantly fell unconscious.

In the next instant, a horrified red nascent soul was forcibly dragged out of the man's head through the use of some type of secret technique, and it was enveloped within a burst of blue light with a pair of heavy-lidded eyes, appearing to be in a very weak and lethargic state.

Wyrms 9 and 16 carried the nascent soul back into the courtyard, and they took a glance at the seated Wyrms 10 and 11 before turning their gaze toward Han Li.

"I didn't think that you would be such an expert in arrays, Fellow Daoist. I thought you were deserting the battle, but it seems that I was too eager to jump to conclusions. Please forgive me, Fellow Daoist," Wyrms 9 and 16 said.

"You're far too kind, Fellow Daoist. I'm no expert in arrays, I just so happened to have been able to find a fragile point within that space. It's all thanks to your efforts in keeping that layman immortal occupied that I had the opportunity to break open the array," Han Li replied with a smile.

Wyrms 9 and 16 didn't speak any further on this matter, and they turned to the nascent soul in their hands with a cold look in their eyes, then raised their other hands.

A plume of thick black threads shot out of their palms before piercing directly into the nascent soul's head.

The nascent soul shuddered as it let loose an agonized howl, but Wyrms 9 and 16 remained completely unmoved as more black threads shot out of their palms before surging into the nascent soul's head.

The nascent soul's voice became weaker and weaker, and the look on its face also became more wooden and dazed.

Wyrms 9 and 16's brows furrowed slightly as if they were displeased by something, and the number of black threads surging out of their palms abruptly increased drastically.

Right at this moment, a layer of translucent light suddenly appeared over the nascent soul's body, causing it to become semi-transparent.

An alarmed look immediately appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, but before he had a chance to say anything, the nascent soul exploded into countless specks of translucent light.

A dark look appeared on Wyrms 9's face upon seeing this.

"It looks like some type of restriction was placed upon his nascent soul, and that restriction is triggered when a soul search technique is used on him. Did you manage to find anything, Fellow Daoist?" Han Li asked as he heaved a faint sigh.

"I didn't manage to find anything useful. Given that he was only a Body Integration cultivator, he most likely wouldn't have known much anyway. However, I can confirm that the Transient Guild members who were previously here have already been killed by them," Wyrms 9 replied.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this.

"What do we do now?" Wyrms 16 asked as he rose to his feet.

At this point, he had already recovered somewhat from his injuries.

"Let's conduct a thorough search of this city first. Our covers have already been blown, so we don't need to sneak around anymore," Wyrms 9 replied.

.....

Meanwhile.

A dark red louchuan was speeding through a blanket of dark clouds in the sky tens of thousands of kilometers away from Heavenly Water City.

The louchuan had a total of two levels, each of which had several independent rooms. There were several wing designs engraved onto the louchuan, forming eight pairs of giant red wings that were flapping rapidly.

In one of the rooms on the top floor of the louchuan was the purple-robed elderly man who had fought against Han Li's trio not long ago, and he was seated on the ground with his legs crossed and a dark look on his face.

After a brief moment of silence, he flipped a hand over to produce a palm-sized jade plate, then tapped it a few times, upon which a burst of red light appeared on its surface, accompanied by a rather coarse voice.

"How did it go, Chou Wu?"

"I've already fought with the people sent by the Transient Guild," the purple-robed elderly man replied in an expressionless manner.

"I see. Then it's just as I expected," the voice in the jade plate replied in a smug manner.

"The overall power of the people they sent far exceeded what you predicted! There were two Layman Immortals and an Earthly Immortal! If I didn't have some tricks up my sleeve, I could've easily met my demise there! Even though I managed to escape, one of my subordinates still fell into their hands," the purple-robed elderly man grumbled in an incensed voice.

"Oh? Does that subordinate know anything?" The voice in the jade plate also faltered slightly upon hearing this.

"He's just a Body Integration cultivator, what could he possibly know?" the purple-robed elderly man scoffed in a disdainful voice.

"Good. So three True Immortals were sent to your side alone. Looks like the Transient Guild really is coming after us this time. If they decide to back down, then both sides will be spared a lot of trouble, but if they continue to present themselves as a pest, then the holy lord will teach them a good lesson. Thanks for your hard work, you can come back now," the voice in the jade plate instructed.

The purple-robed elderly man's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this, clearly quite displeased that the owner of the voice in the jade plate was issuing him orders, but he didn't say anything and put an end to the voice transmission.

After that, he made a hand seal, and the red light radiating from the louchuan brightened considerably as it accelerated even further.

.....

In a certain stone hall in Heavenly Water City.

This was quite a large area, but it was rather empty inside. There were rows of stone pillars standing on either side of the hall, at the tops of which sat a series of unlit braziers.

At this moment, Han Li's trio was standing at the entrance of the hall, and their masks had already reverted back to their original forms.

Seeing as they no longer had any qualms about being discovered, they were able to release their spiritual sense without any inhibitions, allowing them to quickly complete an exhaustive search of the entire city. As a result, they discovered no cultivators above the Spatial Tempering Stage in the city, nor abnormal activity that was worthy of note. However, they did discover this stone hall in a secluded area in the southern part of the city.

At the center of the hall were three corpses placed together in an orderly fashion. All three corpses were completely shriveled up with their faces warped and distorted, as if they had seen something extremely terrifying right before they died. Furthermore, there were also several azure masks that were similar to the ones worn by Han Li's trio placed next to the bodies.

Judging from how shriveled up these bodies were, it looked as if they had had all of their blood sucked dry in an instant.

The fact that these bodies had been placed in this stone hall without any effort made to conceal them indicated that this was a clear act of provocation.

"These must be the guild members who infiltrated the island before us," Wyrms 9 remarked as he inspected the bodies and their masks.

"One of them was at the Grand Ascension Stage, while the other two were at the Body Integration Stage. It looks like they were killed in an instant, and not even their nascent souls were able to escape. I presume this was done by that Layman Immortal we fought earlier. However, thinking back, it seems like he was able to use some power of laws," Han Li said with a contemplative expression as his gaze roamed over the three bodies.

"Looks like Gong Shuhong was already prepared. He set up a meticulous trap, and we fell right into it," Wyrms 16 said in a resentful voice.

"Now's not the time to be dwelling on things like that. It looks like we won't be able to find any useful information in Heavenly Water City. Before we leave, we have to inform Wyrms 3 of the situation, then discuss how to proceed from here," Wyrms 9 said.

After that, he made a hand seal, and a layer of blue ripples emerged over his blue goat mask. The mask then began to flash erratically before abruptly lighting up.

Wyrms 9 immediately closed his eyes, and his lips began to quiver as he communicated a message through voice transmission.

Meanwhile, Han Li and Wyrms 16 stood silently off to the side.

A short while later, the light glowing from Wyrms 9's mask faded, and he opened his eyes.

"What did Wyrms 3 say?" Wyrms 16 immediately asked.

"He instructed us to travel to Dragon Lake City right away to meet up with him," Wyrms 9 replied.

"Have they been attacked as well?" Han Li asked.

"The city that Wyrms 3 and the other fellow daoists are traveling to is quite far away, so they still haven't gotten there yet. However, judging from the situation here, the guild members that they're supposed to meet up with are most likely already dead as well. Now that they're aware of the situation, it won't be that easy for the enemy to catch them off guard," Wym 9 replied.

Han Li nodded in response and didn't ask any further questions.

"There's no point in staying here any longer, so let's go." Wym 9 swept a hand through the air to release a burst of blue light that swept up the bodies and stowed them into a storage tool, then began to make his way outside.

The trio departed from the stone hall, then quickly left Heavenly Water City and arrived on a barren plain.

Wym 16 was just about to unleash a self-concealment secret technique when he was stopped by Wym 9.

"There's no need for that. Wym 3 says that seeing as the enemy is already aware of our presence on the island, there's no need to bother with concealing ourselves anymore. We can go straight to Dragon Lake City."

He swept a sleeve through the air as he spoke, and blue waves appeared out of thin air in all directions, while a blue flying ark that was over 100 feet in length emerged up ahead. The flying ark was completely translucent, and it was extremely sleek in design with spiritual light radiating from its surface.

Wym 16 faltered slightly upon seeing the flying ark, following which a hint of envy appeared in his eyes.

"This entire boat is constructed from Blue Skycloud Crystal. It's not an immortal treasure, but it can't be too far away," Han Li praised.

"You're far too kind, Fellow Daoist. This is only a mere spirit treasure, it can't even begin to compare with an immortal treasure," Wym 9 chuckled.

The power that Han Li had displayed during the recently concluded battle had greatly impressed Wyrms 9, and he was unconsciously speaking in a more polite manner to Han Li as a result.

"This flying ark is decently fast and will suffice as a mode of transport. Wyrms 16, try to recover as quickly as possible. I'm sure there are going to be more hard battles to come," Wyrms 9 said as he leaped onto the front of the ark.

Wyrms 16 nodded in response, then also flew onto the ark with Han Li.

With a wave of his hand, Wyrms 9 released an incantation seal, and the blue light radiating from the flying ark brightened considerably as it shot through the air as a streak of blue light.

.....

Dragon Lake City was a far larger city than Heavenly Water City. There was a lake in the city that took up over 1,000 acres in area, and it was connected to several large rivers in the city, which flowed all the way out of the city.

It was morning at the moment, and there were many people traversing through the city, presenting a lively and bustling sight.

By the time Han Li's trio arrived in the city, then traveled to a secluded estate in the western part of the city, everyone else had already arrived, but by the looks of it, Wyrms 8's trio had only just arrived as well.

Wyrms 9 provided Wyrms 3 with a detailed recount of events pertaining to the ambush they had suffered in Heavenly Water City, then released the bodies of the Transient Guild members who had previously infiltrated the island.

A cold look appeared in Wyrms 3's eyes at the sight of the shriveled-up bodies on the ground, and everyone else's expressions also changed slightly upon seeing this.

Chapter 109: Exploring Red Moon City

"They were already like this by the time we discovered them. We speculate that they were most likely killed by the same Layman Immortal that ambushed us," Wyrms 9 said as he withdrew his gaze from the bodies on the ground.

"After hearing about what happened to your group, Wyrms 8 and I also arrived at our destinations, and as expected, all of the guild members who infiltrated the island before have already disappeared," Wyrms 3 said in a grim voice.

"On the way here, we didn't discover anything abnormal aside from the deserted cities, where the residents supposedly traveled to the holy city for the pilgrimage. As for the pilgrimage itself, the results of our investigation are much the same as what Wyrms 9 and the others found; it's most likely just a way for Gong Shuhong to collect the power of faith," Wyrms 8 said after a brief moment of contemplation.

"Did you also hear that the so-called most devout followers out of the people attending the pilgrimage will be chosen, and that those chosen ones won't return to the cities that they once lived in?" Han Li suddenly asked.

"We did indeed hear about that as well. Apparently, they'll be taken to another city with more fertile land. Perhaps that's just a method that Gong Shuhong employs to increase the level of devotion that his followers feel toward him," Wyrms 8 replied in a nonchalant manner, then changed the subject as he continued, "On the way here, neither Wyrms 3 nor my group was ambushed by the enemy, so it seems that Gong Shuhong has already been wary of our Transient Guild for quite some time. In light of that, I believe it's necessary for us to reassess the accuracy of the information that the guild has previously received about Red Moon Island,"

"Indeed. Perhaps Gong Shuhong is already aware that we're on Red Moon Island, and he intentionally spread false information to lure us to the wrong places. However, it seems that he underestimated our overall power. Setting aside everything else for now, I think it's safe to conclude that Gong Shuhong definitely won't be at any of the six or seven places annotated on the map.

"Instead, there may actually be a chance that he's in Red Moon City right now, so we might as well go and take a look there. Perhaps we'll be able to find something," Wyrms 9 suggested.

"Speaking of that, Red Moon Island has a total of 28 provinces, and almost every one of them has a city by the name of Red Moon City," Wyrms 8 said with a shake of his head.

"Really?" Wyrms 9 and 10 were very much taken aback to hear this.

"There's a place by the name of Red Moon City marked on the map that we received, but as we were passing through a certain city, we discovered by chance that the Red Moon City that they were referring to was somewhere else entirely. Initially, we didn't really take it to heart, thinking that they had merely misspoken, but that wasn't the case.

"Even though we only passed through several provinces, we made sure to keep an eye out, and we discovered that each of the provinces that we passed through has a Red Moon City," Wyrms 8 said as he swept a sleeve through the air, releasing five jade slips that flew toward Han Li and the others.

Everyone caught the jade slips before injecting their spiritual sense into them.

There were many more annotated locations on the map in the jade slip than the previously obtained, and sure enough, aside from the originally marked-out Red Moon City, there was another Red Moon City annotated in each of the provinces that Wyrms 8's group had passed through.

Each province was extremely vast, so if the high-grade cultivators in those provinces intentionally kept this a secret, there was no way that any mortals or even low-grade cultivators would've been able to find out the existence of the other Red Moon Cities.

"The cities that we passed through on the way here only sold maps of certain areas, but there are no maps of the entire island being sold, and it seems that this was entirely by Gong Shuhong's design.

"His subordinates most likely have some type of special restriction placed upon them, making them unable to disclose this matter to anyone. I think it's even reasonable to speculate that the map that we originally obtained was intentionally leaked to us by Gong Shuhong," Wyrms 9 mused.

Everyone fell silent upon hearing this.

Given all of this new information that had come to light, Gong Shuhong's whereabouts had become a complete mystery, making it very difficult for them to proceed with the mission.

All of a sudden, a thought seemed to have occurred to Han Li, and he pressed the jade slip against his own forehead again as a peculiar look flashed through his eyes.

"Seeing as we have no other leads, let's begin by investigating those Red Moon Cities. Mobilize everyone and check out those Red Moon Cities one by one," Wyrms 3 instructed.

Wyrms 9 faltered slightly upon hearing this, then asked, "Are you not going to come with us, Wyrms 3?"

"I'll act on my own. If you find out anything, then just convey the information to me through voice transmission," Wyrms 3 replied, following which a burst of red light emerged over his body, and flew up into the sky before flying toward a certain direction, making no attempt to conceal his aura.

"Looks like Wyrms 3 intends to openly search for Gong Shuhong. Let's follow his instructions. We're currently in the Wave Province, and we're not too far away from the Red Moon City in this province," Wyrms 8 said.

Thus, everyone immediately adopted different faces using their masks, then mingled into the crowd before leaving the city.

As they were passing by a certain street, Han Li suddenly said, "Please wait here for me for a moment, I have some errands that I need to run. My apologies for the inconvenience."

He then quickly made his way into the shop that sold all types of books before anyone had a chance to respond.

Everyone faltered slightly upon seeing this, but they all exchanged a quick glance with one another and didn't say anything.

It didn't take long before Han Li emerged from the shop with a few books in his hand, and they seemed to be books on the geographic environment of this island.

"Sorry to keep you all waiting," Han Li said as he stowed the books away in front of everyone.

The group quickly departed from Dragon Lake City, then made their way to a secluded place before rising up into the sky.

Wyrms 9 and 16 released that translucent blue flying ark once again as a mode of transport for himself, as well as Han Li, attracting a great deal of attention from Wyrms 8 and the others.

Han Li stood on the spirit ark as he took a glance down at a river near Dragon Lake City, then sat down with his legs crossed and pulled out the books that he had just purchased before carefully reading through them.

Wyrms 9 and 16 were rather perplexed by Han Li's actions, but he paid Han Li no heed as he continued to recover from his injuries.

Han Li quickly read through the books that he had purchased, and after some contemplation, he pulled out the jade slip that Wyrms 8 had given to everyone earlier before injecting his spiritual sense into it.

At this point, the sky was gradually beginning to darken, and some stars had appeared up above.

The group of seven traveled for close to an entire day before stopping in front of a large city.

This city was none other than the Red Moon City of the Wave Province, and it was even larger than Dragon Lake City, with a huge river that was several thousand feet wide flowing through it.

The entire city was enshrouded under an enormous blue restriction that occasionally rippled with surges of translucent light, presenting a rather mysterious sight to behold. Through the blue light barrier, only a faint outline of the city could be made out.

However, there were openings in the restrictions corresponding with the locations of the four city gates situated in the north, south, east, and west, allowing people to enter and exit the city.

Blue-robed cultivators were situated at each of the four city gates, examining the people who wished to enter or exit the city.

"If I'm not mistaken, this should be the vastly renowned Thousand Light Illusory Ripple Restriction. The restriction's defensive properties aren't very remarkable, but it's extremely sensitive to spiritual sense," Wyrms 8 mused as he inspected the restriction.

"If this city is so heavily guarded, is there a chance that this is the Red Moon City that we're searching for?" Wyrms 21 speculated as an elated look appeared on his face.

Everyone else's eyes also lit up upon hearing this.

"Regardless of whether it is or not, let's go in and take a look first. Make sure to be on your guard at all times and rein in your spiritual sense as much as possible so you don't trigger any arrays or restrictions," Wyrms 8 instructed.

A hint of displeasure flashed through Wyrms 9's eyes upon hearing this, clearly discontent with taking orders from Wyrms 8, but he didn't say anything.

The seven of them descended upon a secluded spot outside the city, then made their way into the crowd of people who were entering the city.

There were Deity Transformation cultivators stationed at the city gate, but they were naturally unable to see through the disguises adopted by Han Li and the others, and the seven of them successfully entered the city.

The ground in the city was paved with large slabs of bluestone in a neat and orderly fashion, and the streets were lined with shops, presenting a thriving sight to behold.

The four city gates were connected by a pair of wide roads, which split up the entire city into four areas. At the center of the city was a massive plaza, at the center of which stood a huge statue.

At this moment, the city was absolutely packed with people, as were the massive plaza at the center of the city and all of the streets and roads. At the very least, the city had to have been holding several million people.

All of those people were currently reverently worshipping the statue at the center of the plaza, and the entire city was filled with a solemn atmosphere.

Han Li faltered slightly upon seeing, and he, along with everyone else, quickly realized what was happening.

This was most likely the so-called pilgrimage that they had been hearing about.

Blue light flashed through Han Li's eyes as he inspected his surroundings, following which his brows immediately furrowed slightly.

There was a massive number of people in the city, but most of them were mortals who possessed no magic power. There were some cultivators among them, but they were all low-grade cultivators ranging between the Qi Condensation Stage and the Core Formation Stage.

There were also some blue-robed cultivators in the city, but none of them possessed advanced cultivation bases, either. Just like the cultivators stationed at the city gates, these blue-robed cultivators were all at the Nascent Soul Stage or the Deity Transformation Stage, and there wasn't even a single Spatial Tempering cultivator among them.

It seemed like this wasn't the place that they were searching for.

At this point, everyone else had clearly also noticed this, and their expressions immediately darkened slightly.

"In any case, we should examine this city thoroughly. Perhaps we'll be able to find some leads," Wyrn 8 proposed.

Everyone else nodded in agreement, and after a brief discussion, they decided to split up.

The city was too massive, and Han Li and the others couldn't just use their spiritual sense to scour large areas at once. In any case, everyone was in the city, so even if there were any enemies lurking in

ambush, they would've been within sufficiently close proximity to one another to provide reinforcements.

Thus, the decision was made, and everyone quickly split up.

Han Li made his way along a certain street, inspecting everything in the surrounding area with blue light flashing within his eyes.

His body had taken on a semi-tangible form, allowing him to blend into his environment.

All of the people on the street were worshiping the statue, so he would've stuck out like a sore thumb walking along the street on his own, and that was why he had decided to employ this concealment technique.

Moments later, Han Li appeared in front of a shop on the side of the street, and it was another bookshop.

At the moment, the entire city was observing the pilgrimage, so even though the shop was open, there weren't any customers inside, only a middle-aged manager looking after the shop.

Han Li flew into the shop, then re-emerged moments later.

After that, he made no further stops and began to carefully explore the city.

Due to how massive the city was, it took the seven of them close to half a day to examine the entire city, following which they gathered back together in a secluded area in the city.

Unfortunately, none of them were able to dig up any useful information.

It seemed that this city was completely unremarkable aside from its enormous size.

"Looks like this isn't the Red Moon City that we're looking for. In that case, we shouldn't waste any more time here..."

Right at this moment, Wyrms 25 suddenly spoke up to interrupt Wyrms 8. "Hold on a second, Fellow Daoist Wyrms 8, there's something rather strange underground here."

At this moment, Wyrms 25 was crouched down onto the ground, and a series of yellow ripples that were visible to the naked eye were emanating from his body before vanishing into the ground down below.

Chapter 110: Leads

"Did you manage to find something down there?" Wyrms 8 hurriedly asked as an elated look appeared in his eyes.

"I suggest all of you take a look at what's 1,000 feet under here," Wyrms 25 said as he stood up straight again.

Everyone immediately released their spiritual sense before directing it into the ground beneath their feet, following which their eyes quickly lit up.

There was a large underground cavity directly beneath them, and it had clearly been artificially constructed.

"It's a good thing that you have such great attention to detail. Otherwise, we would've missed this entirely," Wyrms 8 praised.

"You're far too kind, Fellow Daoist. I just so happen to be using a special cultivation art that gives me heightened sensitivity to what's underground," Wyrms 25 replied with a modest smile.

"Let's go and take a look down there." Wyrms 8 didn't say anything further and led the way down underground.

The other two members of his team immediately followed along, as did Wyrms 25.

Soon, Han Li's trio were the only ones left still on the surface.

Wyrms 9 was looking rather displeased, and he didn't immediately follow Wyrms 8 and the others underground.

Han Li and Wyrms 16 exchanged a glance before also choosing to remain on the spot.

Even though the seven of them were operating together, certain factions had been formed among them due to the teams assigned by Wyrms 3.

After a brief moment of silence, a burst of blue light appeared over Wyrms 9's body, and he also vanished into the ground down below.

Han Li and Wyrms 16 quickly followed suit, and a short while later, they arrived in that underground cavity.

The space within the underground cavity was quite large, standing at a radius of at least tens of thousands of feet.

The ground was very smooth and even, and it was entirely paved with bluestone slabs to form a circular underground plaza. It seemed that it had already been a very long time since anyone had visited this area.

Everyone couldn't help but exchange a few glances upon seeing this.

Han Li briefly inspected his surroundings, then took a whiff of the air in the underground cavity to find that it was very damp here. In addition to that, there was a faint bloody odor wafting through the air alongside an indistinct yin aura.

He crouched down before plunging his fingers into one of the bluestone slabs on the ground, then pulled it up to reveal the dark red earth down below, upon which he discovered that the dark red soil was tinged with a faint layer of black.

Han Li picked up a handful of soil, then tossed it away after a brief inspection.

"Did you discover something, Wyrms 15?" Wyrms 16 asked.

"No, I just feel like this place is rather strange. The faint odor of blood and the yin aura in here indicates that many people seem to have died here, and even the soil beneath these stone slabs has been tainted to become yin soil," Han Li mused with a contemplative expression.

"Perhaps this is a place that was specifically constructed to deal with enemies," Wyrms 16 speculated.

Han Li shook his head in response. Enemies of the island could've been killed anywhere, so why was it necessary to construct this massive underground chamber as an execution site?

He felt like there was something very suspicious about this, but he couldn't pinpoint exactly what was wrong here.

Meanwhile, Wyrms 8 and the others were also speculating about what this underground space could've been used for.

"There's a simple solution to this. If we want to know why there's an underground space here, all we need to do is capture someone and interrogate them," Wyrms 9 suddenly said, then swept a sleeve through the air to release a small yellow flag, which vanished into the ceiling of the underground cavity in a flash.

Somewhere on the edge of the plaza in Red Moon City, a blue-robed middle-aged cultivator at the Nascent Soul Stage was patrolling the city and maintaining order.

All of a sudden, a burst of yellow light flashed beneath his feet, and a large yellow hand shot out like lightning, closing itself around his legs before dragging him down into the ground.

At the same time, a series of yellow ripples emerged on the ground beneath his feet, transforming the hard stone material into a swamp-like consistency.

Thus, the middle-aged man vanished into the ground in the blink of an eye, and the yellow ripples on the ground also disappeared immediately thereafter.

Everyone was focused wholeheartedly on the pilgrimage, so no one noticed what had just happened.

Yellow light flashed on the ceiling above the underground plaza, and the middle-aged man tumbled down before falling onto the ground.

His expression immediately changed at the sight of Han Li's group, but his body was enshrouded in a layer of yellow light that prevented him from moving and making any sound.

Wyrms 9 grabbed onto the man's head, and countless black threads shot out of his palm before vanishing into the man's head.

The man's facial muscles twisted and spasmed painfully as blood began to seep out of his orifices, but Wyrms 9 paid that no heed as he continued to release more black threads out of his palm with a cold expression.

Moments later, the middle-aged man's body abruptly shuddered, and a dull thump rang out within his head, as if something had exploded in there.

Immediately thereafter, his aura completely faded, as did the light in his eyes.

A dark look appeared on Wyrms 9's face.

As was the case with the Body Integration cultivator that he had captured in Heavenly Water City, this man's soul had also had a restriction placed upon it, leading to automatic self-detonation as soon as certain memories were encroached upon through the use of soul search techniques.

"Even if there were no restrictions placed on the souls of these cultivators, a Nascent Soul cultivator wouldn't have known much anyway. There's not much point in continuing to stay here. I suggest we move on to the next Red Moon City right away," Wyrms 8 said with a hint of mockery in his eyes.

After that, he rose up into the air and vanished into the stone ceiling up above, followed immediately by the three people beside him.

Wyrms 9 gave a cold harrumph, then also departed from the underground cavity with Han Li and Wyrms 16.

A short while later, the group of seven departed from the city and traveled to the next Red Moon City.

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Several days later, the seven of them arrived in front of another city that was enshrouded under an enormous blue restriction, and this one was right next to a massive lake.

To call it a lake wasn't entirely accurate. In reality, it was connected to the sea, making it technically an inland sea.

Outside the city was a series of connected docks with thousands of ships and boats entering and exiting, presenting a breathtaking spectacle to behold.

This was the Red Moon City of the Feng province, and it was also already the sixth Red Moon City that they had visited in the past few days.

Every single one of those cities had been the same as the Red Moon City in Lan. Aside from the residents of the cities observing the pilgrimage and the underground space that each city possessed, there was nothing abnormal or worthy of note.

The seven of them landed outside the city before sneaking their way inside.

Once again, this city had two main roads that connected the four city gates, with a massive circular plaza at the center of the city.

This city was also absolutely packed with people, and the plaza was laden with worshippers who had come to attend the pilgrimage from all over the province.

Han Li briefly inspected his surroundings with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, and a hint of dismay quickly appeared on his face.

Just like the previous few Red Moon Cities, there were no high-grade cultivators in this city at all. Once again, this was most likely a red herring and a complete waste of time.

Wyrms 8 and 9 were just about to say something when a faint breeze swept past them, and Wyrms 10 and 11 had already taken Han Li and Wyrms 12 and 13 deeper into the city.

A cold look flashed through Wyrms 8's eyes, but he didn't say anything as he led the three people accompanying him down another path.

Moments later, Han Li's trio arrived in a secluded corner.

Right as they were about to split up and go off on their own, Wyrms 9 suddenly said to Han Li and Wyrms 10 and 11, "There's an unofficial rule in the guild that those who make important contributions in missions will be given additional rewards, and these rewards are often extremely bountiful."

"Even though we don't have many leads at this point, make sure to constantly be on the lookout so the reward doesn't fall into the hands of Wyrms 8 and the others."

Han Li and Wyrms 12 and 13 faltered slightly upon hearing this, then cupped their fists in a salute toward Wyrms 9.

"Thank you for your guidance, Fellow Daoist."

Wyrms 9 and 16 nodded in response before departing in a certain direction, and Wyrms 10 and 11 also did the same after hurriedly bidding farewell to Han Li, seemingly very eager to claim this reward for themselves.

Meanwhile, Han Li made his way down another street, and his gaze was constantly roaming over the shops on either side of the street as if he were searching for something.

At this point, the pilgrimage seemed to be about to draw to a conclusion soon, and many people had begun walking through the city, so he didn't have to employ a concealment technique.

A short while later, Han Li made his way into a shop on the side of the street, and this was yet another bookshop.

The shop was quite large, with a total of four levels. There were three rooms on the first floor, each of which was around 40 to 50 feet wide, and they were packed with bookshelves.

Due to the ongoing pilgrimage, business was quite slow, and there weren't many customers in the shop.

"What can I help you with?" A portly middle-aged man with a well-maintained mustache immediately approached Han Li with a warm smile, and it seemed like he was the shopkeeper of the bookshop.

"Do you have any old maps or books on geography? The older, the better," Han Li replied as he glanced at the bookshelves in the shop.

A peculiar look flashed through the shopkeeper's eyes, but the expression only lingered for an instant before he replied in a calm manner, "We do have maps here, but none of them are very old."

Even though the change in the shopkeeper's expression was only present for a split-second, it naturally didn't escape Han Li's attention.

Intrigued by this development, a layer of translucent light appeared in his eyes, and the shopkeeper's eyes instantly took on a dazed look at the sight of Han Li's eyes.

"Bring me the oldest maps and geography books that you have here," Han Li instructed.

"Yes," the shopkeeper replied in a wooden manner, then turned and made his way deeper into the shop.

Han Li followed along behind the shopkeeper, and a short while later, he emerged from the shop with a book that had a brown cover.

The pages of the book seemed to have been made of some type of beast hide, and it appeared to be an extremely old book.

As Han Li flipped through the pages of the book, a hint of excitement appeared in his eyes.

Close to half a day later, the group of seven met back up again, and all of them were looking rather frustrated.

They hadn't discovered anything in this city, and the underground space here was also completely empty, so no leads had been gathered.

"Where the hell is he? Are we really just going to have to keep searching for him indefinitely on this island?" Wyrms 21 grumbled.

"Don't get disheartened. Gong Shuhong may have gone into hiding, but this is his stronghold. There are only less than 30 Red Moon Cities in total. If we search through them one by one, we'll be sure to find some leads. Next, we'll go to the Red Moon City in the Zang province," Wyrms 8 said before turning to depart.

Right at this moment, Han Li suddenly spoke up. "Please wait a moment, Fellow Daoist Wyrms 8, I may have found some leads pertaining to Gong Shuhong's whereabouts."

Everyone immediately turned to him upon hearing this, and an elated look appeared in Wyrms 9's eyes as he hurriedly asked, "What have you found?"

Han Li extended a finger forward, and a screen of light that was depicting an image appeared in front of him.

"Please take a look, everyone," Han Li said.

Everyone turned to the light screen to find that there was a map of the island displayed on it. It was very similar to the map of the island that Wyrms 8 and 9 had previously presented to everyone, except this one was a bit more detailed.

"Isn't this the map that Fellow Daoist Wyrms 8 and 9 has already distributed to everyone? We've already seen it," Wyrms 25 scoffed with a hint of disdain in his voice.

Everyone else was also rather perplexed.

However, Wyrms 8 and Wyrms 9 seemed to be quite intrigued by what they were seeing.