

A Record 181

Chapter 181: Heavenly Devil Possession

"Now that you've verified the authenticity of my token, I believe it's time that you told me exactly what needs to be done for this mission," Han Li said in a direct and straightforward manner.

"Before that, there's one more thing that I must examine before I decide whether I'm going to entrust this mission to you," the portly manager said.

"What is it?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"I need to examine your cultivation base to see if you truly possess the ability to complete the mission," the portly manager said.

Han Li didn't suppress his aura any longer upon hearing this, releasing his early-True Immortal Stage aura in a completely unconcealed form.

Even though he had only released a hint of his aura, the portly manager still swayed unsteadily as an unnatural flush appeared on his face, and he appeared to have been struggling to breathe.

Han Li hurriedly withdrew his aura upon seeing this, and a hint of befuddlement flashed through his eyes.

The portly manager's appearance was clearly also a disguise manifested by a mask from the Transient Guild, and it had concealed his aura as well, so even with Han Li's immense spiritual sense, he was unable to glean the man's cultivation base.

He had only released a tiny hint of his aura, so he was rather taken aback by the strong reaction displayed by the portly manager.

The portly manager's complexion was still a little pale, but some color had returned to his cheeks after a few deep breaths, and he asked, "If I'm not mistaken, you're an early-True Immortal cultivator, right, Fellow Daoist?"

Han Li merely nodded in response.

A hint of disappointment flashed through the portly manager's face as he sighed, "In that case, I advise you not to take on this mission."

"Why is that?" Han Li asked with a perplexed expression. "The mission description stated that any True Immortal cultivator could take on the mission, "

"To tell you the truth, the mission that I released will require you to kill someone. According to my knowledge, that person is also at the True Immortal Stage, but he possesses certain powers that make him far more formidable than other cultivators of the same caliber. I'm concerned that you'll be no match for him and end up losing your life here," the portly manager explained with a shake of his head.

"If it's another early-True Immortal cultivator, then I'm fairly confident that I can take him on. Even if I can't defeat him, I'll definitely be able to at least ensure that I'll survive the encounter, so rest assured and give me the mission debriefing, Fellow Daoist. I've already made up my mind, and I'm not going to back down," Han Li insisted with a smile

The portly manager could see that Han Li was quite determined, so he could only comply with Han Li's request.

"Alright. The person that I want to kill is a man by the name of Bai Songshi, and he currently serves as the imperial preceptor of the Hundred Blessings Nation. If you can kill him, then you'll receive the promised reward."

Han Li was rather taken aback by this request, and he asked, "You want me to kill the imperial preceptor of a mortal nation? Aren't cultivators prohibited from meddlings in the affairs of the mortal world while in the territory of the Blaze Dragon Dao? Also, if that man really is a True Immortal cultivator, then how did he end up becoming the imperial preceptor of a mortal nation?"

Instead of answering Han Li's question, the portly manager raised one of his own. "I'm assuming you're not from our Ancient Cloud Continent, right, Fellow Daoist?"

"That's right," Han Li admitted in a forthright manner.

"That explains it. The thing is that there are trillions of mortals on the Ancient Cloud Continent, and as a result, there are millions of mortal nations. Some nations like the Hundred Blessings Nation appear to be run by the mortal imperial family on the surface, but in reality, they're being presided over by one or two cultivating clans in the shadows. They are the ones pulling the strings behind the scenes," the portly manager explained.

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face as he asked, "So what you're saying is that the clan that Bai Songshi belongs to is the actual ruler of the Hundred Blessings Nation?"

"That's right. These cultivating clans are supported by some powerful cultivating sects as well, but due to certain unspoken rules, unless a nation is facing complete annihilation, these cultivating clans generally won't interfere with the nation's affairs. Hence, the mortals residing in those nations don't feel the influence of these cultivating clans at all," the portly manager explained.

"In that case, if I kill Bai Songshi, won't I be making an enemy out of his clan and the cultivating sects that support his clan? In fact, wouldn't that make me a target of the Blaze Dragon Dao as well?" Han Li asked with a puzzled expression.

"You can rest assured on that front, Fellow Daoist. The man that I'm asking you to kill is not the true Bai Songshi," the portly manager replied with a wave of his hand.

Han Li was becoming more befuddled by the second, and he was just about to ask what all of this meant when the portly manager continued, "The one that I want you to kill is actually an Extrarealm Heavenly Devil. While transcending his ascension tribulation, the true Bai Songshi was possessed by that heavenly devil.

"In order to avoid attracting attention to itself, the heavenly devil has been suppressing its cultivation base to the Grand Ascension Stage this entire time, even though its actual cultivation base is at the early-True Immortal Stage..."

Han Li raised an eyebrow as he interjected, "That makes sense, but I have one question: if a heavenly devil really did possess Bai Songshi's body, they would've been sure to act in a secretive manner to avoid attention, so how do you know so much about all of this?"

A hesitant look appeared on the portly manager's face, and it seemed that he was unsure of how to respond.

"What you've just described to me is truly rather bewildering. If you're unable or unwilling to explain the situation to me in further detail, then I'm afraid I can't believe you," Han Li said.

The portly manager lowered his head and fell into deep thought upon hearing this.

Han Li also fell silent and waited patiently for a response.

After a long silence, the portly manager slowly raised his head, and there was a determined look in his eyes, indicating that he had just arrived at an important decision.

He raised his hands and placed them on his cheeks, then made a gentle lifting motion, and an azure rabbit mask that was riddled with spirit patterns was removed amid a flash of rippling azure light.

As soon as the mask was removed, azure light surged over the portly manager's entire body, and he began to rapidly shrink, while his waist was also quickly compressing.

It didn't take long for the portly manager to completely disappear, replaced by a young woman who appeared to have been around 17 to 18 years of age.

The woman had a pair of almond eyes and thin lips, coupled with a pair of fine eyebrows and a delicate nose. There was still some baby fat lingering on her cheeks, and she was wearing a tight-fitting pink lotus flower dress, giving her a gorgeous and refreshing appearance.

However, there was a slight wrinkle between her brows, striking the beholder with a hint of sympathy.

Han Li's expression remained unchanged, but he finally understood why the woman had displayed such a strong reaction to the release of his aura from earlier.

As it turned out, she was only a Deity Transformation cultivator, and upon detecting this, Han Li couldn't help but wonder how someone of such a lowly cultivation base had managed to join the Transient Guild.

However, after some closer inspection, he noticed that there seemed to be something out of the ordinary about the woman, but he couldn't pinpoint exactly what was different about her.

"I'm sure you're aware that members of the Transient Guild are prohibited from enquiring about the true identities of other members, so the fact that I'm revealing my true appearance to you should be a sufficient show of my sincerity, right, Fellow Daoist?" the young woman asked, and her voice was very pleasant on the ears.

Despite the fact that she was facing a True Immortal whose cultivation base far exceeded hers, she remained quite calm and collected.

Han Li remained unmoved by this gesture, and he said, "Please answer my question from earlier."

The young woman took a deep breath, then said, "To tell you the truth, my name is Bai Suyuan, and I am the granddaughter of Bai Songshi. At the time..."

Thanks to her description of the events that unfolded at the time, Han Li was able to get a rough grasp on the timeline.

As it turned out, Bai Suyuna's parents had unfortunately passed away during an outing when she was still at a very young age. Due to her cleverness and her exceptional cultivation aptitude, Bai Songshi was very fond of Bai Suyuan and always kept her by his side, constantly showering her with doting affection.

During Bai Songshi's ascension tribulation, he was possessed by an Extrarealm Heavenly Devil, but no one was able to tell. She was the first one to have noticed, but no one in her clan believed her when she told them, not even her own grandfather.

In the beginning, the heavenly devil was quite restrained and didn't step out of line. However, once it had completely integrated itself with Bai Songshi's memories, it gradually began to control the entire Bai Clan, then set his sights on the Hundred Blessings Nation's imperial court, aiming to seize more power with his status as imperial preceptor.

After that, strange happenings began to occur frequently in the Hundred Blessings Nation, with entire cities or towns of people disappearing overnight. As the cultivating power presiding over the Hundred Blessings Nation, the Bai Clan had naturally sent people to investigate these strange occurrences, but all to no avail.

"Eventually, the heavenly devil's behavior became more and more brazen, and some of the members of my clan finally caught on to the fact that something was wrong, so they began to investigate the matter, but they were all taken out by the heavenly devil before they could uncover the truth.

"My cultivation aptitude caught the heavenly devil's eye, and it wanted to develop me into a cultivation cauldron, so it had me imprisoned in a restricted area in our clan, and my grandfather was killed by the heavenly devil while rescuing me."

Bai Suyuan's voice trailed off here, and a hint of pain and grief flashed through her eyes.

"My condolences, Fellow Daoist Bai," Han Li consoled.

Bai Suyuan was silent for a moment longer, then continued, "After my grandfather rescued me, he entrusted me with this mask and the token of our ancestor, both of which had been passed down for generations in our clan.

"He told me to take this token to the Blaze Dragon Dao and cultivate there until I attained the power to avenge our clan, but I'm only at the Deity Transformation Stage, who knows how long it'll take before I can contend against that heavenly devil?"

"So that's why you released this mission in the Transient Guild to find someone to help you kill him?" Han Li asked.

Han Li could understand why Bai Suyuan was so disheartened. For a Deity Transformation cultivator, even the Spatial Tempering Stage would've seemed impossibly far away, let alone the True Immortal Stage. Having progressed arduously through the ranks himself, Han Li knew just how difficult and perilous this process could be.

At this point, Bai Suyuan had already regained her composure, and she replied, "That's right. I discovered the existence of the Transient Guild by chance through this mask, and I decided to release this mission."

"The heavenly devil has been constantly searching for me ever since I escaped, and it was only thanks to this mask that I've been able to avoid capture all this time. If I don't find someone to kill that heavenly devil, then I'm afraid I won't be able to get away from it for much longer."

Chapter 182: Heavenly Worship

"I see. Your explanation makes sense, but why is it that you were able to join the Transient Guild with your cultivation base. Also, you mentioned that this mask and the token were passed down for generations in your clan, is that right?"

"This mask originally belonged to an ancestor of our Bai Clan, the same one who once served as an inner sect elder of the Blaze Dragon Dao. He was also the reason why our Bai Clan was able to become the immortal clan controlling the Hundred Blessings Nation from the shadows. As for the token, that belonged to him as well," Bai Suyuan explained.

"In that case, why didn't you go to the Blaze Dragon Dao to search for that ancestor of yours and get him to help you slay the heavenly devil?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"According to my grandfather, that ancestor of ours suddenly disappeared without a trace several thousand years ago. Several Body Integration Stage elders of our clan had been sent out to search for him, but all of them disappeared as well.

"As a result, our Bai Clan gradually fell into decline, and it was exactly because of this that my great-grandfather prematurely attempted a breakthrough to the True Immortal Stage, ultimately resulting in him being possessed by that heavenly devil," Bai Suyuan sighed.

Han Li contemplated Bai Suyuan's story for a moment, then said, "There's nothing that can back up your claims at the moment. I have to see Bai Songshi for myself to verify whether he's actually been possessed by a heavenly devil before I decide if I want to carry out the mission."

At the moment, he still didn't completely trust Bai Suyuan.

In his eyes, the fact that a late-Deity Transformation cultivator like her was able to escape from a True Immortal for all these years was a clear indication that there was more to her than met the eye, so he was naturally slightly wary of her.

Bai Suyuan hesitated momentarily, then said, "I suppose that's reasonable. The Hundred Blessings Nation's decennial heavenly worship ceremony is being held early next month. The emperor and all of his officials will be in attendance, and they'll be traveling collectively to the Grand Loft Mountain for the ceremony.

"Bai Songshi will naturally be among them as well, and that would be the best opportunity to strike as the Grand Loft Mountain is far away from all mortal cities."

Han Li nodded in response, expressing his silent approval of this plan.

Bai Suyuan's eyes immediately lit up upon seeing this, and she said, "By the way, I still don't know your name, Fellow Daoist."

"My name is Li Feiyu."

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The Grand Loft Mountain Range situated in the eastern region of the Hundred Blessings Nation had always been renowned for its beauty and majesty, and the Grand Loft Mountain in the mountain range was the tallest mountain in the entire nation. It had always been known as the Eastern Divine Mountain, and it held an extremely lofty position in the hearts of all of the nation's citizens. It was said that a True Immortal had once ascended from that very mountain.

The scholars and poets of the Hundred Blessings Nation had also always taken pride in scaling the Grand Loft Mountain and dedicating poems and odes to the majestic mountain. Even to this day, the mountain was still riddled with poems that had been engraved onto the rock faces, attracting many tourists every year to see those poems for themselves.

However, starting from a month ago, the entirety of the Grand Loft Mountain had been surrounded by large numbers of armored soldiers, completely sealing it off to everyone, regardless of whether they were common folk or nobility.

No one in the Hundred Blessings Nation had any complaints about this as they knew that the heavenly worship ceremony was about to commence.

Even though the mountain had been sealed off, countless people had gathered at the foot of the mountain from the nearby counties in the days leading up to the ceremony.

On the day of the official ceremony, even before first light had arrived, the official road leading up to the Grand Loft Mountain was already lined with people wanting to witness the emperor in person.

As soon as the designated hour arrived, the carriages of the emperor and the officials made their way out of the imperial palace, traveling toward the Grand Loft Mountain while escorted by the imperial guard.

On the summit of the Grand Loft Mountain was a large round altar, atop which stood a table and an incense burner. There was a damask red carpet draped over the ground, while many officials in ceremonial robes were gathered around the altars, waiting with their hands clasped in front of them and reverent looks on their faces.

Among them was an ordinary-looking middle-aged official whose eyes were constantly darting around, inspecting his surroundings.

This person was none other than Han Li, who had managed to sneak into the ranks of the officials, while Bai Suyuan had concealed herself outside of the altar.

After some observation, Han Li discovered that aside from the dozen or so Nascent Soul and Foundation Establishment cultivators among the patrolling soldiers present on the mountain summit, the high official of the Ministry of Rites standing beside him was also a Deity Transformation cultivator.

Han Li knew that these people had most likely been planted into the imperial court by the Bai Clan in secret.

After waiting for a few hours, the emperor's carriage finally arrived on the summit of the Grand Loft Mountain, followed by a procession of other carriages.

The emperor appeared to have only been around 20 years of age, and he was helped down from his carriage by a eunuch. However, instead of immediately making his way to the altar, he stopped beside his carriage, seemingly waiting for something.

Moments later, the carriages behind him also arrived on the mountain summit one after another, and the door of the carriage immediately following the emperor's swung open.

There was a white-haired elderly man in a purple robe inside, and he reached out a hand before making his way out of the carriage in a shaky manner, assisted by a couple of servants.

The man had an extremely geriatric appearance. He had a pair of murky eyes, and his face was riddled with wrinkles. There were several stray strands of white hair drifting in front of his forehead, and his body was severely hunched over. It seemed that even a slightly strong breeze would be able to knock him down.

A faint smile appeared on the emperor's face as he slowly made his way to the elderly man's side, then accompanied him toward the altar, followed quickly by all of the other officials.

Standing among the crowd, a hint of barely detectable blue light flashed through Han Li's eyes as his gaze swept over the elderly man, and just that single glance alone was enough for him to tell him that this man was the imperial preceptor, Bai Songshi.

Bai Songshi was putting on the façade of a frail old man, and he had done a very good job of concealing his own aura, but he was naturally unable to fool Han Li's spiritual sense, and on the surface, he didn't indeed appear to have been a Grand Ascension cultivator.

Aside from the fact that he was intentionally suppressing his own aura and cultivation base, Han Li didn't find anything else worthy of note about him.

The emperor and Bai Songshi slowly made their way up the staircase toward the altar, while the other officials stopped at the foot of the altar.

While passing by Han Li and the other officials, Bai Songshi's footsteps faltered ever so slightly, and he took what appeared to have been a casual glance in a certain direction outside of the altar out of the corner of his eye. A faint gleam flashed through his murky eyes, but it was gone in an instant, and he continued to make his way toward the center of the altar as if nothing had happened.

The ceremony commenced under the watchful eye of a high-ranking official from the Ministry of Rites, while Han Li was silently contemplating how to proceed.

Right at this moment, Bai Suyuan's voice suddenly rang out in his mind, and she was sounding a little frantic. "Fellow Daoist Li, why have you still not done anything? I'm sure that heavenly devil has already discovered me at this point. Have you been fooled by that heavenly devil's façade?"

Han Li lowered his head to look down at his own shadow, then asked internally, "Fellow Daoist Mo Guang, can you take a look at that man for me?"

A brief moment later, Mo Guang's voice rang out in his mind. "He's done a fair good job of disguising himself, but as far as I can tell, he is indeed an Extrarealm Heavenly Devil."

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face upon hearing this.

At this point, the emperor had already offered up his three customary sticks of incense to the altar and had returned to the side of his carriage.

Meanwhile, as the head of all of the imperial court's officials, Bai Songshi had been tasked with reciting the heavenly worship oration on the emperor's behalf. His voice was hoarse and strained, and he really did sound like an old man who was struggling just to speak.

Right at this moment, Han Li suddenly strode forward and emerged from the crowd.

The officials of the Ministry of Rites around him were stunned by this insolent gesture, and they hurriedly called out to stop him, but before they could do anything, he had already vanished on the spot.

In the next instant, he appeared at the center of the altar, and with a sweep of his sleeve, a gust of fierce azure wind was released, sweeping up all of the officials, including the emperor, before carrying them down to the foot of the mountain.

The cultivators concealed among the mortals were trying to break out of the gust of azure wind with all their might, but they were completely powerless to do so and could only look on helplessly as they were carried down the mountain.

Bai Songshi ceased his chanting as he turned to face Han Li. "So you're the one that the girl has sought out to kill me?"

At the same time, his murky eyes instantly became incredibly clear, and his hunched back had also become ramrod straight. He smoothed down the strands of stray hair in front of his forehead, and all of his geriatric frailty had vanished in an instant, replaced by a powerful and domineering aura.

Han Li offered no response as a cold smile appeared on his face, and he launched himself forward as he threw a punch directly at Bai Songshi's head.

Bai Songshi's eyelids twitched slightly as he detected the immense aura that had erupted out of Han Li's body, and he immediately shot back several hundred feet in retreat.

As a result, Han Li's fist missed its target and struck the altar instead.

A resounding boom rang out as the entire altar was destroyed, reduced to a pile of rubble and dust.

Around a dozen streaks of light appeared around Han Li one after another, each of which contained a cultivator who was glowering at Han Li with furious expressions.

An azure-robed elderly man stabbed a finger in Han Li's direction as he yelled, "How dare you attack our patriarch, you insolent cur!"

After that initial punch, Han Li didn't unleash any further attacks. Instead, he merely observed Bai Songshi from afar while ignoring everyone around him.

The cultivators that had surrounded him were all from the Bai Clan, and even the most powerful one among them was only at the late-Deity Transformation Stage, so he naturally wasn't going to target them.

Right at this moment, a slender figure shot forth from afar before descending onto the destroyed altar, revealing herself to be none other than Bai Suyuan.

"Stop! This is Senior Li, a cultivator that I implored to come and eradicate this heavenly devil. Don't be fooled by that devilish creature!" Bai Suyuan yelled in a frantic voice.

The azure-robed elderly man erupted into a fit of fury as he rushed directly toward Bai Suyuan. "Silence, you foul wench! Not only have you killed your grandfather, you're now slandering the head of our clan! You are the only devilish creature here!"

Han Li could see what was happening out of the corner of his eye, but he paid that no heed as he made his way toward Bai Songshi.

Chapter 183: Slaying the Devil

A cold look appeared in Bai Songshi's eyes at the sight of the approaching Han Li, and he swept his sleeves through the air to release a pair of giant fiery wheels that were enveloped in five-colored light and burning with five-colored spirit flames.

This was a pair of spirit treasures of quite a high caliber, but Han Li remained completely unfazed as he chuckled coldly, "Even now, you're still unwilling to reveal your true form?"

Bai Songshi offered no reply as he swept his sleeves toward Han Li while chanting an incantation.

The sound of howling wind rang out as the pair of five-colored fiery wheels rapidly expanded, swelling to several hundred feet in size in the blink of an eye before hurtling directly toward Han Li.

A burst of wince-inducing screeching rang out as a pair of extremely deep trenches were dug into the surface of the mountain summit by the pair of fiery wheels. Five-colored flames were burning within both of the trenches, melting straight through the solid rock.

The surrounding cultivators of the Bai Clan knew that they were far too weak to participate in the battle between Han Li and Bai Songshi, so all of them turned to attack Bai Suyuan at the azure-robed elderly man's behest.

Bai Suyuan clearly had no intentions of fighting fire with fire, and she summoned two or three protective treasures at once, conjuring up a large fiery cloud around her to ward off the attacks from the surrounding Bai Clan cultivators.

Even though she was significantly younger than all of the Bai Clan cultivators around her, she possessed outstanding cultivation aptitude, and her late-Deity Transformation Stage cultivation base meant that she was able to hold her own just fine despite being severely outnumbered.

Han Li displayed no intention of taking evasive measures from the pair of oncoming fiery wheels. Instead, he took a step forward, and golden scales surfaced over both of his arms as he reached forward with both hands at once.

A pair of massive golden hands appeared out of thin air, then reached straight into the five-colored flames before grabbing tightly onto the wheels within.

The fiery wheels were instantly stopped cold in their tracks as if they had crashed into an insurmountable barrier.

Bai Songshi's pupils contracted slightly upon seeing this, and he began to chant a loud incantation while making a rapid series of hand seals.

The flames around the fiery wheel instantly began to burn with even greater ferocity, while the wheels themselves began to revolve at a higher speed, sending the flames around it shooting through the air in all directions.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly as he felt the increased power output from the pair of fiery wheels, and he let loose a thunderous roar, then abruptly threw both of his hands up into the air.

Both of the giant fiery wheels were involuntarily hurled up into the sky, and in the next instant, Han Li sprang forward, arriving in front of Bai Songshi in a flash.

A string of cracks and pops rang out from one of his arms, which also expanded drastically in size as he launched a fist directly at Bai Songshi's head.

However, Bai Songshi was already prepared for such an attack, and he thrust both of his hands forward to release a round shield with the head of a beast engraved onto its surface.

A resounding thump rang out as Han Li's fist made contact with the shield, and the latter instantly caved in significantly, while Bai Songshi was sent flying back by the tremendous force behind Han Li's punch.

Before he had a chance to steady himself, Han Li appeared in front of him once again before throwing another devastating punch.

Bai Songshi had no choice but to raise the already severely damaged shield once again to defend himself, and a resounding boom rang out as the shield exploded into the pieces in the face of Han Li's attack.

Even after plowing through the shield, Han Li's fist still carried tremendous momentum as it continued to hurtle through the air before striking Bai Songshi square on the chest.

A dull thump rang out, and even though the sound wasn't very loud, it sent tremors running through the entire mountain summit.

Bai Songshi's chest was instantly caved in by the blow, but he suddenly raised his head to the heavens before opening his mouth to release a burst of dense, black devilish qi, which rose up into the sky like a plume of black smoke.

The plume of devilish qi quickly filled the entire sky above the Grand Loft Mountain, and in the blink of an eye, the entire surrounding area in a radius of several hundred kilometers had been plunged into a pitch-black night.

"What the hell..."

"Everyone, stop!"

"Suyuan, could it be that you were telling the truth this entire time?"

All of the Bai Clan cultivators who were attacking Bai Suyuan immediately stopped what they were doing as they looked up into the sky with incredulous expressions. No longer supported by the heavenly devil, Bai Songshi's lifeless body was falling out of the air.

Bai Suyuan also looked up into the sky as the fiery cloud around her faded, and a hint of fierce resentment had surfaced in her eyes.

"If you don't want to die, then take those mortals at the foot of the mountain and leave this place right now," Han Li instructed in a cold voice.

Everyone immediately snapped back to their senses upon hearing this, and they hurriedly picked up Bai Songshi's remains before flying down the mountain.

The azure-robed elderly man turned to Bai Suyuan with a complex expression, and after some hesitation, he said, "I'm sorry for doubting you, Suyuan. Come with us, it's not safe here."

Bai Suyuan didn't even spare a glance at the elderly man as she spat through gritted teeth, "No, I have to see that heavenly devil die with my own eyes."

The azure-robed elderly man opened his mouth to say something, but ultimately only heaved a resigned sigh before flying down the mountain.

At this point, the devilish cloud in the sky had already become extremely dense, and it had manifested itself into a giant human face.

"I'm going to tear off your skin and grind your bones to dust for forcing me to abandon my human body!"

A cold voice rang out from the heavens, and as soon as the voice trailed off, the human face in the sky immediately opened its mouth to release a vast expanse of devilish flames that swept toward Han Li in a frenzy.

At this point, Han Li had already summoned the black saber that he had taken from Fang Pan, and with a flick of his wrist, he unleashed a massive saber projection that was over 100 feet wide, sending it sweeping toward the oncoming sea of devilish flames.

The sea of black flames was instantly parted by the formidable saber projection, creating a path straight down the middle that was 1,000 feet wide.

Han Li flew directly through that opening as he slashed his saber incessantly through the air, conjuring up a vast expanse of black saber projections that hurtled toward the massive face up above.

In the face of the saber projections, the enormous devilish cloud up above was sliced into pieces while churning incessantly.

The giant face in the sky continued to blast devilish flames at Han Li, but the flames were easily kept at bay by Han Li's saber projections.

Right at this moment, the devilish cloud suddenly began to shrink, contracting from several hundred kilometers in size to only dozens of kilometers, forming a massive devilish face with a pair of black horns on its head.

The devilish face opened its mouth, and an enormous black vortex appeared within, releasing a burst of tremendous suction force that sucked Han Li into the vortex in the blink of an eye.

Immediately thereafter, the devilish face closed its mouth to swallow up Han Li.

Bai Suyuan's heart sank slightly upon seeing this, and she flipped a hand over to produce a golden ball, which she concealed up her sleeve.

The golden ball was riddled with runes, and there were arcs of golden lightning flashing over its surface. It was a ball of Divine Devilbane Lightning, which was unmatched in its effectiveness against Extrarealm Heavenly Devils.

A long while later, the devilish face remained completely unchanged, and a hint of resolve appeared in Bai Suyuan's eyes as she prepared to fly up herself and attack the heavenly devil in one final act of defiance.

Right at this moment, flashes of silver light suddenly appeared from the corners of the devilish face's lips, and immediately thereafter, a resounding thunderclap rang out as the giant devilish face exploded amid an eruption of silver lightning.

A Lightning Bird with silver lightning all over its body then flew out into the open before reverting back to Han Li's human form.

After the devilish face exploded, the scattered devilish cloud converged once again to form an inky-black elderly man that sped directly toward Bai Suyuan.

The elderly man was identical to Bai Songshi in appearance, except its entire body was pitch-black in color.

A cold look flashed through Han Li's eyes as he slashed his black saber downward, and a black saber projection flashed through the air at an incredible speed, striking the inky-black elderly man and slicing its body in half right before it could reach Bai Suyuan.

A thunderous crack rang out as the black saber projection continued onward even after passing through the inky-black elderly man's body, slicing straight into the Grand Loft Mountain itself.

A burst of violent tremors rang through the entire mountain, and countless rocks were sent clattering down the mountain while flocks of birds flew away in alarm and panic.

Only after a long while did the tremors subside, and after the dust settled, Bai Suyuan was astonished to discover that an enormous rift had appeared before her.

The entire Grand Loft Mountain had been sliced in half.

Unbeknownst to Han Li, this casual slash of his would go on to erase the name of the Grand Loft Mountain from the map of the Hundred Blessings Nation. From that day onward, the Grand Loft Mountain became known as the Mountain of Halves, and this new name was accompanied by a legend detailing the exploits of a devil-slaying immortal.

Of course, none of that was of any concern to Han Li.

The heavenly devil's body had also been sliced into two, with each half situated on one side of the rift.

Han Li descended out of the sky and arrived beside the inky-black elderly man with a cold look in his eyes. He raised a hand and was just about to deal the killing blow when a voice suddenly rang his mind.

"Hold on a second, Fellow Daoist Han."

A pitiful look appeared in the inky-black elderly man's eyes as he implored, "Please don't kill me, Fellow Daoist. I'm willing to sign a heavenly devil contract with you and pledge my eternal servitude to you."

Han Li offered no response to this, but a peculiar look had appeared on his face.

Bai Suyuan was terrified that Han Li would accept this offer, and she hurriedly approached him to dissuade him from giving in to temptation.

Right at this moment, Han Li's shadow abruptly elongated, and an inky-black figure emerged from within. It was none other than Mo Guang, and he was the one that had called out to Han Li just now, urging him not to deal the killing blow right away.

Chapter 184: A Request

As soon as Mo Guang appeared, he looked down at the inky-black elderly man on the ground as he scoffed in an emotionless voice, "How insolent of you to think that low-tier trash like yourself is worthy of signing a heavenly devil contract with him!"

The inky-black elderly was terrified at the sight of Mo Guang, and black light flashed over its body as it attempted to flee by disintegrating into a cloud of devilish qi.

However, Mo Guang wasn't going to allow such a thing to happen, and he instantly extended a hand forward. Black light flashed from his palm, forming a large black net that descended onto the elderly man, enveloping the cloud of devilish qi that the man had transformed into before rapidly contracting.

"No!"

An anguished howl rang out from within the cloud of devilish qi, and it twisted and warped momentarily before reforming into the elderly man's body within the net.

Immediately thereafter, Mo Guang chanted an incantation in an unfamiliar language, and black light flashed within his eyes, following which he opened his mouth before inhaling sharply, and the elderly man reverted back into a cloud of devilish qi that flowed into Mo Guang's mouth along with the black net.

The other half of the heavenly devil's body on the other side of the rift wasn't spared, either, and it was also devoured by Mo Guang as a stream of mist, following which the storage bracelet that it was carrying clattered down onto the ground.

Meanwhile, Han Li had already collected the pair of fiery wheel spirit treasures before returning to his original spot.

Mo Guang's body blurred momentarily before he re-entered Han Li's shadow, and at the same time, his voice rang out within Han Li's mind.

"Please examine the contents of that man's storage treasure for me, Fellow Daoist Han. As a heavenly devil, I'm sure he must have a good collection of Devilish Deed Stones. If I can get my hands on those stones, I'll be able to recover a bit more."

After devouring the other heavenly devil, Mo Guang's voice had become slightly more expressive and wasn't as stiff and wooden as it had been previously.

Han Li swept a sleeve toward the ground upon hearing this, and the black storage bracelet rose up into the air.

Right at this moment, a white shadow flashed past, and the black bracelet abruptly vanished from the spot.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this.

The white shadow drew to a halt not far away, revealing itself to be Bai Suyuan, and she was clutching the black bracelet tightly in both hands.

"Thank you for slaying that devil for me, Senior Li, but this bracelet belongs to our Bai Clan. As a lofty immortal, surely nothing in the possession of our Bai Clan would be of sufficient value to catch your eye," Bai Suyuan said.

Her expression had eased significantly in the wake of the heavenly devil's death, and she was clearly extremely relieved. Furthermore, she wasn't displaying any fear at the sight of Mo Guang.

Han Li faltered slightly upon hearing this, then said, "Please don't misunderstand, Fellow Daoist Bai. I have no intention of taking anything that rightfully belongs to your Bai Clan. However, that Extrarealm Heavenly Devil most likely had some Devilish Deed Stones in his collection, and those stones are very important to me.

"Please check if there are any such stones present in the storage bracelet, and if there are, I'm willing to purchase them from you with spirit stones."

Bai Suyuan nodded in response as a smile appeared on her face, then directed her spiritual sense into the black bracelet.

Moments later, she flipped a hand over to produce a black stone that had wisps of black mist drifting around it and was giving off a peculiar aura.

"Is this what you're looking for?"

Han Li consulted Mo Guang through their spiritual connection, and after verifying that this was indeed a Devilish Deed Stone, he replied, "That's right. How many of these stones are in there? I'll take them all."

"Hold on, I'll count them now... There are 20 of these stones in the bracelet," Bai Suyuan replied.

"I can offer you 20 top-grade spirit stones for these Devilish Deed Stones. What do you think?" Han Li asked as he flipped a hand over to produce 20 top-grade spirit stones.

To his surprise, Bai Suyuan immediately shook her head and turned down his offer.

"Is the price too low for your liking?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

Bai Suyuan shook her head once again as she replied, "That's not the case. I know that there's no way that a True Immortal like yourself would stoop to trying to swindle someone like me. In our Hundred Blessings Nation, a top-grade spirit stones is worth at least 100 high-grade spirit stones, and even back when our Bai Clan was in its heyday, I only received an allowance of no more than three high-grade spirit stones per year, and that was only because I was held in high regard by our patriarch."

"Then what would you like in exchange for those Devilish Deed Stones?" Han Li asked as he stowed his spirit stones away.

"I want you to fulfill a request of mine," Bai Suyuan replied with a mischievous smile.

"A request?" Han Li was rather taken aback to hear this, and he felt as if he were getting to know Bai Suyuan for the first time all over again.

Following the heavenly devil's demise, it was as if she had become a completely different person, as if her quirky and mischievous nature, which had previously been repressed by her stress and desire for vengeance, was only just returning to the fore.

"That's right. As for exactly what the request is, I haven't decided on it yet, but rest assured, my request definitely won't be a dangerous one to fulfill, or beyond the scope of your abilities. I'll only be a small request," Bai Suyuan said with a serious expression.

Han Li contemplated the situation momentarily, then nodded in agreement. "Alright, but I'll only give you three days to think of your request. If you take any longer than that, then the deal's off."

"It's a promise!" Bai Suyuan smiled as she tossed a small pouch at Han Li.

"I've already completed the mission that you requested for me, so I believe it's time you gave me the promised reward," Han Li said as he stowed the pouch away.

"Given what's just happened here, other people are most likely going to arrive on the scene to investigate soon, so let's leave this place first. Rest assured, Senior, if I don't give you your reward for completing the mission, even if you don't come after me, the Transient Guild wouldn't spare me," Bai Suyuan said.

Immediately thereafter, she turned and flew away into the distance as a streak of white light without waiting for a response from Han Li.

Han Li also rose up into the air and followed along behind her.

A short while later, the two of them descended onto a lush mountain several thousand kilometers away from the Grand Loft Mountain.

The environment on the mountain was quite peaceful, and there was also a quaint river at the foot of the mountain, presenting a captivating sight to behold.

On the mountain was a grave, complete with an old tombstone with some text engraved upon it. The text had already become quite indistinct from age and natural wear, but the initial Bai character could still be made out.

Bai Suyuan descended onto the ground in front of the grave, and a film of tears appeared in her eyes at the sight of the tombstone as she sank to her knees.

"That devilish creature is finally dead, Grandpa. Your soul can rest now..." Bai Suyuan sobbed as her thin and delicate shoulders trembled.

Han Li waited patiently as Bai Suyuan paid her respects at her grandfather's grave, turning to look away from the grave in order to give her some privacy.

Bai Suyuan's sobs continued to ring out from behind him, and only after a long while did they gradually subside.

"I'm sorry you had to see that, Senior Li. I was momentarily overcome with emotions," Bai Suyuan said as she slowly made her way toward Han Li.

"There's nothing to apologize for, Fellow Daoist Bai, you were only displaying normal human emotions. Having said that, as those who remain in the world of the living, we have to remain strong, so don't dwell too much on your grief," Han Li consoled.

The rims of Bai Suyuan's eyes were still a little red, and there were still some tear streaks on her cheeks. Both her expression and her aura indicated that her emotions were completely genuine.

Having seen so much throughout his life, Han Li wasn't moved by her emotional display, but he didn't have a heart of stone, either, so he naturally offered her some words of consolation.

"Thank you, Senior Li," Bai Suyuan sighed as she flipped a hand over to produce a palm-sized azure badge. On one side of the badge was inscribed the characters for "Blaze Dragon", while the visage of a strange dragon with a pair of wings on its back and a single horn on its head was engraved on the other side.

Han Li's eyes lit up slightly as his gaze fell upon the badge.

"This is a Blaze Dragon Token. Seeing as you're not from the Ancient Cloud Continent, you may not be aware of how rigorous the standards are for someone wishing to join the Blaze Dragon Dao. For a start, they must possess exceptional aptitude and have a pure and untarnished background.

"However, this token can allow one to directly enter the Blaze Dragon Dao's inner sect regardless of their aptitude. The ancestor of our Bai Clan was only awarded with this token after making a significant contribution to the Blaze Dragon Dao," Bai Suyuan said as she gently stroked the badge with her fingers.

"I see. This is indeed quite a precious token then," Han Li replied with a nod.

"After my grandfather passed away, I originally planned to join the Blaze Dragon Dao using this token, but I couldn't bear the thought of allowing that heavenly devil to remain at large for the foreseeable future, and that's why I used the token to release this mission instead," Bai Suyuan sighed as she offered the badge to Han Li.

A hint of sympathy flashed through Han Li's eyes, but he still accepted the badge from her.

All of a sudden, Bai Suyuan raised her head as she asked, "Your promise to fulfill a request of mine still counts, right?"

"Have you thought of what you'd like to request from me?" Han Li asked.

"I don't have very strong emotional ties with the rest of the members of the Bai Clan. In fact, most of them hold negative views of me for what happened in the past, so I can't stay here any longer. Even though I no longer have a Blaze Dragon Token, I still want to go to the Blaze Dragon Dao and try my luck.

"Who knows? Maybe I'll be fortunate enough to be accepted. Seeing as you accepted this mission for this Blaze Dragon Token, I presume you must intend to join the Blaze Dragon Dao as well. Hence, I would like you to take me there," Bai Suyuan said.

Han Li faltered slightly upon hearing this, clearly not anticipating such a request.

The Ancient Cloud Continent was extremely vast, and there was still a very long way to go before one could reach the Bell Toll Mountain Range where the Blaze Dragon Dao was situated. The journey wouldn't be as perilous as that of crossing the Primordial Wave Continent, but it still definitely wasn't going to be smooth sailing.

Given her Deity Transformation Stage cultivation base, attempting the journey on her own would've been extremely risky, and even the slightest mishap along the way could result in her demise.

Despite her frail appearance, Bai Suyuan was quite a crafty girl, and Han Li had no good reason to turn down her request.

After a moment of contemplation, Han Li said, "If you've made up your mind, then I could certainly bring you with me. However, once we reach the Blaze Dragon Dao, your request will be fulfilled, so don't expect anything more out of me."

"Really? Thank you so much! I'm already extremely grateful that you're willing to take me there, I wouldn't dare to trouble you for anything else, Senior Li!" Bai Suyuan said as an exuberant smile appeared on her face.

Han Li wasted no time with words upon hearing this, and he swept a sleeve through the air to release a white jade boat shaped like a flying bird before drifting onto it.

This was a top-grade spirit treasure that he had found in Fang Pan's storage treasure, and it was only a sliver away from becoming an immortal treasure.

Bai Suyuan hurriedly flew onto the boat as well before taking a seat. Her smile then faded as she put on a serious expression and vowed, "I'll be sure to remember everything you've done for me, Senior Li."

Han Li offered no response as he released an incantation seal, and the jade boat immediately began to glow with bright white radiance before shooting rapidly away into the distance.

Chapter 185: Arriving at the Blaze Dragon Dao

The Bell Toll Mountain Range was situated atop a massive system of spirit veins, so the world's origin qi in the area was extremely abundant. Hence, even though the climate here was quite cold, the mountain range was still rife with lush greenery, and countless spirit beasts and spirit herbs could be found in the region.

The mountain range was so vast that it stretched across virtually half of the entire Ancient Cloud Continent, and all of the mountains within it were extremely tall and steep, extending straight up into the heavens. Furthermore, the mountains were enshrouded within a type of azure mist all year round, giving them a sense of enigma and mystique.

A strange loud noise would periodically ring out across the entire mountain range during all times of the year, and the sound was very similar to the toll of a bell, thereby giving the mountain range its name.

Apparently, these sounds came from the tectonic plate activity taking place in the earth beneath the mountain range.

The Bell Toll Mountain Range was quite a renowned place in its own right, but it was overshadowed by the Blaze Dragon Dao, which was vastly renowned across the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region.

The Blaze Dragon Dao was one of the oldest sects in the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region, and its founder was a man with the title of Daoist Master Blaze Dragon.

Ever since its founding, the Blaze Dragon Dao had always been the number one sect on the Ancient Cloud Continent, and at this point, its forces had branched out across the entire continent. The sect was

home to countless prodigious disciples, and even in the context of the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region, it ranked among a small handful of the very top sects.

Around the central region of the Bell Toll Mountain Range stood a massive mountain near the edge of the mountain range.

The mountain extended all the way up into the clouds, and a vast white jade plaza had been constructed halfway up the mountain. A series of tall buildings were situated on the plaza, and they were also primarily white in color, giving off a bright glow that allowed them to be clearly seen even from hundreds of kilometers away.

This was one of the external mountains of the Blaze Dragon Dao, and it was generally used to accommodate visitors.

Due to the resounding reputation of the Blaze Dragon Dao, it received an enormous number of visitors, so there were several dozen such accommodation sites littered throughout the Bell Toll Mountain Range.

At this moment, there were several Blaze Dragon Dao disciples chatting with one another while standing in the welcome pavilion on the plaza.

These disciples were all at around the Deity Transformation Stage, and each of them had the visage of a dragon with a pair of wings and a single horn on its head embroidered onto their sleeve.

"How many batches of visitors have we had over the past few days?" a tall and thin young man asked with a smile.

"It's already been 25 batches. What can I say? Our Blaze Dragon Dao has such a resounding reputation that people flock here from all over the continent," a slightly portly man replied with a proud grin on his face.

"Welcoming these guests is such a boring job. I just want my shift to be over as soon as possible," a gorgeous purple-haired young woman complained with a disgruntled expression.

"I understand your frustration, Junior Martial Sister Yin. You've already reached the pinnacle of the Deity Transformation Stage, so you'll be attempting a breakthrough to the Spatial Tempering Stage soon. This is indeed a rather unsuitable time for you to be serving guest welcoming duties. How are your preparations for the breakthrough coming along?" the thin young man asked.

"I've already made some preparations, but I'd say I only have a roughly 30% chance of success," the purple-haired young woman replied with furrowed brows.

"Don't be disheartened, Junior Disciple Sister. Welcoming guests isn't necessarily always a waste of time. If you encounter a generous senior and ensure that they receive a satisfactory welcome, perhaps they'll be willing to gift you some spirit stones. In particular, someone as beautiful as yourself stands a much better chance of receiving such a reward than men like us," the portly man said with a smile.

The purple-haired young woman's eyes lit up slightly upon hearing this. "Is that so?"

Right at this moment, a speck of white light appeared on the distant horizon, and it was rapidly approaching the Bell Toll Mountain Range.

As the speck of white light drew closer to the mountain range, it was revealed to be a white jade boat.

A middle-aged man with a yellow complexion was standing on the boat, accompanied by a gorgeous young woman in a long white dress.

These two were none other than Han Li and Bai Suyuan, and they had finally arrived here after traveling for several years.

"So this is the Bell Toll Mountain Range... the world's origin qi here is extremely abundant," Han Li remarked with an approving nod.

A hint of longing had also surfaced in Bai Suyuan's eyes, and she was looking quite excited, but she then immediately took a deep breath to recover her composure.

Instead of descending onto the mountain range right away, a contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face.

Even though Bai Suyuan had told him that the Blaze Dragon Token would be sufficient for him to join the Blaze Dragon Dao, he still had to think about how to make the best use of the token.

Ideally, he would have someone in the Blaze Dragon Dao submit a recommendation for him.

Han Li knew nothing about the Blaze Dragon Dao, but this wasn't a very difficult task to accomplish. All that he required was some time for planning.

An intelligent gleam flashed through Bai Suyuan's eyes as she said, "Senior Li, if you're considering how to acquaint yourself with someone in the Blaze Dragon Dao, then I believe I can lend you a hand."

"What do you propose?" Han Li asked as he turned to Bai Suyuan.

He wasn't all that surprised that she had managed to guess his intentions.

During the past few years traveling together, he had come to know Bai Suyuan quite well. Her cultivation base wasn't worthy of note, but she was extremely intelligent and observant, often able to glean his thoughts and intentions from very limited tidbits of information.

As a result, he barely said a word to her throughout the final two to three years of their journey.

"It just so happens that the ancestor of our Bai Clan had a good friend by the name of Qi Liang in the Blaze Dragon Dao. He's an inner sect elder, and our ancestor once said that if anyone in our clan wishes to join the Blaze Dragon Dao in the future, then we can seek out Qi Liang to look out for us.

"It's been several thousand years since our ancestor disappeared, so I'm not sure if he would still be willing to help us, but we should at least be able to request an audience with him," Bai Suyuan explained.

"In that case, I'll have to trouble you, Fellow Daoist Bai," Han Li replied with a nod.

"It's no trouble at all, Senior Li. You looked after me throughout our entire journey to the Blaze Dragon Dao, this is the least that I can do for you. However..." Bai Suyuan's voice trailed off here as a hesitant look appeared on her face.

"What is it?" Han Li asked.

"Forgive me for prying into your personal matters, but I'm assuming that your current appearance isn't your true appearance, right, Senior Li?" Bai Suyuan asked in a hesitant voice.

Han Li's expression remained unchanged as he asked, "What do you mean by that, Fellow Daoist Bai?"

"Over the past few years, I've developed somewhat of an understanding of your personality. You're extremely cautious when it comes to everything else, but you've made no effort at all to hide your appearance, and that tells me that this most likely isn't your true appearance at all. On top of that, as a member of the Transient Guild, I'm aware that these masks can provide extremely effective disguises," Bai Suyuan explained with a faint smile.

"As expected, these little tricks of mine aren't enough to fool you. Your intelligence is truly unmatched, Fellow Daoist Bai," Han Li praised with a smile of his own.

"You're far too kind, Senior Li. If it isn't for the fact that I've been by your side for so long, I wouldn't have been able to make this educated guess. If you want to join the Blaze Dragon Dao, then you'll have to do away with your disguise.

"The masks of the Transient Guild can fool the vast majority of cultivators, but it's said that here are 13 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords in the Blaze Dragon Dao, and the first dao lord is said to have already reached the pinnacle of the Golden Immortal Stage and is on the very cusp of the High Zenith Stage.

"I doubt the disguises conjured up by the masks of the Transient Guild will be able to fool them, and if you're exposed, not only will you be barred from joining the sect, there's a chance that you'll even be regarded as a spy from an enemy sect," Bai Suyuan said with a serious expression.

Han Li was silent for a moment, then nodded in response as he made a hand seal, reverting back to his original appearance amid a faint flash of light.

Bai Suyuan's gaze lingered momentarily on Han Li's completely unremarkable appearance, following which she pursed her lips slightly as she withdrew her gaze.

The white jade boat continued to fly onward at Han Li's behest, quickly reaching the mountain up ahead before descending onto the plaza.

After Bai Suyuan had gotten down from the boat, Han Li stowed it away, and the two of them were standing side by side on the plaza.

The disciples responsible for welcoming guests had already spotted them from afar, and they approached Han Li's duo as one of them said, "Welcome to the Blaze Dragon Dao. May I ask what business you have here?"

The disciples were immediately able to tell that Han Li possessed a cultivation base far superior to theirs, but even so, all of them wore relaxed smiles and didn't appear to have been feeling intimidated or inferior in the slightest.

"We've come here with the intention of paying Elder Qi Liang a visit. Is he in the sect right now?" Han Li asked as he revealed a hint of his True Immortal Stage aura, and the Blaze Dragon Dao cultivators before him shuddered collectively in the face of his aura, but thankfully, the aura was only revealed for an instant before it was withdrawn again.

"Please inform Elder Qi of our arrival." Han Li flicked a finger through the air as he spoke, releasing several precious Deity Transformation Stage pills.

These pills had all been obtained from the storage treasures of cultivators that he had slain in the past, and they were useless to him, so he was naturally happy to present them as gifts to these Blaze Dragon Dao cultivators.

The group of cultivators before him swept their spiritual sense over the pills, and they weren't able to maintain their composure any longer as ecstatic looks appeared on their faces.

These worthless pills to Han Li were nothing short of priceless treasures to these disciples.

Even a pill suitable for consumption for Nascent Soul cultivators could be sold on the market in exchange for spirit stones sufficient to cover their cultivation needs for a long time, let alone these pills that were fit for consumption for Deity Transformation cultivators.

Among the disciples, the thin young man was more restrained, and he cupped his fist in a respectful salute as he said, "You're far too kind, Senior. Elder Qi Liang serves in the Heavenly Star Palace, so he's always present in the sect. May I ask your name, Senior? And also, do you have any tokens that we can pass onto Elder Qi?"

"I am Li Feiyu, and this is Bai Suyuan. In terms of tokens..." Han Li turned to Bai Suyuan as he spoke.

"Please pass this onto Elder Qi and he'll know who we are." Bai Suyuan pulled out a red penannular jade pendant and offered it to the thin young man as she spoke.

"I see. I'll inform Elder Qi of your arrival right away, Senior Li. However, I must make it clear ahead of time that I can't guarantee whether Elder Qi will agree to see you or not," the thin young man said as he accepted the jade pendant.

"Of course," Han Li replied with a nod.

Thus, the thin young man took his leave before quickly making his way toward a certain palace in the sect.

"Senior Li, Fellow Daoist Bai, please come and take a rest in the side hall," the slightly portly man said in a respectful voice, then led Han Li and Bai Suyuan to a pavilion constructed halfway up the mountain.

The pavilion was situated in a bamboo forest, and the light of the sun was filtering through the gaps among the bamboo leaves, casting some beautiful shadows onto the building. The interior of the pavilion was cool and tidy, and all of the furnishings inside had clearly been chosen with care, presenting a pleasant sight to behold.

"Please wait here for a moment. Elder Qi is an inner sect elder, so it may take some time to reach him," the portly man said with a hint of apology on his face, then offered up two cups of spirit tea.

Han Li nodded in response and left the spirit tea on the table beside him, while Bai Suyuan began to sip on her tea, savoring it with keen interest.

The portly man remained in the hall alongside Han Li and Bai Suyuan, and before long, close to half a day had passed by.

Despite the long wait, Han Li remained patient, taking the time to ponder the situation that he was in.

While traveling to the Blaze Dragon Dao, he had been periodically detecting for the presence of Daoist Xie and his Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords.

To his elation, the closer he drew to the Bell Toll Mountain Range, the clearer he was able to sense those lost treasures, indicating to him that they were most likely situated in the Bell Toll Mountain Range.

If he wanted to recover them, then he would have to join the Blaze Dragon Dao first.

Chapter 186: Plan

Han Li's primary objective for coming to the Blaze Dragon Dao was to recover his lost treasures, and he also wanted to read the sect's scriptures pertaining to the laws of time to see if he could learn anything from them.

Even though he was able to manifest crystals that also contained the power of time laws using his Heaven Controlling Vial, the crystals served no other purpose than to speed up his Earthly Deity Avatar's derivation of heavy water, and he was unable to glean anything from them.

As one of the three paramount laws, the laws of time were extremely profound, and given his aptitude, it was downright delusional to think that he could master the laws of time unless he had some immense luck on his side.

In contrast, these sects had already studied the laws of time for millions, even tens of millions of years, and there was no lack of prodigiously talented individuals to come out of these sects during this time, so they would've surely developed some valuable insights.

Of course, if it proved impossible for him to access the scriptures that he desired, then he wouldn't force the issue. Time was of the essence for him, and he couldn't afford to waste it. Given how vast the Northern Glacial Immortal Region was, he would always be able to find something else.

This was his initial thought process, but during the journey to Bell Toll Mountain Range, he had learned some things about the Blaze Dragon Dao from Bai Suyuan that had convinced him to change his mind.

The Blaze Dragon Dao had a long history and a vast foundation, home to countless high-grade immortal scriptures of all descriptions. Most importantly, it harbored no aversion to outsiders.

It was very difficult for itinerant cultivators like Han Li to join the Blaze Dragon Dao, but if he could successfully join the sect, then he would be granted a high degree of freedom and autonomy, and that was a very tempting prospect to him.

Some time had already passed since his return to the Immortal Realm, and aside from the initial few years that he had spent in the Black Wind Sea, he had been traveling the rest of the time, so he hadn't been able to take any time to cultivate.

The Black Wind Sea was a relatively safe place, but it was extremely short on resources, with not even a single high-grade immortal scripture to be found.

There were all types of cultivation resources available in the Blaze Dragon Dao, and his freedom wasn't going to be overly restricted here, so this was the ideal place for him to stay for the time being.

Thanks to his powers as a Profound Immortal and certain cultivation arts that he mastered in lower realms, such as his Provenance True Devil Arts, he had been able to deal with some early and mid-True Immortal Stage itinerant cultivators just fine.

However, contending against True Immortals who had attained the power of laws was still quite a struggle for him. After all, he couldn't expect to get lucky every single time as he had against Fang Pan.

As their name suggested, True Immortals were immortal, but they weren't indestructible, and they could perish all the same, just not by natural causes.

Hence, he required more power if he wanted to stake a foothold for himself in the Immortal Realm. The problem was that he didn't even have a suitable immortal cultivation art, so he was still stuck at the early-True Immortal Stage.

Right as these thoughts were running through Han Li's mind, the sound of footsteps rang out from outside, and he immediately opened his eyes to find the same thin young man from before accompanying a middle-aged man who appeared to have been in his forties into the room.

The man wore a long white robe, and there was an authoritative look on his square face. His features were quite unremarkable, but there was a sharp and piercing gleam in his eyes. What was particularly noteworthy about him was his vast aura, which indicated that he was also a True Immortal cultivator.

Han Li rose to his feet, and Bai Suyuan hurriedly got up from her chair as well.

The square-faced man was holding Bai Suyuan's penannular jade pendant, and he took a glance at the two people in the room, resting his gaze on Han Li for a moment as he declared, "I am Qi Liang. May I ask how you've managed to come across this token of Elder Bai Fengyi's?"

"Bai Fengyi is the patriarch of my clan, Senior Qi. My name is Bai Suyuan, and I am a descendant of Patriarch Bai," Bai Suyuan explained as she extended a curtsy toward Qi Liang.

"I see, then who is this Fellow Daoist Li?" Qi Liang asked as he turned his gaze to Han Li.

"I am just an itinerant cultivator who accompanied Fellow Daoist Bai to the Blaze Dragon Dao. It's an honor to make your acquaintance, Fellow Daoist Qi," Han Li said with a smile as he cupped his fist in a salute.

"The honor is all mine, Fellow Daoist Li. Please take a seat," Qi Liang said as he returned Han Li's salute.

The thin young man brought the three of them fresh cups of spirit tea, then extended a respectful bow before departing from the room.

"Where is Brother Bai right now, Suyuan? Is he well? If I recall correctly, it's already been several thousand years since he left the sect, and there's been no news of him at all since then," Qi Liang said.

"Unfortunately, we haven't heard any news from our patriarch, either, ever since his departure several thousand years ago, so I have no idea where he is or what condition he's currently in," Bai Suyuan replied as a dejected look appeared on his face.

Qi Liang seemed to have been rather taken aback to hear this. "You're saying Brother Bai never returned to his clan?"

Bai Suyuan could tell that Qi Liang seemed to know something that she didn't, and she hurriedly asked, "Senior Qi, do you know exactly for what purpose our patriarch last left the sect?"

"If I recall correctly, Brother Bai left the sect to carry out some type of mission. There's no need to be overly concerned, Suyuan. Brother Bai's Origin Soul Lamp in our sect has remained lit this entire time, so perhaps he's simply been delayed by some matters. For the likes of Brother Bai and myself, several thousand years is not a very long time. Perhaps he'll be back soon," Qi Liang consoled.

Bai Suyuan was ecstatic to hear this, and an excited look appeared in her eyes. "Is that true? That's great!"

Meanwhile, Han Li sat off to the side in silence, taking no part in the conversation.

"Suyuan, may I ask why you've come to the Blaze Dragon Dao with Fellow Daoist Li?" Qi Liang asked as he took a glance at Han Li's duo.

Bai Suyuan and Han Li exchanged a glance, and Han Li made a slight gesture, indicating for her to speak first.

"I've held a great deal of admiration toward the Blaze Dragon Dao ever since I was a child, and I've come here on this occasion with the hope of being able to join the sect. I know that we're currently not in the sect's disciple intake window, so I wanted to trouble you to submit a recommendation for me. I've prepared these gifts as a gesture of my sincerity, please accept them, Senior Qi."

Bai Suyuan rose to her feet and extended a deep curtsey as she spoke, then pulled out a storage treasure that she was just about set down onto the table next to Qi Liang.

A displeased look appeared on Qi Liang's face as he swept a sleeve through the air, releasing a burst of invisible force that lifted Bai Suyuan's body into an upright posture again. "Brother Bai and I are extremely close friends, how could I possibly accept a gift from you over such a minor matter? Put that away at once!"

Bai Suyuan didn't insist on making Qi Liang accept her gifts, and she stowed the storage treasure away discreetly as she said, "In that case, I'll be counting on you, Senior Qi."

"I can submit a recommendation for you, but the prerequisites for disciple recruitment in the Blaze Dragon Dao are very rigorous. If your aptitude is found lacking, then I'm afraid there's nothing I can do," Qi Liang said.

"Of course. If my aptitude is lacking, then that means I was simply not meant to go further on the path of cultivation, and I certainly wouldn't dare to blame you for anything, Senior Qi," Bai Suyuan immediately replied.

Qi Liang nodded in response, then took a glance at Han Li, and even though he didn't say anything, it was clear that he wanted to know Han Li's purpose for visiting the Blaze Dragon Dao as well.

"My objective for visiting the Blaze Dragon Dao is the same as Fellow Daoist Bai's. I would also like to join the Blaze Dragon Dao, and I was wondering if you could submit a recommendation for me as well. Regardless of the outcome, I'll be sure to compensate you for your efforts," Han Li said as he cupped his fist in a salute.

Qi Liang's brows furrowed ever so slightly upon hearing this.

Even though he had told Bai Suyuan that he couldn't guarantee her entry into the Blaze Dragon Dao, he had briefly examined her spiritual roots just now, so he knew that given her aptitude, there should've been no problems for her to join the sect.

However, Han Li was a True Immortal cultivator, and if he were to join the Blaze Dragon Dao, then it definitely wouldn't be as a disciple.

The Blaze Dragon Dao's requirements for recruiting foreign True Immortal cultivators had always been far more rigorous than that of recruiting disciples, so a thorough examination had to be made into Han Li's identity, background, cultivation base, and aptitude.

If Han Li were found to be lacking in any of those areas, then Qi Liang would be punished by the sect for submitting a recommendation for him without performing due diligence.

Han Li could see that Qi Liang had some qualms about accepting his request, so he flipped a hand over to produce the Blaze Dragon Token as he said, "Rest assured, Fellow Daoist Qi. I may be an itinerant cultivator, but I haven't committed any heinous crimes in the past, and I have this token with me. All I need is for you to submit a small recommendation for me."

"That's a Blaze Dragon Token!" Qi Liang exclaimed as he rose to his feet, then turned to Bai Suyuan with a surprised expression.

"That's right, that is the very same Blaze Dragon Token that previously belonged to our patriarch. Recently, our Bai Clan encountered an extremely severe crisis, and it was only thanks to Senior Li that we were able to avert the crisis, so I gave him the Blaze Dragon Token as thanks for saving our clan," Bai Suyuan explained.

"I see. If Fellow Daoist Li has indeed saved the entire Bai Clan, then he's certainly deserving of the Blaze Dragon Token. Please come with me," Qi Liang replied with a nod as he turned to depart from the pavilion.

Han Li and Bai Suyuan followed him to a nearby azure hall, hanging above the entrance of which was a plaque that read "Teleportation Pavilion".

"Our Blaze Dragon Dao is so massive that it can be very inconvenient to get to certain places by flight. Hence, these teleportation pavilions have been set up in all of the important places in the sect," Qi Liang explained.

"As expected of the number one sect on the Ancient Cloud Continent," Han Li praised in a heartfelt manner.

Upon stepping into the pavilion, Han Li discovered that the interior space wasn't very large, and there was only a single small teleportation array at the center of the room, surrounded by an array of stone pillars.

Aside from that, there was also a middle-aged man who was roughly at the Deity Transformation Stage standing beside the array, and he hurriedly extended a respectful bow at the sight of Qi Liang.

"Send us to the Ostentatious Palace," Qi Liang instructed after all three of them had made their way into the teleportation array.

"Yes!" the middle-aged man hurriedly replied with a nod, then chanted an incantation before releasing a burst of white light out of the palm of his hand.

As the teleportation array began to operate, a vast expanse of dazzling white light rose up to swallow up Han Li's trio.

Their surroundings blurred for a moment, and in the next instant, they appeared in another spacious azure hall.

His expression remained unchanged, but internally, he was feeling quite stunned.

Having already taken teleportation arrays on many occasions after arriving in the Immortal Realm, he was able to roughly estimate the distance of teleportation according to the time taken, and he had determined that if he were to fly over the same distance that they had just teleported, then it would've taken him roughly a month.

For the first time, he was given a rough indication of just how massive the Blaze Dragon Dao was.

"What an enormous place this is..." Han Li murmured to himself.

Chapter 187: Mediocre Aptitude

Moments later, Han Li's trio emerged from the teleportation pavilion.

This teleportation hall was situated on an extremely tall mountain summit, and there was a massive pavilion nearby as well, but this one was several times the size of the guest welcoming plaza.

The entire plaza was paved with white jade, which was giving off a bright white sheen, as well as traces of white mist.

Walking upon the plaza, one could see all the nearby mountains beneath their feet, striking one with the feeling that they were overlords presiding over everything.

There was a massive place hovering in mid-air above the plaza, and it was half-concealed within the clouds, giving it the appearance of a celestial city.

Above the entrance of the palace was a golden plaque, upon which was inscribed the words "Ostentatious Palace" in flowing golden characters.

"The Ostentatious Palace is where our sect examines the spiritual roots and aptitude of those wishing to join the sect. It's overseen by a deputy dao lord, so take care in how you act and speak once we're inside," Qi Liang cautioned.

Han Li gave a slight nod upon hearing this.

According to his knowledge, the Blaze Dragon Dao was different from normal sects in that it had no sect master. Instead, the sect was overseen by the 13 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords on a rotating roster.

Beneath the 13 dao lords were the 36 deputy dao lords, all of whom were said to have been at the pinnacle of the True Immortal Stage.

Furthermore, these deputy dao lords weren't just ordinary True Immortals. Instead, all of them had mastered the power of laws, so they were far more powerful than the average itinerant immortal of the same cultivation base.

"Rest assured, Fellow Daoist Qi," Han Li replied, and Bai Suyuan also responded in kind.

As they were speaking, the three of them had already descended onto the ground in front of the floating palace.

The gates of the palace up ahead were tightly shut, and a pair of young disciples were standing on either side of the gates.

The two young disciples hurriedly extended respectful bows toward Qi Liang, who asked them, "Is Deputy Dao Lord Xiong inside?"

"He is, but he's currently cultivating in seclusion at the moment, and he forbade us from interrupting him," one of the young disciples replied with a slightly awkward expression.

Qi Liang's brows furrowed lightly upon hearing this. "Did he tell you when he was going to conclude his seclusion?"

"No," the disciple replied.

Qi Liang pondered the situation in silence for a moment, then said, "Please inform him of our arrival, and tell him that I've come to him with an important matter."

Reluctant looks appeared on the faces of the two disciples, but after exchanging a glance, one of them pulled out a white badge before communicating something into it.

A full 15 minutes passed by before a brief flash of white light appeared on the badge.

"Deputy Dao Lord Xiong has invited you to go in," the disciple informed in a relieved voice, then cast an incantation seal, and the gates of the palace slowly swung open.

"Let's go."

Qi Liang led the way into the palace, and its interior was very spacious, with an area of several thousand feet.

There were dozens of azure stone pillars standing around the palace, every single one of which had a beastly statue coiled around it, including ones that depicted creatures like the Divine Dragon, the Azure Phoenix, the White Tiger, and the Qilin.

The mouths of these beasts were all aimed at a dark azure stone platform that resembled an altar, which stood at the center of the hall.

It was a circular platform that was over 100 feet in size, with countless extremely complex runes inscribed upon it, as well as diagrams formed by countless specks of light, giving the entire platform an extremely profound appearance.

At the very rear of the hall was a tall white platform, atop which sat a short and stubby middle-aged man who appeared to have been around 40 years of age. There was a thin mustache above his upper lip, and instead of the usual white robes worn by Blaze Dragon Dao disciples, he was dressed in a lavish

golden robe with a golden hat on his head, giving him the appearance of a wealthy merchant of the mortal world.

The man wore a rather disgruntled expression, seemingly displeased by the fact that his cultivation had been disrupted.

"Greetings, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong," Qi Liang greeted as he cupped his fist in a salute.

Han Li took a glance at the man on the platform, and his pupils immediately contracted slightly.

The man was very unassuming in both appearance and stature, but he was giving off an incredibly powerful aura that far exceeded the auras of Fang Pan and that octopus sea beast.

Han Li couldn't help but be impressed by the man's immense aura, and he and Bai Suyuan both followed Qi Liang's example, each extending a salute toward the deputy dao lord.

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong didn't even spare a glance at Han Li and Bai Suyuan as he asked, "What is this important matter that you speak of, Elder Qi? Could you not have waited for me to conclude my seclusion before requesting an audience."

"My apologies for disrupting your cultivation, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong. This here is Fellow Daoist Li, and he's carrying a Blaze Dragon Token with the intention of joining our sect, so I had no choice but to come to you," Qi Liang explained with an apologetic expression.

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's expression eased slightly upon hearing this, and he said, "I see. Show me your Blaze Dragon Token."

Han Li had already summoned the token into his grasp, and Deputy Dao Lord Xiong made a beckoning motion to draw the token to himself.

"This is indeed an authentic Blaze Dragon Token," Deputy Dao Lord Xiong concluded after a brief examination, and only then did he turn his gaze toward Han Li.

At the same time, a faint gleam flashed through his eyes, as if he were trying to see straight through Han Li.

Under Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's sharp and intrusive gaze, Han Li felt as if there were blades raking over his entire body, resulting in a slightly painful sensation.

His brows furrowed ever so slightly, but he didn't say anything.

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong then withdrew his gaze as he cast an incantation seal and instructed, "Step on the Immortal Revolution Platform to have your aptitude examined."

All of the dozens of stone pillars in the hall shuddered slightly in unison before releasing dazzling azure light, and it was as if all of the spirit beasts engraved onto the pillars had sprung to life.

Bursts of azure light erupted out of the mouths of the spirit beasts engraved on the statues before vanishing into the round stone platform at the center of the hall.

All of the runes on the stone platform began to radiate dazzling light, forming a semi-transparent ball of light, upon which countless specks of what appeared to be starlight were flashing incessantly.

"Please go ahead, Fellow Daoist Li," Qi Liang said as he turned to Han Li.

Han Li nodded in response, then made his way onto the stone platform, and a huge burst of heat instantly rose up from the platform before surging into his body.

Countless specks of light of different colors instantly appeared within the ball of light, then began to rapidly revolve around Han Li in an extremely chaotic fashion.

Wherever that burst of heat flowed to in his body, Han Li felt as if everything within that part of his body was revealed for all to see, and that was a slightly disconcerting sensation.

All of a sudden, the burst of heat flowed into his brain and surged into his consciousness.

Han Li was greatly alarmed by this, and he immediately compressed the majority of his enormous spiritual sense into a point, leaving only around a tenth to a fifth of his spiritual sense exposed.

The surge of heat flowed through his brain for a moment before quickly moving onto other parts of his body, and it didn't take long before it left his body altogether, then flowed back into the stone platform.

The spherical light barrier on the stone platform faded, but those countless runes continued to linger in the air, then converged to form a blurry humanoid figure that was giving off lights of different colors, including azure, black, crimson, and purple. However, these lights weren't very bright, and they appeared to be extremely chaotic.

Qi Liang's brows furrowed slightly at the sight of the indistinct humanoid figure.

A cold sneer appeared on Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's face, and he made no effort to hide his derision as he declared, "Your aptitude is downright mediocre. The cultivation arts that you've dabbled in are a chaotic mess, but your energy and blood essence are both quite abundant. It seems that you've managed to absorb some demonic bloodlines, but those are in a state of complete disarray as well.

"On top of that, you haven't managed to open up even a single immortal acupoint. It's a miracle that you were even able to reach the early-True Immortal Stage at all."

Qi Liang seemed to have been rather surprised by this assessment, and he turned to Han Li with a surprised expression, as did Bai Suyuan.

As for Han Li himself, he wasn't disappointed at all after hearing this verdict, and he gave Deputy Dao Lord Xiong a slight nod, then made his way down from the stone platform, following which the platform quickly reverted back to its original state.

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong was just about to depart when Qi Liang suddenly said, "Please wait a moment, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong. This is Bai Suyuan, and she's a descendant of Elder Bai Fengyi. She has also come here to join our sect, so please examine her aptitude as well."

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's patience was clearly running thin, and his expression only eased slightly upon hearing mention of Bai Fengyi.

"Alright, but make it quick!" He took a glance at Bai Suyuan, then cast another incantation seal.

Once again, the stone pillars in the hall began to radiate dazzling azure light, and the massive ball of light reappeared around the stone platform.

Bai Suyuan took a deep breath before stepping onto the platform, and countless runes emerged within the ball of light.

However, in contrast with the runes that had appeared for Han Li, all of the runes on this occasion were silver in color and had a glittering and translucent quality to them.

The entire hall began to rumble violently, and all of the spirit beast statues engraved onto the stone pillars let loose ferocious roars, while powerful energy fluctuated surged throughout the hall.

"What's going on?"

Both Qi Liang and Han Li were quite startled by this turn of events, and they turned their attention toward Bai Suyuan in unison.

Meanwhile, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong had abruptly risen to his feet, and an excited look had appeared in his eyes.

The ball of light on the stone platform quickly faded, while the countless silver runes converged in one place to form a silver humanoid figure.

The figure was of an extremely bright silver color, resembling a bright moon hanging in the night sky.

The most eye-catching thing about it was that there were seven bright specks of light shining on its chest.

Deputy Dao Lord Xiong rushed onto the stone platform in a flash as he declared with an excited expression, "She possesses the legendary Moonlight Immortal Physique and had seven immortal acupoints opened from birth!"

A thought then occurred to him, and he immediately released an incantation seal, upon which all of the light on the stone platform faded alongside the silver humanoid figure, and Bai Suyuan was revealed again.

All of a sudden, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's attitude had become extremely amicable and benevolent, and he said in a warm voice, "Your name is Bai Suyuan, right? As expected of a descendant of Elder Bai Fengyi's, your aptitude is truly exceptional."

"That's correct. Bai Suyuan pays her respects to Deputy Dao Lord Xiong."

Bai Suyuan had been enveloped by a burst of enormous power that had cut off her senses just now, so she had no idea what had just happened, but she could tell from Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's reaction that she seemed to have displayed some remarkable aptitude.

"I can tell that you're still quite young. How many years have you been cultivating for?" Deputy Dao Lord Xiong asked.

"I began cultivating at three years of age, and I've been cultivating for over 50 years up to this point," Bai Suyuan replied.

Both Han Li and Qi Liang were quite taken aback to hear this, but Deputy Dao Lord Xiong merely nodded in response, seemingly not surprised by this answer at all.

Indeed, with her Moonlight Immortal Physique and seven innately awakened immortal acupoints, it wasn't all that remarkable for her to have reached the late-Deity Transformation Stage in less than 60 years of cultivation.

As long as she had access to the right cultivation arts and resources, he was confident that he could elevate her all the way to the True Immortal Stage within 1,000 years.

Given her exceptional aptitude, it was even possible that she could reach the Golden Immortal Stage in the future.

Chapter 188: Disciple to a Golden Immortal

"Bai Suyuan, given your outstanding aptitude, you won't have to start off as an outer sect disciple like all other new disciples. Let me ask you this: are you willing to accept me as your master and become a direct disciple of mine?" Deputy Dao Lord Xiong asked in a gentle voice?

Bai Suyuan's mouth gaped open in shock, and she was completely rooted to the spot.

Right at this moment, a hazy voice suddenly rang out before spreading through the hall like waves of gentle, rippling water. "Xiong Shan, you're cultivating the laws of metal, while this child possesses the Moonlight Immortal Physique, so you're not suitable to serve as her mentor. Hand her over to me instead."

As soon as Han Li heard this voice, he felt as if had fallen into a boundless sea of flowers. His mouth and nose were completely filled with a floral aroma that intoxicated the mind.

However, he was able to instantly return to his senses thanks to a sudden jolt from his enormous spiritual sense.

A hint of frustration flashed through Deputy Dao Lord Xiong's eyes in the wake of this turn of events, but he quickly regained his composure.

Right at this moment, a ball of white light appeared out of thin air within the hall, and it was so bright that everyone was forced to avert their eyes.

In the next instant, the white light abruptly vanished, and a young woman in a palatial dress appeared on the stone platform.

The woman appeared to be in her thirties with an oval face and a set of features that looked as if they had been taken straight from a masterful piece of artwork. In particular, her eyes were extremely seductive, and her tight-fitting white robe hugged her voluptuous curves to perfection.

Her entire body was giving off an overwhelming aura of seduction, captivating the beholder and lulling them into countless lustful fantasies.

Han Li was stunned by the woman's incredibly seductive qualities, and he immediately averted his gaze, not daring to look at her any longer. At the same time, he began to circulate his spiritual sense, and a cool and refreshing sensation spread through his mind, snapping him back to his senses.

"Xiong Shan pays his respects to Dao Lord Yun," Deputy Dao Lord Xiong greeted as he cupped his fist in a salute.

Han Li was initially rather surprised to hear this, but he quickly realized that this was only to be expected. After all, only one of the 13 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords of the Blaze Dragon Dao could possess such a terrifyingly seductive aura.

He immediately extended a salute as well, while Qi Liang had already lowered his head in a deep bow, not daring to look at the white-robed woman at all.

Meanwhile, Bai Suyuan was staring at the woman in a complete daze, clearly already completely intoxicated by the woman's seductive aura.

It seemed that her seduction was effective on both men and women.

With a wave of the woman's sleeve, a hint of clarity immediately returned to Bai Suyuan's eyes.

She immediately noticed that Han Li and the others were all saluting the woman, and she hurriedly leaned forward to extend a bow as well, but the white-robed woman caught her before she could do so. "There's no need for such formalities, my child."

The woman gently pulled Bai Suyuan closer to her, and the more she looked at Bai Suyuan, the more pleased she became.

"Your name is Suyuan, right? Your Moonlight Immortal Physique pairs up quite nicely with my cultivation. Are you willing to become my disciple and cultivate under me?" the woman asked in a gentle voice.

Bai Suyuan immediately extended a deep bow upon hearing this. "I am. Suyuan pays her respects to her mistress."

"Great! From this day forth, you will be my fifth direct disciple. This fortune bracelet is a spirit treasure that I obtained some years ago, and I'm gifting it to you now in the hope that it'll protect you in your time of need."

A pleased smile appeared on the woman's face as she flipped a hand over to produce a white jade bracelet before slipping it onto Bai Suyuan's wrist. The bracelet was giving off astonishing spiritual power fluctuations, indicating that it was a top-grade spirit treasure.

Bai Suyuan was ecstatic, and she hurriedly expressed her gratitude. "Thank you, Mistress!"

Only then did the white-robed young woman turn to Deputy Dao Lord Xiong as she said, "I'm taking this child with me. Do you have any objections, Xiong Shan?"

"Of course now," Xiong Shan hurriedly replied with a smile. "Your cultivation art its a perfect match for her, so she's naturally much better off with you."

A faint smile appeared on the white-robed young woman, and she turned to Han Li and Qi Liang, with her gaze lingering momentarily on the former.

Xiong Shan noticed the white-robed young woman's gaze, and he immediately explained, "He's an itinerant cultivator by the name of Li Feiyu, and he's joined our sect using Blaze Dragon Token. I've just examined his aptitude."

The white-robed woman's gaze only lingered on Han Li for a moment before looking away in a disinterested manner as she said in a casual voice, "I see. I'll leave these matters to you then."

"Let's go, Suyuan." She latched onto Bai Suyuan's hand as she spoke, then swept a sleeve through the air, releasing a burst of gentle white light that enveloped both of them.

Bai Suyuan hurriedly turned to Han Li, but in the next instant, her vision was obscured by a flash of white light.

The white light then vanished in an instant, as did Bai Suyuan and the white-robed woman.

Xiong Shan's smile instantly faded following the woman's departure, and he turned to leave with a dark look on his face.

"Deputy Dao Lord Xiong, what role is to be assigned to Fellow Daoist Li?" Qi Liang hurriedly asked.

"Do I have to tell you how to do everything? Just get him to serve as an ordinary attendant in the inner sect!" Xiong Shan replied in a cold voice, paying no heed to whether he was offending Han Li with his abrasive demeanor.

As soon as his voice trailed off, he immediately vanished from the spot amid a flash of golden light.

Following Xiong Shan's departure, Han Li fell into deep thought with an absentminded look on his face.

"Everyone's fate is different on the path of cultivation. It's already a remarkable feat that you were able to reach the True Immortal Stage, so there's no need to be envious of others," Elder Qi cautioned.

Han Li faltered slightly upon hearing this, and he knew that Qi Liang had most likely misconstrued his contemplative expression, but he didn't bother to explain himself, merely nodding in response.

"Seeing as Deputy Dao Lord Xiong has instructed me to instate you as an inner sect attendant, I must inform you of some of the sect's rules. As for some of the more specific details, I'll update you on that later," Qi Liang said with a smile.

"Thank you, Elder Qi. May I ask what duties I have to perform as an attendant elder of the inner sect?" Han Li asked.

"There are two options available to you, the first of which is to complete three regular elder missions released by the sect every century. Of course, if you have sufficient merit points to offset the missions, then you won't have to complete them," Qi Liang explained.

"What's the second option?" Han Li asked.

"The second option is to do what I'm doing and perform some daily duties in a certain pavilion in the sect. All you need to do is perform these duties for one decade out of every century. However, in order to not affect their cultivation, many elders choose to perform these duties for 100 consecutive years so that they can spend the next 900 years focusing on cultivation," Qi Liang replied.

"If they don't want their duties to get in the way of their cultivation, then why don't they just use merit points to exempt themselves from those duties instead?" Han Li asked.

"Firstly, merit points are extremely precious to the elders and disciple of the Blaze Dragon Dao, so no one is willing to use them to offset missions. Secondly, the sect doesn't permit one to use their merit points to exempt oneself from their daily administrative duties," Qi Liang explained.

"If these merit points are considered to be so precious, then they must be very difficult to obtain, right, Elder Qi?" Han Li asked with a contemplative expression.

"Indeed. Most of the sect's disciples can generally only earn some accolade points by tending to spirit farms for several years at a time, whereas elders can earn some merit points by performing monthly administrative duties," Qi Liang replied with a nod.

"Then what if I choose to complete regular elder missions instead?" Han Li asked.

"Each regular elder mission requires one to perform different tasks, and they also vary in difficulty, so the number of merit points that can be earned from completing each mission naturally varies as well. Generally speaking, mission rewards range from around a dozen to over 100 merit points.

"Of course, if you make some special contributions to the sect, then you'll be rewarded with additional merit points. You'll become more familiar with this system once you've been in the inner sect for a while," Qi Liang explained in a patient manner.

After some contemplation, Han Li decided, "In that case, I think I'll select the first option for my first 100 years in the sect."

"That's the option that the majority of new elders choose. Come with me. The Abode Assignment Palace just so happens to be nearby as well. I'll take you there so you can select a cave abode," Qi Liang said with a smile.

He led Han Li out of the Ostentatious Palace as he spoke, then rose up into the air before flying toward a nearby mountain.

In contrast with the mountain where the Ostentatious Palace was situated, this mountain was far more lively and bustling.

A cluster of red buildings that took up a massive area had been constructed on the mountain summit, with hundreds of palatial structures among them. The giant plaza outside wasn't exactly completely packed, but there was definitely a huge number of people on it.

Streaks of light could occasionally be seen whizzing through the air, either descending onto or flying up from the plaza.

"As the name suggests, the elders and disciples of the Abode Assignment Palace oversee cave abode assignment duties, as well as the distribution of resources, so it's always one of the busiest places in the entire inner sect," Qi Liang introduced to Han Li after the two of them landed on the plaza.

"No wonder there are so many people here. Looks like you'll have to wait with me for quite some time," Han Li said in an apologetic manner.

"Not to worry. I'm close friends with Elder Yu of the Abode Assignment Palace, so I can take you to see him right away," Qi Liang replied with a smile.

"Thank you, Elder Qi."

As the two of them passed through the plaza, many of the disciples would greet Qi Liang upon seeing the elder robes that he was wearing, and Qi Liang would respond with slight nods of acknowledgement.

Through the palace gates, Han Li could see that this was indeed an extremely busy place.

Under Qi Liang's guidance, Han Li was taken to a hall situated in the deepest part of the area.

At this moment, there were seven or eight people in the hall engaged in a spirited discussion, seemingly arguing about something.

"Brother Yu!" Qi Liang called out as he stepped into the hall with Han Li.

A large head with a bright, rosy complexion emerged from behind the seven or eight arguing figures, and the head took a glance at Qi Liang and Han Li, then disappeared back behind the small crowd, immediately following which a loud voice rang out.

"Alright, all of you can go back for now. Come back tomorrow and I'll make a decision on your cave abode reassignment requests."

The disciples could only cease their argument upon hearing this, then took their leave before exiting the hall.

Elder Yu was a portly man with a large head, and he said, "It's been quite a while since you paid me a visit. Who's this?"

Despite his unremarkable appearance, Han Li could sense that Elder Yu was also a True Immortal cultivator.

Chapter 189: Cave Abode and Mountain Guardian Beast

"Our Heavenly Star Palace isn't as busy as your Abode Assignment Palace, but I still don't get enough spare time to come and visit you whenever I please. It just so happens to be the case that we've welcomed a new elder into our sect. His name is Li Feiyu, and I've brought him here to complete the registration process and pick out a cave abode," Qi Liang replied with a smile.

"I see. That's not a problem at all. Greetings, Elder Li, my name is Yu Xiansheng, and I currently serve as the attendant elder of the Abode Assignment Palace. I'll get you registered right away," Elder Yu said with a smile

"Thank you, Elder Yu," Han Li hurriedly said.

Yu Xiansheng waved a hand in response, then summoned a brush that appeared as if it had been carved out of gold and jade with a flick of his wrist. He then made his way over to the table and began to quickly write something down onto a thick book that was glowing with azure light.

As he was writing, Yu Xiansheng suddenly paused for a moment, then raised his head as he asked, "Have you decided what you're going to do to fulfill your elder duties for the first 100 years, Elder Li?"

"I'll complete three regular elder missions," Han Li replied.

Yu Xiansheng seemed to have already anticipated this answer, and he nodded in response before continuing in his writing.

A short while later, Yu Xiansheng looked up again as he said, "The registration is complete. According to the rules of our sect, all inner sect elders and direct disciples are entitled to a mountain of their own. Hence, it's time for you to select a mountain to construct your cave abode on, Elder Li."

He then swept a sleeve through the air, and a green scroll that was over three feet in length appeared before him amid a flash of green light.

Immediately thereafter, the scroll began to slowly unfurl itself, revealing a piece of artwork depicting a stretch of scenery.

Han Li swept his gaze over the piece of artwork to find that it was extremely complex, complete with countless mountains and bodies of water.

Initially, he didn't find the scroll to be all that remarkable, but as soon as his gaze lingered for a moment on one of the mountains, that section of the artwork would instantly expand before his eyes and become more vibrant and lifelike, as if he had been transported to the actual location, much to his amazement.

"This Inkspirit Scenic Scroll contains an artwork that depicts our Bell Toll Mountain Range. However, the mountain range is too vast to be encompassed in a single frame, so you're only seeing a part of the mountain range right now. If you want to see other areas, then you'll have to extend the scroll further," Yu Xiansheng explained with a smile.

He swept a sleeve through the air as he spoke, and the image in the scroll began to slowly move to reveal more of the landscape.

As more and more areas were revealed, Han Li noticed that different areas on the artwork had different background colors. Some were blue, some were green, some were golden, and some were pitch-black, as if ink had been inadvertently poured onto those areas.

There were also some areas that didn't display a real-life image, even after Han Li's gaze had lingered on them for a while.

"Why do these areas have different background colors? Do they serve different purposes?" Han Li asked.

"That's right. The golden areas in the scroll depict the mountains where some of the most integral palaces of the sect are situated, and they're mostly distributed throughout the central region of the Bell Toll Mountain Range, such as the Ostentatious Palace, the Merit Conveyance Palace, and the Abode

Assignment Palace, while the silver areas are where the cave abodes of the direct disciples are situated," Yu Xiansheng explained.

He then swept his sleeve through the air once again, and the image in the scroll moved several hundred feet to the right before stopping at a blue area.

"The green area that you saw earlier was the western region of the mountain range, where the cave abodes of all of the outer sect elders and disciples are situated, while this blue area depicts the eastern region of the mountain range, where the cave abodes of all of the inner sect disciples and elders are.

"As for those gray areas, they mark out the sect's trial venues, such as the Snowmelt Forest and the Inexplicable Valley, and barring certain special circumstances, those areas are generally closed off to everyone," Yu Xiansheng continued.

"Are those black areas the restricted areas of the sect?" Han Li asked.

Yu Xiansheng nodded in response. "That's right. Aside from the dao lords and deputy dao lords, only a select few core elders and direct disciples are permitted to enter those areas. There are powerful restrictions set up around all of those areas, so there's no way you'll inadvertently stumble into them."

"I see. I've only just arrived in the sect, and I know next to nothing about this place. I have no idea which mountain to choose among this vast selection. Can you make some recommendations, Elder Yu?" Han Li asked with a smile.

"Of course," Yu Xiansheng replied with a nod.

He swept his sleeve through the air once again as he spoke, and the image in the green scroll abruptly accelerated in its movement, instantly traveling over 100 feet to reveal several mountains that extended all the way up into the clouds.

"This Sun Mountain Peak is only only around 100,000 kilometers in radius, but there's a spirit spring of an exceptional caliber on it, thereby allowing the mountain to naturally gather the world's origin qi, making it an exceptional place for cultivation. Roughly 250,000 kilometers away is this Sundrum Peak,

which takes up a slightly larger area, but it has no spirit spring," Yu Xiansheng introduced as he pointed at two of the mountains on the scroll.

"It doesn't really concern me whether a mountain has a spirit spring or not. Is there a more peaceful and secluded mountain available?" Han Li asked.

After a moment of deliberation, Yu Xiansheng swept his sleeve through the air again, and this time, the image in the scroll moved for close to 1,000 feet before stopping.

"This Dawnfall Peak is situated in a rather secluded location, and it's also quite a short mountain. If I recall correctly, no elder has ever resided there. It's surrounded by many plains and valleys, so it's a lot more quiet than the other mountains. If you'd like to select this mountain, then you'll have to construct your own cave abode there," Yu Xiansheng said as he pointed at the scroll.

Han Li's gaze followed Yu Xiansheng's finger, and he stared at the Dawnfall Peak for a while without saying anything, seemingly not quite satisfied with the location.

Yu Xiansheng exchanged a glance with Qi Liang upon seeing this, then said, "That's alright, let's keep looking."

With that, he continued to introduce other mountains to Han Li.

Some time later, right as Yu Xiansheng was gradually losing his patience, Han Li's gaze was suddenly drawn to a corner of the scroll, where a lone mountain was standing, and he asked, "Elder Yu, can I choose this mountain?"

A peculiar look appeared on Qi Liang's face at the sight of Han Li's selection, and he asked, "You want to choose the Crimson Dawn Peak?"

Han Li noticed Qi Liang's reaction, and he asked, "Is there something wrong with this mountain?"

Before Qi Liang had a chance to reply, Yu Xiansheng explained, "No, there's nothing wrong with the mountain. It was previously occupied by another elder, and it's been vacant ever since that elder's

passing. I suppose it's a good choice, considering it already has a cave abode completely with a medicine farm and a beast stable, all it needs is to be tidied up a little. You can go to the Cattail Spirit Valley later to pick out some servants to do that for you."

Han Li's heart stirred slightly upon hearing this, but he didn't say anything further, settling on this mountain as he expressed his gratitude to Yu Xiansheng.

With a flick of his wrist, a small seal appeared in Yu Xiansheng's hand, and he pressed the seal down onto the scroll where the Crimson Dawn Peak was situated.

As soon as the seal made contact with the scroll, a burst of peculiar fluctuations immediately swept over the Crimson Dawn Peak and the surrounding area, and when Han Li set his gaze upon, he discovered that he was no longer able to see a real-life image of the area.

Yu Xiansheng stowed the seal away, then flipped a hand over to produce a crimson badge and a storage bracelet as he smiled and said, "Alright, the Crimson Dawn Peak and the area close to 300,000 kilometers in radius belongs to you now, Elder Li. Here's your attendant elder badge and a storage bracelet that contains some information and resources."

Han Li accepted the two items and stowed the storage bracelet away before carefully inspecting the elder badge.

It was a palm-sized badge that seemed to have been constructed from a jade-like material, and the visage of a strange dragon was engraved onto one side, while the other side carried the word "Elder" inscribed in seal script.

"This elder badge is an important identification token, and it'll be required in many instances in our sect. In order to prevent it from being stolen, you need to mark it with your blood essence. The badge also contains 100 free merit points given out to all new elders, so make sure to keep it safe," Qi Liang said.

Han Li nodded in response, then brought his index and middle fingers together before tapping them onto the badge.

A burst of light flashed from his fingertips, and a drop of golden blood essence instantly emerged before quickly seeping into the badge.

A peculiar golden pattern instantly appeared on the surface of the badge amid a flash of light, and the pattern was giving off an aura that was unique to Han Li.

He then injected his spiritual sense into the badge, and sure enough, there were already 100 merit points inside.

"Elder Li, would you like me to take you to the Cattail Spirit Valley to select some servants, or to the Beast Rearing Fields to select a mountain guardian beast?" Qi Liang asked.

"What's a mountain guardian beast?" Han Li asked.

"They are spirit beasts that had been tamed by the sect. Given your cultivation base and your status as an inner sect elder, you're entitled to Body Integration Stage spirit beast to guard your mountain and cave abode," Qi Liang explained.

Han Li was rather taken aback to hear this, and he asked, "Will I need to spend merit points for such a beast?"

"No, the mountain guardian beast is gifted to you by the sect free of charge, just like the servants. Most of the servants are outer sect disciples who wish to serve a True Immortal. It looks like you're quite interested in a mountain guardian beast, so how about I take you to the Beast Rearing Fields first?" Qi Liang proposed.

"I'm just intrigued as I've never heard of something like this before. Back when I was selecting my mountain, I noticed that the Imperial Dragon Peak that the Merit Conveyance Palace is situated on isn't too far away from here. I'd like to go and take a look there first," Han Li said.

Qi Liang faltered slightly upon hearing this, then said, "You're quite observant to have noticed that, Elder Li. The Imperial Dragon Peak appears to be not far away on the map, but it's actually quite some distance away in our Bell Toll Mountain Range. Are you sure you don't want to have everything organized in your cave abode first before you go to the Merit Conveyance Palace?"

"Truth be told, I've been yearning to see the scriptures in the Merit Conveyance Palace for a long time, and now that I've finally managed to join the sect, I simply can't suppress the urge to want to go and take a look there first," Han Li replied as he intentionally put on a bashful expression.

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Qi Liang was quite amused to hear this, and he said, "In that case, I'll take you to the Imperial Dragon Peak first."

Han Li hurriedly waved his hands as he refused, "I've already troubled you far too much today, Elder Qi. Now that I have this elder badge, I'll be able to take care of everything else on my own. You and Elder Yu haven't met for quite some time, so why don't you take the time to catch up and have a good chat?"

"That's very thoughtful of you, Elder Li," Yu Xiansheng chuckled. "The storage bracelet that I just gave you contains a map of our Blaze Dragon Dao, so you won't get lost."

Qi Liang hesitated momentarily upon hearing this, then said, "In that case, I'll leave you to yourself, Elder Li. If you get some spare time, you can come and pay my Heavenly Star Palace a visit."

"I'll be sure to do so," Han Li replied as he cupped his fist in a salute before departing.

Following his departure, a hint of mockery appeared on Yu Xiansheng's face as he mused, "Some people just don't know their limits. All of these new elders think that regular elder missions are easy to complete. Only after experiencing hardships will they come to realize that the most consistent long-term strategy is to oversee a palace like us."

Qi Liang merely smiled in response, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this sentiment.

Meanwhile, Han Li emerged from the palace and arrived on the plaza outside, then flipped a hand over to pull the map of the Blaze Dragon Dao out of the storage bracelet that had just been given to him by Yu Xiansheng. After inspecting it closely for a moment, he stowed the map away again.

After that, he flipped his hand over again to pull out a jade slip that contained some information about all of the Blaze Dragon Dao's palaces, then pressed the jade slip against his own glabella.

Moments later, he stowed the jade slip away before abruptly rising up into the sky as a streak of azure light.

As Han Li was flying through the air, he was also taking the opportunity to inspect the landscape beneath him.

The undulating mountains were like waves that stretched as far as the eyes could see, and with the exceptions of some locations where sect palaces and pavilions were situated, the majority of the landscape was covered by a blanket of snow, giving the entire area the appearance of a glacial realm.

However, the rivers and creeks that passed through the mountain range were still slowly flowing, remaining unfrozen despite the low temperatures.

They were like a series of gentle and slow-moving pythons that were slithering through the mountain range.

Han Li had already seen several of the major rivers while on the way to the Blaze Dragon Dao, but their names were different from the names that they were referred to as here, and they were only the downstream tail-ends of those rivers.

Constantly staring at a monotonous white landscape proved to be quite disconcerting over time, so Han Li redirected his gaze to the sky instead as he flew toward the Imperial Dragon Peak at full speed.

.....

15 minutes later.

The Imperial Dragon Peak was one of the tallest and most majestic mountains in the entire Bell Toll Mountain Range. At the same time, it was also one of the Blaze Dragon Dao's most important mountains. It was protected by an array all year round, and whenever any situations arose, the arrays

would instantly be activated. Furthermore, there was more than one True Immortal cultivator stationed inside at all times.

The entirety of the Imperial Dragon Peak was riddled with dense clusters of buildings from head to toe, all of which housed the countless cultivation arts and secret techniques of the sect.

The buildings at the foot of the mountain were collectively known as the scripture library, and the scriptures they contained catered toward outer sect elders and disciples, whereas the buildings halfway up the mountain were known as the inner tome library, and they catered toward inner sect elders and disciples.

These two locations housed a vast number of books on an extremely diverse range of topics, and elders and disciples could find what they wanted through the library catalogs, then exchange for those scriptures using merit points.

There was only a single building on the mountain summit named the Merit Conveyance Palace, and it catered exclusively toward inner sect elders and direct disciples, housing the most important scriptures in the entire sect.

Right at this moment, a streak of azure light descended out of the sky and onto the white jade plaza in front of the palace.

It was none other than Han Li, and after landing on the plaza, he took a moment to adjust his robes, which were slightly disheveled from his flight, then raised his head to look at the palace up ahead.

The Merit Conveyance Palace was very unremarkable in appearance, with seemingly no extra thought or care put into its construction, but upon closer inspection, one would quickly discover that there was more to the palace than met the eye.

Firstly, the Merit Conveyance Palace wasn't constructed from wooden or stone materials. Instead, the building consisted entirely of a special type of metal. Secondly, there were all types of complex runes engraved onto the outer walls and eaves of the palace, giving it a profound and mystical appearance.

Han Li speculated that this palace itself was most likely an extremely powerful spirit treasure, perhaps even an Acquired Immortal Treasure.

If that really were the case, then this would truly be an extraordinary spectacle.

After inspecting the building for a moment, he cast aside this train of thought before making his way inside.

Upon entering the palace, Han Li was surprised to find that even though there were no light sources such as lamps or candles inside, it was somehow even brighter in the palace than outside.

After looking around the hall, he discovered that aside from the wall that the door was attached to, the other three walls had been split up into countless metal grids, all of which were flashing with spiritual light and tightly sealed behind independent restrictions.

Directly across from him was a middle-aged man with graying hair huddled over a table. His attention was focused entirely on an ancient book with a green cover and yellow pages, and he didn't seem to have noticed Han Li at all.

Han Li approached the man and was just about to say something when he noticed out of the corner of his eye that the entire book had been written in golden seal text.

The man looked up to reveal a set of calm features, and he said, "Judging from your attire, you're not an inner sect elder, nor are you a direct disciple, so what are you doing here?"

"I am Li Feiyu, and I was only just instated as an inner sect elder. I was in a hurry to get here, so I didn't get a chance to change into my elder robes," Han Li explained as he pulled out his elder badge before offering it to the man.

The middle-aged man accepted the badge and examined it for a moment, but didn't immediately return it to Han Li as he smiled and cupped his fist in a welcoming salute.

"It's fine. The first thing that many of the new elders like to do after joining the sect is to visit the Imperial Dragon Peak, so this is no surprise. My name is Fang Zhuan, and I am the attendant elder overseeing the Merit Conveyance Palace at the moment."

Han Li immediately returned the salute, and his expression remained completely unchanged, but he was feeling a little perplexed.

Fang Zhuan was only a Grand Ascension cultivator, so why was it that he had been assigned with such an important role?

"Have you come here to exchange for some cultivation arts or secret techniques? I don't mean to rain on your parade, but given that you've only just joined the sect, I'm assuming you only have 100 merit points, right? 100 merit points can perhaps get you a decent cultivation art from the inner tome library, but in here..." Fang Zhuan's voice trailed off here, but it was clear what he was implying.

"Thank you for the tip, Elder Fang. I've only come here this time to browse the catalog of cultivation arts so I know how many merit points I have to aim for," Han Li replied.

Fang Zhuan nodded in response, then asked, "I see. May I ask which cultivation art you'd like to inquire about?"

"Prior to joining the sect, I had already heard that our Blaze Dragon Dao had a cultivation art that could allow one to cultivate the laws of time. How many merit points will be required for that cultivation art?" Han Li asked.

Fang Zhuan seemed to have been rather taken aback to hear this, and he asked, "You mean the Formless True Axis Scripture?"

"Is there something wrong?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

Instead of answering Han Li's question, Fang Zhuan asked, "Have you looked into the Formless True Axis Scripture at all prior to this?"

"I'm afraid not. Please enlighten me, Elder Fang," Han Li replied.

"Due to the fact that the cultivation art is related to the laws of time, it's considered to be one of the Blaze Dragon Dao's top three cultivation arts, but in reality, no one in the Blaze Dragon Dao has ever managed to attain the laws of time through this cultivation art. Almost everyone who decided to pursue the cultivation art gave up at the first level and switched to other cultivation arts," Fang Zhuan explained.

Han Li nodded in response, then asked in a casual voice, "I see. May I ask how many merit points are required to exchange for the Formless True Axis Scripture?"

"You still want to exchange for the cultivation art, even though the practical success rate of cultivating it is zero?" Fang Zhuan asked with a perplexed expression.

"I've been yearning for this cultivation art for a long time, so I can't bear to just give up on it before at least giving it a try. If it doesn't work, I can always switch to something else," Han Li replied with a smile.

Fang Zhuan was silent for a moment, then said, "In that case, I won't try to dissuade you any further. The Formless True Axis Scripture is split up into three levels, and elders and disciples are only permitted to exchange for one level at a time. The first level only costs 90 merit points..."

"Only 90 merit points?" Han Li was very surprised to hear this, and he couldn't help but cut Fang Zhuan off for confirmation.

"That's right, the first level only costs 90 merit points. Due to the special circumstances surrounding the cultivation art, it's the least popular of the sect's top three cultivation arts by far, so it's far cheaper than the other two," Fang Zhuan explained.

"Then what about the other two levels?" Han Li asked.

"The second level will cost 9,000 merit points, and it's only accessible to direct disciples and inner sect elders. As for the third level, that's only accessible to the dao lords and deputy dao lords, and it'll cost 900,000 merit points," Fang Zhuan replied.

"That's an extremely steep hike in price," Han Li mused.

"The reason why the first level is so easily accessible and so cheap is because the sect is hoping that someday, one of the sect's disciples will actually be able to attain the laws of time through it. Having said that, like I mentioned, no one has ever managed to succeed in this endeavor, so it's become even less popular over time," Fang Zhuan explained.

"Thank you for informing me of all of this, Elder Fang. I would still like to exchange for the first level of the Formless True Axis Scripture," Han Li said.

"Alright, if you've already made up your mind, then please wait for a moment," Fang Zhuan replied with a nod, then turned around and made his way toward the metal grids behind him.