

## **A Record 231**

### Chapter 231: The Might of Heavy Water

As soon as the wooden puppet appeared, it instantly vanished on the spot, then appeared directly above Han Li an instant later in a wraith-like manner.

A burst of golden light flashed past as a golden-armored puppet that was over 30 feet tall emerged. The puppet was wielding a vajra pestle, which it swung down directly upon Han Li's head.

Han Li tossed a black ball in the direction of the Heavy Water True Axis, then turned around and raised an arm to combat the descending vajra pestle.

A layer of golden scales appeared over his arm as it clashed against the vajra pestle amid a resounding boom.

A shimmering golden fist struck the vajra pestle with tremendous force, sending a burst of even more powerful shockwaves sweeping through the air.

Before the sound from the clash had completely subsided, a deafening boom rang out from the Heavy Water True Axis as well, originating from the explosion of the ball of Heavy Water Veined Lightning that Han Li had just tossed in that direction.

Violent arcs of silver lightning erupted in all directions, quickly encompassing the entire area within a radius of over 1,000 feet.

The ball of white light formed by the elderly man's flying swords was instantly scattered, while the Heavy Water True Axis remained largely unaffected and continued to plunge forward with unstoppable might.

Immediately thereafter, a string of loud booms rang out as five of the seven flying swords were crushed into dust by the tremendous weight of the Heavy Water True Axis.

The destruction of the elderly man's bonded flying swords instantly caused him to throw up a large mouthful of blood from the resulting backlash.

However, he had no time to wipe the blood from his lips as he turned to Han Li with an incredulous look on his face. There, cracks were beginning to appear on the surface of the golden-armored puppet that he had been nurturing in his body for countless years.

Only then did he realize that he was no match for Han Li, and he immediately fled the scene at an incredible speed, doing so in such a hasty and decisive fashion that he had even abandoned his two remaining bonded flying swords.

Almost at the exact same moment, the golden-armored puppet shattered into pieces.

"Elder Li, he's getting away!" Bai Suyuan yelled in an urgent voice.

Han Li took a glance in the direction that the elderly man had fled in, but wasn't in a hurry to set off in pursuit.

With a wave of his hand, he stowed the Heavy Water True Axis away, then drew the two remaining flying swords and the golden bead that was capable of transforming into that golden net into his storage bracelet as well.

Immediately thereafter, countless arcs of silver lightning appeared over his body, forming a circular lightning array with a diameter in excess of 100 feet in the blink of an eye.

An earth-shattering thunderclap rang out as the silver array vanished on the spot, leaving behind only a few arcs of silver lightning that quickly dissipated as well. Meanwhile, Bai Suyuan and the others were left to gawk at one another with astonished expressions.

A True Immortal cultivator was simply unfathomable in their eyes. The clash between Han Li and the elderly man had only lasted a few seconds, but they were already thoroughly astonished by what they had just witnessed.

High up in the sky close to 100,000 kilometers away, the elderly man had blood dripping down from the corner of his lips as he flew through the air as quickly as he could with a look of intense fear in his eyes.

According to the information that he had gathered before coming here, Han Li was supposed to have been an itinerant early-True Immortal cultivator who had only recently joined the sect, but he was far more powerful than what the elderly man had imagined. Granted, he hadn't unleashed all of his treasures and abilities, but he knew that if the battle had continued, then he would've perished for sure. Thankfully, it seemed that he wasn't being pursued.

Right as this thought crossed his mind, an earth-shattering thunderclap suddenly rang out in the sky above him.

The elderly man looked up to see a bolt of silver lightning that was as thick as a water vat crashing down from the heavens, and within the lightning was a deity-like figure that was descending from above with his long hair dancing all around him.

The figure was holding a black spear with lightning revolving all around it, and the spear was being plunged down viciously from above.

The elderly man was caught completely off guard, and he had no time to take evasive measures, so he could only hurriedly raise his hands and summon a scaled shield to protect himself.

A resounding boom rang out as the heavy water spear pierced straight through the shield, then continued downward and plunged through the elderly man's head.

Right at this moment, a tiny figure that was around three inches tall and was clad in a suit of golden armor suddenly flew out of the top of the elderly man's head in a flash.

Before Han Li had a chance to do anything, a layer of crimson light suddenly appeared over the tiny figure's skin, immediately following which its entire body erupted into a cloud of blood mist that vanished without a trace.

Han Li instantly released his spiritual sense to encompass the surrounding area in a radius of tens of thousands of kilometers, but was ultimately unable to find anything.

He slowly withdrew the heavy water spear that he had impaled through the elderly man's body, then made a grabbing motion with one hand, and the storage bracelet on the elderly man's wrist flew into his grasp.

After securing the storage bracelet, he injected his spiritual sense into it to find that it contained a good collection of items, including several powerful treasures and around a dozen Immortal Origin Stones.

After stowing the storage bracelet away, Han Li flew back the same way he had come from as a streak of azure light, and by the time he returned, he discovered that Bai Suyuan and the others had been taken to a valley near Pine Fruit Mountain by Su Tongxiao.

Fang Yu and the other two groups of disciples were there as well.

Aside from Qi Huanyu's group, out of which four of the disciples had had their physical bodies destroyed, there were no other casualties, but everyone still had looks of lingering fear in their eyes.

At this moment, Su Tongxiao was seated on a giant rock in the valley, and his aura was rather unstable, indicating that he had sustained some injuries.

He immediately approached Han Li upon spotting him, then asked, "Did you manage to catch him, Brother Li?"

It was clear that he had already been made aware of what had just transpired here.

Han Li shook his head in response. "I managed to destroy his physical body, but his nascent soul got away using some type of secret technique."

"Thank heavens you arrived in time to protect the other disciples. I got complacent for a moment on my end and... At the very least, with that man's physical body destroyed, we haven't completely failed in our mission," Su Tongxiao sighed.

"Is there still a need to continue the trial at this point, Brother Su?" Han Li asked.

"An enemy True Immortal cultivator has already appeared, and there's no guarantee that he doesn't have accomplices nearby, so we'll have to conclude the trial as a safety precaution. Let's go back and report to the sect," Su Tongxiao replied.

"That sounds like it's for the best," Han Li replied with a nod.

Su Tongxiao suddenly drew a little closer to Han Li, then pulled out a storage pouch that he stuffed into Han Li's hand as he communicated through voice transmission, "By the way, I owe you my thanks for protecting the other two groups of disciples. You deserve a share of the offerings from the elders."

"You're far too kind, Brother Su."

Han Li raised no objections as he stowed the storage pouch away.

Given his contributions, he was indeed deserving of a share in these offerings.

In order to avoid further mishaps, everyone chose to return the same way they had come on foot rather than flying back.

Following this humbling incident, all of the disciples who regarded themselves as blessed prodigies were a lot more quiet, and even Qi Huanyu and Tang Chuan had become quite sullen and dejected.

Su Tongxiao was leading the way, while the disciples trailed along behind him, and Han Li was bringing up the rear.

Perhaps it was because she had heard about the patriarch of her clan from her assailant, but Bai Suyuan was walking along in an absentminded manner, seemingly with a lot on her mind.

Meanwhile, Sun Ke was dragging his feet as he trudged through the snow, and after some hesitation, he decided to intentionally drop to the rear of the group so that he could arrive by Han Li's side.

Right as he was pondering what he was going to say, he was greeted by the sound of a familiar voice.  
"Long time no see, Fellow Daoist Sun."

Sun Ke faltered slightly upon hearing this, then hurriedly replied with a respectful expression, "Ah, so it really is you, Brother Li, I mean, Elder Li..."

"I hope you don't mind that I hid my cultivation base from you back on the Seafaring Lightning Boat," Han Li said with a smile.

"I wouldn't dare! I'm just surprised that you're an inner sect elder of the Blaze Dragon Dao. If I had known this sooner, I wouldn't have had to go through the trouble of offering so many treasures to establish connections in order to join the sect. Instead, I would've offered the treasures straight to you," Sun Ke sighed.

"I was also quite surprised to see you here. If I had known you were coming here, I would've accompanied you along the way. I still think about all of the fine wines in your collection, and I've been dying to get a taste of the Fire Drop Wine that you've been sharing with your fellow disciples," Han Li chuckled.

"I still have some Fire Drop Wine left, you can have the rest of it if you'd like, Elder Li," Sun Ke immediately offered without any hesitation.

Instead of replying to Sun Ke's offer, Han Li said, "I have a request for you, Fellow Daoist Sun."

Sun Ke faltered slightly upon hearing this, then prompted, "Please go ahead, Elder Li."

"I want to exchange a spirit treasure for the recipe of your Fire Drop Wine. Is that a trade you're willing to make?" Han Li asked.

A conflicted look appeared on Sun Ke's face upon hearing this request, following which he gritted his teeth as he said, "Truth be told, this wine is different from the other wines in my collection as it's a secret recipe that's been passed down in my clan for generations, and it most likely can't be found anywhere else."

"I did bring it out with me in secret, but giving the recipe to outsiders has always been strictly prohibited. However, you've already saved my life on two occasions, and I'm not an ungrateful person, so I can make an exception and give you the recipe."

"If you're going to give me the recipe, then I must give you a spirit treasure in exchange. Otherwise, people will say that I'm extorting disciples for my own benefit. This sword is quite a powerful treasure, and it's not so easy to use, so you have to practice diligently with it after you've refined it," Han Li said as he flipped a hand over to produce a storage pouch, then offered it to Sun Ke.

The storage pouch contained that golden longsword that he had taken from the Origin Mirage Beast.

An overawed look appeared on Sun Ke's face, but he didn't refuse the storage pouch. At the same time, he offered an ancient piece of paper and an intricate red wine flagon to Han Li in exchange.

Han Li stowed the flagon away, then took a glance at the recipe on the ancient piece of paper before making a copy using a jade slip and returning the original to Sun Ke.

The other disciples noticed this interaction, and upon coming to the realization that he seemed to have been on friendly terms with an inner sect elder, all of them were feeling rather envious of him.

Even though all of them also had True Immortals in their clans, they certainly didn't have the courage to interact with a True Immortal as equals.

In particular, from their perspective, it seemed that Han Li was more powerful than Elder Su, which meant that he most likely had a higher status in the sect as well. After all, Tang Chuan's group hadn't suffered any casualties under his protection, but four of the disciples in Qi Huanyu's group had had their physical bodies destroyed while under Su Tongxiao's protection.

A few of the female cultivators were also taking extra glances at Sun Ke.

Han Li was openly conducting this trade with Sun Ke in front of everyone with the objective of earning Sun Ke more respect from his peers, a fact that Sun Ke had already caught onto.

## Chapter 232: Dispelling Doubts

After returning to the Blaze Dragon Dao, Su Tongxiao instructed Fang Yu to take the disciples back to the Rising Sun Palace, while he went to deliver a report to the sect's higher-ups. As the supervising elder with the higher cultivation base, he had to give the sect an explanation in the wake of the incident that had taken place during the trial.

In particular, four of the disciples had had their physical bodies destroyed, and having accepted bribes from so many elders, he was unable to escape culpability.

Han Li didn't want to get involved in this matter, so he bade farewell to Su Tongxiao, then went straight to the Cloud Piercing Peak before making his way into the side hall of the High Profound Palace.

The side hall was as deserted as ever, and the door was slightly ajar, while Elder Hu Yan was seated in his chair behind the table with a bored expression.

"Wine is truly a great thing, but it seems I must exercise more moderation. It's only been a few days, yet I'm close to running out again," Elder Hu Yan grumbled to himself as he took a sip out of the red gourd in his hand.

Han Li just so happened to have heard Elder Hu Yan's grumbling as he arrived at the entrance of the side hall, and he paused momentarily before making his way inside.

Elder Hu Yan raised his head to look at Han Li, then said, "Looks like you completed your third mission. You sure are a hard worker. Did any of the girls in the trial catch your eye?"

"Some unforeseen mishaps arose during the trial, so it was terminated halfway. However, most of the disciples emerged unscathed. Does this count as completing the mission?"

Han Li gave Elder Hu Yan a brief recount of what had taken place in the Profound Ice Mountain Range, handing Elder Hu Yan his elder badge as he did so.



"It doesn't concern you whether they've completed their trial or not. As long as you've done your job, the mission will naturally be counted as completed," Elder Hu Yan said as he took Han Li's elder badge from him.

He then quickly deposited the sum of merit points corresponding with the mission into the badge before tossing it back to Han Li.

Han Li didn't say anything as he caught the badge before stowing it away.

He took a glance at Elder Hu Yan, then at the potted spirit plant on the table, and he displayed no intention of departing.

"What do you want? Have you gotten addicted to carrying out missions? Do you want a fourth one?" Elder Hu Yan grumbled.

"Senior Hu Yan, I wanted to discuss our agreement about the Dao Warriors..."

Before Han Li had a chance to finish, Elder Hu Yan raised a hand to cut him off. "I'm gonna stop you right there! Don't bother coming to me unless you've found a good wine recipe. Before then, I'm not going to teach you anything."

Han Li had already anticipated such a reaction from Elder Hu Yan, and he smiled as he said, "Don't be in such a hurry to turn me down, Senior. Now that I've completed my missions, I have nothing to do anyway, so would I be able to have a drink with you?"

Elder Hu Yan's expression immediately darkened upon hearing this, and he hurriedly tucked his red gourd back under his belt as he grumbled, "I've been very busy recently, so I haven't had any time to brew wine, and I don't have much left. I don't even have enough for myself! I let you drink to your heart's content last time, and I was kicking myself after you left! Stop thinking my Dao Warriors and get out of here!"

"I'm not asking for wine from you, Senior. Instead, I'd like to treat you to a cup of wine," Han Li said with a smile.

"You want to treat me to a cup of wine? I'm extremely picky, so if it's just some ordinary spirit wine, then don't bother bringing it out. If you ruin my appetite with a foul-tasting wine, not only will I never impart my knowledge in Dao Warriors onto you, I'll kick you off this Cloud Piercing Peak myself!" Elder Hu Yan said.

Han Li remained unfazed by this threat, reaching out a hand before gently sweeping it over the table before him, upon which a pair of vibrant green jade cups appeared.

The cups were of an extremely even and flawless green color, and there were thin golden lines inside, forming a series of flower-petal-shaped patterns that were quite remarkable to behold.

Elder Hu Yan was just about to say something else when his attention was drawn to the pair of jade cups. "Those are some decent Golden Thread Jade Cups."

Han Li didn't say anything as he flipped a hand over to produce an intricate fire-red wine flagon.

He then raised his other hand and removed the flagon's wooden stopper.

A faint pop rang out, following which an extremely unique and rich wine aroma instantly wafted throughout the entire side hall from within the flagon.

Elder Hu Yan's slightly red nose instantly twitched slightly as his eyes lit up with intrigue.

He leaned forward involuntarily, then stood up from his chair. His entire upper body was sprawled out on the table as he brought his nose closer to the flagon in Han Li's hand before taking a vigorous whiff of its contents.

"Hurry up and pour me a cup! What are you waiting for? My goodness, I'm about to start drooling all over the table!" Elder Hu Yan demanded in an urgent voice as he gulped down the saliva that was accumulating in his mouth.

Han Li didn't dare to make Elder Hu Yan wait, so he leaned forward slightly and filled the pair of Golden Thread Jade Cups on the table with the wine from the flagon.

Elder Hu Yan immediately picked up one of the cups, then began to carefully inspect it right in front of his eye.

The wine in the cup was of a vibrant red color, and it was giving off a fiery red glow. The wine itself was translucent, and with a slight shake of the cup, specks of red light could be seen dancing over the surface of the wine like tiny flames.

Elder Hu Yan eagerly brought the teacup to his lips, then took a small sip, upon which a look of surprise and elation instantly appeared on his face. He then tipped his head back and downed the rest of the wine in the cup in one go.

As soon as the wine entered his belly, it transformed into a surge of warmth that flowed throughout his entire body, and the red coloration of his nose instantly became even more pronounced.

He closed his eyes as he savored the lingering flavor of the wine in his mouth, and a blissful look appeared on his face.

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

After returning to his senses, Elder Hu Yan immediately said, "This is truly an extraordinarily exquisite wine. Where did you get this wine from? I've never tasted it before."

"This wine is called the Fire Drop Wine, and it's produced on the Primordial Wave Continent. However, due to the fact that the recipe has already been lost, it's very difficult to find nowadays," Han Li explained.

"What? The recipe has been lost?"

This revelation struck Elder Hu Yan like a bolt of lightning, causing his voice to spike up a few octaves.

However, he then quickly calmed down again as he asked, "If the recipe has already been lost, then how did you get your hands on this wine?"

"I'm afraid that's a question I can't answer. All I want to know is if the recipe for this wine is enough to exchange for your knowledge in Dao Warriors," Han Li said in a direct and straightforward manner.

A hesitant look appeared on Elder Hu Yan's face as he sat back down in his chair, and he appeared to have been quite conflicted.

However, Han Li could see that Elder Hu Yan was constantly glancing at the red wine flagong in his hand out of the corner of his eye, and it was clear that he wanted both the recipe and the flagong of wine.

Sure enough, it didn't take long before Elder Hu Yan caved.

"So be it. You and I get along quite well with each other, so as long as you give me the wine recipe and that flagong of Fire Drop Wine, I can impart my knowledge in Dao Warriors onto you."

"I'm afraid that won't do, Senior. Our prior agreement only concerned a wine recipe, and I only have a single flagong of this Fire Drop Wine, so I can't just give it to you free of charge," Han Li said.

Elder Hu Yan was immediately able to read between the lines, and he glared at Han Li as he asked, "You can't give it to me free of charge, you say? Fine, what else do you want from me?"

"I also wanted to learn from you how to plant spirit plants into pots, like in the case of this one," Han Li replied with a slightly embarrassed smile.

Elder Hu Yan immediately burst into laughter upon hearing this. "That's not a problem at all! I can teach you that."

Han Li was rather surprised by how willing Elder Hu Yan was to impart this knowledge, but after hearing the planting method, he realized why Elder Hu Yan wasn't reluctant at all to give this piece of knowledge away.

As it turned out, this type of planting method wasn't complex at all. What was difficult about it was finding containers suitable for holding spirit plants, as well as spirit fluids that can supply the spirit plants with sufficient spiritual power.

The black pot that Elder Hu Yan was using for the potted plant on the table was a treasure that was capable of absorbing the world's origin qi, and that was why the spirit plant planted within it was able to thrive even though it had been taken from the earth.

Furthermore, this type of planting method was only applicable to an extremely small selection of spirit plants.

"I didn't think there would be so many restrictions. What a pity..." Han Li sighed.

"Now that I've given you what you wanted, you better hand over that flagon of wine and its recipe to me," Elder Hu Yan urged with a pleased smile.

Han Li handed the flagon of wine over to Elder Hu Yan, then flipped a hand over to produce a copy of the wine recipe, which he set down onto the table.

Elder Hu Yan grabbed the flagon, then removed the wooden stopper before taking another whiff. He then began to carefully read through the recipe while murmuring his observations to himself. "As expected, 10,000-year-old Arhat Leaves were used... Oh, and there's Bright Stone Flower as well... I see..."

Han Li could see that Elder Hu Yan was completely absorbed in his reading, so he didn't interrupt him. He reached out to grab the cup of wine on the table that he had poured for himself, only for Elder Hu Yan to immediately slap his hand away.

"All of this wine belongs to me now!"

A grabbed the cup as he spoke before downing its contents in one go, then began smacking his lips in pleasure.

Han Li naturally wasn't offended by this, and he asked, "Can we talk about Dao Warriors now, Senior?"

Elder Hu Yan stowed the flagon and the wine recipe away, following which a serious look appeared on his face as he said, "I didn't think you would actually be able to acquire such an exceptional wine recipe. What do you want to know?"

Han Li paused for a moment, then asked, "These Dao Warriors appear similar to puppets, but are also quite different, and I wanted to know exactly what they were."

Elder Hu Yan considered the question for a moment, then replied, "That's a rather difficult question to answer. Dao Warriors could start off as a number of things, such as cultivators who sold themselves as slaves, powerful demon beasts, puppets refined in special ways, heavenly devils with established contracts, mutated ghosts, artifact spirits... Even spirits born in spirit domains are technically Dao Warriors."

"What category do those Dao Warriors that can sprout from those yellow beans fall into?" Han Li asked.

"Oh, you're talking about Bean Warriors. They're a type of plant Dao Warrior, and they fall under the puppet category. They need to be planted, then refined, and the power of the Bean Warriors will vary depending on how long the beans were nurtured and the potency of the arrays inscribed upon them," Elder Hu Yan explained.

## Chapter 233: Planting a Bean Warrior

"I see. Aside from being useful in battle, what else can Dao Warriors be used for?" Han Li asked.

"Depending on where a Dao Warrior came from, it could possess certain special talents, and it'll be absolutely obedient to its owner. If you have a sufficient number of Dao Warriors, you can even use them to assemble various types of arrays, thereby making them powerful allies," Elder Hu Yan replied.

"If there are so many benefits to owning Dao Warriors, then wouldn't everyone try to procure them? Why is it that they seem to be extremely rare?" Han Li asked.

"What do you take Dao Warriors for, kid? How can they be considered to be precious if any ordinary immortal is able to use them? A huge amount of time, energy, and resources are required to develop Dao Warriors, and even then, there's still some luck involved, so not all immortals have the required resources and ability to obtain them.

"Even Bean Warriors, which are considered to be among the lower third grade of Dao Warriors, are extremely rare," Elder Hu Yan explained.

"Thank you for explaining all of this to me, Elder Hu Yan. Would you be able to tell me exactly how these Dao Warriors are refined?" Han Li asked as he cupped his fist toward Elder Hu Yan in a grateful salute.

"Seeing as you were able to bring me such a fantastic wine recipe, I'll pass my knowledge in nurturing Bean Warriors to you. However, make sure you don't give this information to anyone else! Also, I quite like this pair of Golden Thread Jade Cups, so I'll accept them as a gift from you," Elder Hu Yan said as a sly grin appeared on his face.

Before Han Li had a chance to reply, Elder Hu Yan gently swept a sleeve over the table to stow the pair of cups away.

At the same time, a thin yellow paper book appeared on the table.

Han Li was feeling a little exasperated, but he was already familiar with Elder Hu Yan's personality, and he naturally wasn't going to say anything. He picked up the thin book before flipping through a few of its pages, then carefully stowed it away.

The book was completely unremarkable in appearance, but it really did contain information on the method required to plant Bean Warriors, so this was something that he would have to study in further detail once he returned to his cave abode.

"Thank you, Senior," he said as he extended another salute of gratitude.

"Don't worry about it, both of us got what we wanted, so neither of us owe each other anything. I'm really busy right now, so I have no time to entertain you," Elder Hu Yan said with a dismissive wave of his hand.

That was clearly Han Li's cue to depart, and he willingly obliged.

After leaving the High Profound Palace, he returned straight to the Crimson Dawn Peak, where he entered his cave abode and immediately went to the small spirit medicine field.

At this point, quite a few spirit medicines had already been planted here, and the giant ape puppet that was responsible for tending to them was situated nearby.

Han Li made his way to a vacant plot of land in the southwestern corner of the field, then crouched down before using his hands to dig a small hole into the soft and loamy soil. After that, he flipped a hand over to produce a walnut-sized yellow bean, which he tossed into the hole before covering it with soil.

This yellow bean was none other than the primary bean that he had obtained from the golden giant in the Origin Realm Temple of the Spirit Domain Realm.

According to the book that Elder Hu Yan had given to him, after a Bean Warrior was planted, it would require a long time to germinate, but it was impossible to predict exactly how much time it would take.

There were disparities in the time required for Bean Warriors of different varieties and even different specimens from the same variety of Bean Warrior to germinate, and the quality of the Bean Warriors, the soil that they were planted in, and the spirit liquid used to nurture them all played huge roles.

On the subject of spirit liquids, there was most likely no better option than the spirit liquid produced by the Heaven Controlling Vial.

All of the spirit liquid in the vial had already been used up on maturing the spirit medicines planted in this field, so he would have to wait until the next time the vial produced spirit liquid to administer the first dose to the bean.

After doing all of that, Han Li took a glance at the spirit medicines in the field, of which several were already approaching 50,000 years in age.



These spirit medicines were at an age where they could be used, but he had no suitable pill recipe for them.

There were avenues in the sect through which pill recipes could be obtained, but pill refinement was a skill that required practice, and pills that could enhance the cultivation base of True Immortal cultivators had to have been quite difficult to refine. With his skills in pill refinement, he could give it a try, but in all likelihood, he would have to fail numerous times before finding success.

With his current stash of spirit stones and Immortal Origin Stones, he could be considered to have been quite wealthy among early-True Immortal cultivators, but it most likely wasn't going to be enough once he began dabbling in pill refinement.

Having said that, he did have quite a large stash of low and mid-tier treasures, materials, and other things laying around. He would have to plan out how to sell them in batches to fund his future pill refinement endeavors.

However, prior to that, there were a few other things that he had to take care of.

With that in mind, he returned to his secret chamber, and after taking a seat with his legs crossed, he flipped a hand over to produce an intricate storage bracelet, out of which emerged a large collection of different items.

This storage bracelet was the one that he had taken from that elderly man that had appeared in the Profound Ice Mountain Range.

Somehow, the man seemed to have gathered some information on what had happened to Elder Bai Fengyi, and it was unclear what his objectives were for trying to abduct Bai Suyuan.

It was a pity that he was unable to capture the man's nascent soul. Otherwise, he would've been able to perform a soul search technique.

It didn't take long before Han Li had split up the contents of the storage bracelet into different categories in an expert fashion, following which he stowed them away to leave only three items behind,

namely a dark golden chunk of metal with some type of pattern all over its surface and a pair of jade boxes.

Both of the jade boxes had white talismans that were glowing with spiritual light adhered to them, clearly indicating that they held very important items inside.

The first thing that he did was pick up the chunk of metal for inspection. It was around the size of a watermelon and was the exact same as those few pieces of metal that he had obtained from the Origin Mirage Beast.

Han Li was rather intrigued at the sight of the chunk of metal.

The Origin Mirage Beast had been collecting this material, and it was also present in the elderly man's storage bracelet, so it had to have some type of special uses.

After a brief moment of contemplation, he stowed the chunk of metal away. Prior to this, he hadn't paid much heed to this material, but it seemed that he would have to find some time to have the material appraised so he could find out exactly what it was.

After that, Han Li picked up one of the jade boxes, and bright azure light began to emanate from his hand as he pointed at the talismans adhered to the box.

The talismans immediately began to glow with dazzling white light in an effort to resist him, but Han Li merely flicked a finger through the air with a cold smile on his face, and several streaks of azure sword qi were released before shredding through the white talismans.

After being severed into pieces, the white talismans were rendered completely useless, and Han Li was able to open the jade box.

Inside, he discovered a palm-sized white badge that had a rather peculiar appearance. It was thin and long, and its edges weren't very even, as if it were something that had been casually crafted out of jade by a child.

Han Li picked up the badge to give it a closer inspection, and he discovered that the material was glittering and translucent, and it was giving off a gentle glow.

It was definitely no ordinary material, but he couldn't identify it. However, it was clear from how carefully it had been stored that this was something that the elderly man had held in high regard.

Han Li then employed several secret techniques to thoroughly inspect both the inside and the outside of the badge, but still wasn't able to discover anything.

With a shake of his head, he placed the badge back into the jade box before stowing it away.

Seeing as he couldn't figure out what it was, he would just have to leave it for another time.

Finally, Han Li picked up the other jade badge before removing the talismans on the outside using the same method as before.

Inside this jade box was a book that was yellow with age, and its pages seemed to have been made from some type of beasthide.

Han Li picked up the book, but after briefly flipping through its pages, he shook his head before placing it back in the jade box.

The book had no cover or name, but judging from the content that it contained, it appeared to have been a book about tool refinement. There were many techniques in the book for refining and enhancing treasures, but it was a little niche.

There were still many other things that he had to take care of for now, so he decided to spend time studying the book for now.

After stowing the second jade box away, Han Li made a hand seal, and the Heavy Water True Axis appeared before him.

Blue light flashed within his eyes as he made a beckoning motion with one hand, and a small ball of heavy water flew out of his True Water Pouch before slowly approaching the Heavy Water True Axis.

At the moment, the axis was revolving on the spot while giving off a faint black glow.

As the ball of heavy water approached the axis, the Water Dao Rune on the latter instantly began to release a watery blue glow, as well as bursts of faint law powers.

The suction force that had emerged during Han Li's battle against the elderly man also appeared once again, and the ball of heavy water was drawn straight into the Heavy Water True Axis, which became slightly heavier as a result.

Han Li was very pleased to see this. Just as he had anticipated, the Heavy Water True Axis really was capable of absorbing more heavy water.

With a flick of his wrist, a volume of heavy water that was enough to fill an entire bucket surged forth before flowing toward the Heavy Water True Axis.

The Water Dao Rune on the Heavy Water True Axis radiated dazzling blue light as it quickly devoured most of the heavy water, but right at this moment, an unexpected turn of events unfolded.

The Water Dao Rune flashed a few more times before suddenly turning dark, and the axis also stopped devouring heavy water.

At the same time, most of Han Li's spiritual connection with the Heavy Water True Axis abruptly faded, and the axis came plummeting down toward the ground.

Thankfully, Han Li was able to react quickly enough to catch the axis before it hit the ground, but his arm sank down involuntarily from its enormous weight.

Having absorbed so much heavy water, the axis had become significantly heavier than before.

What just happened?

Initially, he had only refined the Heavy Water True Axis as a smokescreen to keep his Mantra True Axis hidden, but he had since discovered that it was extremely useful in battle, and he certainly didn't want to lose his spiritual connection to it.

#### Chapter 234: Monkey Wine

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li stowed the rest of the heavy water away, then injected his spiritual sense into the axis in an attempt to find out what was happening.

However, as soon as his spiritual sense entered the axis, he felt a burst of enormous churning inside like turbulent waves of the sea, and his spiritual sense was forced out.

After that, he spent close to half a day employing several different methods to find out what had changed within the Heavy Water True Axis, but all to no avail, leaving him to stare at the axis with tightly furrowed brows.

Could it be that the axis underwent some type of mutation after absorbing the heavy water?

Back when he refined the Heavy Water True Axis, he had followed the refinement method recorded in the Mantra Axis Scripture, and he hadn't completely familiarized himself with the fundamental principles of the treasure, so it wasn't impossible for it to have undergone some type of mutation.

With that in mind, Han Li was beginning to regret not taking the Heavy Water True Axis more seriously, but those emotions weren't going to help him.

At this point, he had to focus on thinking of a way to save the axis. He certainly didn't have enough time and resources to refine another one.

There was still a faint connection left between himself and the axis, so he pressed the axis against his lower abdomen where his dantian was, then activated this connection with all his might.

A layer of black light appeared over the Heavy Water True Axis, and it entered his dantian in a flash, residing peacefully in there like before.

The fact that Han Li was able to draw the axis back into his dantian meant that he hadn't completely lost it.

He immediately sat up straight and directed all of the immortal spiritual power in his dantian to envelop the Heavy Water True Axis, and his nascent soul also released bursts of nascent flames to encompass the entire axis.

The Water Dao Runes on the Heavy Water True Axis began to glow faintly, while the axis itself began to spin slowly again.

An elated look appeared in Han Li's eyes upon seeing this, and he continued this process.

An entire month passed by in the blink of an eye.

On this day, Han Li opened his eyes before sweeping a sleeve through the air, and the Heavy Water True Axis emerged with its spiritual connection to Han Li completely restored.

Not only that, but the color of the Water Dao Rune on its surface seemed to have become slightly darker.

As the axis revolved in mid-air, it released bursts of tremendous force that caused the surrounding space to tremble and quiver.

Han Li was extremely relieved to see this. Not only had the Heavy Water True Axis's weight increased significantly, its power had been given a slight boost as well.

He drew the axis into his grasp, then began to gently stroke its surface.

There were quite a few people in the Blaze Dragon Dao who had cultivated the Mantra Axis Scripture, but never had he heard of anyone creating a faux axis capable of absorbing one of the materials that it had been refined from, and he didn't know if this had something to do with the refinement process, or perhaps it was related to the materials used.

In any case, this was definitely a good thing.

Previously, the Heavy Water True Axis had resembled someone who had consumed too much food at once, resulting in indigestion.

A hint of anticipation coupled with unease appeared in Han Li's eyes as he placed the Heavy Water True Axis in the air in front of himself, then sent a ball of heavy water around the size of a human head drifting toward it.

The Water Dao Rune on the axis began to glow blue once again, and it quickly devoured the entire ball of heavy water.

Han Li was ecstatic to see this, and he clapped his hands together with glee.

He had just confirmed that the Heavy Water True Axis was able to keep absorbing heavy water.

Each intake of heavy water wasn't able to enhance the power of the axis by much, but if he were to repeat this process over and over again, he could envision the axis eventually becoming several times, even over 10 times more powerful than it currently was.

The Heavy Water True Axis was quite formidable to begin with, and once it reached its full potential, it would truly be a force to be reckoned with.

With that in mind, Han Li couldn't help but grow a little excited again.

With a sweep of his sleeve, he brought out another large ball of heavy water that descended onto the axis.

The Water Dao Rune on the axis lit up as it began to devour the heavy water again.

However, only about half of the ball of heavy water had been devoured when the axis suddenly fell dark again, and Han Li's spiritual connection with it was once again severely compromised as it fell out of the air, only to be caught by Han Li.

After these two cycles, Han Li was able to roughly determine that the Heavy Water True Axis was able to absorb roughly a bucket's worth of heavy water per intake.

With that in mind, he stowed the Heavy Water True Axis back into his dantian to be refined with his nascent flame.

Over two years passed by in the blink of an eye.

All of a sudden, Han Li's eyes sprang open as he swept a sleeve through the air, and a ball of black light flew out of his body.

It was none other than the Heavy Water True Axis, and as soon as it emerged, the space within the secret chamber instantly began to shudder, while a burst of rumbling that resembled faint thunderclaps rang out.

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

During the past two years, he had remained exclusively in his secret chamber, focusing on feeding the Heavy Water True Axis more heavy water while also manifesting crystals to be sent to his Earthly Deity Avatar.

After over 20 more intakes of heavy water, the Heavy Water True Axis had become at least three times more powerful than before.

However, after absorbing so much heavy water, the rate at which the axis was absorbing heavy water was becoming slower, and the volume of each intake was also decreasing.



It was still able to absorb more, but Han Li could sense that it was about to reach its limit.

Even so, the Heavy Water True Axis had already become extremely fearsome.

With that in mind, he stowed the axis away before making his way outside.

The gate of the cave abode opened, and Han Li emerged.

A figure quickly approached him from a nearby room, and it was none other than Sun Buzheng, who appeared to have been waiting for him.

"Sun Buzheng pays his respects to Elder Li."

"Is there something you need to speak to me about?" Han Li asked.

"Elder Li, all of the spirit fields in your territory have already been cleared up, and I wanted to ask which types of spirit plants you wanted to have planted in these fields," Sun Buzheng replied in a respectful manner.

Han Li nodded in response, then flipped a hand over to produce a storage pouch that he handed to Sun Buzheng. "The seeds and the planting methods are all in here. Just do as the instructions say."

"Yes, Elder Li," Sun Buzheng accepted the storage pouch before departing.

Han Li took a few steps forward, then looked down from his vantage point.

Some restrictions had been set up around the spirit fields at the foot of the mountain, and Meng Qianqian and the others were all busy at work, tending to the fields.

Meanwhile, the Two-headed Griffin was soaring through the air nearby, constantly patrolling the area.

Han Li nodded with a pleased expression upon seeing this. He didn't have a large number of servants, but even so, his territory was beginning to look quite prosperous.

A smile appeared on his face, and in the next instant, he abruptly vanished from the spot before reappearing near a waterfall at the foot of the Crimson Dawn Peak.

The weather was becoming even colder, and the entire landscape was covered in snow. Even the water had mostly frozen, reduced to only around a third of its original size.

Thankfully, the spiritual qi around the Crimson Dawn Peak was quite abundant, so the valley was still filled with lush greenery.

After taking a brief glance at his surroundings, Han Li summoned his Heavy Water True Axis, yet before he had a chance to do anything, an elated cry suddenly rang out from nearby.

Han Li turned in that direction, and a smile appeared on his face.

As it turned out, a group of monkeys were playing in the nearby forest, and it seemed that they were the same ones that he had run into last time.

All of a sudden, a large crimson monkey sprang out of the forest, then landed not far away from Han Li, and it was none other than the monkey king.

The monkey king had become more physically imposing since last time, and its crimson fur had also become more vibrant.

Furthermore, it was only very faint, but it was giving off a burst of demonic qi fluctuations.

"Looks like you've made some good progress in your cultivation," Han Li remarked with a smile.

A grateful look appeared in the monkey king's eyes as it knelt down onto the ground before kowtowing respectfully to Han Li.

The other monkeys also jumped down to pay their respects to Han Li.

"I did give you some minor assistance last time we met, but your aptitude is the main reason behind the progress you've been able to make. On top of that, you're residing in a blessed paradise, so even without my help, you would've been able to reach this level with a few more years of cultivation," Han Li said as he clasped his hands behind his back.

The monkey king shook its head as it attempted to communicate something to Han Li, following which it swept an arm through the air.

One of the monkeys behind it immediately jumped forward with a yellow gourd in its hands, which it set down in front of Han Li.

The aroma of wine was wafting out from within the gourd, and Han Li was silent for a moment as he glanced at the gourd on the ground before asking, "Could it be that you've been waiting here for me this entire time?"

The monkey king immediately nodded in response.

Han Li was rather touched by this gesture, and he swept a sleeve through the air to release a ball of azure light, which split up into several dozen bursts, each of which surged into one of the monkeys present.

All of the monkeys immediately cried out in elation.

He then produced a pill that he tossed at the monkey king, and the latter immediately caught the pill in its mouth before swallowing it.

A burst of crimson light appeared over its body, and only after a long while did it subside, following which the demonic qi radiating from the monkey king's body became significantly more pronounced. An ecstatic look appeared on its face as he pushed the yellow gourd closer to Han Li's foot.

"Did you brew this wine yourselves? I have previously heard that monkey wine is extremely sweet and delectable, I didn't think I would ever get to taste it," Han Li said with a smile as he picked up the gourd before removing the stopper.

The aroma of the wine inside instantly became 10 times stronger, and it flowed straight into his nostrils as if it had a mind of its own.

A hint of surprise appeared on Han Li's face. He had only picked up the gourd as he didn't want to disappoint these thoughtful monkeys, but the fragrance of the monkey wine was unexpectedly delectable, and his eyes immediately lit up as he took a small sip.

Not only was the wine extremely delicious, it had a special aroma, and it wasn't inferior even compared with the immortal wines that Han Li had tried from Elder Hu Yan's collection.

"How are you able to brew such fine wine? Is there some secret?" Han Li asked.

The monkey king scratched its head as a hesitant look appeared on its face.

Han Li was ecstatic to see this. The monkey king's hesitant reaction indicated that they really did have a secret, and it would be extremely useful if he could obtain this secret. Despite how erratic Elder Hu Yan was, it seemed that he was quite an important figure in the sect, and there was a good chance that Han Li would have to interact with him in the future.

Right as he was about to pull out a few pills to offer a deal to the monkey king, it suddenly cried out before turning and rushing away into the distance.

Han Li was rather taken aback to see this, and the monkey king rushed to over 100 feet away before stopping in its tracks and turning around to call out to Han Li.

Han Li followed along behind the monkey king, and the other monkeys also trailed along behind him.

The monkey king moved as swiftly as the wind, quickly covering close to 10 kilometers before arriving at a mountain stream.

The weather here was warmer, but the landscape was very rocky, and there wasn't much vegetation.

There was an even larger waterfall here, and it was giving off a loud rumbling while water vapor churned all around it, presenting a breathtaking sight to behold.

The monkey king leaped straight into the waterfall, and Han Li raised an eyebrow before following along.

Upon passing through the waterfall, they arrived in a massive cave.

#### Chapter 235: An Offering from the Monkey King

The cave appeared to have been formed naturally, and it wasn't special in any way compared with most of the caves on the mountain.

The cave was quite spacious, around 200 to 300 feet in area, and there were several small caves inside that appeared to have been the homes for these monkeys. A tender cry rang out from one of the smaller caves as several small monkeys poked their heads out, only to be immediately pulled back by the arm of another monkey.

Immediately thereafter, a female monkey appeared at the entrance of the cave, looking at Han Li with a cautious expression as it let loose a threatening cry.

The monkey king immediately responded with an authoritative roar, and the female monkey's expression instantly changed as it ducked back into the cave.

The monkey king turned to Han Li to deliver what seemed to have been an apology, then continued onward, quickly reaching the deepest cave.

This was a rather small cave that was only several dozen feet in area, and the entire cave was filled with a rich wine aroma that was coming from a cauldron that was taller than a grown man.

The cauldron was gray in color, and it seemed to have been constructed from some type of unknown rock. It was a round cauldron that was supported by three feet, and there was a lid on the cauldron that was shaped like a conical bamboo hat.

There were eight large runes engraved onto the surface of the cauldron, giving it a remarkable appearance, but the cauldron wasn't giving off even the slightest aura, appearing as if it were nothing more than an ordinary cauldron.

The monkey king cried out a few times as it pointed at the cauldron, then jumped onto it before lifting the lid.

Most of the cauldron was filled with a light red liquid, which was giving off the same aroma as the monkey wine in the gourd.

However, it was clear that the brewing process wasn't yet complete for this batch of wine as it was still looking a little murky.

There were many pieces of fruit skin and cores littered around the cauldron, and Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this.

He pointed at the fruit scraps on the ground as he asked, "This is what you used to brew your wine?"

The monkey king immediately nodded in response.

Han Li fell silent as he made his way over to the cauldron, and after inspecting it carefully for some time, his eyes gradually lit up.

All of the fruit scraps on the ground belonged to some common wild fruits in the mountains, but due to the fact that they were growing in the Bell Toll Mountain Range, all of them contained some of the world's origin qi. Even so, they could only have been considered to be the most ordinary of spirit fruits.

The fact that these monkeys were able to brew such exquisite wine with such simple ingredients had to have had something to do with their wine brewing expertise, but the main contributing factor was most likely this mysterious stone cauldron.

Han Li inspected the cauldron for a moment, then pressed his hand against it and slowly injected his immortal spiritual power into it, but the cauldron displayed no reaction.

His brows furrowed slightly as he increased the rate of immortal spiritual power outflow while also simultaneously injecting his spiritual sense into the cauldron as well.

The eight runes on the surface of the cauldron suddenly lit up slightly, but then immediately fell dark again.

A hint of elation flashed through Han Li's eyes as he withdrew his immortal spiritual power and spiritual sense.

He still wasn't able to uncover exactly what was so special about this stone cauldron, but it was clearly no ordinary cauldron.

"Where did you get this cauldron from?" he asked as he turned to the monkey king.

The monkey king scratched its head for a moment, then pointed at the cave and tried to communicate something to Han Li.

"You're saying it was always here to begin with?" Han Li asked.

The monkey king immediately nodded in response with an elated expression.

Han Li fell silent upon seeing this.

This was a cave that had been formed naturally, so how had such a mysterious stone cauldron appeared here? Could it be that someone had put it here?

In any case, at the very least, this stone cauldron was clearly a brilliant treasure for brewing wine.

At this moment, some other monkeys also entered the cave and began to play. As a result, the quiet cave instantly became quite lively.

Many of the monkeys were looking into the deepest cave, but none of them stepped inside.

Han Li took a glance outside, then quickly withdrew his gaze as he asked, "This stone cauldron is very useful to me. Would you be able to give it to me? Of course, I'm not going to just take it from you. Here, you can have your pick out of these pills and spirit fruits, or anything else you may like."

Han Li flipped a hand over to produce a bunch of items as he spoke.

The monkey king's eyes immediately lit up at the sight of the pills and spirit fruits, but it then shook its head vigorously, as if to free itself from temptation.

After refusing Han Li's proposal, it pointed in the direction of the Crimson Dawn Peak in the distance.

"You want me to take you live on the Crimson Dawn Peak?" Han Li asked.

The monkey nodded vigorously in response, following which a thought occurred to it, and it pointed at the monkeys outside.

"You want me to take them with me as well?" Han Li asked.

The monkey king nodded in response as a hopeful look appeared on its eyes.



The monkeys outside also seemed to have sensed that this was an important moment, and all of them instantly fell silent.

"I can do that. The spiritual qi on the Crimson Dawn Peak is far more abundant than it is here, but it's also a lot colder. Will you be able to handle it?" Han Li asked.

The monkey king nodded vigorously as it thumped its own chest.

Han Li stowed his offerings away, then said, "In that case, I'll take all of you to the Crimson Dawn Peak once you're prepared for the move."

The monkey king cried out in excitement, then rushed out of the cave before calling out loudly to its brethren, and it was met with a wave of ecstatic cheers.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face, and he turned to the stone cauldron, then swept a sleeve through the air to release a burst of azure light, stowing the cauldron away along with the batch of unfinished monkey wine instead.

A pleased smile appeared on his face as he made his way out of the cave.

Moments later, a streak of azure light shot out of the waterfall before hurtling away into the distance, flying for several thousand feet before stopping to reveal none other than Han Li.

He had arrived in a rather desolate area with sparse vegetation and only a few black mountains, all of which were covered in a thick layer of snow.

He gently exhaled before rubbing his hands together, and his Heavy Water True Axis emerged.

He chanted an incantation as he activated the axis, and much to his surprise, the immortal spiritual power in his body was being sucked away by the Heavy Water True Axis like flood water out of a broken dam.

Before he had a chance to do anything, the Heavy Water True Axis began to glow with dazzling bright light while expanding to several times its original size in the blink of an eye.

A burst of formidable spiritual pressure erupted out of the axis alongside a series of black halos that proliferated outward in all directions, and the sound of crashing waves could be heard as well.

All of the world's origin qi within a radius of thousands of kilometers was swept up into a frenzy, and countless specks of blue light appeared before converging toward a certain spot.

Han Li faltered slightly upon seeing this, following which an elated look appeared in his eyes.

The Heavy Water True Axis had swelled to the size of a house, and it was rapidly revolving while giving off piercing black light. The Water Dao Rune on its surface was also glowing a bright blue, and the blue and black light seemed to have been feeding off one another, becoming brighter and brighter until it was as if there were a black and blue sun hovering in mid-air.

At the same time, bursts of invisible fluctuations surged forth in a frenzy, becoming more powerful with each successive wave. The nearby space also began to tremble violently, while gusts of fierce wind swept through the surrounding air.

After a brief pause, Han Li swept a sleeve through the air, and the massive Heavy Water True Axis immediately hurtled through the air before crashing toward the ground.

The ground and the sky began to tremble violently in unison, as if doomsday had descended.

Ripples of black and blue light surged through the air in all directions, sweeping up ferocious gusts of wind that swept away the snow on the ground with ease while also stripping away the top layer of earth beneath the snow.

The clouds in the sky were also churning violently as they spread into the distance like turbulent waves.

The Crimson Dawn Peak that was several thousand kilometers away also shuddered as an immeasurable volume of snow came crashing down.

Sun Buzheng and the others, who were tending to the spirit fields at the foot of the mountain, all looked at one another with surprised expressions, and no one knew what had happened.

"Could it be that Elder Li is using some type of cultivation art? But it doesn't feel like the tremors are coming from the mountaintop," someone mused.

"Who else could cause such a massive commotion aside from Elder Li? He only just came out of seclusion, so perhaps he's mastered some cultivation art of unmatched power or has refined a treasure and is testing it out," Sun Buzheng said as he turned to the direction that the tremors were coming from with a hint of longing in his eyes.

Meng Qianqian also turned to that direction with a look of admiration on her face.

Several thousand kilometers away, the earth-shattering tremors finally faded, and the dust settled to reveal the scene down below.

An enormous chasm that was several thousand feet wide had appeared on the ground, and it extended in either direction as far as the eyes could see, as if the entire earth had been split in half.

Furthermore, the chasm was extremely deep, and faint glimmers of fiery red light could be seen at the bottom, indicating that it reached all the way down into the lava beneath the earth.

The nearby mountains had completely vanished, clearly having already been destroyed.

Han Li was standing in mid-air with the Heavy Water True Axis hovering beside him, and it had already reverted back to its original size.

His face was slightly pale, and around a third of all of his immortal spiritual power had been exhausted from unleashing that all-out attack with the Heavy Water True Axis.

However, there was an elated look on his face.

The Heavy Water True Axis had become far more powerful than he anticipated, and if he were to use it in battle, it would be no less powerful than an Acquired Immortal Treasure of a very high caliber.

He took a deep breath, and his complexion quickly returned to normal. He then stowed the Heavy Water True Axis away before flying toward the Crimson Dawn Peak as a streak of azure light.

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Half a day later, Han Li appeared in a massive cave halfway up the Crimson Dawn Peak.

He inspected his surroundings briefly, then flicked a finger through the air in rapid succession.

Streaks of sword qi erupted in all directions, shredding through the mountain rock like tofu, quickly digging out around a dozen smaller caves with surfaces that were extraordinarily smooth.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this, and with a sweep of his sleeve, the monkeys from the foot of the mountain appeared in the cave amid a flash of light.

The monkeys looked around, and ecstatic looks quickly appeared on their faces as they began to explore their new home.

The monkey king was just as ecstatic as its brethren, and it immediately fell to its knees and kowtowed to Han Li over and over again.

"You can all live here from now on. If you encounter any trouble or difficulties, you can go to the mountaintop to seek out my servants," Han Li said.

The monkey king hurriedly nodded in response.

In the next instant, Han Li had already vanished from the spot.

All of the other monkeys rushed over to the monkey king, and after looking at one another for a moment, all of them kowtowed toward the spot where Han Li had been standing just a moment ago.

At this point, Han Li had already returned to his cave abode on the mountaintop, and he placed the stone cauldron down in a room before setting a few restrictions.

After that, he made his way to his secret chamber.

At this point, the three regular elder missions had already been completed, and the Heavy Water True Axis had also become about as powerful as it could be in its current form, so it was time to think about pills.

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face as he sat down with his legs crossed.

#### Chapter 236: Initial Dabbles in Immortal Pills

Half a month later.

In the central region of the Bell Toll Mountain Range was a very-strange looking lone mountain. The top and bottom of the mountain were round and full, but the middle of the mountain was tapered, thereby giving it the appearance of a giant gourd.

The mountain was fittingly named Gourd Peak, and just like the Imperial Dragon Peak, it was also one of the most important mountains in the entire Blaze Dragon Dao.

The mountain wasn't very precarious, and it was less than 10,000 feet tall. At the foot of the mountain was an extremely fine spirit spring that was sufficient to nurture all of the living beings on the mountain. As a result, all of the plant life on the mountain was green and vibrant all year round.

The entire mountain was enveloped within an extremely secure protective array that was constantly activated. Hence, any elders or disciples who wanted to enter the mountain, regardless of whether they were from the inner or outer sect, could only do so through the teleportation hall at the foot of the mountain.

The reason why this mountain was so tightly guarded was because almost all of the pills in the entire Blaze Dragon Dao came from this mountain, and it was also home to all of the pill refinement masters in the sect.

Of course, earthly pill masters who were capable of refining pills fit for consumption for immortals were the most revered figures on the Gourd Peak.

If an early-True Immortal cultivator were to progress at the normal rate of cultivation, it would take anywhere between centuries to tens of thousands of years to open up a single immortal acupoint, and each successive immortal acupoint was only going to be more difficult to open. However, if they had access to the appropriate pills to aid them in their cultivation, then that timeframe could be severely shortened.

However, in order to refine pills of that caliber, spirit medicines that were tens of thousands of years old had to be used as the main ingredient, and even the supplementary ingredients were extremely rare and precious. To make matters even worse, even a seasoned Earthly Pill Master's pill refinement success rate when it came to refining pills of this caliber was generally pitifully low.

This was why only normally major sects or prominent cultivating powers could afford to nurture Earthly Pill Masters.

At this moment, Han Li was emerging from the teleportation hall near the Gourd Peak, and he arrived at the foot of the mountain before making his way into a golden palace.

The palace was closely connected to the array that encompassed the entirety of Gourd Peak, and it was the only entrance into the mountain.

After having his identity verified, Han Li stepped straight into a teleportation array at the center of the palace, then vanished on the spot amid a flash of white light.

Shortly thereafter, he appeared in a red palace on the mountain summit.

The interior layout of the palace appeared to have been no different from that of a mortal drugstore, with a counter at the front and apothecary cabinets at the back. The only difference was that there were clear restrictions placed upon the cabinet grids that contained earthly pills.

There were very few people in the hall, only a pair of attendant elders and several inner sect elders who had come to purchase pills.

As soon as Han Li came in, he was approached by a friendly-looking middle-aged attendant elder, who said, "My name is Ye Nanfeng, and I'm an attendant here at the Immortal Medicine Pavilion. Can I help you with something, Fellow Daoist?"

"My name is Li Feiyu, and I would like to purchase some pills that can aid me in my cultivation," Han Li replied as he cupped his fist in a salute.

"I see. In that case, allow me to recommend a few types of pills to you, Fellow Daoist Li," Ye Nanfeng said with a smile.

"Thank you," Han Li replied with a nod.

"Given your current cultivation base, the most commonly used pill to aid in your cultivation would be this Origin Unifying Pill. Each vial contains 10 pills and only costs 200 merit points. If you want something a bit better, then you can try the Spirit Sign Pill. However, it'll also be a bit more expensive, costing 500 merit points for each vial of 10 pills," Ye Nanfeng introduced.

Han Li had already come into this mentally prepared, but he was still shocked by the prices of the pills.

Even after completing the three regular elder missions, he still hadn't managed to save up 500 merit points, so these pills were truly quite steep in price.

"This Spirit Sign Pill is truly not cheap," Han Li remarked with a wry smile.

"Of course. The only one in our entire sect capable of refining the Spirit Sign Pill is Master Hu Yan, so it's available in only very limited supply," Ye Nanfeng explained with a smile.

Han Li was rather taken aback to hear the mention of "Master Hu Yan" in this context.

Could it be that the erratic old drunkard was also a high-grade Earthly Pill Master?

"If neither of those two types of pills are to your liking, then you can try this Spring Rain Pill. It's a little cheaper than the Spirit Sign Pill, but it's more efficacious than the Origin Unifying Pill, giving you the best value for your money," Ye Nanfeng continued.

"Elder Ye, may I ask if any pill recipes are sold in the Immortal Medicine Pavilion?" Han Li suddenly asked.

Ye Nanfeng faltered slightly upon hearing this, then asked, "Could it be that you're planning to refine pills for yourself, Fellow Daoist Li?"

"Not at all. I just so happen to know someone who recently became an Earthly Pill Master, and he agreed to refine pills for me as long as I can provide him with the recipes and spirit ingredients," Han Li replied.

Ye Nanfeng clearly wanted to dissuade Han Li from this course of action, but ultimately held his tongue.

Han Li knew that Ye Nanfeng wanted to tell him that as opposed to purchasing pill recipes and ingredients and counting on someone else, it was a much better idea to simply purchase the pills directly.

In the end, Ye Nanfeng decided not to offer any words of advice, and he replied, "Both the recipes for the Origin Unifying Pill and the Spring Rain Pill are available for sale, but sales of the recipe for the Spirit Sign Pill are prohibited without express approval from Master Hu Yan."

"How many merit points will the two pill recipes cost?" Han Li asked.



"The recipe for the Origin Unifying Pill costs 50 merit points, while the recipe for the Spring Rain Pill costs 150," Ye Nanfeng replied.

A hesitant look appeared on Han Li's face upon hearing this, and he was wondering which recipe would be better for him to purchase.

Ye Nanfeng smiled as he reminded in a thoughtful manner, "I suggest you take a look at the ingredients required for the two pills to help you make your decision."

"That does sound like a good idea," Han Li replied with a nod.

Ye Nanfeng swept a sleeve through the air, and a burst of azure light flashed past, following which an azure book appeared.

After flipping briefly through some pages, he handed the book over to Han Li.

Han Li accepted the book and looked down to find that this particular page contained the list of ingredients required to refine the Spring Rain Pill.

"One 50,000-year-old Horned Dragon Herb, three 5,000-year-old Sea Splitting Flowers, a handful of Wind Bucket Sand..."

Han Li silently read out the names of the ingredients to himself one after another, and he discovered that out of the 15 spirit medicines required to refine this pill, the majority of them were high-grade spirit medicines of a very advanced age, with even the youngest of them all required to be at least 3,000 years of age.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li asked, "Elder Ye, may I ask how spirit medicines are sold in the Immortal Medicine Pavilion? Are they sold for merit points as well?"

"No. Aside from certain extremely precious spirit medicines that can only be purchased using Immortal Origin Stones, all of the other spirit medicines can be purchased with Immortal Origin Stones or top-grade spirit stones," Ye Nanfeng replied.

"How many spirit stones would it cost for me to purchase all of the ingredients required for a batch of Spring Rain Pills?" Han Li asked.

"The main ingredient, the Horned Dragon Herb, can only be purchased with Immortal Origin Stones, and the price is seven Immortal Origin Stones. As for all of the other ingredients, they add up to around 2,000 top-grade spirit stones, but of course, you can pay for them using Immortal Origin Stones as well," Ye Nanfeng replied.

Han Li couldn't help but feel a little speechless upon hearing this. Even if he were to exhaust all of his Immortal Origin Stones and top-grade spirit stones, he wouldn't be able to purchase many sets of ingredients required for this pill at all.

With that in mind, he pinched the page of the book that he was currently on between his fingers to flip to the next page, but Ye Nanfeng interjected, "The recipe for the Origin Unifying Pill comes a little earlier in the book. You should be able to find it after flipping back a few pages."

Han Li did as he was told, and sure enough, it didn't take long for him to find the list of ingredients required to refine the Origin Unifying Pill.

As soon as his gaze fell upon the first ingredient, which was "one 50,000-year-old Blaze Tuber Herb", his eyes immediately lit up slightly.

This was the main ingredient required to refine the Origin Unifying Pill, and he just so happened to already have had a few of them planted in the spirit medicine field in his cave abode. Furthermore, all of them had been matured to the required age stipulated in the recipe.

He then directed his gaze to the dozen or so supplementary spirit medicines, but he wasn't as fortunate there, and all of those spirit medicines were ones that he hadn't planted.

"Aside from the Blaze Tuber Herb, how many spirit stones will be required to purchase all of the other spirit medicines?" Han Li asked.

"If we discount the Blaze Tuber Herb, the other spirit medicines will cost 1,200 top-grade spirit stones," Ye Nanfeng replied.

Han Li nodded in response with a contemplative expression.

He was only intending to purchase a pill recipe to make his first attempts at refining earthly pills, and he didn't know how many spirit medicines would go to waste during this process, so it definitely wasn't a good idea to pick the Spring Rain Pill, which had more expensive ingredients.

With that in mind, Han Li arrived at a decision. "I'll take the recipe for the Origin Unifying Pill."

"Alright, please give me your badge, Fellow Daoist," Ye Nanfeng requested.

Han Li flipped a hand over to produce his elder badge, which he handed to Ye Nanfeng, and 50 merit points were deducted before the badge was returned to him along with a copy of the pill recipe.

After carefully inspecting the pill recipe for a moment, Han Li said, "In addition to the recipe, I'll need 10 batches of all of the spirit medicines required to refine the Origin Unifying Pill with the exception of the Blaze Tuber Herb."

After making this purchase, he would essentially have no spirit stones left.

Following the completion of the transaction, Han Li bade farewell to Ye Nanfeng, then left the Gourd Peak and returned straight to his cave abode.

.....

Three months quickly passed by.

During this time, Han Li barely left his secret chamber at all, and he had dedicated all of his time and energy into studying the pill recipe. He carefully pondered every single step in the recipe, simulating the pill refinement process in extreme detail in his mind countless times.

Even though he was already quite a seasoned pill refinement master, all pill recipes carried countless minute differences from one another, and these disparities were often important factors contributing to one's pill refinement failures.

Hence, he wanted to have the pill recipe completely figured out before he attempted any pill refinement.

On this day, he finally made up his mind to attempt his first Origin Unifying Pill refinement.

Inside the secret chamber, there was an incense burner on the table behind the cushion. A stick of lit greenish-gray incense was protruding out of the burner, and smoke was billowing out from its smoldering tip, spreading a calming fragrance throughout the secret chamber.

Han Li's back was facing the table as he sat with his legs crossed on the cushion, and after meditating with his eyes closed for some time, he slowly reopened his eyes, having rid himself of all unnecessary thoughts.

On the ground in front of him was a purple copper cauldron that was around a foot in radius, and the surface of the cauldron was riddled with flame patterns and ancient runes. Beside the cauldron was a piece of azure silken fabric, upon which were placed the dozen or so ingredients required to refine the Origin Unifying Pill.

The cauldron was a treasure that he had obtained from the Origin Mirage Beast's cave abode, and it wasn't a treasure of a particularly high caliber, but it should've been enough to refine the Origin Unifying Pill.

## Chapter 237: Using Law Powers for Pill Refinement

Han Li gently exhaled as he flipped a palm upward before gently raising it.

The purple copper burner rose up into the air, carried by a burst of invisible force, hovering around three feet above the ground.

Han Li then opened his mouth to release a burst of nascent flames, which resembled a lingering fiery cloud that enveloped the entire cauldron.

All of the ancient runes and flame patterns on the surface of the copper cauldron lit up in unison, and the cauldron itself began to take on a crimson color.

Han Li made a beckoning motion upon seeing this, and the Blaze Tuber Herb rose up into the air before falling into his grasp.

In the next instant, his hand began to glow with bright azure light, and a miniature azure vortex slowly took shape with a faint whistling sound ringing out from within it.

The Blaze Tuber Herb began to rapidly revolve within the vortex, and it was torn to shreds and grinded down into powder as if the vortex were acting as a stone mill.

A faint pop rang out as the lid of the purple copper cauldron was suddenly removed, and the powdered Blaze Tuber Herb immediately flew in.

With a sweep of Han Li's sleeve, the cauldron began to revolve within the nascent flame.

Time slowly passed by, and a rich medicinal fragrance began to waft throughout the secret chamber.

Han Li's attention remained entirely fixed on the pill cauldron, monitoring all of the changes taking place within it. He followed the pill recipe, adding one ingredient after another to the cauldron while simultaneously constantly adjusting the temperature of his nascent flame.

Only after an entire day and night had passed by did the fire in the secret chamber gradually fade away, following which the cauldron descended onto the ground with a faint clang.

Han Li rose to his feet and made his way over to the cauldron, then removed the lid with a sweep of his sleeve, and he was immediately greeted by an extremely rich medicinal aroma.

His brows were slightly furrowed as he peered into the cauldron with a nervous look on his face, and he discovered that the interior of the cauldron was pitch-black, with only a layer of medicine powder at the bottom, and there was not a single pill to be seen.

Unsurprisingly, this first pill refinement attempt had ended in complete failure.

Han Li reached into the cauldron to scoop out some of the medicinal powder, then carefully examined it for a moment on the palm of his hand. After that, he sniffed at the powder a few times, and he began to understand why he had failed.

It seemed that his temperature manipulation had been lacking, and the temperature was too low at the point when the pills should've taken shape, thereby resulting in failure.

After understanding the underlying reason for his failure, Han Li remained unfazed, and after half a day of rest, he commenced his second pill refinement attempt.

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Around half a month passed by in the blink of an eye.

Inside the secret chamber, there were nine small piles of black powder on the ground in front of Han Li, resembling a row of miniature graves.

All nine of his pill refinement attempts had ended in failure.

Even though he was already prepared for such an outcome, he still couldn't help but feel a little defeated and frustrated in the wake of nine consecutive failures, particularly when almost all of them had been a result of incorrect temperature moderation.

He had thought that all he would have to do was to raise the temperature right as the pills were about to take shape, and that would ensure that the pills would be formed, but as soon as the pills took shape, they would instantly be incinerated into charred powder due to the excessively high temperatures.

Hence, after nine failures, Han Li didn't continue. Instead, he paused to think of a way around this problem.

The window of time during which the pills were supposed to take shape was extremely brief, and it was virtually impossible to master the required temperature manipulation strategy in a short time. At this rate, it would most likely have taken Han Li at least 10 more failures to begin grasping the correct method.

With that in mind, it became understandable why Earthly Pill Masters were considered to be so precious. After all, every single one of them would've taken an astronomical amount of resources to develop.

The problem was that he didn't have such a large supply of ingredients for him to experiment with, and if he were to fail once more, then all of the top-grade spirit stones that he had spent would go to waste, but how could he capitalize on that incredibly brief window of opportunity?

Han Li was massaging his brows with a vexed expression when he was suddenly struck by an idea.

He immediately sprang into action, making a hand seal while chanting an incantation to conjure up his Mantra Treasured Axis behind him.

14 semi-transparent Time Dao Runes were flashing on the axis, giving off peculiar law fluctuations that slowed down the flow of air in the entire secret chamber.

In order to minimize his immortal spiritual power expenditure, Han Li limited the area encompassed within the law fluctuations to only the area within 10 feet in front of him.

He then opened his mouth to release a ball of nascent flames, which lifted up the purple copper cauldron while also causing it to slowly revolve in mid-air.

The movement of the flames around the cauldron had also been slowed down significantly, to the point that Han Li was able to see every single minute flicker that the flames exhibited.

He then began to powderize the spirit medicines before adding them into the cauldron for refinement.

Under the effects of the Mantra Treasured Axis, the entire process was slowed down to less than a third of its normal speed.

At the same time, the changes taking place in the spirit medicines within the cauldron were also slowed down, to the point that Han Li was able clearly monitor everything that was unfolding inside through the use of his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, and some details that had evaded him in the past were now coming to the fore.

After observing the refinement process for a while, Han Li withdrew his Mantra Treasured Axis. Even though he had limited the area under the axis's influence, constantly maintaining it was still quite taxing on him. He had already mastered the majority of the pill refinement process, so he would only require the Mantra Treasured Axis's services at some crucial junctures.

Time slowly passed by, and the refinement process that had originally only required a day and a night was extended to almost twice its original duration. However, Han Li was able to gain more insight and understanding from this single pill refinement than all of the previous nine attempts combined. In particular, it had become a lot easier for him to control the temperature of his nascent flame during the moments where the pills were about to take shape.

As the flames around the cauldron slowly subsided, Han Li withdrew the Mantra Treasured Axis back into his body once again.

He made a beckoning motion to draw the cauldron to himself, then swept a sleeve through the air to remove its lid. His eyes were filled with both unease and anticipation as he tipped over the cauldron to pour out its contents.

Some black powder fell out of the opening of the cauldron, immediately following which the sound of pills rolling around inside the cauldron rang out.

Han Li was ecstatic to hear this sound, and he tipped the entire cauldron upside-down before reaching out a hand to catch what was inside.



Seven or eight longan-sized golden pills rolled out of the cauldron before falling into his grasp.

According to the pill recipe, a successful batch of Origin Unifying Pills should've been somewhere between 15 to 16 pills, so this still wasn't a complete success.

However, Han Li was still extremely pleased with this outcome. After all, he was treating these 10 pill refinements as an experiment to begin with, so this was already a very favorable outcome.

Furthermore, now that he had developed the idea of using his Mantra Treasured Axis to assist him in the pill refinement process, his success rate going forward was going to be significantly elevated.

He examined the pills in his hand over and over again, then stored them away in a small vial, leaving only one behind, which he devoured before closing his eyes and beginning to cultivate his Mantra Axis Scripture.

Ultimately, these pills had to be put to the test to see if they had actually been correctly refined.

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Two months later, Han Li appeared in the sky above the Crimson Dawn Peak before descending toward the spirit fields down below.

The pills that he had refined earlier had worked extremely well, and he had spent this entire time cultivating while consuming the pills in his secret chamber. His rate of cultivation progression had clearly improved during this time, and he had only come out of seclusion on this day.

Sun Buzheng and the others were busy at work in the spirit fields, and Meng Yungui was also among them, having recently made his return.

The majority of the spirit fields near the Crimson Dawn Peak had already been arranged into orderly sections, presenting a spectacular sight to behold.

Following the recession of the fire miasma, not only had the climate returned to normal, the underground veins had also been restored to their normal state, so they were no longer restricted to just planting fire-attribute spirit plants in the fields.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this. These spirit fields were situated quite close to the main spirit vein of the Crimson Dawn Peak, so any spirit plants planted in these fields would be sure to grow quite quickly.

He had descended in a silent manner, so Meng Yungui and the others initially didn't notice his presence, but he was quickly spotted thereafter.

"Elder Li!"

The servant hurriedly extended a respectful bow.

Everyone else immediately turned around to find Han Li hovering in mid-air, and they hurriedly dropped what they were doing to pay their respects.

"Welcome back, Elder Li."

Having been with Han Li for quite some time, Meng Yungui and the others had developed a rough understanding of Han Li's personality, so they no longer spoke to him in as formal and rigid a manner as before.

"I just came back, and I decided to come down here to take a look. Keep doing what you were doing. Meng Yungui, come with me," Han Li said with a dismissive wave, then flew back toward the mountain with Meng Yungui trailing along behind him.

A short while later, the two of them arrived in Han Li's cave abode.

Han Li wasted no time with idle chatter as he cut straight to the chase. "I've assigned you quite an arduous task, making you travel so extensively in search of spirit plant seeds. How did it go?"

"Please don't say that, Elder Li. It's my honor to be able to serve you, and I didn't find the task grueling or arduous at all. These are the seeds that I've collected during these past years, please take a look," Meng Yungui hurriedly replied as he pulled out a storage treasure that he offered to Han Li in a respectful manner.

Han Li accepted the storage treasure before injecting his spiritual sense into it, and a few moments later, a surprised look appeared on his face as he nodded and praised, "You did quite well."

He had only sent Meng Yungui on a mission to search for spirit plant seeds as a spur-of-the-moment decision, and he hadn't actually harbored any high hopes for him.

After all, with Meng Yungui's limited cultivation base, there was only so much that he could've been expected to do.

However, the rewards that Meng Yungui had reaped went far beyond Han Li's expectations. All of the seeds that he had found were quite remarkable, and many of them were seeds for supplementary spirit medicines required to refine Origin Unifying Pills. If he were to plant all of these seeds, then he would be able to save a huge sum of spirit stones when refining Origin Unifying Pill in the future.

On top of that, he had also discovered several unfamiliar seeds that resembled rocks with granite-like patterns on their surfaces, but clear traces of life could be detected within them.

"You're far too kind, Elder Li. I was simply very fortunate," Meng Yungui said in a humble manner, but it was clear that he was ecstatic to have received such praise from Han Li.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li gave some seeds to Meng Yungui, some of which had been collected by Meng Yungui, while the others were from Han Li's own collection.

"Go and plant these seeds in the spirit fields at the foot of the mountain, and make sure to look after them well," he instructed.

"Yes, Elder Li," Meng Yungui replied as he accepted the seeds.

"Also, continue your search for seeds. You can keep this treasure for your protection," Han Li said as he handed another storage pouch to Meng Yungui.

"Thank you, Elder Li! I'll be sure to do my best!" Meng Yungui immediately replied before turning to depart.

Han Li remained standing on the spot for a moment, then made his way to the medicine garden in his cave abode.

There, he pulled out several seeds, one of which was shaped like a worm, another was as translucent as jade, and a third one resembled a pea-sized lump of soil with a bumpy surface.

These seeds all belonged to supplementary ingredients for refining Origin Unifying Pill and Spring Rain Pills.

Han Li carefully planted the seeds before watering them with spirit liquid, and only after close to half a day did he finally complete the procedure.

A faint smile appeared on his face as he looked at his gradually expanding medicine garden.

After that, he summoned the giant ape puppet, then instructed it to look after these newly planted spirit seeds before departing from the medicine garden.

## Chapter 238: Tight Budget

After returning to his cave abode, Han Li sat down with his legs crossed and began to contemplate what to do next.

The half-batch of Origin Unifying Pills that he had refined had worked quite well, allowing him to make close to 10 years worth of cultivation progress in just two months, but it was going to be very expensive to maintain this rate of progression.

Seeing as he was able to use his Mantra Treasured Axis to significantly improve his success rate in pill refinement, he naturally wasn't going to purchase ready-made pills using merit points as they were a very useful form of currency in other areas.

Thus, the top priority for him now was to secure ingredients for pill refinement.

Aside from manifesting crystals to help the Earthly Deity Avatar heavy water, maturing Blaze Tuber Herbs alone was already close to the limits of the Heaven Controlling Vial's capabilities, so it wouldn't be able to mature many other supplementary ingredients on top of that. Hence, he would have to buy the majority of those ingredients, but the problem was that he didn't have many spirit stones left.

He could sell some of the spoils he had collected from his vanquished enemies for spirit stones, but that was only a temporary solution that wasn't going to work out over the long term.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li flipped a hand over to produce his Transient Guild mask.

There were many ways to earn spirit stones, but given his current situation, completing Transient Guild missions was the fastest and the most reliable avenue to take.

There were many missions in the sect that offered spirit stones as rewards, but completing too many of those missions would attract too much attention to himself, thereby potentially leading to trouble.

Furthermore, the Transient Guild missions generally offered better rewards anyway.

With that in mind, he put on his mask, and the azure array projection quickly took shape.

He turned to the missions section and quickly tracked down some missions that could be completed near the Blaze Dragon Dao. There were quite a few of these missions, and they were quite diverse, including missions to gather certain spirit materials, pills, or treasures, as well as missions to hunt down certain demon beasts or individuals.

These missions were all quite conventional, and some of the more special missions had also caught Han Li's attention. For example, there was someone gathering several Earthly Pill Masters to refine a certain type of pill.

There was also a mission that called upon a True Immortal adept in the art of restrictions and arrays to break the restriction on a certain set of ruins, and there was even a mission that was gathering a large number of True Immortals to attack a certain mysterious cultivator.

All of a sudden, Han Li's gaze fell upon a certain mission, and a peculiar look appeared on his face.

The mission was to search for the "the number one sword cultivator of Heavenly South", and the reward offered was quite a lofty one. Even those who only provided certain pieces of information would be able to receive decent compensation.

Han Li's eyes narrowed slightly as a faint smile appeared on his face.

Following the trial on that day, everyone had departed quite quickly, so there shouldn't have been anyone that had discovered the message that he had engraved onto the bottom of the fourth Origin Defying Stone Sword. Hence, someone from the Heavenly Sword Peak had to have discovered the message at a later date.

In that case, the person who had released the mission was most likely someone from the Heavenly Sword Peak, and given the Transient Guild's barrier to entry, that person was very likely to have been Xiong Shan himself. After discovering the message, he had most likely deduced that there was a very good chance that this number one sword cultivator of Heavenly South was the one who had foiled his plans, and as it turned out, he was right.

However, Han Li had never revealed to anyone the fact that he had come from the Heavenly South Region of the Mortal Realm, so there was naturally no cause for concern.

Having said that, this mission was an indication that Xiong Shan was most likely also a member of the Transient Guild, and given his cultivation base, he most likely possessed quite a lofty status in the Transient Guild.

Shortly thereafter, Han Li also noticed a mission searching for the whereabouts of Bai Fengyi, and the thought of Bai Suyuan sprang into his mind at the sight of this mission.

However, he then quickly shook his head to rid himself of these irrelevant trains of thought as he began to focus his attention on searching for missions that were suitable for himself.

Moments later, his gaze fell upon a hunting mission: "Travel to the Heavenly Glacial Pond and slay a True Immortal Stage Glacial Blowfish, making sure to recover its carcass. Reward: 4,000 top-grade spirit stones."

Han Li had read from a book in the Blaze Dragon Dao that the Heavenly Glacial Pond was situated in the northernmost region of the Bell Toll Mountain Range, even further north than the Profound Ice Mountain Range. It was a notoriously perilous place on the Ancient Cloud Continent, and it was said that many True Immortals had perished in there in the past.

Han Li accepted this mission before rising to his feet.

“ ”

Several months later.

In the northernmost region of the Ancient Cloud Continent, bone-chilling winds were howling incessantly, while the entire sky was concealed behind a swirling flurry of snow.

There were several snow-covered mountains standing on the landscape, silently enduring the flogging of the unforgiving wind.

An azure streak of light shot forth from the distant sky, then descended onto the summit of one of the mountains to reveal a yellow-skinned middle-aged man.

It was none other than Han Li, who had adopted a disguise using his Transient Guild mask.

Casting his gaze forward from the mountain summit, he was greeted by the sight of an enormous lake that stretched as far as the eyes could see. The water in the lake was extremely, resembling black ink.

What was particularly strange was that despite the incredibly low temperatures, the lake hadn't frozen at all, and there were clouds of black mist drifting above its surface.

The biting chill being released by this black mist was far colder than even the frosty wind blowing through the surrounding area.

This was the Heavenly Glacial Pond.

Han Li paused momentarily on the mountain summit, then flew toward the Heavenly Glacial Pond as a streak of azure light.

This place appeared to have been completely devoid of life, but that was not actually the case.

There were many natural treasures in the Heavenly Glacial Pond, including certain special and precious materials that were exclusively found in the pond. Otherwise, it wouldn't have attracted so many people to venture into its depths. Beneath the surface were many powerful demon beasts that were resistant to the cold environment, and those who came here seeking treasures could easily find themselves falling prey to these demon beasts if they weren't careful.

Han Li was flying along at a low altitude above the surface of the water while staring intently at the lake down below, seemingly searching for something.

All of a sudden, the surface of the water over 1,000 feet up ahead erupted, and a demon beast that was 50 to 60 feet in length shot out before pouncing directly at Han Li.

The demon beast resembled a crocodile with its entire body covered in black scales, and it opened its cavernous mouth to reveal rows of sharp white fangs. There was a pair of bloated yellow eyes on the top of its head, giving it a ferocious appearance, and it was attempting to bite Han Li's body into two with a single vicious chomp.



Han Li's expression changed slightly as he swept a sleeve through the air to release a streak of azure light, and the black demon beast's body abruptly stiffened in mid-air.

Han Li continued onward without pause, flying straight through between the two rows of the demon beast's sharp fangs.

A red line appeared all the way from the demon beast's head to the tip of its tail, following which its body abruptly split open, sending an enormous volume of blood interspersed with internal organs plunging into the lake below.

Han Li paid no heed to what was happening behind him as he continued onward, vanishing into the distance in the blink of an eye.

After flying for several more hours, he had already reached quite deep into the Heavenly Glacial Pond.

The further one ventured into the pond, the more the air temperature plummeted, and the more powerful the demon beasts lurking in the water became. At this point, there were even demon beasts that possessed Body Integration Stage power that were occasionally attacking Han Li.

However, they naturally posed no threat to him at all, and he was able to take care of them with ease.

All of a sudden, his eyes lit up as he drew to a halt. His gaze was fixed intently on the surface of the lake beneath him, and he swept a sleeve through the air to send a burst of azure light plunging into the water.

Moments later, a black object emerged from the lake, enveloped by a ball of azure light. It was a ball of algae that was giving off a faint fragrance.

This type of algae was known as Black Star Algae, and it was very prevalent on the lakebed here.

Black Star Algae was the Glacial Blowfish's favorite food, and such a large mass of Black Star Algae was sure to attract feeding Glacial Blowfishes.

Han Li tossed the ball of Black Star Algae away, then flipped a hand over to produce a millstone-sized blue object. It appeared to have been an internal organ of a certain type of demon beast, and it was giving off a strong odor.

This was an organ from the Elephant Trunk Beast, and it was very alluring to Glacial Blowfishs. He had purchased the organ from the Transient Guild for a sum of spirit stones prior to setting off on this trip.

He then summoned a white talisman in his other hand, and the talisman flew into the blue organ at his behest as a ball of white light, vanishing without a trace.

After that, Han Li tossed the organ into the water down below.

The organ was instantly enveloped by the bone-chilling glacial qi in the area, and it was frozen into a chunk of black ice in the blink of an eye before plunging into the lake.

Even though it had been frozen, its odor didn't abate in the slightest.

That white talisman was a sensory talisman, and it would immediately alert him if a demon beast devoured the organ.

Instead of remaining on the spot to wait, Han Li continued to fly onward.

The Heavenly Glacial Pond was enormous, so he naturally couldn't place his hopes entirely on one patch of Black Star Algae.

Close to a day later, Han Li found another mass of Black Star Algae, where he left another Elephant Trunk Beast with a sensory talisman inside before continuing onward yet again.

Half a month passed by.

During this time, Han Li discovered several dozen masses of Black Star Algae, leaving an Elephant Trunk Beast organ at each one.

From there, Han Li stopped searching for more patches of Black Star Algae and concealed himself at the center of the dozens of patches of Black Star Algae that he had discovered.

This wasn't because he didn't want to find any more, he had simply exhausted his supply of Elephant Trunk Beast organs.

Furthermore, he had already left out a sufficient number of baits, and all that was left to do was to wait.

One day, two months later.

An earth-shattering boom that was audible even several thousands of kilometers away rang out in the Heavenly Glacial Pond.

The surface of the water churned violently as enormous waves that were several thousand feet tall were sent sweeping in all directions, and even the clouds in the sky were stirred up into a frenzy.

At the center of the giant waves was Han Li and a bluish-black blowfish-like demon beast.

The demon beast was only around 200 to 300 feet in length, and its bulging body was riddled with bluish-black bone spikes. Furthermore, its tail resembled a scorpion's stinger, and it was rapidly swinging around like lightning. Dense black qi was swirling all around it, within which projections of different human and beastly faces would occasionally emerge, all of which were extremely twisted and tormented, presenting a harrowing sight to behold.

This demon beast was none other than a Glacial Blowfish, and its enormous aura indicated that it had already reached the True Immortal Stage.

The Glacial Blowfish was constantly producing a strange sound that resembled the weeping of a small child as thick pillars of blue light erupted out of its swinging tail before hurtling directly toward Han Li.

Each pillar of blue light was tinged with hints of law powers, and a glacial aura had spread through the entire surrounding area within a radius of several thousand kilometers. Countless icicle spears had appeared in the air, and it seemed that the very space itself had been frozen.

Han Li paid no heed to the glacial qi around him as two thick azure sword projections danced around him like a pair of guardian wyrms, forming a sword net that kept all of the oncoming pillars of blue light at bay.

## Chapter 239: Madman

An alarmed look appeared in the Glacial Blowfish's eyes, and its roars became even more urgent.

Its bonded glacial qi was extremely formidable, able to seep into the bodies of its enemies without their detection, and thanks to that, it had never lost a battle, but this human cultivator was somehow completely unaffected by it.

At this moment, the Heavy Water True Axis within Han Li's body was slowly revolving, absorbing all of the glacial qi that was surging into his body.

He made a grabbing motion, and four streaks of azure swordlight instantly appeared before swelling to close to 1,000 feet in size each, intertwining with one another as they flew through the air.

Countless azure sword projections were conjured up, destroying all of the oncoming blue light.

Immediately thereafter, Han Li made a hand seal, and the four massive streaks of swordlight fused as one in the blink of an eye to form an enormous sword that was over 10,000 feet in length, and thick arcs of golden lightning appeared on its surface as it swept viciously toward the Glacial Blowfish.

The Glacial Blowfish shuddered upon seeing this, seemingly extremely fearful of the golden lightning, and it opened its mouth up wide before letting loose a sharp screech.

Ripples that were visible even to the naked eye appeared in the surrounding space, and everything encompassed within the ripples was abruptly rooted to the spot, as if some type of restriction had been placed upon them.

Han Li felt his entire body tighten up, and he was completely unable to move, while his golden lightning sword was also immobilized in mid-air.

The Glacial Blowfish let loose a low roar, and the bone spikes on its body abruptly lit up, while the black mist around it surged through the air, transforming into an enormous black python as it pounced directly toward Han Li.

A hint of surprise initially appeared on Han Li's face, but he then gave a cold harrumph, and a massive axial projection suddenly appeared around him before revolving on the spot, releasing a burst of terrifying power that easily destroyed the restrictive force in the surrounding space.

As a result, the golden lightning sword was instantly freed, and it came crashing down to clash against the giant black python.

Arcs of golden lightning wrapped themselves around the massive black python as a string of resounding booms rang out.

The huge python let loose an anguished wail, and its enormous body exploded into countless plumes of black smoke that spread through the air in all directions.

A fearful look appeared in the Glacial Blowfish's eyes upon seeing this, and bright bluish-black light erupted from its body as it turned to flee.

Right at this moment, a cold harrumph rang out within the Glacial Blowfish's ears, immediately following which it was struck by a burst of excruciating pain directly in its mind, as if a red-hot poker had been plunged into its soul. As a result, it let loose an involuntary cry of agony, and the pain was so severe that it was instantly stopped cold in its tracks.

In the next instant, a golden sword projection flashed past, entering through its mouth before emerging from its rear end. An enormous volume of blue blood instantly came gushing out of the two massive holes, forming a pair of blue blood fountains.

The light in the Glacial Blowfish's quickly faded, and the nascent soul in its body didn't even get a chance to try and escape before it was destroyed by the golden sword projection.

Han Li made a beckoning motion with one hand, and the golden lightning sword circled around before flying back, then reverted back into four flying swords in a flash before vanishing into his body.

Immediately thereafter, he swept his other hand through the air, releasing a burst of blue light to envelop the Glacial Blowfish's carcass.

A layer of blue ice instantly appeared over the surface of the giant carcass, instantly stopping the bleeding.

His mission was to recover this carcass, so he couldn't afford to lose too much blood.

With a sweep of his sleeve, Han Li stowed the Glacial Blowfish carcass away, then flew away into the distance as a streak of azure light without pause.

.....

Inside the secret chamber of a secluded residence in a certain city on the Ancient Cloud Continent.

A scholarly-robed middle-aged man with the appearance of a schoolteacher was seated with his legs crossed in front of a crimson pill furnace, making a hand seal with a look of concentration on his face. He was controlling the flame beneath the furnace, seemingly in the process of refining a batch of pills.

All of a sudden, the pill furnace shuddered, and a string of dull explosions rang out, following which a charred smell wafted out from within.

A dark look appeared on the man's face, and he heaved a long sigh.

Right at this moment, a burst of azure light suddenly lit up on his body.

He immediately pulled out an azure fox mask upon seeing this, then placed the mask onto his own face.

The mask released a burst of azure light, which formed a massive light screen in front of him.

Immediately thereafter, light flashed from the center of the screen, and a storage pouch appeared.

"Oh? I didn't think that this mission would be completed so quickly!" the man murmured to himself with a surprised expression, then made a grabbing motion to draw the storage pouch into his grasp while sweeping his other sleeve through the air, and a massive Glacial Blowfish carcass instantly appeared before him.

"What a clean killing blow! I don't think even I would've been able to preserve such a complete carcass if I had gone after this beast on my own. Wyrms 15, eh? I've never heard of this person before, but it appears they're quite a formidable character," the man mused to himself.

.....

At the same time.

Inside the cave abode on the Crimson Dawn Peak, Han Li was also wearing his Transient Guild mask, and a storage pouch appeared before him following a flash of light from the light screen up ahead.

He drew the storage pouch into his grasp before emptying its contents, and a pile of top-grade spirit stones instantly spilled out onto the ground.

After counting the spirit stones, a pleased look appeared on his face, and he stowed the spirit stones away again with a sweep of his sleeve before searching for his next mission.

.....

Somewhere on the Thunderstorm Sea.

Thick bolts of lightning were flashing incessantly through the dense, dark clouds up above, and occasionally, bolts of lightning would come crashing down onto the sea below.

There were several enormous balls of light near a black island situated somewhere on the Thunderstorm Sea, and they were releasing such a massive commotion that even the sound of the thunderclaps in the area was drowned out.

Different attacks would occasionally be seen hurtling through the air, churning up the sky and the sea down below.

Among the two sides locked in battle, one was a group of five True Immortal cultivators, all of whom were wearing Transient Guild masks, two of which were azure, while the other three were blue.

They were battling a colony of close to 100 lightning bats, each of which was several hundred feet in length with purple lightning revolving around their bodies, and every single one of them was giving off a Grand Ascension Stage aura, blasting thick pillars of lightning out of their mouths in retaliation.

Despite the fact that the five Transient Guild cultivators were severely outnumbered, their superior quality more than made up for their lack of quantity, and they held a clear upper hand over the lightning bats, striking down one bat after another in quick succession.

A black spear pierced into the body of a lightning bat amid a flash of black light, and arcs of silver lightning surged along the length of the spear, flowing into the lightning bat's body through the wound it had inflicted.

The lightning bat instantly exploded, and a glittering and translucent purple bead appeared.

An azure-robed man then shot forth like lightning before catching the purple bead in his grasp.



The man was wearing an azure cow mask with the characters for "Wyrms 15" engraved upon it, and after clinching the purple bead, he did pause even for a moment before plunging back into the fray.

Lightning continued to flash over the length of the black spear in his hand as he pierced it through the body of another lightning bat.

All of the nearby lightning bats began to screech in fury upon seeing this.

Thick bolts of purple lightning came hurtling toward the azure-robed man from all directions, making it impossible for him to take evasive measures.

The man's expression remained completely unchanged as he stowed away the lightning crystal that he had plucked out of the lightning bat's body, and a protective layer of silver lightning appeared around him to keep all of the oncoming attacks at bay.

The silver barrier was trembling incessantly in the face of the oncoming attacks, but it showed no signs of breaking at all.

All of a sudden, the azure-robed man pounced at another lightning bat, with the black spear in his hand releasing a series of spear projections.

He was like a tiger that had broken into a sheep's pen, slaying four or five more lightning bats in the span of just a few breaths.

The other four cultivators were all stunned by his display of power.

The individual attacks from these lightning bats weren't all that formidable, and it wasn't much trouble for them to withstand even four or five attacks at once, but anything beyond that would begin to pose a threat to them. After all, lightning in any significant quantity was not a force to be underestimated.

However, the azure-robed man had no qualms about his own safety at all as he swept through the lightning bats' ranks with ease.

The other four cultivators hurriedly sprang into action as well, hunting down some of the straggling lightning bats.

Close to an hour later, the final lightning bat was slain by a black spear projection.

Its body exploded to reveal a purple bead, which was taken by the azure-robed man.

With that, the entire flock of lightning bats had been slain, and close to half of them had been killed by the azure-robed man.

The azure-robed man gently exhaled, then flew away into the distance as a streak of azure light without even sparing a glance at his companions.

The other four cultivators exchanged a few glances, then also went their separate ways in silence.

Meanwhile, the azure-robed man appeared somewhere above the Thunderstorm Sea amid a flash of silver lightning, and the mask on his face projected an azure light screen.

After casting an incantation seal onto the light screen, a projection of a blurry figure emerged.

"Here are 47 lightning bat crystals," Han Li said as he swept a sleeve through the air to release a small pile of purple lightning beads.

The blurry figure nodded in response. "According to the mission's stipulations, your reward will be 47 Immortal Origin Stones."

A hint of elation appeared on Han Li's face as he swept a sleeve through the air, and the small pile of lightning bat crystals vanished into the array at the center of the light screen in a flash.

Shortly thereafter, a small pile of Immortal Origin Stones within the array amid a flash of light.

Han Li quickly stowed the Immortal Origin Stones away, then turned to search for his next mission.

.....

One day, three years later, on the Crimson Dawn Peak.

A streak of azure light shot forth from afar, landing on the mountain summit in a discrete fashion. The azure light faded to reveal none other than Han Li, and his face was looking slightly pale.

He entered his cave abode without alerting any of his servants, then sat down with his legs crossed in his secret chamber as he pulled out his Transient Guild mask to conjure up the azure light screen.

After that, he pulled out three black badges, each of which had the visage of a menacing black ghost engraved upon it.

He cast an incantation seal to teleport the three badges away using the array, and moments later, around three dozen Immortal Origin Stones were transmitted to him.

He inspected the Immortal Origin Stones briefly with his spiritual sense before stowing them away, but there was a peculiar look in his eyes.

His mission on this occasion had been to kill a group of evil cultivators residing on the border of the Ancient Cloud Continent. They were proficient in various types of arrays and secret techniques that made them quite difficult to deal with, which was why six Transient Guild members had been sent after them, and almost all of them had been high-level azure-masked members.

During the course of the mission, Han Li had made an observation by chance.

Among the Transient Guild members that had completed the mission, the majority of them had been cultivators from the Blaze Dragon Dao. In particular, the leader had unleashed a set of extremely formidable flying swords to slay the mid-True Immortal Stage leader of the evil cultivators with ease.

Han Li had been struck by a sense of familiarity upon seeing this. In particular, that Transient Guild member's flying sword manipulation techniques reminded him greatly of Deputy Dao Lord Xiong Shan.

Even though the man's aura had been concealed by his Transient Guild mask, Han Li was almost certain that he was Xiong Shan.

However, he only pondered this matter for a moment before ridding himself of that rain of thought.

It hardly mattered to him whether that person was Xiong Shan or not.

#### Chapter 240: Discussion Among Golden Immortals

One day, several years later, in a majestic palace somewhere in the Blaze Dragon Dao.

The ceiling of the palace was extremely tall, while the interior was vast and spacious. There were eight thick pillars supporting the ceiling, and each pillar had a giant dragon engaged in a different activity engraved upon it, with some roaring to the heavens, some soaring through the sky, and some locked in fierce battle.

Every single one of those dragons were extremely life-like, as if they could spring to life and fly out of the pillars at any moment.

There was a giant plaque hanging in the hall that read "Dragon God Palace", and beneath the plaque was a massive statue depicting another dragon that was roaring to the heavens.

In contrast with the extremely intricate craftsmanship of the dragons engraved onto the eight pillars, this dragon statue had been carved out in a far less sophisticated fashion. In fact, many of the scales on its body hadn't even been carved out, and it resembles the creation of a complete amateur.

Despite the fact that the statue was a little rough around the edges, there was an indescribable sense of mystique about it. It was as if there were another pair of eyes within the statue's crudely carved out eyes, looking down upon all of the insignificant ants of the world like an almighty dragon god.

The giant statue cast a huge shadow within the hall, striking the beholder with a sense of awe and veneration.

Furthermore, there was a huge altar in front of the statue, which was laden with incense and offerings.

At this moment, there were three people standing in the hall, at the center of which was a purple-robed middle-aged man with an authoritative expression. It was none other than Ouyang Kuishan.

The second person was Bai Suyuan's seductive and stunningly beautiful mistress, Dao Lord Yun, and the third person was the golden-robed Deputy Dao Lord Xiong, who was standing around 10 feet away in a respectful manner.

The three of them were all silent, and they seemed to have been waiting for something.

Moments later, the sound of footsteps rang out, and three more figures made their way into the hall.

They were led by a gray-robed old man with a red nose, and if Han Li were here, he would be surprised to find that it was none other than Elder Hu Yan.

Beside him was a woman in a black dress with black veil over her face, concealing all of her features with the exception of a pair of cold eyes. However, she appeared to have been quite young, and her fingernails were a peculiar dark purple color, while also giving off a faint sheen.

The final figure in the trio was a black-robed young man who appeared to have only been in his twenties. He was quite handsome, with a head of long golden hair, and his face was also slightly golden in color, while a golden wheel was sitting on his back.

"You're finally here, fellow daoists. The five of us are finally all gathered in one place," Ouyang Kuishan said as he approached the three figures with a smile on his face.

A faint smile had also appeared on Dao Lord Yun's face, and even though three people had entered the hall, her gaze had remained fixed exclusively on Elder Hu Yan with a barely detectable hint of displeasure in her eyes.

The respectful look on Xiong Shan's face became even more pronounced as he extended a salute toward the three new arrivals.

The trio paid no heed to Xiong Shan, extending a collective salute toward the giant dragon statue instead before turning to Ouyang Kuishan and the others.

In the face of Dao Lord Yun's scrutiny, Elder Hu Yan was clearly feeling a little awkward, and he looked directly at Ouyang Kuishan as he said, "Fellow Daoist Ouyang, seeing as you're currently in charge of the sect, you can take care of the sect's internal affairs as you see fit. For what reason have you decided to call this meeting?"

The woman in the black dress and the golden-haired young man also turned to Ouyang Kuishan, waiting for an answer.

"Believe me, I wouldn't have interrupted your cultivation had there been an alternative. A while back, an incident took place in the Profound Ice Mountain Range while the core disciples were undergoing their trial. This matter has the potential to be quite significant, and that's why I must discuss it with you all," Ouyang Kuishan said as a serious look appeared on his face.

Elder Hu Yan was already aware of the incident, so he wasn't surprised to hear this.

As for the two people behind him, the golden-haired young man seemed to have also already heard about this, while the woman in the black dress appeared slightly perplexed, seemingly only having just been made aware of the incident.

After a brief pause, Ouyang Kuishan gave everyone a detailed recount of the incident that took place in the Profound Ice Mountain Range.

"... Thankfully, the two elders overseeing the trial were able to intervene in time to destroy the infiltrator's physical body, and only his nascent soul managed to escape. As for the disciples undertaking the trial, all of them also survived, so overall, there were no significant consequences," Ouyang Kuishan concluded.

"No significant consequences? Prior to coming here, I heard that four of the disciples had their physical bodies destroyed. Those four were all bright talents of the inner sect with exceptional aptitude.

"Now that their physical bodies have been destroyed, even if they can find new bodies to possess, their aptitude will be significantly compromised. Those two elders must be severely punished for their failure to protect the disciples!" the golden-haired young man said in a cold voice.

The 13 dao lords of the Blaze Dragon Dao were also split up into the native and itinerant factions.

The golden-haired young man was a native dao lord, and the four inner sect disciples who had lost their physical bodies during the trial were all native disciples, while all of the itinerant cultivators remained completely unharmed.

The seniors of the four disciples were furious upon hearing this, and they were all of the opinion that the two elders had favored the itinerant cultivators over the native ones.

Even if Ouyang Kuishan hadn't called for this meeting, the golden-haired young man was planning to pursue this matter further anyway.

"I'll have to disagree, Fellow Daoist Yuan. We've already familiarized ourselves with the sequence of events, and the two elders are not at fault. That True Immortal Stage intruder was extremely cunning and also quite powerful.

"Additionally, he had set up multiple arrays ahead of time, and it's already quite commendable that the two elders were able to destroy his physical body while keeping the disciples safe, so I think we should reward them instead," Dao Lord Yun retorted as she turned to take a glance at the golden-haired young man.

Dao Lord Yun was an itinerant cultivator before joining the sect, and the same applied to Ouyang Kuishan as well.

"How could you say that, Fellow Daoist Yun? They took on the mission to protect the disciples, and that made them responsible for all unforeseen mishaps. How can you say that they're not at fault when the

physical bodies of those four disciples were destroyed?" the golden-haired young man countered in a justified manner.

"I think we all know whether you're actually discussing this matter objectively, or trying to take advantage of this opportunity to further your own agenda," Dao Lord Yun said with a cold smile.

"What did you say?!"

An enraged look appeared on the golden-haired young man's face but before he could say anything else, Elder Hu Yan gave him a stern glare, as he interjected, "That's enough, Yuan Bushao! Fellow Daoist Ouyang is the one in charge of the sect right now, so he's the one that gets to decide the verdict on this matter. I'm sure he'll make a decision that's satisfactory for all of us."

"Of course. You can rest assured on that, Fellow Daoist Hu Yan," Ouyang Kuishan assured with a smile.

Yuan Bushao clearly wanted to argue the point further, but he refrained from saying anything in the end.

A cold smile appeared on Dao Lord Yun's face, and she also remained silent.

"After the trial, I had in-depth conversations with both of the elders and the disciples that undertook the trial, and this is the information I've managed to gather on that True Immortal Stage intruder. All three of you are more knowledgeable and experienced than I am, so I invited you here to see if you can identify him," Ouyang Kuishan said as he pulled out three jade slips and handed them out.

The trio accepted the jade slips, then injected their spiritual sense into them.

"Deputy Dao Lord Xiong, your input is quite valuable as well, so you should take a look as well," Ouyang Kuishan said as he offered a jade slip to Xiong Shan as well.

Xiong Shan extended a respectful bow as he accepted the jade slip, then injected his spiritual sense into it as well.



The initial part of the content in the jade slip was a piece of footage, and it recorded the entire process from when the elderly man began conversing with Bai Suyuan and the other disciples, all the way to the point when he was defeated by Han Li and fled the scene.

Xiong Shan's expression changed slightly as he heard the elderly man mention Bai Fengyi.

After that came some text and images, denoting the items that the elderly man had been carrying.

"Who recorded the footage? It's very detailed, and it's very remarkable that one of the disciples was able to have the presence of mind to record this footage while in the heat of battle," Elder Hu Yan asked.

"It was Dao Lord Yun's disciple, Bai Suyuan," Ouyang Kuishan replied.

Elder Hu Yan took a glance at Dao Lord Yun before immediately withdrawing his gaze. "I see. Not only does she possess exceptional aptitude, it seems her mental qualities are just as stellar."

"I have an eye for people, so my disciples are naturally all outstanding. I'm not blind like a certain someone," Dao Lord Yun scoffed with a meaningful look in her eyes.

Elder Hu Yan sheepishly rubbed his own nose and offered no response.

The atmosphere had suddenly become a little awkward, and Ouyang Kuishan cleared his throat as he asked, "Does anyone have any ideas on who this person could be?"

"All of the items in his possession are quite ordinary, and there's nothing that we can use to identify him. However, judging from the cultivation arts that he used, it seems like he may be from the Upper Ah Continent," the woman in the black dress remarked in a slightly raspy voice.

"That golden-armored puppet looks a lot like the Wise King Puppets of the Infernal Frost Continent's Holy Puppet Sect," Yuan Bushao chimed in.

"That does indeed appear to be a Wise King Puppet. However, the Wise King Puppets of the Holy Puppet Sect are indeed quite precious, but they can still be purchased for a price, so it's impossible to identify him from the puppet," Elder Hu Yan said.

Ouyang Kuishan turned to Xiong Shan as he asked, "Is there anything you can enlighten us with, Deputy Dao Lord Xiong?"

"I wouldn't dare to say enlighten. I am far less knowledgeable and experienced than all of you, but I did notice that the sword array that he unleashed is a little similar to the Seven Deaths Sword Array of the Boundless Sword Sect," Xiong Shan replied in a humble manner.

"I've heard of the Seven Deaths Sword Array, it's an extremely renowned sword array from the Boundless Sword Sect, but how is it so pitifully weak? Not only was that elder with the Li surname able to destroy it with ease, he even managed to destroy those five flying swords as well," Yuan Bushao scoffed, clearly unconvinced by Xiong Shan's statement.

"I'm not sure of it myself, I just feel like it looks a little similar," Xiong Shan said as he lowered his head.

"Deputy Dao Lord Xiong is very proficient in the way of the sword, and I heard that he once obtained a lost inheritance of the Boundless Sword Sect, so I'm sure he's correct here. The reason why Elder Li was able to destroy the sword array so easily isn't because the array is too weak. Instead, it's because his attacks were sufficiently powerful to do so.

"It looks like the Mantra Treasured Axis that he refined contains heavy water that is imbued with the power of water laws, and that's quite a unique path, producing a very powerful treasure. If it wasn't for him, I'd say it wouldn't have just been a matter of four disciples having their physical bodies destroyed. If you ask me, you should reward him handsomely, Fellow Daoist Ouyang," Elder Hu Yan said.

Everyone else was rather taken aback to hear this.

It was very difficult to clearly assess the situation from the footage, so they could only speculate about what had taken place during the battle, but it appeared that Elder Hu Yan was very confident in his assessment of the battle, and no one was going to rebuke him.

"Indeed, Fellow Daoist Hu Yan. I'll make sure to have that arranged, but back to the subject at hand, it appears that the intruder won't be so easy to identify," Ouyang Kuishan mused.

Yuan Bushao wanted to say something further, but he held his tongue in the end after taking a glance at Elder Hu Yan.

Dao Lord Yun took a glance at everyone else, and there was a slightly concerned look on her face.

That man had attempted to abduct Bai Suyuan, so in her eyes, it was of the utmost importance for him to be tracked down and dealt with.

After a brief hesitation, Ouyang Kuishan said, "There's also something else that needs to be noted. That man mentioned Bai Fengyi, and it seems like there's some type of connection between the two."

Contemplative looks appeared on everyone's faces upon hearing this.

"Speaking of Bai Fengyi, it's quite a pity what happened to him. If it wasn't for what happened back then, given his aptitude, perhaps our Blaze Dragon Dao would've had 14 Golden Immortal Stage dao lords by now," Elder Hu Yan sighed.

A slightly dejected look appeared in Dao Lord Yun's eyes upon hearing this.

"I'm afraid we're also unable to identify the intruder, so just take care of this matter as you see fit, Fellow Daoist Ouyang," Elder Huyan said, then turned to depart.

"Why are you in such a hurry to leave, Fellow Daoist Hu Yan?"

In the blink of an eye, Dao Lord Yun appeared in front of Elder Hu Yan, blocking his path.

"Haven't you always been an avid wine enthusiast? I happened to get my hands on a few jars of fine immortal wine a while back, would you like to come over and have a taste? I also have questions about cultivation that I'd like to ask you as well," Dao Lord Yun said.

