

A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality: Immortal Realm #Chapter 31: Trade Valley - Read A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality: Immortal Realm Chapter 31: Trade Valley

Chapter 31: Trade Valley

Han Li casually smashed a giant crater that was around an acre in area into the secluded cave abode, then placed the plot of spirit farmland into it, and Lu Jun couldn't help but burst into raucous laughter upon seeing this.

"Your extraordinary strength has far exceeded my expectations, Fellow Daoist Han! I have truly been humbled!"

"You're far too kind, Fellow Daoist Luo. Now that you've finished examining my abilities, it's time that we discuss some official matters, is it not?" Han Li asked with a hint of a smile on his face.

A sheepish smile appeared on Luo Jun's face upon hearing this, and he cleared his throat in a slightly awkward manner as he replied, "I had no such intentions, Fellow Daoist Han. There's not too much that needs to be said. You don't need to do anything to become a guest elder of our sect, and every year, our sect will assign you 50,000 spirit stones and some pills to support your cultivation.

"However, the pill assignment window for this year has already passed, so you'll have to wait for next year. This is your badge, it contains a map of our sect and some information on all of our sect's peaks. This is this year's spirit stone allotment of 80,000 spirit stones. The additional 30,000 spirit stones are a welcoming gift from Peak Master Nangong."

Luo Jun pulled out a shimmering golden badge and an azure storage bag as he spoke, then offered them to Han Li.

A complex look appeared in Gu Yunyue's eyes as she cast her gaze toward Han Li. The benefits that Luo Jun had just described were normally reserved only for Deity Transformation Stage elders, but given the power that Han Li has displayed, no one could argue that he was unworthy of such treatment.

"Thank you, Elder Luo. By the way, are Sharp Watch Pills allocated yearly by the sect or are there some other avenues through which they can be obtained?" Han Li asked as he accepted the badge and the spirit stones.

"Sharp Watch Pills are occasionally allocated by the sect. They're great for treating injuries, but they don't have much use when it comes to cultivation base advancement. Some disciples will trade them in our sect's internal markets, but most of them are traded very quickly, so they're not easy to obtain," Luo Jun replied.

"It looks like I'll just have to try my luck then," Han Li said with a thoughtful expression.

Luo Jun didn't linger much longer, and he departed with Gu Yunyue and Yu Menghan after exchanging some more small talk with Han Li.

Following Luo Jun's departure, Han Li activated all of the restrictions within the cave abode, then led Liu Le'er on a tour. He arranged a bedroom for her to rest in, then departed from the cave abode.

Around 15 minutes later, Han Li appeared in a valley several kilometers away from Cloudrise Peak.

There was a white stone plaque situated at the entrance of the valley, upon which were engraved the words "Trade Valley" in large red characters. Beneath the plaque was a wide stone street that extended into the valley.

This Trade Valley was none other than the internal market that Luo Jun had referred to earlier, and even before entering the valley, Han Li could already hear the chaotic commotion one would normally expect to hear in a busy market.

Han Li paused momentarily at the entrance of the valley, then continued onward, and by the time he arrived under the plaque, most of the valley was laid out before him.

Most of the streets in the valley sloped upward, and all of the shops were also constructed in a way that followed the terrain of the valley. All types of flags were hanging outside the shops, and it looked no different from a normal market.

At the moment, it was just past noon, and there were countless people entering and exiting the shops in the market, presenting a lively and bustling sight to behold.

Han Li chose a pill shop at random before walking into it, but shortly thereafter, he emerged in an expressionless manner before proceeding to the next shop.

He visited five or six large pill shops in a row, but didn't encounter even a single Sharp Watch Pill. Only in one of the shops was he informed that they had recently received one such pill, but that was two months ago, and it had been traded away on the same day.

After close to half a day, Han Li traversed through almost the entire market, but still had nothing to show for his efforts.

After emerging from yet another pill shop, Han Li didn't continue deeper into the valley. Instead, he made his way toward a secluded corner in an unhurried manner, then suddenly swiveled around before casting a cold gaze toward a nearby tree.

"You've been following me almost the entire time I've been in this valley. Do you have some business with me?"

"Please forgive me, Fellow Daoist. It's all just a misunderstanding."

A gray-robed elderly man emerged from behind the tree before making his way over to Han Li with a sheepish expression.

The man's hair and beard were all completely white, yet he had an extremely youthful, childlike face, presenting a rather peculiar contrast to behold.

Han Li could sense that the man was a Deity Transformation cultivator. "A misunderstanding?" magic

The elderly man's expression remained unchanged as he calmly explained, "I am Gao Bulin, an elder of Sunset Peak. I just so happened to overhear that you were searching for a Sharp Watch Pill, and that's why I've been following you briefly."

"The Sunset Peak? If I recall correctly, that peak is specifically dedicated to the pill refinement masters of the sect, right? Could it be that you have a Sharp Watch Pill in your possession?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"Hehe, I do indeed have a Sharp Watch Pill, and I intend to trade it, but I'll have to see if you have anything that I need," Gao Bulin replied with a smile as he took a glance at the storage bag on Han Li's waist.

"What are you looking for, Elder Gao?" Han Li asked.

"There's no hurry. I still don't even know your name yet, Fellow Daoist," Gao Bulin said, displaying no urgency to proceed with the trade.

"I am Han Li, a guest elder of the Cloudrise Peak. Can we get back to business now?" Han Li asked with a calm expression.

"A guest elder of Cloudrise Peak? You must possess some remarkable abilities, Fellow Daoist. I'm completely unable to discern your cultivation base! But I digress. I am looking for Glacial Yin Water, Blue Crystal Sand, Heavenly River Starstone, or a Lanling Flower or Inkfragrance Herb over 3,000 years old.

"Do you have any of those things, Fellow Daoist Han? If you have any one of them, I'd be more than willing to trade my Sharp Watch Pill to you," Gao Bulin said as he stroked his long beard.

"Surely you jest, Elder Gao. Every single one of those things is extremely rare. If I had those things, I would be asking for far more than just a Sharp Watch Pill," Han Li said.

Gao Bulin's expression stiffened slightly upon hearing this, and a sheepish look appeared on his face.

"I suggest you make some more realistic requests, Fellow Daoist. Otherwise, I'd be willing to purchase the pill from you using spirit stones as well," Han Li continued.

Even though he hadn't found any Sharp Watch Pills thus far, he had managed to sell some of the materials, ingredients, and pills that he had previously obtained for a decent sum of spirit stones. In addition to the spirit stones that Luo Jun had given to him, he had a small fortune at his disposal. Of course,

the few top-grade spirit stones that he had obtained weren't being factored into those calculations.

Gao Bulin hesitated momentarily upon hearing this, then conceded, "Alright, in that case, I'll do you a favor and trade my Sharp Watch Pill for spirit stones. I'll take two top-grade spirit stones for my Sharp Watch Pill. What do you say?"

"You're asking for way too much, Elder Gao! Sharp Watch Pills may be quite rare in this market, but even the highest asking price shouldn't exceed 600,000 spirit stones!" Han Li said as his brows furrowed slightly with displeasure.

"I don't think I'm asking for too much. After all, you're referring to the prices in our sect's internal market. If a Sharp Watch Pill were to go on auction outside of the sect, it would fetch a far higher price," Gao Bulin countered in an unhurried manner.

Han Li was silent for a moment, then asked, "How about this? I don't have any of the things that you listed earlier, but I have some other precious materials and ingredients in my possession. Are you interested?"

"If you're only referring to some common treasures, then there's no need to bring them out, Fellow Daoist Han. It would be much more convenient to just use spirit stones," Gao Bulin said with a smile.

"I have an Azure Underworld Crystal, a Myriad Yin Spirit Trapping Array Scroll, and a Yin Soul Zoysia. Do any of those things catch your interest?" Han Li asked.

Those were all things that he had found in Lu Ya's storage bag, and they were precious items, but they weren't very useful to him.

A hesitant look appeared on Gao Bulin's face, and only after some contemplation did he reply in a reluctant voice, "I have some use for a Yin Soul Zoysia, but it has to be at least 1,000 years old, and the Sharp Watch Pill is yours if you can throw in an extra 300,000 spirit stones on top of that."

Han Li immediately turned to depart upon hearing this, not hesitating in the slightest.

"Fellow Daoist Han, please wait!"

Gao Bulin's calm facade instantly fell away at the sight of Han Li's sudden departure.

Han Li naturally wasn't serious about leaving, and he willingly obliged, stopping in his tracks. However, instead of making his way back to Gao Bulin, he merely turned around to look at him from where he was.

Gao Bulin hurriedly made his way over to Han Li, then said with a sheepish smile, "Don't be in such a hurry to leave, Fellow Daoist Han, the price is still negotiable. Would you be able to let me see the Yin Soul Zoysia that you have in your possession?"

Han Li didn't waste any time with words as he flipped a hand over to produce a wooden box that was around half a foot in length, then opened the lid of the box by a sliver. Gao Bulin immediately released his spiritual sense to inspect the contents of the box, and a hint of surprise appeared on his face before quickly fading.

Chapter 32: Pill Reversal Art

"You're a lucky man, Fellow Daoist Han. That Yin Soul Zoysia has to be at least 2,300... no, 2,400 years old. It's more than enough to exchange for a Sharp Watch Pill," Gao Bulin said.

"I want two Sharp Watch Pills for this Yin Soul Zoysia," Han Li demanded in an implacable voice.

A wry smile appeared on Gao Bulin's face upon hearing this. "But I only have one of these pills, Fellow Daoist Han."

"Perhaps I would believe you if you were an elder from another sect, but you can't expect to convince me that an elder of the Sunset Peak like yourself is unable to offer me at least two Sharp Watch Pills. If it's too much to ask, then I can afford to keep waiting. I'm sure I'll find a seller eventually," Han Li said in an unhurried voice.

Gao Bulin's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this, and this time, he was truly grappling with a dilemma. After pondering the situation for quite some time, he finally conceded, "Deal!"

Han Li accepted a white jade box that was handed to him by Gao Bulin, and a pleased smile appeared on his face after he inspected the box's contents with his spiritual sense.

The scent of different medicinal ingredients emanating from Gao Bulin's body served as confirmation to Han Li that he was indeed a pill refinement master.

For others, a spirit medicine that was over 2,000 years old was perhaps extremely rare, but it naturally wasn't much in Han Li's eyes, and it was far less useful to him than these two Sharp Watch Pills.

Gao Bulin brought the wooden box under his nose and took a long whiff, then exhaled with a satisfied expression before gleefully stowing the box away in his storage bag. He then invited Han Li to visit him at Sunset Peak when he had some free time before quickly departing.

After completing the trade, Han Li didn't immediately leave the market. Instead, he continued to make his way through the valley, trading most of his spirit stones for high-grade pills of a similar caliber to the Sharp Watch Pill, and only after that did he depart from the valley before traveling back to the Cloudrise Peak.

After returning to his cave abode, Han Li saw Liu Le'er sitting on her own in the hall, staring absentmindedly into the distance with her chin resting on her hand.

"What are you thinking about, Le'er?" Han Li asked as he made his way over to Liu Le'er before taking a seat in front of her.

Only then did she notice that Han Li had returned, and she immediately called out in an elated voice, "Brother Rock!"

"Why are you daydreaming here on your own?" Han Li asked with a gentle smile.

"I was just thinking to myself that ever since I met you, my life has felt like a dream," Liu Le'er replied with a serious expression.

Han Li faltered slightly upon hearing this before an amused smile appeared on his face.

"If this is a dream, then I really hope that I never wake up. Aside from mama and dada, you treat me better than anyone else in the world. I want to be by your side forever, Brother Rock," Liu Le'er said in a low voice as tears began to well up in her eyes.

Han Li hesitated momentarily, then suddenly raised his hand and joined his index and middle fingers together before pressing them against Liu Le'er's glabella.

Liu Le'er was quite startled by this, but she didn't recoil.

"Close your eyes," Han Li instructed in a gentle voice.

Liu Le'er immediately did as she was told without any hesitation, closing her eyes tightly.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face as he also closed his eyes before chanting an incantation.

Around 15 minutes later, Han Li opened his eyes.

At this point, Liu Le'er's face had already turned slightly pale, and there was a faint sheen of sweat on her forehead.

Han Li withdrew his fingers as he said, "Alright, you can open your eyes now."

Liu Le'er's eyelashes fluttered slightly as she slowly opened her eyes, then cast a puzzled gaze toward Han Li.

"I just implanted a cultivation art by the name of 'Illusory Spirit Cicada Transformation' into your mind. I picked up this high-grade demonic cultivation art some years ago, and it's perfect for a demonic fox like yourself to cultivate," Han Li said with a faint smile.

Liu Le'er closed her eyes to sense the newly implanted cultivation art in her mind upon hearing this, but she still looked rather perplexed.

"I'll continue to do my best to protect you, but if I'm not by your side for some reason, you need to be able to protect yourself as well. At the very least, you need to be able to keep yourself safe until I get to you," Han Li explained with a serious expression.

Liu Le'er thought about this momentarily before nodding in response with a serious look of her own. "I'll be sure to work hard on this cultivation art!"

Han Li gave a pleased nod in response.

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In a certain conference hall on Cloudrise Peak, Luo Jun extended a respectful bow toward the scholarly-robed middle-aged man sitting on the main seat.

"As expected, Han Li really is a high-grade body cultivator. I've already arranged a place for him to stay, and no one from the other peaks has been made aware of his arrival. As for Martial Niece Gu, I've already issued a reward to her as you instructed, and she's been told not to tell anyone about Han Li's exploits in slaying that Deity Transformation Stage elder of the Heavenly Ghost Sect."

Peak Master Nangong nodded in response. "Good. The fact that he was able to slay a Deity Transformation cultivator as a Nascent Soul cultivator indicates that he must possess an exceptionally powerful body. I'm sure he's going to be extremely useful to our peak in the future. Make sure to look after him and satisfy any requests he may have as much as possible."

"Yes," Luo Jun replied.

"You can go now," Peak Master Nangong said with a dismissive wave of his hand.

Luo Jun extended a respectful bow before departing.

Following Luo Jun's departure, Peak Master Nangong sat in silence with his eyes closed for a short while, then rose to his feet and made his way toward the back of the hall.

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Han Li was naturally oblivious to the conversation that had taken place between Luo Jun and Peak Master Nangong.

At this moment, he was seated with his legs crossed in a secret chamber of his cave abode, and there were around a dozen containers, such as jade vials and jade boxes, placed on the table in front of him.

He was holding a small red vial, and he pulled out the stopper before tipping out a crimson pill. A strong medicinal aroma immediately spread through the air, and after a brief inspection, Han Li took the pill before closing his eyes to examine his internal condition.

Moments later, he reopened his eyes with tightly furrowed brows.

The red pill was comparable in caliber to the Sharp Watch Pill, but it had no effect on him whatsoever.

Han Li wasn't surprised by this, and he picked up a second vial before tipping out a yellow pill that he promptly swallowed.

The pill melted as soon as it entered his stomach, but there still wasn't any magic power generated.

A short while later, Han Li opened his eyes before picking up a third vial.

Soon, most of the pills on the table had already been tested, but none of them had proven to be effective, and there was only a purple jade box and an azure porcelain vial left on the table.

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face, and he was beginning to feel rather frustrated.

It seemed that finding pills that would have an effect on him was going to be far more difficult than he had imagined. However, the good thing was that he was now part of a major sect, and based on his current understanding of the Spirit Domain Realm, this was a realm with an abundance of cultivation resources, so as long as he put his mind to it, there was surely progress to be made.

With that in mind, he picked up the purple jade box from the table, then plucked out a gray pill between his fingers before tipping his head back to swallow it.

This time, a hint of elation finally appeared on Han Li's face.

He could feel wisps of magic power emerging from the pill before circulating throughout his meridians and entering his dantian, slightly increasing his magic power reserves.

The gray pill was far less effective than the Sharp Watch Pill, but it was still very encouraging that he had managed to find another pill that he could use for magic power restoration.

As for the pills in the azure porcelain vial, sure enough, they were also completely ineffective.

Han Li exhaled as he pulled out another gray pill from the purple jade box and held it at the center of his palm.

This pill was called the Dark Cloud Pill, and it was supposed to have restorative properties, but it was more suited to cultivators using water-attribute cultivation arts, and its intended effect was quite different from that of the Sharp Watch Pill.

After a moment of contemplation, Han Li suddenly rose to his feet, then exited the secret chamber before making his way outside.

He stopped while passing by Liu Le'er's bedroom, and even through the door, he could still sense the spiritual qi surging inside the room, clearly indicating that she was cultivating diligently.

He gave a pleased nod before continuing onward, quickly arriving in the pill refinement room.

This pill refinement room wasn't very large, only around 40 to 50 feet in size, and the ground was a dark azure color. At the center of the room was a cylindrical mound that was around half a foot tall, upon which was engraved an array consisting of many dark red patterns.

At the center of the array was a black hole that contained a lit flame, and a scorching aura was emanating from within it.

A pill furnace that was around half the height of a grown human was sitting on the mound, giving off wisps of spiritual qi.

Han Li swept his gaze over the room, then took a seat on a futon beside the pill furnace before releasing an incantation seal with a wave of his hand.

The red array immediately lit up, following which a burst of bright red groundfire erupted out of the black hole to envelop the pill furnace.

First, Han Li cleaned the inside and outside of the pill furnace in an expert fashion. He then flipped a hand over to produce the Dark Cloud Pill before tossing it into the pill furnace.

The groundfire began to move at his behest as he made a hand seal, splitting up into eight independent flames that surged into the pill furnace, and soon, a strong medicinal scent began to waft through the air.

As Han Li continued to make hand seals, the medicinal aroma suddenly became less pronounced.

His expression remained unchanged as he continued to go through a series of hand seals, and close to an hour passed by in the blink of an eye.

At this point, the medicinal aroma wafting out from the furnace had almost completely faded, and it had been replaced by another aroma that seemed to be a rather chaotic culmination of many types of different scents.magic

All of a sudden, Han Li stopped what he was doing as he released a final incantation seal, and the flame beneath the furnace was instantly snuffed out.

He swept a hand through the air to remove the furnace's lid, and the Dark Cloud Pill inside had already disappeared, having been replaced by a small mound of colorful powder.

Han Li inspected the small mound of powder briefly, then carefully released a burst of green light that carried the powder out of the furnace.

The green light shuddered slightly, and countless thin threads that resembled thousands upon thousands of tiny hands reached into the powder.

Soon, the small mound of powder was split up into around a dozen portions, each of which was of a different color.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this, then carefully split the powder up into around a dozen small jade boxes that he had already prepared in advance.

The secret technique that he had just used was called the Pill Reversal Art, and it was quite a rare secret technique that he had obtained by chance back in the Spirit Realm. The secret technique allowed him to reverse-refine and break down pills.

The creator of the secret technique had tried to use it to break down other people's pills in order to extrapolate the refinement methods for those pills.

Unfortunately, he failed in the end. The Pill Reversal Art ultimately still had its limits, and it was only able to help one identify the ingredients used in a pill, but was unable to yield the actual pill refinement method.

Han Li had been quite intrigued by the secret technique, and he was a pill refinement master himself, so he decided to record it, but this was the first time that he had ever used it.

Thankfully, the Dark Cloud Pill was only a Nascent Soul Stage pill, so it wasn't of a very high caliber. Otherwise, he may not have been able to successfully break it down on the first try.

Chapter 33: Quintessential Purple Qi

Han Li set the jade boxes containing the different powders aside, then swept a hand through the air to release another incantation seal, activating the pill furnace array once again. After that, he pulled out another pill, and this one was a Sharp Watch Pill.

After a brief hesitation, he tossed the Sharp Watch Pill into the pill furnace and unleashed the Pill Refinement Art again.

Close to an hour later, the Sharp Watch Pill was also split up into around a dozen different types of ingredients that were stored into jade boxes.

He placed the ingredients of the two pills together before conducting a thorough examination.

A short while later, a faint smile appeared on his face.

Most of the ingredients used for these two pills were completely different, but there was a type of blue crystalline powder used in both pills that was identical in both color and form, so it was clear that it was the same type of ingredient.

However, the Sharp Watch Pill contained much more of this ingredient than the Dark Cloud Pill did.

Both types of pills had an effect on him, and while the blue powder wasn't necessarily confirmed to be the sole effective ingredient, it was definitely something worth exploring.

Han Li gently dipped the tip of his finger into the blue powder before taking a whiff, then placed it into his mouth for a taste, and his brows slowly furrowed slightly.

Ever since the beginning, his cultivation journey had been closely intertwined with the art of pill refinement. Regardless of whether it was in the Human Realm or the Spirit Realm, he was at least somewhat familiar with all of the pill refinement ingredients that the two realms had to offer, and he even had some knowledge of the pill refinement ingredients of other realms. However, he had no idea what this blue powder was.

Perhaps this is something unique to the Spirit Domain Realm?

After pondering the issue to himself for a while, Han Li suddenly rose to his feet before promptly departing from his cave abode.

At this point, it was already quite dark outside.

Azure light flashed from his body as he flew through the air, and moments later, he descended in front of a certain cave abode on Sunset Peak several dozen kilometers away.

The cave abode was situated in quite a secluded location with barely anyone around.

Han Li quickly inspected his surroundings, then made his way to the entrance of the cave abode before flipping a hand over to produce a voice transmission talisman, which he whispered a message into before sending it flying through the air.

The voice transmission talisman flew into the cave abode as a streak of white light, and moments later, the gates of the cave abode swung open amid a burst of rumbling.

"Please pardon my intrusion, Elder Gao," Han Li said as he cupped his fist in a salute.

"Not at all! I didn't think we would meet again so soon, Fellow Daoist Han. Please come in." Gao Bulin emerged with a wide smile before inviting Han Li into the cave abode.

Gao Bulin's cave abode was clearly larger than Han Li's, but the furnishings were quite simple, and a strong medicinal aroma was wafting throughout the entire cave abode.

"I won't waste any more of your time than necessary, Elder Gao. I came here because I wanted to ask you something," Han Li said in a direct and straightforward manner after taking a seat.

Gao Bulin faltered slightly upon hearing this, then prompted, "Go ahead, Fellow Daoist Han."

Han Li flipped a hand over to produce a jade box that contained the blue powder, then offered it to Gao Bulin. "Do you recognize this ingredient, Elder Gao?"

Gao Bulin accepted the jade box before taking a close look. He then dipped a fingertip into the powder before placing it onto his tongue, and he raised an eyebrow as he took a meaningful look at Han Li.

"Looks like I came to the right person," Han Li said with a smile.

"You did indeed make the right decision to come to me. However..." Gao Bulin's voice trailed off here as a suggestive smile appeared on his face.

Han Li immediately flipped a hand over to produce a high-grade spirit stone, which he tossed at Gao Bulin.

Gao Bulin gleefully accepted the spirit stone, and his smile grew even wider as he elaborated, "This is powderized Cloud Crane Herb. Upon reaching a certain age, the Cloud Crane Herb is used as one of the main ingredients for several types of high-grade pills produced in our sect, and it's an extremely rare ingredient.

"On top of that, this powder seems to have been processed through certain means, and I was only just barely able to identify it thanks to the familiarity with all types of ingredients that I've developed through years of pill refinement."

Han Li nodded in response, then asked, "I see... Would you be able to tell me about the medicinal properties of this Cloud Crane Herb?"

A suggestive grin reappeared on Gao Bulin's face, as he gave Han Li a sly look.

Han Li tossed another high-grade spirit stone at him.magic

Gao Bulin happily accepted the spirit stone, then said, "The Cloud Crane Herb is also known as the Chameleon Herb. The herb turns white at 100 years old, blue at 1,000 years old, red at 3,000 years old, dark red at 10,000 years old, and purplish-red at 30,000 years old or above.

"The most remarkable property of this herb is its ability to absorb the energy of the rising sun and produce a wisp of quintessential purple qi upon reaching 100 years old. Not only is quintessential purple qi something that's absolutely required for cultivating several types of incredibly powerful cultivation arts, it can also be directly converted into quintessential spiritual power, which can cleanse one's essence and enhance one's constitution.

"The older a Cloud Crane Herb is, the purer the quintessential purple qi it contains becomes, and effects of that quintessential purple qi naturally become more incredible as a result."

"Where can this Cloud Crane Herb be found?" Han Li asked.

"This herb can only grow in a set of very specific conditions, and as far as I'm aware, it can only be found in a few places, virtually all of which are under the control of the major sects in our realm. At the moment, almost all specimens over 1,000 years old are in the possession of the major sects, and they're almost impossible to find outside of that," Gao Bulin replied.

After hearing what Gao Bulin had to say, Han Li had already gotten the answers that he wanted. It was most likely the case that this quintessential purple qi was the key to his magic power recovery.

"Aside from the Sharp Watch Pill, what other pills are refined using the Cloud Crane Herb?" Han Li asked.

This time, Gao Bulin didn't ask for any further financial compensation as he replied, "Aside from the Sharp Watch Pill, small amounts of the herb are also used in the Dark Cloud Pill. In addition to that, the Spirit Nurturing Pill and the

Void Origin Pill also contain small amounts of Cloud Crane Herb of a young age, but the quintessential purple qi that those pills contain is virtually negligible."

After parting ways with Gao Bulin, Han Li made another trip to the Trade Valley and spent a top-grade spirit stone to purchase a few of each of the pills that Gao Bulin mentioned. In addition to that, he also purchased several Cloud Crane Herbs in the hundreds of years old before returning to Cloudrise Peak.

Inside the secret chamber of his cave abode, Han Li was seated on a futon, and placed in front of him were the pills and the Cloud Crane Herbs that he had just purchased.

He opened a white porcelain vial before tipping out a Dark Cloud Pill that he promptly swallowed. A surge of warmth quickly rose up from his dantian as traces of spiritual power were released by the pill, gradually converting into magic power that was stored in his body.

This was naturally an encouraging development, and he picked up a Cloud Crane Herb before placing it into his mouth, then chewed a few times before also swallowing it.

Roughly 10 minutes later, his dantian began to warm up again, and wisps of magic power flowed into his dantian before being stored again.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face, and he could finally confirm that this quintessential purple qi was indeed the key to his magic power recovery.

After a day and a night, he had devoured most of the pills and Cloud Crane Herbs that he had purchased, and as a result, his cultivation base had recovered to the late-Nascent Soul Stage.

He was ecstatic to see this, yet right as he was about to devour all of the remaining pills, his expression suddenly stiffened slightly.

The medicinal power in his body that was still yet to be converted was finally converted into magic power that converged toward his dantian, but his dantian was already like a filled tank of water, unable to hold any more magic power.

All he could do was watch as the superfluous magic power lingered momentarily in his dantian, then dissipated into nothingness.

Han Li heaved a faint sigh, and he knew that this most likely had something to do with the condition that his nascent soul was in. In his current state, any further consumption of pills was most likely only going to be a waste.

He would have to wait for his physical body and spiritual sense to recover further before he could investigate the cause behind the condition that his nascent soul was in.

At the moment, he was unable to increase his magic power through cultivation, and he could only recover to the late-Nascent Soul Stage through the use of pills, so his top priority now was to enhance the rate of recovery of his physical body and spiritual sense.

With that in mind, he was rather unsure of how to proceed, and his brows furrowed slightly as he fell into deep thought.

Moments later, a thought suddenly seemed to have occurred to him, and he flipped a hand over to produce the guest elder badge that he had received from Luo Jun.

He injected his spiritual sense into the badge, and a map of the Cold Flame Sect that was formed by golden lines of light appeared before his eyes.

His gaze roamed over the map for a moment before finally settling on a building on the Sage Gathering Peak, which was annotated with the words "Scripture Library" in small text.

Chapter 34: Theft

Halfway up the Cloudrise Peak, a young disciple in a white robe was making his way up the mountain path.

Right as he raised his foot and was about to tread onto the next step, a blur suddenly flashed through his eyes, and he was instantly rooted to the spot, while his spiritual sense had also become murky and indistinct.

Immediately thereafter, an imposing young man appeared beside him, and it was none other than Han Li.

"Tell me about the scripture library," Han Li said in a peculiar voice as he looked into the young man's eyes with blue light flashing in his own eyes.

The white-robed disciple's eyes were completely glazed over, giving him a dazed appearance as he replied, "The scripture library is situated on the Sage Gathering Peak, and it's split up into the inner library and the outer library. The outer library is open to all disciples and elders, while the inner library is accessible only to inner court disciples and elders."

Han Li's expression remained unchanged upon hearing this, but a thoughtful look had appeared in his eyes.

The scripture library was a vital location in the sect, so it was undoubtedly guarded extremely tightly.

In order to exchange for resources from the library, not only did the disciples and elders of the sect have to issue large sums of spirit stones, they also had sect contribution points deducted as well.

Sect contribution points were a measure of the degree of contributions that inner sect disciples and elders had made to the sect, and they were generally earned by completing missions assigned by the sect. The more difficult a mission was, the greater the number of contribution points awarded. Without sufficient time to accumulate contribution points, it was impossible to earn enough to exchange for high-grade cultivation arts and secret techniques.

As a result, many people tried to pursue shortcuts.

There had been no lack of vagrant cultivators with ulterior motives who had agreed to become guest elders of the Cold Flame Sect in order to sneak into the scripture library to steal cultivation resources, but all of them had been caught with no exceptions, and the fate that they suffered was not enviable, to say the least.

The defenses of the scripture library were watertight, and there were no holes to be exploited.

According to the white-robed disciple, there were Spatial Tempering Stage elders stationed in the scripture library at all times, and the establishment was patrolled at all hours of the day. There were also countless powerful restrictions set up there, making it impossible for the average cultivator to even get close to the scripture library.

Han Li considered the information that he had received for a moment, then tapped a finger against the white-robed disciple's glabella before vanishing on the spot in a wraith-like manner.

At this point, the white-robed disciple's foot had been suspended in mid-air for quite some time, and only now did he take the step.

As a result, he almost stumbled and fell onto his face.

After steadying himself, he massaged his slightly numb calf, then looked around with a confused expression before shaking his head in a perplexed manner and continuing up the mountain.

Around 15 minutes later, Han Li appeared on the Sage Gathering Peak.

He stood at the foot of a huge cypress tree as he cast his gaze toward a two-story tall pavilion in the distance.

The pavilion was roughly 90 feet tall with eight faces forming a regular octagon, but there was only a single entrance, and that was on the south-facing wall.

There were many types of complex defensive arrays engraved onto the roof of the pavilion, and two groups of patrolling cultivators were constantly surveying the area.

After observing for some time, a contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face, and he abruptly vanished from the spot in a flash.

That night.

There was a large bluestone hall situated in a valley deep in the Cold Flame Sect, and the area was being patrolled by as many as seven or eight groups of disciples. All of the groups were led by Deity Transformation cultivators, so it was clear that this was an extremely important place.

One of the patrol groups flew silently through the entrance of the valley. The group was led by an azure-robed man, and he was yawning in a rather weary manner.

Right at this moment, another patrol group flew past several hundred feet away, traveling in a different direction.

The azure-robed man pursed his lips in discontent upon seeing this.

The Heavenly Talisman Hall was an extremely important location in the Cold Flame Sect, but in his opinion, it was completely overkill to have so many disciples patrolling the area at night.

Not only was the all situated in a very secretive location, it was entirely enshrouded under a powerful protective array, so it was preposterous to think that anyone could infiltrate the area.

Of course, he didn't dare to voice these objections. Instead, he made a voice transmission to the disciples behind him, telling them to be on their guard as they flew into the valley.

Right at this moment, a thunderous boom suddenly rang out from a hall not far away from the azure-robed man, followed by a flash of purple lightning before everything immediately fell silent again.

The azure-robed man faltered slightly upon seeing this.

"Who's there?"

"Someone's breaking into the Heavenly Talisman Hall!"

Cries of alarm rang out from the disciples behind the azure-robed man, and at this point, the azure-robed man himself had also returned to his senses, flying down as quickly as he could to arrive outside the hall in the blink of an eye.

"Who goes there? Surrender yourself right now!" the azure-robed man roared as he grabbed onto a treasure with one hand while sweeping his other hand through the air, upon which the disciples behind him immediately dispersed to surround the hall.

The other disciples also arrived on the scene in a flash, and soon, all of the patrolling teams were assembled, amounting to over 100 cultivators that surrounded the hall in a watertight encirclement.

The interior of the hall remained completely dark and silent.

All of the halls here were enshrouded under restrictions, keeping all spiritual sense at bay.

The leaders of the patrol groups exchanged a series of uncertain glances with one another, unsure of whether they should rush in or not.

As patrolling disciples, they had no right to set foot into the hall.

"What's going on here?" A streak of white light shot forth before arriving outside the hall, revealing itself to be a white-haired elderly man.

"Master Fan, someone's broken into the Heavenly Talisman Hall! We're considering entering the hall to capture the perpetrator, but according to the rules, we don't have the right to enter the hall," one of the patrol groups' leaders hurriedly reported.

The white-haired elderly man was furious to hear this. "Are you an idiot? Now's not the time to be following rules! Hurry up and go in!"

He immediately rushed into the hall as he spoke, and most of the patrol groups' leaders quickly rushed in with him, but two of them remained outside.

Upon reaching the entrance of the hall, the white-haired elderly man was surprised to find that the restrictions on the gate were completely unharmed.

This was quite a perplexing sight, but there was no time for him to ponder the situation, and he immediately pulled out a badge, which released a burst of white light that fell upon the gate.

The gate flashed momentarily before swinging open.

Everyone immediately rushed into the hall, and the white-haired elderly man released an incantation seal, upon which dazzling white light instantly appeared all over the hall, illuminating the entire scene.

The layout of the hall was very simple with only around a dozen white jade shelves in the room, so it was a simple matter to take stock of what, if anything, had been lost.

There were a few black scorch marks on the ground, but there wasn't a single person to be seen.

Could it be that the perpetrator has already gotten away?

The leaders of the patrol groups couldn't help but exchange a few bewildered glances.

The azure-robed man was also in the hall, and his eyes were wide with incredulity.

He had been right beside the hall at the time of the incident, and his gaze had been focused on the building the entire time, so it was downright unfathomable to him how the perpetrator could've possibly escaped.

All of a sudden, the white-haired elderly man rushed over to one of the white jade shelves, and his face paled significantly. "Argh! The Heavenly Shadow Rock and the Moon Gazing Herb are all gone!"

All of these white jade shelves were laden with ingredients and materials, and all of them were enshrouded under restrictions, but the restrictions near two of the shelves had been broken, and those shelves were missing a large number of items.

"The Flowing Billow Wood and Ironheart Feather have been taken as well!" the elderly man cried as he rushed over to another shelf with a distraught expression.

The leaders of the patrol groups also wore grim expressions.

"Conduct a search! Deploy all of the patrolling disciples! We must capture the perpetrator!" the white-haired elderly man roared in a furious voice.

The theft that had taken place in the Heavenly Talisman Hall stirred up a massive commotion in the Cold Flame Sect, and countless night patrol disciples were deployed to search for the perpetrator.

The search wore on all the way until the morning, upon which many outer court disciples were also woken up and ordered to join the hunt.

An exhaustive search was conducted throughout the entire Spirit Flame Mountain Range, but not a single trace of the perpetrator was found.

The higher-ups of the sect were quickly alerted to the incident, and a late-Spatial Tempering Stage elder who was adept at tracking was sent to the Heavenly Talisman Hall. After an investigation, he concluded that the

perpetrator had fled the scene using some type of lightning teleportation array, and he hadn't left any traces behind, making it impossible to track him down.

The late-Spatial Tempering Stage elder was powerless to do anything, and there was no way that any of the Body Integration Stage grand elders would get involved with something so minor, so Master Fan of the Heavenly Talisman Hall was forced to call off the hunt.

Even though the incident seemed to have blown over on the surface, there was naturally no way that the sect would let something like this pass so easily.

There were no signs of a break-in in the protective array around the entire Spirit Flame Mountain Range, so the perpetrator had to still be somewhere in the mountain range, and the Cold Flame Sect had sent out powerful cultivators to continue the hunt in secret.

In the wake of such an incident, the defenses in all parts of the Cold Flame Sect were bolstered by severalfold.

Chapter 35: Getting Away with It

Three days passed by in the blink of an eye.

That night, at the scripture library of the Cold Flame Sect.

Ever since the Heavenly Talisman Hall incident, the number of people patrolling the scripture library had been doubled.

In a dense forest several thousand feet away from the pavilion, an indistinct silver figure appeared. Under the cover of the night, it was impossible to make out the figure's facial features.

The figure raised his head to look up at the octagonal pavilion that was the scripture library, and a moment later, he flipped a hand over to produce a light purple talisman, which he adhered to his own body.

The purple talisman instantly exploded silently into several indistinct runes that resembled tadpoles, revolving around the figure momentarily before vanishing into his body.

A burst of purple mist abruptly rose up around the figure, instantly devouring him and causing him to vanish on the spot.

The figure naturally hadn't actually disappeared. Instead, he had taken on an insubstantial form as he drifted directly toward the scripture library, paying no heed at all to the patrols in the area.

The patrols were constantly surveying their surroundings, and their spiritual sense was also sweeping through the area incessantly, but they completely failed to detect the figure.

Before long, the figure had already reached the entrance of the scripture library.

It was quite late at night, and the scripture library's doors were already shut. The wide stone doors of the scripture library were flashing occasionally, clearly indicating that there were restrictions applied to them.

The figure chanted an incantation as he made a hand seal, then opened his mouth to release a cloud of barely visible azure qi that drifted into the doors.

If the cloud of azure qi were to be enlarged by several hundredfold, one would be able to see that it was comprised of countless tiny runes. These tiny runes instantly seeped into the restrictions on the stone doors upon contact, and a large hole seemed to have been corroded into the restrictions, allowing the figure to fly through in a stealthy manner.

Without the restrictions in place, the stone doors posed no obstacle at all, and the figure flew through in a flash.

The restrictions on the doors flashed ever so slightly before instantly returning to normal.

All of this had taken place in the blink of an eye, and the patrolling cultivators outside had no idea that anything was amiss.

The figure entered the scripture library, arriving in a circular hall.

The hall was extremely large, roughly 200 to 300 feet in size, and there were around a dozen paths leading deeper into the scripture library from the hall.

At the very end of the hall was a winding black staircase that led upward.

The figure quickly inspected his surroundings, then flew silently toward one of the paths.

The path wasn't very long, and he quickly arrived at the end, reaching a stone chamber.magic

Just like the doors of the scripture library, the doors of this stone chamber were also bolstered by a white restriction.

Above the door was a white jade plaque, upon which were inscribed the words "Cultivation Arts".

A hint of elation flashed through the figure's eyes upon seeing this, and he opened his mouth to release a cloud of azure qi. Once again, the azure qi corroded a large hole into the white restriction, allowing the figure to fly through without any impediment.

Beyond the stone door was a huge stone chamber that housed hundreds of bookshelves, every single one of which was enshrouded under a red light barrier.

All of the bookshelves were split up into several grids, and each grid contained a jade slip.

There were labels beside each grid denoting the cultivation art contained in the jade slip that was stored in the grid.

The figure casually made his way over one of the bookshelves, then opened his mouth to release a burst of azure qi that corroded a large hole into the red light barrier around the bookshelf. After that, he drew several jade slips into his grasp with a wave of his hand, then injected his spiritual sense into them.

Moments later, his brows furrowed slightly as he casually tossed the jade slips back onto the bookshelf.

The jade slips contained various Core Formation and Nascent Soul Stage cultivation arts, but none of them seemed to have caught the figure's fancy.

The figure continued to make his way through the stone chamber. Soon, he had examined every single one of the jade slips on the bookshelves, and he shook his head in a display of disappointment.

He immediately departed without any hesitation, quickly passing through the stone door before returning to the same hall from before.

From there, he went down another path, and at the end of that path was yet another stone chamber.

There was another plaque above this chamber, and this plaque read "Arts".

The figure quickly dispelled the restrictions on the door of this stone chamber before entering.

A short while later, he returned once again before going down a third path.

Over two hours passed by in the blink of an eye, and all of the dozen or so paths had been explored by the figure, but his brows were still tightly furrowed, indicating that he hadn't found what he was looking for.

The figure drifted over to the black staircase at the very end of the hall, and after taking a glance upward, he slowly flew up the staircase.

The staircase wasn't very long, and he quickly reached the top, upon which he arrived before a huge stone door that was several dozen feet wide.

There was a figure seated with their legs crossed on each side of the door.

The one on the left was a portly man wearing a purple kasaya, and he seemed to be a monk. As for the figure on the right, he was a tall and thin man with a sickly, yellow complexion.

Neither of them had a particularly remarkable physical appearance, but the vast auras that they were giving off indicated that they were both Spatial Tempering cultivators.

The two of them were meditating with their eyes closed, completely oblivious to the fact that there was an intruder present.

The figure took a glance at the pair of Spatial Tempering cultivators, then quickly directed his gaze toward the stone door behind them.

Light rippled like water over the surface of the stone door, giving off colorful refractions, and it was clear just from a glance that this restriction was far more powerful than the ones on all of the other stone chambers.

Given the context clues, the inner library of the scripture library was most likely beyond this stone door. The inner library was home to the Cold Flame

Sect's best cultivation resources, and it seemed that it was not going to be an easy task to break through this restriction.

The figure's eyes narrowed slightly as he waited for a moment, then began to advance again, arriving directly in front of the stone door, where he was less than 10 feet away from the two Spatial Tempering cultivators.

Right at this moment, the portly monk on the left raised an eyebrow, and he opened his eyes before quickly inspecting his surroundings.

"What is it, Brother Lingxi?" the thin man on the right asked as he also opened his eyes.

"Nothing," the portly monk murmured in response as he turned back to take a glance at the door of the inner library.

He hadn't actually detected anything substantial. Instead, he had felt something rather vague and indescribable, and that feeling had stemmed from a certain secret technique that he had cultivated in the past.

However, the success rate of this secret technique was quite low, and given all of the restrictions imposed on this place and the fact that there were two Spatial Tempering cultivators constantly stationed here, it was extremely implausible that anyone would've been able to infiltrate the inner library without being detected. In fact, even a Grand Ascension Stage being would've most likely struggled to pull off such a feat.

With that in mind, the monk slowly closed his eyes again.

The thin man merely brushed it off as a false alarm upon seeing this, and he also closed his eyes to meditate.

Throughout this process, the figure remained completely still on the spot, and only after the two Spatial Tempering cultivators had closed their eyes again did he release a powerful burst of spiritual sense that quickly encompassed the entire door, forming a protective barrier.

Immediately thereafter, he opened his mouth to release a burst of azure qi that fell upon the rippling restriction on the door.

The restriction immediately began to shimmer and warp as if it were resisting the azure qi, and it was releasing magic power fluctuations in the process, but

the two Spatial Tempering cultivators were completely oblivious to this outside the spiritual sense barrier.

The figure made a hand seal, and the azure qi instantly began to expand and shrink, constantly changing forms to combat the rippling restriction. As a result, an area that was around five feet in size was opened up at the center of the restriction.

The figure immediately took advantage of the opening, flying into the stone door in a flash.

The process seemed to have been a complex and convoluted one, but in reality, it had only taken one or two seconds from the moment he broke through the restriction to the instant that he flew through the stone door, and only after that did the spiritual sense barrier silently dissipate.

The portly monk's eyebrows twitched slightly, and he opened his eyes again before quickly turning his gaze toward the stone door of the inner library.

The restriction on the surface of the stone door was rippling incessantly, and it wasn't displaying any signs of abnormality.

However, even though the sense of foreboding that had just welled up in his heart had only appeared for a flash before vanishing, it still planted a seed of doubt in his heart.

"Did you notice something, Brother Lingxli?"

At this point, his companion seemed to have also noticed that something wasn't quite right, and hurriedly rose to his feet, turning back to take a glance at the stone door, then closed his eyes again to release his enormous spiritual sense throughout the entire area.

"Did you sense anything just now, Brother Qingtao?" the portly monk asked as he made his way over to the stone door before conducting a careful inspection.

The thin man opened his eyes, then shook his head as he replied, "Surely it's nothing unless someone was able to travel hundreds of kilometers away from the scripture library in just two or three seconds, or they were able to break through this Glazed Dark Water Array set up by Patriarch Cold Flame to access the inner library."

He hadn't managed to catch anything with his spiritual sense just now.

"Neither of those options sound possible. It must've just been my imagination," the portly monk said with a wry smile.

Even for the Grand Ascension Stage supreme elder of the Cold Flame Sect, it would've been rather implausible for them to break through the Glazed Dark Water Array before restoring it to its original condition in just two or three seconds.

Chapter 36: Theft

While the two Spatial Tempering cultivators were still speculating about what was happening, the figure had already appeared in a black hall.

The hall wasn't very large, only around 200 to 300 feet in size, and there was a thick white jade pillar standing at its center. There were countless runes inscribed upon the surface of the stone pillar, and gentle yellow light was radiating from the top of the pillar, forming a dome-shaped yellow light barrier that encompassed a certain area.

Around a dozen red stone cabinets could be seen within that area, but it was impossible to see what was inside the cabinets, giving them a rather mysterious air.

The figure remained on the spot as he carefully inspected the yellow light barrier up ahead with blue light flashing in his eyes.

Moments later, he swept a hand through the air, releasing dozens of bursts of black light, which were quickly revealed to be a series of black array flags that landed around the yellow barrier in an orderly fashion.

Immediately thereafter, he made a hand seal, and pillars of black light erupted out of the array flags before coming together in mid-air, forming an even larger black light barrier that completely encompassed the entire yellow barrier beneath it.

The yellow light barrier already took up close to half of the space within the hall, and the black light barrier encompassed virtually the entire hall.

The figure then opened his mouth to release a burst of azure qi that landed upon the yellow light barrier, attempting to bypass it just as he had done with all of the previous restrictions.

However, in an unexpected turn of events, the azure qi had only just corroded a palm-sized hole into the light barrier when the surface of the light barrier suddenly began to glow brightly, releasing countless bursts of yellow light that enveloped the cloud of azure qi.

At the same time, the runes on the white jade pillar at the center of the light barrier lit up in unison, and the yellow light barrier flashed brightly as countless dazzling threads of yellow light appeared, wrapping themselves around the cloud of azure qi before constricting viciously.

The azure qi was instantly sliced into countless shreds that quickly dissipated, following which the yellow light also receded, and the hole in the light barrier sealed over again.

The figure's expression remained completely unchanged upon seeing this, seemingly not very surprised by this outcome. After scrutinizing the white jade pillar for some time, he flipped a hand over to produce around a dozen more array flags of different colors.

With a casual flick of his wrist, all of the array flags spread through the area, hovering in mid-air to form a strange ovular array that seemed to be completely random and erratic, but there was far more to the array than met the eye.

As the figure continued to cycle through a series of hand seals, black light flashed from his hands incessantly, and the dozen or so array flags also began to glow with light of different colors as they struck the yellow light barrier like a series of javelins, driving their way in like nails to encircle an area that was around 10 feet in size.

The surface of the yellow light barrier flashed wildly as it resisted the advance of the array flags, and at the same time, a burst of powerful magic power fluctuations surged through the air. However, these fluctuations would instantly vanish as soon as they made contact with the black light barrier, unable to spread any further beyond that.

The figure chanted a complex incantation, and the dozen or so array flags flashed brightly as they sped up drastically, finally completely embedding themselves into the light barrier.

In the next instant, the yellow light on the surface of the light barrier in the section encircled within the array flags quickly dimmed.

The figure immediately released another burst of azure qi out of his mouth, and this time, the weakened light barrier was unable to offer any resistance, and most of it was eroded away in the blink of an eye.

However, the runes on the white jade pillar suddenly began to flash brightly, and the rest of the yellow light barrier outside the encircled area also glowed with dazzling radiance. An enormous outpouring of yellow light emerged, surging toward the area encircled by the array flags like a violent wave, but the array flags managed to keep the turbulent yellow light firmly at bay.

Fierce magic power fluctuations proliferated through the air, only to be contained by the black light barrier. However, the magic power fluctuations on this occasion were incredibly fierce, and the black light barrier began to buzz and tremble incessantly, seemingly on the verge of being overwhelmed.

Thankfully, it only took around two or three seconds before a large hole was eroded into the section of the yellow light barrier encircled by the array flags.

The figure immediately flew through the hole in the light barrier, landing near the white jade pillar before opening his mouth to release a cloud of dense black qi. The black qi enveloped the jade pillar, and at the same time, he made a hand seal before releasing a string of black incantation seals onto the pillar.

The black qi quickly spread over the jade pillar, staining all of the runes on its surface black.

The light glowing from the jade pillar quickly dimmed, and the fierce light surging over the yellow light barrier also slowly receded. Soon, everything was back to normal.

With a wave of the figure's hand, the dozen or so array flags flew out of the light barrier before returning to his grasp, and they were promptly stowed away.

Immediately thereafter, the figure flipped a hand over to produce a stack of yellow array flags, which shot forth as around a dozen streaks of light that struck the yellow light barrier from the inside.

These array flags flew into the light barrier before vanishing without encountering any resistance.

The entire yellow light barrier rippled momentarily before returning to normal, and the large hole that had been corroded into its surface also quickly sealed over again.

Only then did the figure direct his attention toward the dozen or so stone cabinets positioned around the jade pillar.

Every single one of the stone cabinets was enshrouded within a dark red light barrier.

The figure made his way over to one of the stone cabinets, then opened his mouth to release a burst of azure qi onto the light barrier without any hesitation. The affected area of the light barrier instantly began to ripple violently, and the red light quickly began to fade, looking as if it were about to be snuffed out imminently.

Right at this moment, specks of white light appeared on the surface of the red light barrier, and the red and white lights intertwined to keep the azure qi at bay.

At the same time, the deafening sound of a huge gong being struck rang out deep within the hall.

The space around the figure rippled slightly, and he seemed to have been caught off guard by this.

However, in the next instant, he immediately began to chant an incantation while making a series of hand seals, and the cloud of azure qi immediately began to churn violently, taking on various different forms to attack the red and white restriction, but no matter what form the azure qi took on, it was still unable to break through.

All of a sudden, the figure dispelled the cloud of azure qi in a decisive manner with a wave of his hand. He then joined his index and middle fingers together

before pressing them against his glabella, and a black rift suddenly split open there before widening to reveal an inky-black eyeball.

Black runes emerged within the eyeball, and a beam of black light around as thick as a human finger shot out before striking the restriction around the stone cabinet in a flash.

In the face of the beam of black light, the red and white restriction was instantly punctured before shattering with a dull thump.

At the same time, a burst of enormous spiritual sense erupted out of the figure's glabella before splitting itself up into around a dozen portions, each of which entered a jade slip before rapidly inspecting its contents.

With the strike of that gong, all of the restrictions outside the scripture library instantly began to flash wildly while a piercing alarm rang out.

"Someone's broken into the scripture library!"

"Who would dare to do that? They must have a death wish!"

"Could it be the same bastard that broke into the Heavenly Talisman Hall two days ago?"

A series of furious voices rang out as one figure after another converged toward the scripture library from all directions.

With the precedent set by the Heavenly Talisman Hall incident, the patrols didn't hesitate at all, informing the sect's higher-ups of the situation while the most powerful patrol group leaders among them instantly charged into the scripture library.

Lights appeared all over the Cold Flame Sect in the night, and a chaotic commotion erupted.

The first people to react were actually the two Spatial Tempering cultivators at the entrance of the inner library.

As soon as the alarm was raised, the two of them immediately sprang to their feet with furious expressions.

Someone had snuck into the inner library right under their noses!

Could it really have been a Grand Ascension cultivator?

That same thought immediately occurred to both of them, but this wasn't the time to be pondering such matters. Each of them quickly summoned a jade talisman, but one was of a crescent shape, while the other was ovular in form.

The two jade talismans were placed together to form a complete circle, which was immediately adhered to a certain part of the stone door.

The rippling restriction on the door quickly vanished, and the stone door swung open, following which the two of them immediately flew in without any hesitation.

Both of them faltered slightly at the sight of the black light barrier before them.

In a state of urgency, the portly monk quickly made a decision, gritting his teeth as he flipped a hand over to produce a round mirror.

He made a hand seal, and gray light flashed from the mirror before it released a thick beam of gray light, which struck the black light barrier with a deafening boom.

The light barrier churned violently as large ripples surged over its surface, but it wasn't immediately destroyed.

At the same time, the thin man summoned four azure flying swords, which circled around briefly in the air before transforming into four azure lotus flowers.

Countless streaks of azure sword qi erupted out of the four azure lotus flowers, all of which struck the black light barrier.

Finally, the black barrier was unable to withstand the assault and was torn apart to reveal the scene within.

"Stop!"

The two Spatial Tempering cultivators were quite relieved to see the indistinct silver figure within the light barrier, but at the same time, they were also furious and embarrassed.

The figure was only giving off a Nascent Soul aura!magic

However, the figure paid no heed to the two Spatial Tempering cultivators. He had just finished inspecting the contents of the jade slips in one of the stone cabinets, and he quickly moved on to another one.

Another beam of black light shot out of his glabella to shatter the restriction around that stone cabinet, following which he calmly released his spiritual sense again to glean the contents of the jade slips in the cabinet.

Chapter 37: Escape

"How dare you!"

"Surrender now and we'll grant you a swift and painless death!"

The portly monk and his companion were furious, and the former flipped a hand over to produce a yellow jade badge, which he thrust forward with venom.

A beam of yellow light shot out of the surface of the jade badge, landing on the yellow light barrier in a flash.

The light barrier instantly parted down the center to create a path that was around 20 feet wide.

The two Spatial Tempering cultivators instantly flew in, charging toward the figure inside.

Right at this moment, the figure suddenly raised a hand, chanting an incantation as he pointed a finger forward.

A beam of black light erupted out of his fingertip before striking the white jade pillar at the center of the hall.

All of the runes on the jade pillar instantly lit up, as did the yellow light barrier, and it released countless bursts of yellow light that struck the two Spatial Tempering cultivators like lightning while they were still in mid-air.

As a result, both of them instantly felt as if they had fallen into a swamp. Their body weight increased by several hundredfold in the blink of an eye, and it became extremely difficult to even raise a hand.

"The array has been tampered with!" the thin man exclaimed in shock.

"Who are you? How are you able to manipulate this array?" the portly monk interrogated in a furious voice.

The figure completely ignored them as his spiritual sense quickly read through the jade slips, and at the same time, he made a string of hand seals without pause, casting a series of incantation seals onto the white jade pillar.

The yellow light instantly began to ripple before revolving around the pair of Spatial Tempering cultivators, forming a pair of yellow vortexes that completely bound them.

The two of them struggled with all their might, frantically unleashing attacks to strike at the yellow vortexes that they were trapped within, but no matter what they did, they were completely powerless to escape.

Their fury and frustration were growing by the second, but there was nothing that they could do. This yellow restriction was set up to keep out enemies, but somehow, it was being used against them.

Right at this moment, seven or eight figures flew in front outside, all of whom were Deity Transformation Stage patrol group leaders.

They were momentarily stunned by the sight that they were greeted by, but they quickly returned to their senses, summoning a series of treasures to attack the yellow restriction in an attempt to rescue the pair of Spatial Tempering cultivators.

"Stop! Don't attack!" the portly monk exclaimed in an alarmed voice.

However, it was already too late. Seven or eight treasures struck the yellow vortexes, causing them to tremble violently.

However, at the same time, a series of millstone-sized bulges appeared on the yellow vortexes, and seven or eight tentacle-like bursts of light shot out in a flash, wrapping themselves around the Deity Transformation cultivators before dragging them into the vortexes in the blink of an eye.

These patrol group leaders possessed far inferior cultivation bases to the Spatial Tempering cultivators, so they were naturally completely immobilized as well.

"Damn it!" the portly monk roared in frustration.

"Have you notified the sect of the situation here?" the thin man asked in an urgent voice.

"The sect... has already... been notified..." Even speaking was difficult for the Deity Transformation Stage patrol group leaders.

The expressions of the two Spatial Tempering cultivators eased slightly upon hearing this, and they turned their attention back to the figure.

The figure was still breaking restrictions one after another before rapidly reading through the contents of the jade slips in the stone cabinets. He was doing so with astounding speed and efficiency, and he had already read through most of the jade slips in the room.

The two Spatial Tempering cultivators were desperate to intervene, but there was nothing that they could do aside from watch helplessly from within the confines of the yellow restriction.

"Who dares to infiltrate the scripture library?"

Right at his moment, a thunderous roar rang out from outside, causing the air within the entire hall to tremble violently, and even the yellow restriction was swaying slightly in the face of the powerful soundwaves.

The eardrums of the cultivators trapped in the yellow restriction were ringing loudly, but ecstatic looks had appeared on all of their faces.

The figure stiffened slightly upon hearing this voice, then cast his gaze outside, following which the vertical black eye in his glabella began to glow brightly.

Several beams of black light shot forth in a flash, shattering the restrictions of the three remaining stone cabinets at the same time.

Almost at the exact same moment, a red-haired giant of a man came barreling in through the entrance.

The man was over 20 feet tall and was built like a steel wall. He was wearing a crimson robe that was burning with scorching flames, and the entire hall was instantly plunged into what felt like a lava pit.

Judging from the aura radiating from the man's body, he was a Body Integration Stage powerful being.

"Die!"

The red-haired man cast his gaze toward the figure, and his eyes were practically burning with fury.

With a sweep of his hand, he sent a massive burning sword flying through the air, and the sword swelled to several hundred feet in size mid-flight before striking the yellow light barrier with devastating might.

A vast expanse of yellow light emerged in an attempt to oppose the giant sword, but it didn't even manage to make contact with the sword before it was torn apart by the flames burning on the blade of the sword.

The giant flaming sword struck the yellow barrier with ferocious might, and countless cracks instantly appeared on its surface, but it was able to withstand the attack without completely shattering.

Right at this moment, the figure swept a hand through the air, releasing a burst of suction force that drew all of the jade slips in the three stone cabinets into his grasp before being stowed away.

The red-haired man was furious to see this, and he immediately made a hand seal, upon which the giant flaming sword swelled to twice its original size, and the flames on its surface sprang up to several dozen feet.

The yellow light barrier was completely shattered with a dull thump, and the two Spatial Tempering cultivators and the Deity Transformation Stage patrol group leaders were finally freed.

The giant flaming sword faltered momentarily, then continued to crash down toward the figure.

All of a sudden, the figure raised his head, and dazzling light erupted out of the vertical eye in his glabella. Countless back runes surfaced within the eye, and a thick pillar of black light was blasted straight into the giant sword.

A dull thump rang out as the pillar of black light exploded, and most of the flames on the giant sword instantly dissipated.

At the same time, ripples surged through the surrounding space, immobilizing the sword in mid-air, thereby preventing its fall.

"That's the Law Destruction Eye!" the red-haired man exclaimed. [1]

The figure made a hand seal while chanting an incantation, and a burst of purple lightning appeared over his body before quickly spreading to form a lightning array around him. Dazzling light flashed within the array amid a rumbling thunderclap, and the blurry figure within the array had become even more indistinct.

"You're not getting away!"

The red-haired man's fury was growing by the second, and all of a sudden, flames rose up on the giant sword again as it abruptly split itself into two.

A fiery sword projection that was comparable in size to the giant sword came crashing down, traveling several times faster than the giant sword itself as it struck the lightning array.

A resounding boom rang out as dazzling red light erupted in all directions alongside bursts of violent shockwaves.

The two Spatial Tempering cultivators shuddered violently, and they were forced to take several backward steps before finally managing to steady themselves. As for the Deity Transformation Stage patrol group leaders, their legs instantly gave out from under them, causing them to fall to their knees, and the protective spiritual light around them was flickering like a candle in the breeze.

The red light dissipated, revealing a deep trench that had been slashed into the ground, but the figure had already vanished.

Everyone exchanged a series of bewildered glances before turning to the red-haired man, who wore a furious expression.

Meanwhile, at the center of the secret chamber in Han Li's cave abode.

There was a large purple array engraved onto the ground, and arcs of electricity were surging throughout the array. Han Li's eyes were tightly shut, and he was seated beside the array with his eyes closed.

All of a sudden, a burst of dazzling light appeared in the array, and a resounding thunderclap rang out, following which a humanoid figure enshrouded in black qi emerged.

Han Li's eyes immediately sprang open, and a hint of elation appeared on his face as he cast an incantation seal.

The black qi around the figure quickly faded, revealing a shimmering silver-armored warrior that had been summoned from a talisman.

Half of the silver-armored warrior was destroyed, and its aura was fading in and out of existence, seemingly about to be snuffed out at any moment.

With a wave of Han Li's hand, around 20 to 30 jade slips flew out of the armored warrior's body before landing in his grasp.

He stowed the jade slips away, then pressed a finger against the armored warrior's glabella.magic

Black light flashed from the armored warrior's glabella, following which an egg-sized black bead flew out from within with a burst of silver energy slowly flowing within it.

At the same time, the light on the armored warrior's body faded, and it disintegrated into a tattered silver talisman and a purple talisman, both of which drifted down through the air at the same time.

The silver talisman was none other than the Armor Origin Talisman, while the purple one was the High Zenith Invisibility Talisman, both of which had been refined using the materials that Han Li had stolen from the Heavenly Talisman Hall several days ago. [2]

Unfortunately, the Armor Origin Talisman was already too severely damaged for further usage.

1. For more on the Law Destruction Eye, please refer to RMJI Chapter 1180: Fire Spirit Threads and the Law Destruction Eye. 📖

2. For more information on the Armor Origin Talisman and the High Zenith Invisibility Talisman, refer to RMJI Chapter 1472: Two Talismans and Chapter 1306: High Zenith Invisibility Talisman, respectively. 📖

Chapter 38: A Glimmer of Hope

Han Li quickly stowed the two talismans away, then sat down with his legs crossed and held the black bead between his thumb and index finger before pressing it against his own glabella.

The silver qi within the bead immediately began to seep out wisp by wisp, circling around his glabella momentarily before vanishing into it.

If one were to look closely, one would discover that this silver qi was actually comprised of countless tiny characters that were even smaller than the tiniest of mosquitoes. These were all of the cultivation arts and secret techniques that the Armor Origin Talisman puppet had gleaned from the scripture library earlier. magic

Even with Han Li's unfathomably powerful spiritual sense, it was impossible to absorb such an enormous amount of content all at once.

However, he was in no hurry, and he had plenty of time to spend on this.

Time slowly passed by, and Han Li continued to sit as still as a statue for three days and three nights.

Only on the morning of the fourth day did he slowly open his eyes, upon which his brows furrowed slightly.

Some of these scriptures were quite remarkable, presenting incredible ideas and concepts that even he couldn't help but be in awe of, but none of them fit his current needs.

He shook his head as he stowed the black bead away, then swept a sleeve through the air, upon which 30 to 40 jade slips appeared on the ground. These were the jade slips that the Armor Origin Talisman puppet had taken right before its departure from the scripture library.

He swept his gaze over these jade slips with a slightly disheartened expression, hoping that he would find something useful among them.

With that in mind, Han Li picked up one of the jade slips before injecting his spiritual sense into it.

Another whole day passed by, and as Han Li withdrew his spiritual sense from the final jade slip, there was a clear look of disappointment in his eyes.

These jade slips all contained advanced and profound cultivation arts and secret techniques, but there was still nothing that was useful to him.

A wry smile appeared on Han Li's face. He had gone to great lengths to secure these resources, stirring the entire sect up into a frenzy in the process, but it had all been for nothing.

He shook his head as he prepared to destroy all of the jade slips.

Even though he had already examined the jade slips and confirmed that none of them had any tracking restrictions applied to them, it was already clear that the Spirit Domain Realm contained some things that he was unfamiliar with, such as quintessential purple qi. As such, there was no guarantee that there were no measures applied to these jade slips that were undetectable to him, so it was better to be safe than sorry.

All of a sudden, a surprised look appeared on Han Li's face.

All of the jade slips had been reduced to a pile of dust, but there was a completely unremarkable yellow jade slip among them that was completely unharmed.

After a brief moment of contemplation, he picked up the jade slip before inspecting it closely with an intrigued expression.

The power that he had just unleashed would've been enough to completely destroy even a piece of iron essence, yet this jade slip was completely unscathed.

After some inspection, Han Li discovered that there was nothing remarkable about the jade slip. It was made from normal jade, and he had inspected its contents earlier to find that all it contained was a cultivation art suitable for Spatial Tempering cultivators.

Han Li inspected the jade slip for a moment longer before applying some squeezing force through his fingers.

A faint sheen of luster that resembled starlight suddenly appeared on the surface of the jade slip, keeping his power at bay.

His eyes lit up slightly as he relaxed his grip again, and the faint sheen of light also vanished.

It seemed that there really was something special about this jade slip.

He could sense that the starry sheen wasn't a tracking restriction.

Han Li injected his spiritual sense into the jade slip again with the idea that perhaps there was something special about the cultivation art that it contained, but once again, he was unable to discover anything of note.

He read through the contents of the cultivation art from top to bottom three to four times, and he even tried cultivating it, but he still failed to find any hidden secrets.

"Could it be that I'm mistaken?" Han Li murmured to himself.

However, he was still unwilling to give up, and he released an enormous burst of spiritual sense out of his glabella, completely enveloping the jade slip before carefully inspecting it inch by inch.

The starry sheen immediately surfaced on the jade slip again, and it was giving off a devouring force that was eating away at Han Li's spiritual sense.

Immediately thereafter, a speck of golden light appeared on the jade slip's surface.

Han Li was initially quite alarmed by this, but his alarm quickly turned into elation, and instead of withdrawing his spiritual sense, he allowed the jade slip to devour it as it pleased.

As time passed, an astonished look gradually appeared on his face.

The jade slip was like a bottomless pit. It had already devoured close to a fifth of his spiritual sense, yet it still wasn't satisfied, and at this point, the speck of golden light had already grown to the size of a broad bean.

At the moment, his spiritual sense was only at around 10% of its peak, but due to the cultivation arts that he practiced, it was still comparable to that of the average immortal, yet this jade slip had managed to devour a huge chunk of it.

It was going to take quite some time to recover this spiritual sense, but after some brief contemplation, Han Li decided to continue with the process.

Moments later, an astonishing scene ensued.

More and more golden light began to appear on the jade slip, filling its entire surface before gradually forming a golden diagram of the Big Dipper.

At the same time, the devouring force being released by the jade slip finally ceased.

Han Li heaved a sigh of relief as he picked up the jade slip with an ecstatic expression, and as he injected his spiritual sense into it again, he couldn't help but be stunned by what he saw.

The contents of the jade slip were also changing, and the previous body of tiny yellow text had disappeared, only to be replaced by large passages of golden text.

Han Li faltered slightly upon seeing this before hurriedly reading through the new text.

Only after a full 15 minutes had passed did he raise his head with an elated look in his eyes.

The new jade slip contained a body refinement secret technique by the name of the Bigger Dipper Origin Arts.

According to information that Patriarch Cold Flame had left in the jade slip, this was not a cultivation art that could be found in the Spirit Domain Realm. Instead, it was an authentic Immortal Realm cultivation art that the patriarch had sent down to the Spirit Domain Realm following his ascension.

What was worthy of note was that the cultivation of this secret technique didn't depend on the spiritual power of heaven and earth. Instead, it involved refining the physical body by drawing the power of starlight into the body.

The cultivation art was split up into seven levels, and with each level that was mastered, he would be able to manifest a profound aperture. After mastering all seven levels, seven apertures would be manifested, allowing one to attain a True Extreme Body, thereby becoming a legendary Profound Immortal.

Given the current state of his nascent soul, he was unable to cultivate using the spiritual qi of heaven and earth, but perhaps he could try to harness the power of starlight.

However, at the end of the cultivation art, Patriarch Cold Flame had specifically left a note, which contained a warning that refining one's body using the power of starlight was going to put them in constant excruciating pain.

Furthermore, this was not an orthodox cultivation art. It could dramatically enhance one's physical body, but it was impossible to elevate one's magic power using this cultivation art. Even if they could master this cultivation art, they would have to pursue the path of becoming a Profound Immortal, which was a far more difficult path than becoming an ordinary immortal. Thus, one was advised not to practice this cultivation art unless they were absolutely certain that they wanted to pursue such an arduous path.

Most importantly, in order to practice this cultivation art, not only was it a prerequisite that one had to already possess a sufficiently powerful physical body, enormous spiritual sense was also required to draw the power of starlight into the body. Hence, the barrier to entry was extremely steep.

Back when Patriarch Cold Flame sent this cultivation art down from the Immortal Realm, he had placed a special restriction on the jade slip so that only those with sufficiently powerful spiritual sense would be able to see the Big Dipper Origin Arts.

Han Li's grip tightened slightly with excitement around the jade slip, and he felt like he could see a glimmer of hope.

The Big Dipper Origin Arts was virtually tailor-made for him. Even though there was a warning that practicing the cultivation art was going to be extremely painful, that didn't discourage him at all.

However, right at this moment, the jade slip in his hand suddenly cracked before transforming into a ball of piercing golden light.

Han Li's pupils contracted slightly upon seeing this, and he raised his head to discover a golden figure hovering in mid-air.

The figure was a well-built middle-aged man with a square face that wore a stern expression, giving off a sense of authority and righteousness.

Han Li's heart jolted slightly upon seeing this. Having seen a portrait of this man in the sect, he knew that it was none other than Patriarch Cold Flame!

"Fantastic! Looks like my efforts didn't go to waste. Finally, someone has managed to unravel this restriction! Which peak are you a disciple of, and what is your name?" Patriarch Cold Flame asked with a warm smile.

Han Li's mind was racing as he scrambled to fabricate a convincing lie.

It was clear that this was an avatar left behind by Patriarch Cold Flame's spiritual sense, but it still gave him a significant sense of pressure, so it was most likely quite formidable in battle.

Before Han Li had a chance to reply, Patriarch Cold Flame's brows suddenly furrowed slightly, and his voice took a cold turn as he asked, "Why do I not sense the aura of any of our sect's cultivation arts in you? Could it be that you're not an inner court disciple?"

"I am a guest elder who has only recently joined the sect, so I still haven't had a chance to practice any of the sect's cultivation arts yet," Han Li hurriedly replied.

"A guest elder? How did a guest elder like you get your hands on the jade slip containing the Big Dipper Origin Arts?" Patriarch Cold Flame interrogated in a cold voice.

Han Li had no response to this.

Patriarch Cold Flame's gaze then fell upon the pile of powder near Han Li's feet.

Han Li's expression remained unchanged upon seeing this, but his heart sank ever so slightly.

Chapter 39: Decree

Patriarch Cold Flame swept a hand through the air, releasing a burst of golden light that swept up all of the powder in front of Han Li, forming a ball of faint golden light that hovered before him.

"These are all jade slips that contain cultivation arts and secret techniques of our sect. Why are they all in your possession? Could it be that you broke into the inner library and stole them?" Patriarch Cold Flame asked in a cold voice.

Even though the jade slips had been reduced to powder by Han Li, even the slightest trace of what they had once been was enough for Patriarch Cold Flame to identify them.

A resigned look appeared on Han Li's face, and he sighed, "I can explain, Fellow Daoist Cold Flame."

"How dare you refer to me as an equal to yourself!"

Patriarch Cold Flame was furious, and dazzling golden light abruptly erupted out of his glabella. Countless rippling circles of light swept through the air, instantly forming a golden flower projection that was around 10 feet in size.

As the golden flower slowly revolved, light flashed from its bud, and a near-transparent pillar of golden light was released, hurtling toward Han Li at an incredible speed.

The space in the wake of the pillar of light rippled like water.

Han Li remained on the spot, making no attempt to take evasive action. Instead, he merely raised his head slightly, and a burst of invisible ripples erupted out of his glabella as well to oppose the pillar of golden light.

A dull thump rang out, and the space shuddered violently as ripples surged through the air.

It seemed that the golden pillar of light had crashed into something, and it quickly disintegrated, while the invisible ripples also faded.

All of this had taken place in the blink of an eye, and Han Li remained completely unscathed as he stood with a faint smile on his face.

Patriarch Cold Flame shuddered as he exclaimed in an incredulous voice, "Impossible! Are you also an immortal?"

Even though this was only a projection manifested by his spiritual sense, and that wasn't an all-out attack, even a Grand Ascension cultivator definitely

wouldn't have been able to withstand the attack so easily, let alone a Nascent Soul cultivator.

This indicated that Han Li's spiritual sense wasn't inferior to his own!

"Will you listen to me now, Fellow Daoist Cold Flame?" Han Li asked in a calm voice.

Patriarch Cold Flame was silent for a moment, and even though he was still rather displeased, he was clearly willing to listen. "Fine. Why don't you tell me why you're here stealing the scriptures of our sect when you've already ascended to become an immortal."

"Due to some unforeseen circumstances, I fell into the Spirit Domain Realm by chance. I bear no ill will toward your sect, but I currently have some injuries, and I do not have the suitable pills to treat those injuries, so I decided to take some of the scriptures of your sect to conduct some research," Han Li explained.

"I see. May I ask which Immortal Region you were originally from, Fellow Daoist?" Despite what he was saying, it was clear from the look in Patriarch Cold Flame's eyes that he didn't completely believe Han Li's story.

"I'm only staying here for now, and I can assure you that I won't do anything detrimental to your sect. As for where I've come from, that's something that I'd rather not share," Han Li replied with a hint of a smile on his face.

Patriarch Cold Flame gave a cold harrumph upon hearing this. An immortal had suddenly appeared in the Spirit Domain Realm, so he was naturally inclined to find out as much about this immortal as possible. However, this was only an avatar formed by a wisp of his spiritual sense, so he couldn't really do anything if Han Li were unwilling to answer his questions.

"Rest assured, Fellow Daoist. I owe you a favor for this, and in exchange, I can promise you here and now that if the Cold Flame Sect encounters any trouble in the future, I can step in one time to resolve the sect's troubles," Han Li continued in an unhurried voice.

Patriarch Cold Flame was greatly moved by this. "I'll be holding you to that promise, Fellow Daoist."

Even though he had already ascended to the Immortal Realm, he still greatly cherished the Cold Flame Sect, which he had built up from nothing. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gone out of his way to send resources down to the sect.

It seemed that the Cold Flame Sect was a dominant powerhouse in the Spirit Domain Realm with a bright future ahead, but the sect was not truly without its concerns.

Unfortunately, he was in the Immortal Realm, so there wasn't much that he could do to help the sect. However, if he could recruit the assistance of Han Li, then a whole host of possibilities would be opened up.

.....

Two days later, on the Holy Fire Peak of the Cold Flame Sect.

There was an elegant tile courtyard situated deep in a misty purple bamboo forest.

The purple bamboo trees in the forest were neatly organized, and the arrangement didn't seem to be remarkable in any way, but in reality, there was a hidden purpose to how everything was positioned.

The position of every single purple bamboo tree corresponded with a node of an array, and this vast sea of purple bamboo formed a unique array.

The purple bamboo planted here also wasn't just bamboo of the ordinary variety. Instead, it was Lungfire Bamboo that was capable of absorbing the power of earthly fire. If one were to inspect these bamboo trees closely, they would discover that there were dark red patterns spread along the surface of the bamboo.

It was exactly because of the existence of this array that this area had the most abundant spiritual qi in the entire Spirit Flame Mountain Range, and it was also the area with the highest concentration of earthly fire.

The small tile courtyard was situated right on the core of the array.

At this moment, there was a purple-robed man seated with his legs crossed and his eyes closed, cultivating in the main room inside the courtyard.

The man had a head of shoulder-length hair that was as white as snow, and there was a purple flame insignia on his glabella. There was purple qi revolving all around him, and he appeared to be no more than 30 years of age, but he was giving off an extremely powerful aura.

On a small rosewood table not far in front of him was a gold-plated copper incense burner, protruding out of which were several sticks of lit incense that were releasing wisps of smoke.

The table was situated right next to the wall, upon which a portrait of a middle-aged man that was over three feet in length was hanging.

The lines of the portrait weren't particularly intricate, but they were extremely effective in conveying the aura of the subject. The portrait depicted a man with a square face and a pair of bright and piercing eyes. The man had a very strong build, and even his visage alone was giving off a strong sense of authority and righteousness.

Right at this moment, the white-haired man's eyes suddenly sprang open, and he cast a surprised gaze toward the portrait on the wall.

A burst of peculiar fluctuations suddenly erupted out of the portrait, and a series of ripples spread over its surface. It was as if the subject of the portrait had suddenly sprung to life, and he stepped out of the portrait as if it were a portal leading to another realm.

The white-haired man hurriedly rose to his feet, then fell to his knees, trembling slightly with emotion as he greeted in a respectful voice, "Welcome, Patriarch."

"No need for formalities. I've come to you today with some instructions," Patriarch Cold Flame said with a wave of his hand.

Only then did the white-haired man return to his feet, and he waited with a respectful expression for further instructions.

"I've already heard about the incident that took place at the scripture library some days ago," Patriarch Cold Flame said.

The white-haired man's heart jolted upon hearing this, and cold sweat instantly began to appear on his forehead. He was just about to offer an

explanation, but he was cut off by Patriarch Cold Flame. "Leave this matter and do not investigate it any further."

The white-haired man faltered slightly upon hearing this, and he couldn't help but protest, "But Patriarch..."

However, Patriarch Cold Flame raised a hand to cut him off, then communicated something to him through voice transmission.magic

The white-haired man's expression changed once again upon hearing this, first turning to surprise before switching to elation.

Chapter 40: Inconclusive

That afternoon.

A streak of white light shot through the distant sky before landing on a white jade plaza on the Holy Fire Peak.

The light faded to reveal a clean-shaven middle-aged man.

The man was wearing a scholarly robe, which was flapping around him as he slowly descended, and as soon as he landed on the plaza, he was immediately greeted by a male voice that rang out behind him.

"Brother Nangong."

The middle-aged man turned to discover a man with a black beard wearing a set of daoist robes approaching him from several thousand feet away.

The man didn't appear to be moving very quickly, but there was a trail of afterimages in his wake, and he was able to cover a distance of several hundred feet with each step, arriving in front of the scholarly-robed man in the blink of an eye.

"Let's go together, Brother Zhuang," the scholarly-robed man greeted with a smile.magic

The daoist priest nodded in response, then cast his gaze toward several streaks of light that were flying through the distant sky, and he remarked, "If I recall correctly, it's been over a decade since such a big fuss has been kicked up about anything in the sect."

These two were none other than Nangong Changshan and Zhuang Ziyou, the masters of the Cloudrise Peak and the Sunset Peak, respectively.

"This most likely has something to do with the recent scripture library incident. I'm afraid we won't be able to escape accountability," Nangong Changshan sighed with a shake of his head.

"I was busy refining some pills at the time, but I did hear mention of the incident, and the circumstances seem rather strange to me... Not only was the perpetrator able to bypass all of the restrictions to enter the inner library, even Elder Huyan was unable to stop him from escaping," Zhuang Ziyou mused with a grim expression.

"It was indeed a rather peculiar incident. I'm sure the supreme elder will elaborate on the matter when we meet him," Nangong Changshan replied with a nod.

As the two were conversing with one another, they had already passed through the plaza and arrived in front of a grand and majestic red palace. Both of them fell silent here, then quickly scaled the staircase before stepping into the palace together.

At the center of the palace was an elevated section that was around three feet above the ground, upon which was an intricately engraved chair. Below this chair were two more rows of chairs that were facing one another, one on the left, and one on the right.

The pillars behind the chairs were all constructed from precious materials with all types of exotic birds and beasts engraved onto their surfaces.

On the chair in the left row situated closest to the main seat sat a red-haired man in a crimson robe. There was a dark look on his face, and he was built like a steel tower, with a musclebound body that gave off an astonishing aura.

Nangong Changshan and Zhuang Ziyou exchanged a glance with one another, then picked a pair of neighboring chairs before sitting down and closing their eyes to meditate.

More and more people continued to enter the palace, and soon, all of the chairs in the hall were occupied.

All of the people present were at the Spatial Tempering Stage, and there wasn't even a single cultivator at or below the Deity Transformation Stage.

However, all of them were wearing rather grim expressions, and they only exchanged the most concise of greetings, seemingly not interested in chatting.

The entire palace was filled with a rather oppressive and solemn atmosphere.

A few minutes after all of the chairs in the palace were occupied, two more figures strode into the palace from the inner hall.

Everyone in the palace immediately rose to their feet, including the red-haired man, and they all extended a collective respectful bow as they greeted in a unified voice, "We pay our respects to the supreme elder and the sect master!"

The one walking at the front was a purple-robed man with hair as white as snow, and he was the Cold Flame Sect's sole supreme elder, Sima Jingming. Accompanying him was an authoritative middle-aged man wearing a tall hat, and he was the master of the Cold Flame Sect, Liu Jingzhu.

Sima Jingming made his way over to the main seat, but instead of sitting down, his gaze slowly swept over everyone present.

His aura was completely subdued, but even though he was only casually standing there, he still gave off an astonishing sense of pressure. Everyone lowered their heads, not daring to look at one another or even breathe too loudly for fear of retribution.

A short while later, Sima Jingming finally began to speak.

"Recently, two incidents of theft have taken place in quick succession at the Heavenly Talisman Hall and the scripture library, and it is for this reason that all of you have been invited here."

His voice wasn't very loud, but it was filled with an indescribable sense of authority.

Everyone involuntarily tensed up slightly upon hearing this, and they were all waiting in silence for the tirade that was surely to come.

However, what Sima Jingming declared next instantly had everyone looking up with stunned expressions.

"I hereby declare that this will be the end of the matter. Cease all investigations with immediate effect."

Everyone was astonished to hear this, and they couldn't help but exchange bewildered glances, wondering if they had misheard the message.

However, no one dared to ask any questions, either.

In the end, it was the red-haired man who broke the silence, and he stepped forward as he cupped his fist in a salute. "Senior Martial Brother Sima, the theft that took place at the scripture library is a major incident. I..."

Before he had a chance to finish, he was cut off by Sima Jingming, who interjected in a cold voice, "Do I need to repeat myself, Junior Martial Brother Huyan?"

With that, he turned and departed from the palace, offering no further explanation, leaving everyone completely perplexed.

At the same time, Sect Master Liu Jingzhu declared, "That concludes the meeting. You can all go now."

After that, he also departed.

A short while later, on the white jade plaza outside the palace.

Zhuang Ziyou was still reeling from the announcement, and he turned to Nangong Changshan as he asked, "We're supposed to just cease all investigations? Are we simply accepting the loss of so many precious scriptures from the scripture library?"

"The loss of the scriptures isn't a big deal. I'm sure our sect will have replicas that can replace them. However, it's going to be a problem if these secret scriptures are leaked to the outside world. The supreme elder must have his reasons for making such a decision, so let's not speculate aimlessly about this," Nangong Changshan replied with a smile.

Despite what he was saying, he was no less perplexed than Zhuang Ziyou.

Not long after that meeting, all of the disciples of the Cold Flame Sect noticed something extremely puzzling, which was that the sect had suddenly ceased all investigations and searches at the Heavenly Talisman Hall and the scripture library.

This naturally created quite a stir among all of the disciples, but all of the peak masters seemed to be very reluctant to speak on the matter.

Thus, what should've been a pair of incidents with far-reaching consequences and implications blew over under inexplicable circumstances with no concrete conclusions reached.

As the perpetrator, Han Li was completely oblivious to everything that had taken place in the sect. He was holed up in his cave abode, studying the Big Dipper Origin Arts.

Prior to this, he had only quickly read through the cultivation art, but the more he studied it, the more he came to realize how profound and ingenious it was, and the more excited he became.

Ever since he began his cultivation journey, he had come into contact with many body refinement cultivation arts. Some of those cultivation arts primarily refined the muscles and tendons, some focused on refining the bones, and there were also some that refined the internal organs, such as the Organ Refinement Origin Arts. [1]

However, the Big Dipper Origin Arts was unique in that it focused on the cultivation of profound apertures.

What were profound apertures supposed to be?

Han Li had no clue, and there were no further elaborations offered in the cultivation art, either. However, judging from the scripture, the cultivation process was extremely profound, and even for him, it had taken a long time to make sense of the process being described.

To put it in simple terms, if one could attain full mastery of this cultivation art, then they would attain physical power comparable with that of the average immortal.

However, at the same time, there were also many caveats.

Firstly, the cultivation process was extremely painful, and for those with insufficient mental fortitude, there was no way that they would be able to last till the very end.

Secondly, it was extremely difficult to draw in the power of starlight. After all, the stars were an unfathomable distance away. As a result, practicing this cultivation art was extremely time-consuming.

Han Li paid no heed to these caveats, and he planned to begin pursuing the cultivation art right away.

First, he made a trip somewhere, only returning the next day, upon which he immediately activated all of the restrictions within the cave abode.

After that, he chose a suitable secret chamber before opening up a large hole in the ceiling, which allowed him to see the sky.

After doing all of that, he sat down with his legs crossed and began to meditate.

Before practicing a cultivation art that had been passed down from the Immortal Realm, he had to prime himself into the optimal condition so that he was best equipped to deal with any circumstances that could arise during the cultivation process.

1. For more information on the Organ Refinement Origin Arts, please refer to RMJI Chapter 2339: Organ Refinement Origin Arts. 