

A Record 351

Chapter 351: Encountering a Conflict

At this moment, a black-robed elderly man was seated with his legs crossed beside the blue jade platform with dozens of blue jade plates hovering around him.

All of a sudden, one of the jade plates shuddered as a bright gleam flashed over its surface, and the elderly man immediately opened his eyes and cast his gaze toward that jade plate.

"What's wrong, Elder Chu?"

A voice rang out as a black-robed figure emerged out of the darkness, and it was none other than the master of Black Wind Island, Lu Jun.

There hadn't been much change to his physical appearance, and he still appeared as authoritative as ever.

"Someone has just passed through the city's protective array," the black-robed elderly man replied with furrowed brows.

"Passed through? As in someone managed to unravel the array?" Lu Jun asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"No, they've simply passed through it using some type of special movement technique," the black-robed elderly man explained.

"How did they do that?" Lu Jun asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"They must've used some type of spatial secret technique. The city's protective array can't be bypassed through normal movement techniques, but it has no spatial restrictions, so it's not completely foolproof."

Another voice rang out as a third figure emerged from the darkness, and it was none other than the late-True Immortal Stage middle-aged man that Han Li had seen earlier.

The authoritative look on Lu Jun's face was instantly replaced with a respectful expression at the sight of the middle-aged man, and he said, "I've never encountered such a situation before. Perhaps it's because the Black Wind Sea is too secluded and my knowledge is lacking."

"This type of secret technique isn't all that common on the outside, either, so I also wasn't expecting to see one here," the middle-aged man replied.

"Could it be someone from Azure Feather Island?" the black-robed elderly man asked.

"Most likely not. I've had numerous battles with Daoist Master Azure Feather in the past, and even he doesn't possess such an ability. Otherwise, things wouldn't have been so peaceful all this time. I'm presuming it's one of the cultivators who were teleported into the city earlier today," Lu Jun mused.

"We can only hope that this person doesn't have anything to do with Azure Feather Island," the black-robed elderly man said.

"In any case, they're definitely not one of our people, and it's certainly not a good thing that there exists someone who can pass through our city's protective restrictions as they please," Lu Jun said with slightly furrowed brows.

"There's no need to be overly concerned, Island Master Lu. I just so happen to have a restriction here that contains spatial power, and Fellow Daoist Chu can simply add it to the city's protective array," the middle-aged man said as he flipped a hand over to produce a stack of shimmering silver array tools, which he handed to the black-robed elderly man.

The black-robed elderly man's eyes lit up as he felt the faint spatial power fluctuations emanating from the array tools, and he hurriedly accepted them before giving them a close inspection.

Lu Jun was also quite elated to see this, and he cupped his fist in a grateful salute as he said, "You have our thanks, Fellow Daoist Feng."

"Don't worry about it. How are you going with the task that I assigned you?" the middle-aged man asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"After receiving your instructions, I immediately sent people to reinforce the defenses, and we'll be sure to keep out all of the Azure Feather Island cultivators," Lu Jun replied in a serious voice.

"The cultivators of Azure Feather Island aren't worthy of concern, the key is the Reincarnation Palace. If Azure Feather Island is being supported in secret by the Reincarnation Palace, then things will be very troublesome, so we can't afford to grow complacent," the middle-aged man said with a serious expression.

"Rest assured, Fellow Daoist Feng," Lu Jun replied with a nod.

The middle-aged man also nodded in response before departing, and even though he was speaking in a rather haughty manner, neither Lu Jun nor the black-robed elderly man displayed any displeasure, as if this were a normal occurrence.

"I can take care of everything on my own here, Island Master. You should go back to rest," the black-robed elderly man said.

Lu Jun shook his head in response as he cast a concerned gaze toward the blue jade platform.

"Are you still worried about Young Mistress Yuqing?" the black-robed elderly man asked.

"I can't help but be concerned for her," Lu Jun sighed.

"Young Mistress Yuqing is only trying to share your burden. Besides, Waveflow Island isn't far away from Black Wind Island, and she's made significant strides in her cultivation base of late, so she'll definitely be fine," the black-robed elderly man reassured with a smile.

Lu Jun seemed to have been slightly reassured upon hearing this.

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Close to 100,000 kilometers away from Black Wind Island, arcs of golden lightning suddenly erupted out of thin air, forming a golden lightning array above the sea.

Han Li appeared at the center of the array, and his expression eased slightly as he inhaled the slightly damp and salty sea breeze blowing toward him.

After taking a moment to gather his bearings, he flipped a hand over to produce the jade slip that contained the map of the Black Wind Sea that he had previously purchased, then pressed it against his own forehead.

Moments later, he stowed the jade slip away, then flew away into the distance.

According to what he had learned thus far, the area around Black Wind Island wasn't all that peaceful at the moment. Given his current cultivation base, he naturally had nothing to worry about, but he was still going to keep as low a profile as possible, and he was flying carefully at a low speed while taking care to conceal himself.

The night passed by quickly, and as the sun began to rise in the east, it was as if countless shimmering golden scales had appeared on the surface of the sea, presenting a stunning sight to behold.

The Black Wind Sea was the first place Han Li had settled at upon his return to the Immortal Realm, so he harbored some special emotions for this place. This was like his hometown in the Immortal Realm, and that made him particularly partial to the scenery here.

However, right at this moment, he suddenly cast his gaze toward a certain direction with a hint of surprise in his eyes, then immediately stopped in his tracks.

He had just detected some violent spiritual qi fluctuations several thousand kilometers away in that direction, and it seemed that a fierce battle was taking place.

After a brief hesitation, he began to fly in that direction, but as he did so, his body slowly became transparent, and the azure light that he was giving off also faded, turning him into an invisible shadow.

At this current speed, he was able to cover several thousand kilometers to arrive at the scene of the battle in mere moments, and he concealed himself within a cloud in the sky before casting his gaze downward.

Enormous waves were rising up into the heavens alongside streaks of spiritual light of different colors, and resounding booms were also ringing out incessantly.

Out of the two opposing groups of cultivators, one of them consisted of five Black Wind Island cultivators, two of whom were at the Grand Ascension Stage, while the other three were at the Body Integration Stage.

One of the Grand Ascension cultivators was a young woman who appeared to have been in her twenties, and she was wielding an azure feather fan, which conjured up gusts of fierce azure wind with each sweep.

The other Grand Ascension cultivator was a thin yellow-aged man with a rather yellow complexion, and there was a blue mirror hovering above his head that was occasionally shooting forth thick pillars of blue light.

As for the three Body Integration cultivators, they were gathered around the young woman while controlling their own treasures, seemingly intentionally protecting her.

They were facing a pair of Azure Feather Island cultivators, and even though the Black Wind Island cultivators had the numbers advantage, they were in a terrible situation as one of the two Azure Feather Island cultivators, a bald man with a fleshy growth on his head, was at the True Immortal Stage.

At this moment, there was a large black flag hovering in front of the bald man, and the image of the black deity on the flag bore a close resemblance to the lightning god of legends.

As he made a string of hand seals, bolts of black lightning erupted out of the black flag in all directions to form a sea of black lightning.

Thick bolts of lightning shot out of the sea of lightning, vanquishing the attacks from the Black Wind Island cultivators with ease while also forcing them back into constant retreat.

Beside him was an elderly man with a goatee, and he was giving off a Grand Ascension Stage aura.

The elderly man was wielding a pair of yellow spear treasures, which had transformed into a pair of earthy yellow dragons that were blasting millstone-sized balls of yellow light out of their mouths to assist the bald man.

A hint of surprise flashed through Han Li's eyes at the sight of the young man as it was none other than the daughter of Island Master Lu Jun, Lu Yuqing.

"I didn't think you would dare to leave Black Wind Island when you're the sole heir to the island. I wonder if I should call you brave or foolish," the bald man chuckled coldly as he made a hand seal, and thick bolts of lightning erupted out of the sea of lightning, then rapidly intertwined to form five giant lightning serpents that pounced at the five Black Wind Island cultivators.

A grim look appeared on Lu Yuqing's face upon seeing this, and she swept her feather fan through the air, unleashing a gust of ferocious azure wind that enveloped the five huge lightning serpents at once.

Countless threads of azure light could be seen within the gust of wind, and the giant lightning serpents were slowed down significantly.

Meanwhile, the middle-aged man beside her made a rapid string of hand seals, and the blue mirror in front of him abruptly swelled to several hundred feet in size.

An incredibly thick pillar of blue light then shot out of the mirror to encompass the five lightning serpents while releasing vast glacial qi, immediately following which the pillar of light transformed into a massive blue ice mountain, freezing the five lightning serpents inside.

"Go, Young Mistress Yuqing! We'll hold off these two!" the man yelled while making a string of hand seals, sending thick pillars of blue light erupting out of his mirror toward the pair of opposing cultivators.

The other three Body Integration cultivators also braced themselves to make a final stand as they began bombarding the two Azure Feather Island cultivators with attacks.

A conflicted look appeared in Lu Yuqing's eyes, but she then gritted her teeth and fled toward the distance as a streak of azure light.

"You're not getting away!" the bald man declared with a cold smile as he switched to a different hand seal, and the five lightning serpents exploded violently into thick arcs of lightning that tore the blue ice mountain apart with ease.

Immediately thereafter, the arcs of lightning intertwined to form a huge lightning net that swept toward the group of Black Wind Island cultivators at an incredible speed, and it instantly fell upon the middle-aged man and the others, quickly charring their entire bodies black.

Meanwhile, the elderly man with the goatee sped away as a streak of yellow light in pursuit of Lu Yuqing.

Chapter 352: Identity Exposed

The other four Black Wind Island cultivators were struggling with all their might under the lightning net, but they were like insects trapped in a cobweb, unable to break free no matter how hard they tried.

A sinister grin appeared on the bald man's face as he pointed a finger forward, and four thick bolts pillars of lightning instantly erupted out of the black flag above his head before striking the four cultivators in a flash.

The protective treasures around the three Body Integration cultivators were torn apart without being able to put up any resistance, and their bodies were reduced to ashes before they even had a chance to cry out.

The middle-aged man possessed a far superior cultivation base to those three, but a pillar of lightning was still able to pierce straight through him, splitting his body into two with explosive force.

However, he was able to take advantage of this opportunity to struggle free from the lightning net, and a vast expanse of crimson light emerged to envelop the two halves of his body before speeding away in a certain direction as a ball of crimson light.

The bald man immediately switched to a different hand seal upon seeing this, and black lightning flashed over the surface of his black flag, following which it swelled drastically in size before flying away in pursuit of the ball of crimson light, intercepting it in the blink of an eye.

Immediately thereafter, the black flag wrapped itself around the ball of crimson light before releasing a vast expanse of black lightning, and an agonized howl rang out as the ball of crimson light was incinerated into ashes.

All of this had taken place in the span of just a few seconds, and the bald man made a beckoning motion, following which the black flag quickly flew back to his side, reverting back to its original size as it did so.

At the same time, he cast his gaze toward the direction that Lu Yuqing had fled in.

Lu Yuqing hadn't been able to get very far in such a short time, but the elderly man was still unable to catch up to her.

The bald man immediately sped off in that direction as an arc of black lightning, and as a Grand Ascension cultivator, there was naturally no way that Lu Yuqing could outrun a True Immortal, so the arc of black lightning was quickly able to catch up to her.

"Did you really think you could get away from me? What a joke!"

A cold voice rang out within the black lightning, immediately following which a massive black hand that was around an acre in size and formed entirely from lightning emerged out of thin air before grabbing toward Lu Yuqing.

Even before the giant hand had fully descended upon her, she was already struck by an enormous burst of pressure that swept up gusts of fierce wind, causing her to lose control in her flight and swirl around in the air like a helpless leaf.

A panicked look appeared on her face, and the feather fan in her hand lit up as it swelled to around twice its original size, following which she swept it upward with all her might.

A thick pillar of azure wind shot forth, and it was giving off an astonishing howling sound alongside faint spatial fluctuations, allowing it to keep the giant lightning palm at bay.

"That's... a Profound Heavenly Treasure!"

The bald man reappeared in mid-air with a surprised look on his face, following which he gave a cold harrumph as he thrust his palm forward once again.

The giant black lightning palm instantly swelled further by about twofold in size, and countless black lightning runes emerged around it as it also began to emanate bursts of law power fluctuations.

The pillar of azure wind was instantly crushed, while the giant lightning palm continued to descend, and all of the air beneath it seemed to have congealed.

Lu Yuqing felt the surrounding space constrict around her, rendering her completely unable to move, and a hint of despair appeared in her eyes.

Right as the giant palm was about to descend upon her, a burst of spatial fluctuations suddenly erupted beside it, immediately following which an azure shadow flashed past in a wraith-like fashion.

The giant lightning palm was instantly stopped cold in its tracks without any warning, then exploded violently into countless arcs of lightning that quickly dissipated.

As a result, Lu Yuqing was freed, and she was both stunned and elated as she immediately flew through the air, covering a distance of tens of thousands of feet in a flash.

However, instead of fleeing the scene, she began to inspect her surroundings with wide eyes.

"Who's there?" the bald man roared in a furious voice as he also began scouring the surrounding area.

Meanwhile, an alarmed look appeared on the elderly man's face, and he hurriedly flew back to the bald man's side before releasing his spiritual sense to sweep through the air, yet neither of them were able to detect anything.

"You have to be a True Immortal to have dispelled my attack so easily, so why are you sneaking around like a cowardly rat?" the bald man goaded in a mocking voice.

"I have no intention of getting involved in the conflict between Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island. It's just that I have some ties with this woman, so it would be much appreciated if you could let her go."

An indifferent voice reverberated through the air in response, but neither the bald man nor his companion were to ascertain where it was coming from.

"You want me to let her go? Why don't you make me?"

The bald man abruptly turned around and cast his gaze toward what appeared to have been nothing but empty air, following which an incredibly thick pillar of lightning erupted out of his black flag to strike the precise spot that he was looking at.

A vast expanse of dazzling lightning exploded with an earth-shattering boom, causing that stretch of space to shudder violently.

The lightning quickly dissipated, but there was still no one there.

An astonished look appeared on the bald man's face upon seeing this, and right at this moment, a faint sigh rang out beside his ears, followed by an authoritative declaration.

"Let there be wind!"

As soon as the voice trailed off, the bald man's surroundings instantly changed drastically, and he was suddenly transported from the sea to a vast yellow desert.

Gusts of fierce wind were howling around him, and the desert stretched as far as the eyes could see with countless tornadoes raging on the horizon.

The bald man was astonished to see this, but he then immediately realized the situation that he was in.

"This is an illusion!"

Right at this moment, a streak of azure light pierced through his dantian. It was an azure flying sword, and there was a nascent soul pinned through its tip.

The bald man looked down with wide and incredulous eyes at the sight of the flying sword protruding out of his lower abdomen, and in the next instant, the azure flying sword destroyed the nascent soul before vanishing in a flash.

The surrounding desert faded away, and the sea was revealed again.

At this point, the bald man's body was completely limp and lifeless, and a large hole had been pierced through his lower abdomen as he plunged down toward the sea like a dead weight.

Right at this moment, a streak of silver fire suddenly emerged to strike the body, immediately setting it alight and incinerating it into ashes.

The elderly man's expression changed drastically upon seeing this, and he frantically looked around with a horrified expression.

Whoever the concealed enemy was, they were able to slay a True Immortal cultivator in an instant, so he was naturally no match for them.

With that in mind, the elderly man began to tremble with fear as he fell to his knees and implored, "Please spare me, Senior..."

However, right at this moment, a streak of azure swordlight flew out of thin air, then flew in a circle around the elderly man's body at an incredible speed.

The elderly man's expression instantly stiffened, immediately following which several gashes appeared all over his body, splitting it into pieces.

At the same time, his nascent soul had also been destroyed, and the chunks of his body plummeted into the sea down below.

The streak of azure swordlight vanished once again, and peace and quiet was restored.

Lu Yuqing was relatively calm in the wake of this turn of events, and after returning to her senses, she immediately extended a curtsey as she said, "Lu Yuqing of Black Wind Island sincerely thanks you for saving her life, Senior. Would you be able to show yourself?"

Concealed within the cloud in the sky, Han Li made a beckoning motion to recover an Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword, which was carrying a pair of storage tools and a small black flag.

He flipped a hand over to stow these items away, then prepared to leave, displaying no intention of revealing himself.

All of a sudden, Lu Yuqing's ecstatic voice rang out. "Brother Liu!"

Han Li was quite alarmed to hear this, and he immediately stopped cold in his tracks before turning back to look at Lu Yuqing.

At this moment, there was a layer of rippling black light within her eyes, and she was looking directly at him.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this. Under the scrutiny of her strange eyes, it felt as if he were entirely laid bare to her.

If she had been a cultivator of the same caliber as him, then he wouldn't have been overly surprised, but it was very remarkable that a Grand Ascension cultivator like her possessed such an uncanny ocular ability.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li decided to reveal himself, descending not far away in front of Lu Yuqing.

Lu Yuqing faltered slightly at the sight of him, and Han Li was rather puzzled by her reaction, but didn't say anything.

A slightly sulky look appeared on her face as she said, "You didn't look like this back when we last met. Are you in disguise now or were you in disguise back then? Or perhaps you've never revealed your appearance to me?"

"If you're unable to see through my disguise, then how did you recognize me?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

Lu Yuqing hesitated momentarily, then smiled as she replied, "I was born with a pair of Illusory Ghost Eyes that can see straight through the souls of others, thereby allowing me to identify them."

Han Li's expression remained unchanged upon hearing this, but internally, he was quite surprised that such an innate ocular ability existed.

Transient Guild masks could only alter one's appearance and aura, but not one's soul, so it was no wonder that she was able to identify him, and that left Han Li with a rather difficult predicament.

He had saved Lu Yuqing as they were acquaintances, and he had thought that he could simply save her and leave without being detected or recognized, but his plans had been foiled.

However, he couldn't just kill her in order to silence her. He simply wasn't such a cold and callous individual that he could do such a cold-blooded thing to an innocent woman.

Chapter 353: Returning to Dark Veil Island

Lu Yuqing seemed to have identified Han Li's concerns, and she promised in a solemn voice, "Rest assured, Brother Liu, I won't tell anyone about this, including my father."

Han Li faltered slightly upon hearing this, then nodded in response. "You have my thanks. I'm just an itinerant cultivator, and I really don't want to get involved in the conflict between your Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island."

"I should be the one thanking you, Brother Liu! You just saved my life!" Lu Yuqing chuckled.

Han Li merely responded with a faint smile.

After considering the situation, he had realized that it wasn't much of a problem even if his identity were exposed.

All Lu Yuqing knew was that he was an itinerant cultivator by the name of Liu Shi, and he had altered his appearance back when he first arrived on Black Wind Island, so there was very little chance that they would be able to make the connection that he was Liu Shi of Dark Veil Island. After all, there were countless cultivators in the Black Wind Sea, and it wouldn't have been uncommon to see people with the same name.

With that in mind, he felt even more reassured.

"Having said that, the conflict between our Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island will most likely only increase in scope, and it's only a matter of time before the entire Black Wind Sea is swept up in the conflict, so it won't be easy to remain uninvolved. You've saved my life twice, and I'm extremely grateful to you.

"My father also has a very high opinion of you, so if you're willing to come to our Black Wind Island, you'll definitely be given very favorable treatment. Our Black Wind Island has always been very kind to its elders," Lu Yuqing said.

Han Li merely smiled in response, silently turning down her offer.

A hint of disappointment flashed through Lu Yuqing's eyes upon seeing this, but she then pulled out a black badge before offering it to Han Li.

"I can see that you've already made up your mind, so I won't try to persuade you any further. This is my personal badge. If you ever need to go to Black Wind Island for whatever reason, you'll be able to come and go as you please with this badge."

Han Li accepted the badge, then took a brief glance at it before stowing it away.

"I still have some matters to attend to, so I'll be taking my leave. I suggest you return to Black Wind Island as quickly as possible, Fellow Daoist Lu. This is not a safe place," Han Li said, then sped away as a streak of azure light, vanishing into the distance in the blink of an eye.

Lu Yuqing looked on at his departing figure with a slightly forlorn expression, then quickly flew back toward Black Wind Island as well.

After flying for some time, Han Li suddenly changed directions in his flight, and around half a day later, he had finally left the area in which the conflict between Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island was taking place.

From there, Han Li immediately accelerated, hurtling through the air like a bolt of azure lightning.

After flying for about half a month, he had reached a very secluded area in the Black Wind Sea, and there were barely any islands to be seen.

All of a sudden, he stopped in his tracks, then released his spiritual sense throughout the surrounding area.

In the next instant, he abruptly swooped downward and plunged into the sea.

After roaming over the seabed for a moment, he arrived at a deepsea chasm, and he flew to the bottom of the chasm without any hesitation.

There, he found a patch of flat ground before summoning a stack of array tools, which he set down one after another.

This was a rather complex array, and it took Han Li over two hours to set it up to completion.

After that, he chanted an incantation, and a blue light barrier emerged, instantly encompassing the surrounding area in a radius of several hundred feet.

The blue light barrier was very faint in color, and it was even more difficult to catch sight of in the sea. Furthermore, it wasn't giving off any magic power fluctuations, so even if one were situated very close to it, they could still easily miss it.

After doing all of this, a pleased look appeared in Han Li's eyes, and he swept a hand through the water to release around a dozen lengths of Lightning Restraining Wood, all of which were engraved with countless runes.

This was none other than his long-distance lightning teleportation array.

Even though Lu Yuqing had promised not to expose him, he didn't dare to grow complacent.

After a day and a night, he was finally able to complete the lightning array.

He then cast an incantation seal through the water, and a burst of golden lightning instantly emerged within the lightning teleportation array as it began to operate.

However, the aura of the array was completely isolated within the blue restriction, so it was completely undetectable outside.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this, and after taking some more time to examine the array to ensure that there weren't any issues, he promptly departed.

A month later.

The sun gradually rose up over the horizon, but the entirety of Dark Veil Island was still enshrouded in a murky veil of mist.

The mist slowly began to dissipate as gusts of sea breeze blew over the island, and the branches of the trees all over the island were rustling incessantly. Smoke from stove fires was rising up from all of the mortal settlements on the island, and everything appeared serene and peaceful.

All of a sudden, Han Li appeared in the sky above the island amid a burst of spatial fluctuations.

At this moment, his entire body was enveloped within a faint watery light barrier, giving him the appearance of an indistinct shadow that could vanish at any moment.

His expression eased slightly at the sight of the serene scenes down below.

In the current Black Wind Sea, only secluded islands like Dark Veil Island could still enjoy this level of peace and serenity.

He cast his gaze downward, and a hint of a surprise suddenly appeared on his face.

The island remained virtually unchanged, except the village-like settlement of the Luo Clan had been completely replaced with a stretch of luxurious palaces complete with exquisite pagodas and pavilions, as well as some lotus flower ponds, resembling a glorious immortal abode.

Streaks of light were flying over the palaces, and all of them were members of the Luo Clan.

There were far more of them than before, and their cultivation bases had also improved significantly on average. It seemed that Dark Veil Island had been thriving since he was last here, and some of the mortal cities all over the island had also enjoyed large population spikes.

A pleased look appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, and abruptly vanished into thin air, then reappeared in front of a certain place down below.

Inside the palace was a huge altar, upon which stood a deity statue of none other than Han Li.

At this moment, two people were kowtowing and praying to the deity statue.

Both of them were at the Grand Ascension Stage, and bursts of formidable power of faith were converging toward the statue.

Moments later, the two of them rose to their feet, then raised their heads to look up at the statue.

One of these two people was Luo Feng, and he had made significant strides in his cultivation base.

The other person was a middle-aged man with large eyes and bushy brows, and Han Li recalled that he was a Body Integration Stage elder by the name of Luo Ming, but he had also progressed to the Grand Ascension Stage during the past few centuries.

Right at this moment, the sound of footsteps rang out from outside the palace, and a young man who was also dressed in Luo Clan attire arrived.

Instead of entering the palace, he extended a respectful curtsey while standing outside as he declared, "Clan Head, Grand Elder, the preparations for the ceremony are complete."

"Good. Have all of the island masters arrived?" Luo Feng asked as he rose to his feet.

"Island Master Tie Yan and Island Master Chen Zhong have already arrived. Island Master Ling Yun says that he has some matters to attend to on Dusk Cloud Island, so he'll be coming a little later, but he definitely won't delay the ceremony tomorrow," the young man replied in a respectful manner.

A hint of surprise flashed through Han Li's eyes upon hearing this.

Tie Yan and Chen Zhong were a pair of itinerant cultivators who had pledged their subordination to Dark Veil Island in the wake of Han L's slaying of Han Qiu and Mistress Gu Gu, and they had been sent by him to oversee those two islands.

As for Dusk Cloud Island, that was a nearby island, and judging from what the young man had just said, it seemed to have pledged its subordination to Dark Veil Island as well.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon hearing this.

It seemed that Luo Feng and the others had done quite well, and at this point, Dark Veil Island was most likely one of the most powerful islands in this area.

As for the ceremony, this was an event that was held on Dark Veil Island once every 50 years.

"Alright, you can go now. Proceed according to the plan, and do not gloss over any details," Luo Feng instructed with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"Yes, Clan Head," the young man replied with a respectful bow before departing.

Following the young man's departure, Luo Ming asked, "Clan Head, will Master Liu Shi be attending this ceremony?"

He then hesitated momentarily before continuing, "Master Liu Shi has already been in seclusion for several centuries. Is it possible that something's gone wrong with his cultivation?"

"Cease your baseless speculation! Master Liu Shi's powers are unfathomable, how could any problem have possibly arisen in his cultivation? At his cultivation base, it's very common to go into seclusion for hundreds or even thousands of years, so don't say anything like that ever again," Luo Feng scolded with a stern expression.

"I naturally also attribute no weight to these baseless claims, but after the disappearance of Ancestral God Luo Meng in the past, even though our island has been peaceful these past few centuries, many of our people are still quite anxious about the possibility of the ancestral god disappearing again.

"On top of that, with all the conflict taking place in the Black Wind Sea, those concerns have only been heightened, and to further compound these woes, Master Liu Shi hasn't made an appearance in several centuries. Tie Yan, Ling Yun, and the others appear quite respectful and obedient on the surface, but if Master Liu Shi continues to remain in seclusion, there's no telling whether they could hatch some nefarious plans," Luo Ming said.

Luo Feng's brows also furrowed slightly upon hearing this.

"Clan Head, I suggest you go and see Master Liu Shi and implore him to make an appearance at this ceremony, even if it's just this once," Luo Ming advised.

"Alright, I'll put that on my agenda," Luo Feng replied with a nod.

After that, the two of them began to discuss some finer details pertaining to the ceremony, and Han Li discreetly departed.

He had come to see whether Luo Feng had been acting according to his instructions these past few centuries, and he was quite reassured to see that Luo Feng was still performing his duties and obligations.

After leaving Dark Veil Island, Han Li arrived at a nearby region of the sea, where there was a vast vortex that was swirling incessantly.

Han Li flew into the water in a flash, quickly reaching the seabed.

There was a hemispherical blue light barrier that was around an acre in size overlooking the seabed, and layers of rippling blue light were flashing over its surface.

Seawater was able to pass through the light barrier without any impediment, and Han Li cast an incantation seal through the water, upon which an opening immediately appeared on the light barrier, allowing him to fly through.

At this moment, his Earthly Deity Avatar was seated with its legs crossed on the seabed with a thread of blue light hovering above its head. This was a water law thread, and it was far thicker than when Han Li last saw it, with countless tiny runes flashing within it.

The avatar was enshrouded within a thick layer of blue light that was rippling incessantly, and all of the surrounding seawater was swirling around it.

Judging from the formidable spiritual pressure that it was giving off, the Earthly Deity Avatar had already reached the mid-True Immortal Stage, and it was approaching the pinnacle of that stage, so it wasn't far away from the late-True Immortal Stage.

Chapter 354: Site Selection

Han Li wasn't all that surprised to see this.

This avatar had been constantly cultivating by manifesting heavy water using the time crystals, and even though there had been some occasional interruptions, its rate of progression wasn't much slower than Han Li's, so it was no surprise that it had reached the mid-True Immortal Stage.

Right at this moment, the blue light radiating from the avatar's body faded, and it rose to its feet, while the vortex in the sea slowly subsided.

"Thanks for your hard work," Han Li said.

"We are one and the same, so there's no need to thank me. Here's the heavy water I've derived these past years," the Earthly Deity Avatar replied as it flipped its hand over to produce a black pouch, then offered it to Han Li.

Han Li reached out to grab the pouch, but the Earthly Deity Avatar didn't let go right away. Instead, he cautioned, "Be careful, it's very heavy."

Han Li raised an eyebrow as he braced himself, but in the instant that the Earthly Deity Avatar released the pouch, his arm was still abruptly dragged downward, and his entire body was almost thrown forward by the enormous weight of the pouch.

He let loose a low roar as the muscles on his arm bulged, while a layer of golden light appeared over his body, and only then was he able to arrest the pouch's downward momentum.

A hint of surprise flashed through his eyes upon seeing this.

Heavy water had to be refined before he could manipulate it at will, but the fact that he was struggling to hold up such a small pouch even with his current tremendous strength indicated that it had to be containing an enormous volume of heavy water.

With that in mind, he injected his spiritual sense into the pouch, upon which he was once again rather surprised by what he saw.

This was a Heavenly Water Pouch that he had purchased from the Transient Guild for a high price, and it was able to store an entire large lake's worth of water, yet it had almost been completely filled.

"Impressive!" Han Li remarked with a pleased nod.

"After I reached the mid-True Immortal Stage and the fourth level of the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome, my rate of heavy water derivation sped up significantly. This pouch of heavy water is almost enough to be refined into a small creek's worth of level four heavy water," the Earthly Deity Avatar explained.

Han Li nodded in response, and he stowed the Heavenly Water Pouch away before producing two identical empty pouches that he handed to his avatar. "Keep cultivating, and I'll try to supply you with as many time crystals as possible."

The Earthly Deity Avatar accepted the pair of pouches without a word, then sat back down with his legs crossed.

Immediately thereafter, blue light re-emerged over his body, while the law thread above his head gave off dazzling blue light, forming a tiny blue vortex.

The surrounding seawater was churned up into a huge vortex once again around Earthly Deity Avatar, and a tiny speck of heavy water was slowly gradually taking shape between the palms of the avatar's hands, and it was expanding at a rate that was discernible even to the naked eye.

Han Li was rather taken aback to see this, and he immediately urged, "Hold on a second!"

The blue light radiating from the Earthly Deity Avatar's body instantly faded, and it rose to its feet once again.

"Did you just say that upon reaching the fourth level of the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome, your rate of heavy water derivation has significantly increased?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

The avatar nodded in response. "It increased by about threefold."

Han Li was quite stunned to hear this, and he immediately asked, "Threefold! Has the same thing been happening with each level that you've progressed in the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome?"

"For the first three levels, the rate has also been increasing, but not by much. However, upon reaching the fourth level, the rate suddenly increased drastically," the avatar replied.

A hint of excitement flashed through Han Li's eyes upon hearing this.

Progress was extremely slow in the early stages of the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome, and he certainly wasn't expecting something like this to happen.

The Earthly Immortal who had created the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome had only just reached the third level before he gave up on the cultivation art, unable to bear its agonizingly slow rate of progression any longer, and he most likely hadn't anticipated this, either.

At this point, Han Li was seriously beginning to doubt that the Earthly Immortal was actually the creator of the Black Sea Heavy Water Tome.

If he really had created the cultivation art, then this shouldn't have been something that he had failed to anticipate. It was very likely that someone else had created the cultivation art, and he had only obtained it from somewhere before declaring that he was the creator.

"Alright, you can keep cultivating," Han Li said with a contemplative look in his eyes.

He was really eager to find out whether there would be another significant jump in the rate of heavy water derivation upon reaching the fifth stage of the cultivation art.

If so, then with the assistance of the time crystals, the rate of heavy water derivation would reach an incredible level, and even deriving level eight and level nine heavy water at some point in the future wouldn't have been unrealistic.

The Earthly Deity Avatar sat back down with its legs crossed to resume its cultivation, while Han Li observed it with a contemplative look in his eyes.

All of a sudden, he cast his gaze up toward the surface of the sea.

A streak of light had just flown over from afar and stopped outside the blue light barrier. It was none other than Luo Feng, and he cupped his fist in a salute as he greeted, "Luo Feng pays his respects to Master Liu Shi."

On the seabed, Han Li replied, "What is it, Luo Feng?"

Luo Feng faltered slightly upon hearing this, following which an ecstatic look appeared on his face as he hurriedly explained, "Master Liu Shi, our Dark Veil Island's bicentennial ceremony will be taking place tomorrow. Would you be able to make an appearance during the event?"

He had visited Liu Shi several times in the past without receiving a response, so he was fully prepared to be disappointed again, and he was ecstatic that he had received a response for once.

The vortex in the sea continued to churn and swirl, and there was no response.

A sense of urgency welled up in Luo Feng's heart, and he said, "I don't wish to disturb your cultivation, Master Liu Shi, but there's recently been a lot of unrest in the Black Wind Sea. The conflict between Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island is becoming more and more intense, and many of our island's people are growing quite concerned. If you can make an appearance tomorrow, that would surely be a very reassuring sight for everyone..."

"Alright, I'll make an appearance during the ceremony tomorrow."

Han Li's voice rang out from the seabed to cut off Luo Feng.

"Thank you, Master Liu Shi! I'll be taking my leave now!"

Luo Feng was ecstatic, and he extended a respectful bow toward the seabed before flying back to Dark Veil Island.

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Inside the light barrier, Han Li withdrew his gaze.

His Earthly Deity Avatar was going to make an appearance during the ceremony in his stead.

Given its current mid-True Immortal Stage power, it was more than enough to intimidate those early-True Immortal Stage itinerant cultivators.

With that in mind, he flipped a hand over to produce the jade seal that contained the map of the Black Wind Sea, then pressed it against his own forehead.

Now that everything had already been settled, it was time to find a place to go into seclusion.

Dark Veil Island was relatively safe and peaceful, but it wasn't actually an ideal place for him to go into seclusion.

While it was unlikely for his identity as Liu Shi to be exposed, there were no guarantees in the matter, and he didn't want to risk the prospect of having the identity of Liu Shi traced back to him.

Around an hour later, a barely visible streak of azure light flew out of the sea and into the distance.

Only after three days and three nights did Han Li draw to a halt, and he had arrived in an area of the Black Wind Sea that was even more secluded than Dark Veil Island, with nothing but ocean and small deserted islands as far as the eyes could see.

The islands were completely uninhabited by humans, but there were many demon beasts on both the islands and the nearby sea, with no lack of Body Integration and even Grand Ascension Stage demon beasts among them.

Han Li looked around to find that the spirit veins on these islands were decent, not quite on the same level as Dark Veil Island, but there was still a relative abundance of spiritual qi in the area.

This place was already extremely far away from Dark Veil Island, and virtually no cultivators ever came here, making it an ideal location for seclusion.

As for the demon beasts in the area, those naturally posed no threat to him.

With that in mind, he spread his enormous spiritual sense throughout the area, and a short while later, he descended onto a small island down below.

The island wasn't very large, only several dozen kilometers in diameter.

The environment on the island was rather complex, with a volcano that was around 1,000 feet tall situated at its center, and due to the frequent volcanic eruptions, there was no plant life around, only crimson rocks littered all over the landscape.

However, a bit further away from the volcano was a lush forest, and even further away were a series of ponds and swamps, as well as a vibrant grassland.

It was a place that was full of vitality, and there were even some spirit plants and spirit flowers growing here.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this.

The island wasn't very large, but its spirit vein was the best one in the nearby area.

He arrived at an obscure little canyon on the island, then swept a hand through the air to release a streak of azure sword qi, which sliced through a mountain face like tofu, and before long, a cave abode had taken shape.

Han Li didn't put too much effort into refining the cave abode, only paying a little extra attention when carving out the spirit medicine garden. After that, he pulled out a stack of array flags and array plates before setting them up near the new cave abode.

With the restrictions activated, a burst of gentle azure light appeared, following which the cave abode abruptly vanished, transforming into a lush forest that blended in with the nearby environment.

This restriction was the same as the one he had set up earlier on the seabed in that it wasn't giving off any aura, so even if a True Immortal were to scour the area with their spiritual sense, they weren't likely to discover it.

After that, Han Li summoned several more stacks of array tools that had been previously used to set up restrictions around his cave abode back on the Crimson Dawn Peak, and before long, the new cave abode resembled an impregnable fortress.

He had even pulled out another array and set it up around the entire island, but he refrained from activating those restrictions right away, saving them for potential future enemy attacks instead.

After doing all of that, he strode into his cave abode and arrived at the medicine garden.

He had made sure to carve out a large area for the garden, even more so than the one back in his cave abode on the Crimson Dawn Peak.

After standing on the spot for a while, he swept a sleeve several times in succession through the air, summoning clumps of spirit soil of different colors that descended into the medicine garden.

Some of these things had been prepared by him in advance, while others had been purchased on the way back to the Black Wind Sea.

Chapter 355: Sealing the Island

After that, Han Li pulled out various types of spirit liquid and began to mix batches of spirit soil while also setting up restrictions throughout the medicine garden to split it up into different sections.

Only after doing all of that did he pull out all of the spirit medicines in his storage pouch before carefully transferring them to this new medicine garden.

While Han Li was arranging his medicine garden, the ceremony on Dark Veil Island had also commenced.

At this moment, the entire sky above the island was enshrouded in a layer of vibrant crimson light, and black wooden pillars with lit braziers on top of them had also appeared all over the island, giving the event a sense of prestige and occasion.

On a giant plaza stood three huge lit wooden pyres, each of which was several hundred feet tall, and at the center of the pyres was a massive altar.

Atop the altar was a deity statue that was over 100 feet tall, and many people were gathered at the foot of the altar, including all of the cultivators of the Luo Clan.

Aside from them, there were also cultivators in alternative attire, and they were from Dark Veil Island's three subsidiary islands.

In front of the crowd stood four figures. The one on the very left was Luo Feng, and he was joined by a fair-skinned young man, a middle-aged scholarly man with a black mole on his face, and a beautiful woman wearing a long green dress that exposed a sliver of her fair and voluptuous cleavage.

At this moment, everyone was worshipping the altar, and these four were no exception.

Luo Feng wore a solemn expression and was impeccable in every single one of his movements, while the other three had hints of disdain on their faces and were clearly just going through the motions.

They were all True Immortal cultivators, so they were naturally quite reluctant to be worshipping a statue of another True Immortal.

As time passed, the ceremony quickly approached its conclusion.

At this point, Luo Feng and the other three figures beside him had already departed from the front of the crowd and sat down on some nearby chairs.

"Clan Head Luo, today's ceremony is an important occasion for Dark Veil Island. Is Fellow Daoist Liu Shi still not going to make an appearance?" the fair-skinned young man suddenly asked.

"Come to think of it, I only ever met Fellow Daoist Liu Shi once several centuries ago, and he's been in seclusion ever since then. Is he cultivating some type of ability or secret technique?" the scholarly man asked.

The young woman was also looking at Luo Feng, and even though she wasn't saying anything, the inquisitive look in her eyes was very apparent.

Luo Feng took a glance at the trio, then smiled as he replied, "I already met with Master Liu Shi yesterday, and he'll be making an appearance today."

The expressions of the trio instantly changed slightly upon hearing this.

"Is that true?"

"Of course," Luo Feng replied with a smile.

The fair-skinned young man exchanged a glance with the other two True Immortals, then nodded as he said, "It would be great if Fellow Daoist Liu could make an appearance. At the moment, the Black Wind Sea is a state of widespread turmoil, and we'll need him to make decisions on how our Dark Veil Island is to proceed from here onward."

"Indeed, Fellow Daoist Tie Yan. All of the major powers across the entire Black Wind Sea are keenly observing the unfolding situation. Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island are far too formidable for a small island like ours to compare with, so we have to make sure that we don't make any missteps. Otherwise, the consequences could be catastrophic," the scholarly man chimed in.

The fair-skinned young man's name was Tie Yan, while the scholarly man's name was Chen Zhong.

A grim look appeared on Luo Feng's face upon hearing this, and he offered no response.

"There's no need to be so pessimistic, everyone. With us and Fellow Daoist Liu joining forces, we're certainly nothing to be scoffed at, and we should be more than enough to protect these few islands," the young woman suddenly said.

"You sure are optimistic, Fellow Daoist Ling Yun," Tie Yan replied with a faint smile, but it was clear that he wasn't convinced.

The ceremony continued, yet even as it was about to reach a conclusion, Han Li still hadn't made an appearance.

Luo Feng was still seated on his chair, but a hint of anxiety had crept into his eyes, he was occasionally darting glances in the direction where Han Li was in seclusion, while the expressions of Tie Yan's trio were also becoming more skeptical by the minute.

"It looks like Fellow Daoist Liu may be busy and can't make an appearance today, after all," Tie Yan remarked.

As soon as his voice trailed off, a speck of blue light suddenly appeared on the distant horizon before rapidly expanding as it approached from afar.

A burst of rumbling that resembled the sound of countless thundering horse hooves rang out, and all of the world's origin qi in the surrounding area surged violently, forming streaks of blue light that converged from all directions, basking everything near the altar in a blue glow.

At the same time, a burst of tremendous spiritual pressure descended upon everyone down below from the blue light, and everyone was instantly rooted to the spot.

The expressions of Tie Yan's trio changed drastically as they looked up into the sky, and Chen Zhong gulped nervously as he exclaimed to himself in a feeble voice, "He's reached the mid-True Immortal Stage!"

Tie Yan and Ling Yun were just as astonished, and a hint of fear and alarm had surfaced in their eyes.

All of a sudden, all of the blue light faded, and a blue figure slowly descended onto the altar before withdrawing their immense spiritual pressure.

The figure was completely enshrouded in a layer of blue light that gave them an indistinct appearance, and one could only barely make out the outlines of a man standing with his hands clasped behind his back.

Luo Feng was ecstatic, and he immediately extended a respectful salute. "Ancestral God Liu Shi!"

All of the Luo Clan's cultivators were also relieved and elated to see Han Li's arrival, and they hurriedly extended respectful salutes as well.

Everyone else from the other islands quickly followed suit, as did Tie Yan's trio.

"No need for formalities," the blue figure said, and his voice wasn't very loud, but it was clearly audible to everyone present.

Everyone immediately reverted to their original standing postures as they cast their eyes toward the blue figure.

All of the Luo Clan's cultivators were looking at him with fervent elation, but the same didn't apply to some of the cultivators from the other three islands.

"While it's true that I've been in cultivation for the entirety of the past few centuries, I've been keeping tabs on everything that's been happening on the islands and in the Black Wind Sea," the blue figure declared.

The expressions of Tie Yan's trio instantly stiffened slightly upon hearing this.

"Luo Feng, you've managed the islands quite well these past few centuries. Here is a vial of Profound Moon Pills as a reward for your efforts," the blue figure said as he swept a hand through the air to send a burst of blue light flying toward Luo Feng, and the blue light quickly faded to reveal a white jade vial.

An ecstatic look appeared on Luo Feng's face as he hurriedly extended a grateful bow. "Thank you, Ancestral God Liu Shi!"

A hint of admiration flashed through the eyes of Tie Yan's trio upon seeing this.

Profound Moon Pills were extremely renowned pills that had a substantial cultivation enhancement effect even on True Immortal cultivators. However, they were extremely rare, and Black Wind Island was perhaps the only place where they could be purchased in the entire Black Wind Sea.

"Keep working hard in your cultivation and strive to reach the True Immortal Stage as soon as possible," the blue figure instructed.

"I won't disappoint you, Ancestral God Liu Shi!" Luo Feng vowed with a firm nod.

"Tie Yan, Chen Zhong, Ling Yun, the three of you have also worked hard. You can have these three spirit treasures," the blue figure continued as he swept his sleeve through the air once again, releasing three streaks of light that descended in front of the trio before revealing a set of treasures, namely a green jade scepter, a white bead, and a small yellow flag.

All three treasures were premium spirit treasures that were giving off extremely formidable magic power fluctuations and were only one step away from immortal treasures.

Tie Yan's trio was ecstatic, and they split the treasures among themselves before also extending grateful bows.

The blue figure swept a sleeve through the air a third time, this time sending a storage tool flying toward Luo Feng.

"Luo Feng, there are some pills and cultivation resources in there for you to distribute as you see fit and maximize the power of our Dark Veil Island," the blue figure said.

Luo Feng immediately gave an affirmative response.

"As for the ongoing conflict between Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island, that has nothing to do with our Dark Veil Island, so in order to avoid getting swept up in the conflict, from this day forth, everyone is strictly forbidden from leaving the island, and all islands will enter a period of lockdown," the blue figure declared.

This wasn't a surprising decision from Han Li, and no one raised any objections.

The blue figure swept his gaze over everyone present as he declared, "Rest assured, everyone. So long as you remain loyal to Dark Veil Island, I will ensure your safety."

Everyone was instilled with a sense of warmth and reassurance upon hearing this, and they extended another collective grateful bow.

After that, the blue figure didn't linger any longer, promptly departing into the distance as a streak of blue light.

Tie Yan's trio watched as the blue figure departed, then exchanged a few glances, and all of the skepticism they previously harbored had been completely erased, replaced with nothing but awe and veneration.

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Several days later.

On a small island a vast distance away, Han Li was in a state of seated meditation when he suddenly opened his eyes as a faint smile appeared on his face.

His Earthly Deity Avatar had already informed him that Dark Veil Island and its three subsidiary islands had all activated their protective arrays, cutting the islands off from all external contact.

This was naturally something that he had planned in advance.

By sealing the islands, he could minimize his chances of being swept up in the conflict between Black Wind Island and Azure Feather Island, thereby mitigating the risk of his identity being exposed as much as possible.

With that matter settled, he rose to his feet and arrived at his spirit medicine garden.

The garden had a radius of close to 1,000 feet, and it had already been split up into several dozen different sections through the use of light barriers of different colors. The environment in each section was different, allowing for different spirit medicines to thrive.

Some sections were hot, some sections were cold, and some were completely shielded from all light, giving them a perpetual night-like environment.

The spirit medicines had become a little wilted after being stored in Han Li's storage pouch for some time, but now that they had been replanted, they were quickly recovering their vitality.

Aside from that, Han Li had also planted some of the spirit medicine seeds that he had recently acquired, as well as his other primary bean.

At the moment, he simply didn't have a sufficient number of Dao Warriors at his disposal to serve any substantial purpose, so he had to grow some more.

Among these spirit medicines, Han Li was naturally particularly invested in the primary ingredients required to refine the Myriad Axis Pill, namely the Myriad Axis Fruit, the Herofall Flower, and the Blood Crystal Lotus Root. He had planted them in the best locations in the garden and also used the best spirit soil as well.

In particular, he had spent a great deal of time and effort crafting a spirit pond for the length of Blood Crystal Lotus Root that he had purchased during that auction.

He had already gathered a sufficient quantity of all of the Myriad Axis Pill's supplementary ingredients, so once these three primary ingredients were ready, he would be able to commence the pill refinement process.

Chapter 356: Myriad Axis Pill

After carefully examining these three spirit medicines and instructing his giant ape puppet to water them with the Heaven Controlling Vial's spirit liquid in a timely fashion, Han Li departed from the medicine garden and returned to his secret chamber before sitting down with his legs crossed.

At this point, it wouldn't be long before all of the ingredients required to refine the Myriad Axis Pill were ready.

Hence, his current priority was acquiring the two remaining ingredients required for dao pill refinement, namely the Heavenmade Ginseng Root and the Dewform Herb.

With that in mind, Han Li flipped a hand over to produce his Transient Guild mask before putting it on.

He then began to read through the missions in a well-rehearsed fashion, yet there were still no responses to the missions that he had released to acquire those two spirit ingredients.

After a brief moment of contemplation, he erased the previous missions before releasing them again, except the rewards were tripled this time.

With such substantial rewards on offer, he was confident that it was only a matter of time before he received some responses.

After doing all of that, he stowed his Transient Guild mask away, then pulled out a pair of storage tools, which he had obtained from the pair of Azure Feather Island cultivators.

After briefly inspecting their contents with his spiritual sense, he couldn't help but shake his head in dismay.

The cultivators of the Black Wind Sea were downright impoverished compared with their counterparts in the outside world, and their storage tools contained nothing of sufficient value to catch his eye.

All of a sudden, he raised an eyebrow as he flipped a hand over to produce an azure badge.

This was an item in the bald man's storage tool, and it had been crafted from some type of azure spirit jade. On one side was engraved the image of a phoenix-like azure spirit bird, while on the other side was inscribed the character for "Feather".

This must be some type of badge from Azure Feather Island.

The badge didn't appear to contain any information on the bald man, which set it apart from the average identification badge, and that left Han Li feeling a little perplexed.

He inspected the badge a moment longer before stowing it away. After all, he had no interest in native powers of the Black Wind Island like Azure Feather Island anyway, so he naturally didn't want to waste any time or effort studying the badge.

After closing his eyes for a moment to prime himself into optimal condition, he began to examine the third level of the Mantra Axis Scripture.

Even though he had already reached the late-True Immortal Stage, he still hadn't truly begun cultivating the third level of the Mantra Axis Scripture as it was far more difficult to understand than the previous two levels, and he was still yet to completely grasp it.

He was waiting for the three primary ingredients for the Myriad Axis Pill to mature anyway, so this was a good opportunity to study the cultivation art.

Over 30 years passed by in the blink of an eye.

Throughout this entire time, the gate of Han Li's cave abode hadn't been opened even once, and it was already covered in a thick layer of dust.

Of course, no one had come to visit him during this time, either.

At this moment, Han Li was standing in his medicine garden, and he was in the process of carefully picking three golden spirit fruits from a golden spirit tree that was around 10 feet tall. These were none other than Myriad Axis Fruits.

He gave a pleased nod at the sight of the fruits in his hands, and he stowed them away in his storage bracelet before leaving his medicine garden to make his way to the pill refinement chamber.

On the way, he stopped in his tracks and took a glance at another secret chamber.

This was where Daoist Xie was staying in seclusion. Around a decade ago, Daoist Xie had suddenly requested Han Li to arrange a secret chamber for it, and Han Li naturally wasn't going to refuse such a request.

However, up to this point, nothing seemed to have happened in the secret chamber, and Han Li had no idea what Daoist Xie was doing in there.

Daoist Xie was only becoming more and more mysterious in his eyes, and he couldn't help but feel as if it were harboring some type of obscure secret.

However, as long as Daoist Xie wasn't doing anything to his detriment, he naturally wasn't going to meddle in its business. After all, he had far too much on his plate already.

With that in mind, he made his way into his pill refinement chamber, then activated all of the surrounding restrictions before sitting down with his legs crossed.

During these past few decades, the vast majority of the spirit liquid that had been manifested by the Heaven Controlling Vial had been used to mature the Myriad Axis Fruit, the Herofall Flower, and the Blood Crystal Lotus Root.

At this point, he had finally matured sufficient ingredients to refine 30 batches of pills, and he could begin attempting to refine Myriad Axis Pills.

He meditated for half a day to prime himself into the best possible condition, then swept both sleeves through the air to summon that silver cauldron, as well as the fiery silver figure, which fell under the cauldron.

The fiery silver figure sat down with its legs crossed, then made a hand seal, and the silver flames on its body instantly reared up before splitting up into nine identical bursts of flames that enveloped the underside of the cauldron in an extremely even fashion.

Han Li swept a sleeve through the air once again, and 30 batches of Myriad Axis Pill refinement ingredients emerged, laid out beside him in an orderly fashion.

He had already thought about the refinement method for the Myriad Axis Pill countless times these past years, so he couldn't have been more familiar with it.

He opened his mouth to release a burst of azure light that flew into the cauldron, and its lid instantly flew off on its own.

Han Li picked up a Myriad Axis Fruit, then flicked a finger through the air, and several streaks of azure swordlight shot forth, shredding the fruit into a clump of golden puree in the blink of an eye.

The core of the fruit had been set aside, and he carefully guided the puree into the cauldron, which was quickly heating up thanks to the silver flames.

The Myriad Axis Fruit puree quickly melted into a ball of golden liquid, following which Han Li picked up a white gel ingredient that he also guided into the cauldron.

Han Li proceeded to remain in the pill refinement chamber for three whole years.

On this day, the door of the pill refinement chamber abruptly swung open, and Han Li emerged from inside with an excited gleam in his eyes, indicating that he was in quite a good mood.

He flipped a hand over to produce a longan-sized pill amid a flash of golden light, and the pill was golden in color, giving off a gentle golden glow.

Upon closer inspection, one would discover that this layer of golden light was formed by layers of thin golden patterns, presenting a profound sight to behold.

This was none other than a Myriad Axis Pill.

Despite the tiny size of the pill, there were over 10,000 layers of these golden patterns on its surface, and that was most likely where it had gotten its name from.

As a pill that could enhance even a late-True Immortal cultivator's cultivation base, not only had it been very difficult to acquire all of the ingredients required to refine it, the refinement process itself was also the most complex out of any pill that Han Li had attempted to refine thus far.

Even though he was already a pill refinement master and had the assistance of the Mantra Treasured Axis, which could slow time down to a crawl, he was still only able to successfully refine half a batch of pills after going through 10 batches of ingredients in the first year.

However, he had learned a great deal from these failures, and as a result, his success rate had steadily risen. In the end, he managed to successfully refine five and a half batches of pills in the past three years using the 30 batches of ingredients, amounting to a total of 55 pills.

For the ordinary Earthly Pill Master, even 10 batches of Myriad Axis Pill ingredients would've been impossible to gather in a short time, let alone 30. Furthermore, a success rate of just under 20% didn't seem to have been particularly impressive, but if Ping Yaozi were to learn about this in the afterlife, he would be so shocked that his jaw would drop straight to the floor.

Even for the likes of Xiong Shan, Myriad Axis Pills were worth fighting over, even at the risk of his life, and even if he were to obtain a Myriad Axis Pill, he would most likely choose to save it for an important breakthrough in his cultivation, rather than consume it right away.

After all, even in the context of the entire Northern Glacial Immortal Region, there were only several types of pills that could advance the cultivation bases of late-True Immortal cultivators, and even a formidable sect like the Blaze Dragon Dao didn't have many of these pills at its disposal. Otherwise, Golden Immortal cultivators wouldn't have been so rare.

However, this wasn't a problem for Han Li. In fact, he could refine even more Myriad Axis Pills in the future so that he would never have to stop taking them during his cultivation.

At this moment, Han Li was in quite a good mood, but not because of the number of Myriad Axis Pills that he had managed to refine. More importantly, he discovered that his pill refinement mastery had improved rapidly over the course of the past three years, and it reached a certain bottleneck.

He had a feeling that if he could progress through this bottleneck, then his pill refinement skills would reach a whole new level.

With that in mind, he took a deep breath and stowed the Myriad Axis Pills away, then emerged from the pill refinement chamber.

Before long, he had arrived at his medicine garden once again, and he stopped at the spot where the primary bean had been planted.

Under his instructions, the giant ape puppet would water it with a drop of spirit liquid from the Heaven Controlling Vial every once in a while, yet the primary bean still showed no signs of sprouting.

However, given his past experience, Han Li knew what to expect, so he wasn't bothered or agitated in the slightest as he made his way over to a white spirit pond.

The pond was roughly 70 to 80 feet in size with a layer of faint white mist over its surface.

Several crimson lotus flowers were floating on its surface, and wisps of crimson mist could be seen drifting out of its stamen, releasing an extremely rich aroma of sweetness.

One of the lotus flowers was particularly large, comparable to the size of a washbasin, while the other ones were all far smaller.

Han Li looked beneath that lotus flower to find a huge lotus root that was as thick as a bucket extending into the soil at the bottom of the spirit pond from the underside of the flower. The root was around 10 feet in length, and it was very translucent, giving off a layer of dense crimson light.

There were several smaller roots branching off from the main lotus root, but they were far lacking in both thickness and coloration compared with the main root.

On the main root was a fist-sized gray mark that was very dark in coloration, resembling a smudge of ink.

This lotus root was the very same one that Han Li had purchased from the auction, and he was using it to breed more Blood Crystal Lotus Roots in order to support his Myriad Axis Pill refinement.

At this point, the lotus root had already been matured to at least 200,000 to 300,000 years old.

The older the main ingredient, the higher the success rate of Myriad Axis Pill refinement, and the more efficacious the pills were going to be.

During the lotus root's growth, the bonded mark on its surface had also changed slightly in appearance. Not only had it grown larger and darker, certain patterns had emerged within it, resembling the veins of a leaf.

Furthermore, Han Li could sense law power fluctuations emanating from the mark, albeit only very faint ones.

However, it wasn't time law fluctuations. Instead, it was some other type of unknown law power.

This was quite a surprise to Han Li as he definitely hadn't sensed any law power fluctuations from the bonded mark before this, and they had most likely arisen due to the watering from the Heaven Controlling Vial spirit liquid.

In the wake of this discovery, he couldn't help but feel a little intrigued by this bonded mark, and he was eager to see how it was going to change in the future.

Chapter 357: The Final Step

Han Li stayed beside the white spirit pond for a while longer before leaving the medicine garden, then returned to his bedroom before immediately falling asleep.

These past three years, he had been refining Myriad Axis Pills without rest, and the entire pill refinement process was one that required his full attention. At the same time, he had to calculate the

timing of his usage of the Mantra Treasured Axis, and even with his late-True Immortal Stage cultivation base and spiritual sense, he was feeling quite exhausted.

Prior to commencing his cultivation, he had to take some time to recover so that he could prime his body, mind, and magic power into the best possible condition.

He slept for three days and three nights, and upon awakening, he was once again raring to go, arriving in his secret chamber before sitting down with his legs crossed and summoning an azure jade vial.

He tipped the vial over slightly to produce a Myriad Axis Pill, and after holding it between his fingers and inspecting it for a while, he promptly swallowed the pill.

The pill quickly melted in his stomach before surging throughout all of his meridians as a powerful flow of warmth.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly, and he felt as if this surge of warmth were like a pack of galloping wild horses that were flowing faster and faster through his meridians while gradually forming a series of vortexes, resulting in a painful and swollen sensation in those meridians.

Moments later, Han Li's brows gradually unfurrowed as an elated look appeared on his face.

The Myriad Axis Pill was even more efficacious than he had anticipated.

He gently exhaled as he focused his attention on his Mantra Axis Scripture, commencing a process of immersive cultivation.

A layer of gentle golden light rose up to envelop his entire body, and the years slowly passed.

The dust that was accumulating outside the gate of the cave abode was becoming thicker and thicker, and at this point, it was virtually impossible to tell that there was still a gate on the mountain face.

500 years was an extremely long time for mortals. During this time, entire empires could rise up and collapse, yet for cultivators, it was nothing more than one bout of seclusion.

On this day, countless dark clouds suddenly converged in the sky above the island, and arcs of lightning were flashing incessantly within the clouds.

All of the world's origin qi in a radius of thousands of kilometers churned violently to form an enormous spiritual energy vortex that was slowly revolving in the sky.

Countless balls of spiritual qi appeared in the sky, and they converged toward the island, drawn there by the revolving vortex.

Several dozen kilometers away from the island was a fiery red island that was only around a half a kilometer in radius, and it was a coral island that was extremely beautiful and resplendent under the light of the sun.

All of a sudden, a crimson demon beast emerged from the water near the island with a splash.

The demon beast was over 100 feet in length and resembled a boar with steely crimson fur. There was also a pair of white tusks protruding out of its mouth, giving off a metallic gleam.

What was more remarkable about this creature was that it had six legs.

Its facial features were quite menacing, but its body was as round and rotund as a watermelon, so it appeared far more comical than it did threatening.

If any cultivators familiar with the Black Wind Sea were present, they would've been able to identify this demon beast as a Pig Dolphin Beast, a very common low-grade demon beast in this region, except this one was already at the late-Nascent Soul Stage.

The beast's rotund body abruptly swelled up, and it opened its mouth up wide to produce a burst of powerful suction force, allowing it to gobble up some of the balls of spiritual qi in the air.

A layer of red light then began to flash over its body, and the phenomenon lasted for about two hours before the balls of spiritual qi in the air faded away.

The Pig Dolphin Beast closed its mouth, and the red light radiating from its body was looking a little brighter than before.

The beast cast its gaze toward the island in the distance, then oinked a few times as if it were asking for more.

It had already been residing here for a very long time, and several centuries ago, an extremely powerful human cultivator had arrived on that island, leading to all of the formidable demon beasts nearby moving away.

However, at the time, it had just attained a basic level of intelligence and was still rather ignorant, so it didn't leave.

The human cultivator had remained in his cave abode this entire time, and he hadn't attacked any of the nearby demon beasts.

Due to the fact that all of the more formidable demon beasts in the area had moved away, the Pig Dolphin Beast had been able to enjoy a very safe and comfortable life, and even though its intelligence had developed further since then, it had still decided not to leave.

As for why it had decided to stay, that was because during the past few centuries, that enormous spiritual qi vortex would appear every once in a while, and it had already appeared 11 times up to this point.

Whenever this happened, the Pig Dolphin Beast would use its innate ability to absorb some of the spiritual qi in the air, and that was how it had rapidly progressed from the Qi Refinement Stage to its current cultivation base in just a few centuries.

The Pig Dolphin Beast took a few more glances at the island in the distance.

Its cultivation base was already approaching the pinnacle of the Nascent Soul Stage, and if that phenomenon had lasted a while longer, perhaps it would've already reached the Deity Transformation Stage.

Looks like I'll have to wait for next time... the Pig Dolphin Beast thought to itself, then swam back into the sea.

Inside the cave abode, Han Li's entire body was radiating dazzling golden light while also giving off a burst of tremendous spiritual pressure.

As many as 35 specks of golden light had appeared over his body, and as the golden radiance slowly faded, he opened his eyes to reveal a hint of excitement within them.

He had been making rapid progress in his cultivation, opening 11 immortal acupoints in less than 600 years.

If anyone else were to hear about this rate of progress, they would be stunned beyond belief, and if they were to hear that he had a virtually limitless supply of Myriad Axis Pills at his disposal, even a Golden Immortal would be so envious that they would be coughing up blood!

Even Han Li himself hadn't anticipated that he would be able to open 11 immortal acupoints in just 500 years.

According to his original estimates, it would've taken him at least 1,000 years to reach this stage, but in reality, he had gotten there far faster.

Aside from that, there was something that was rather perplexing to Han Li about the Myriad Axis Pill, and that was the issue of resistance.

Even though he had been taking Myriad Axis Pills throughout the past 500 years, his body hadn't developed any resistance to it, thereby making it less efficacious.

He had spent some time trying to uncover the reasons for this, but his experiments hadn't yielded any conclusive results, so he ultimately set the matter aside. After all, it wasn't a bad thing, so there was no reason to dwell on it.

He shook his head to rid himself of that train of thought, following which a contemplative look appeared on his face.

With 35 immortal acupoints opened, he only had one more left to reach the Golden Immortal Stage.

It was only a single step, but the difference was like that between night and day, and the degree of difficulty of making the breakthrough was comparable to a Grand Ascension cultivator ascending to immortality in the Spirit Realm.

In order to break through this bottleneck, not only did he have to open up 36 immortal acupoints, the most difficult part was overcoming the final one of the three decays, namely the acupoint decay.

Up to this point, Han Li still hadn't experienced any of the decays in his cultivation, but he had heard many stories about how damning these decays could be, so even with his current powers and abilities, he didn't dare to grow complacent.

The best way to ward off the three decays was to truly master a law power.

He was cultivating the laws of time, one of the three paramount laws, and if he could truly master it, even a little bit, then that would most likely be extremely effective for warding off the three decays.

However, up to this point, he had exhausted all of his other options without any success, and his only hope left was to refine a dao pill.

All of a sudden, a thought occurred to Han Li, and he rose to his feet and left his secret chamber before arriving in a section of his medicine garden.

There was a patch of black spirit soil here, and the air was very cool and moist.

Planted in the spirit soil was a white spirit ginseng root that was quite transparent in appearance, looking as if it had been carved out of white jade.

This was none other than one of the dao pill's primary ingredients, the Heavenmade Ginseng Root.

Finally, his persistent efforts had paid off, and he had managed to purchase a young Heavenmade Ginseng Root from the Transient Guild at a high price.

Han Li gave a pleased nod at the sight of the ginseng root.

After obtaining the ginseng root, he had immediately instructed the giant ape puppet to water it with the Heaven Controlling Vial spirit liquid, and at this point, it was already over 100,000 years of age, making it fit for pill refinement.

At this point, all that he was missing was the Dewform Herb, but there was still no news on it.

This was almost entirely up to luck anyway, and given that he was currently in the Black Wind Sea, all he could do was rely on the Transient Guild.

With that in mind, he heaved a faint sigh and returned to his secret chamber before sitting down with his legs crossed.

Even though he was still unable to refine any dao pills for now, he naturally didn't want to just sit around and do nothing. Instead, he was going to attempt to open up his 36th immortal acupoint, and at the very least, he was going to open it up most of the way to reach the pinnacle of the late-True Immortal Stage.

With that in mind, Han Li consumed another Myriad Axis Pill before closing his eyes to cultivate.

This area of the Black Wind Sea was virtually completely untouched, and it seemed to never display any changes, giving one the impression that time stood still here.

Another 50 to 60 years passed by in the blink of an eye, and once again, the Pig Dolphin Beast appeared on the nearby coral island before casting its gaze toward the island that Han L was situated on.

According to its past experience, the spiritual qi vortex was about to appear.

During these past few years, it came out virtually every single day to check, for fear of missing out.

However, close to 10 years had already passed since the date that it had predicted, yet the spiritual qi vortex still hadn't appeared.

Not only that, but the island was completely silent, and some of the spiritual power fluctuations that had previously occasionally emanated from it had also ceased to appear.

A slightly agitated look appeared in the Pig Dolphin Beast's eyes as it continued to stare at the island in the distance.

Could it be that the human cultivator had already left?

After some further hesitation, it turned and began to swim toward the island.

Chapter 358: A Gift from the Pig Dolphin Beast

For a late-Nascent Soul Stage Pig Dolphin Beast, a distance of several dozen kilometers could be easily covered, and before long, it had already swam to the island.

It was doing its best to conceal its own aura as it swam along the edge of the island toward the cave abode of the human cultivator.

Shortly thereafter, it arrived near the cave abode before casting its gaze in that direction.

It was greeted by the sight of a lush forest that didn't appear to have been any different from the forestry around it.

The beast stared at that area of the forest for a long time before opening its mouth to release a streak of faint blue light, which flew into that area.

As soon as the blue light came into contact with the forest, it immediately vanished without a trace.

The Pig Dolphin Beast was quite elated to see this. The restriction was still standing, which meant that the human cultivator still hadn't left.

The Pig Dolphin Beast was quite relieved to see this, and it was just about to leave when an amused chuckle suddenly rang out nearby.

The Pig Dolphin Beast shuddered before turning in that direction, upon which it was so frightened that its soul almost left its body.

Standing on the shore not far away was an amused azure-robed young man, and it was none other than the human cultivator it had once seen from afar many years ago.

The Pig Dolphin Beast let loose an alarmed oink as it hurriedly tried to flee back into the sea, but the azure-robed young man made a grabbing motion, and all of the seawater in a radius of roughly half a kilometers swept back before rising up into the air.

The Pig Dolphin Beast was trapped within the seawater, completely unable to move.

"A late-Nascent Soul Stage Pig Dolphin Beast? That's quite rare," the azure-robed young man remarked.

The man was none other than Han Li, and his expression at the moment suggested that something was troubling him.

During the past few decades, he had continued to cultivate in seclusion in his cave abode, attempting to open up his 36th immortal acupoint, but even though he had continued to take Myriad Axis Pills without pause during this time, the final immortal acupoint remained completely unmoved.

On this day, he was feeling rather frustrated and was taking a stroll to take his mind off things, and he certainly wasn't expecting to encounter such a demon beast.

The Pig Dolphin Beast oinked panic and alarm as it struggled with its six stubby legs with all its might, but to no avail.

Its voice was extremely shrill, resembling the bloodcurdling howls of a fat pig that was about to be slaughtered, and it was putting on quite an amusing display that had put Han Li in a much better mood.

"Don't worry, I won't kill you," he said with a faint smile, then flicked a finger through the air to send a fiery red pill flying into the Pig Dolphin Beast's wide open mouth.

Its alarmed oinking instantly ceased, immediately following which red light flashed erratically over its rotund body, and its aura began to rapidly elevate.

A dazed look appeared on its face upon sensing this, and its struggles also gradually subsided.

Meanwhile, the red light radiating from its body continued to grow brighter and brighter, and it quickly broke through a bottleneck to reach the Deity Transformation Stage.

At the same time, the red coloration of its skin and fur completely faded, leaving it as white as snow.

The muscles on its lower abdomen squirmed momentarily, and a pair of short stubs appeared, as if two more legs were about to emerge.

"You must have decent aptitude if you're about to grow two more legs so quickly," Han Li murmured to himself before lowering his hand, and the seawater that was enveloping the Pig Dolphin Beast instantly fell back into the sea with a loud splash.

The Pig Dolphin Beast was freed, but instead of flying away, it remained standing in mid-air, staring at Han Li with a dazed expression.

"I've already helped you break through your Deity Transformation Stage bottleneck, are you still not satisfied?" Han Li asked with a faint smile.

The Pig Dolphin Beast stared at Han Li for a moment longer, then suddenly flew back into the sea and disappeared into the waves.

Meanwhile, Han Li cast his gaze toward the distant horizon with a faint smile.

He was feeling a little frustrated, but certainly not disheartened or agitated.

It was only to be expected that a Golden Immortal Stage breakthrough would be difficult to make. Otherwise, Golden Immortal cultivators wouldn't have been so rare. However, he hadn't been able to find any way to resolve this problem.

Day quickly transitioned into night, and stars appeared in the night sky.

Han Li looked up at the starry night sky, and his eyes suddenly lit up as a thought occurred to him.

He flipped a hand over to produce a gray stone slab that was covered in tiny antiquated text, and it was none other than the Great Universe Origin Arts that he had obtained from Patriarch Cold Flame.

Not long after obtaining this cultivation art, Han Li had been swept up in a string of chaotic events. As a result, he had forgotten all about it, and this stone slab had been sitting in his storage pouch this entire time.

The Big Dipper Origin Arts that he had come across in the Spirit Domain Realm had allowed him to open up seven profound acupoints, and after that, it hadn't taken him much effort at all to open up his first seven immortal acupoints.

If he wasn't mistaken, there seemed to have been some type of connection between profound acupoints and immortal acupoints. Perhaps it would become a lot easier for him to open his 36th immortal acupoint if he could first open 36 profound acupoints.

With that in mind, Han Li sat down onto the ground while holding the stone slab instead of returning to his cave abode.

Back when he had first obtained this cultivation art, he had only inspected it briefly, and now that he was carefully examining it, the excitement on his face quickly faded, slowly replaced by a wry smile.

Sure enough, both the Great Universe Origin Arts and the Big Dipper Origin Arts were similar in nature, and the former was even more profound.

However, just as Patriarch Cold Flame said, this stone slab was holding half of the cultivation art, which would only allow one to open up 18 profound acupoints. That meant that he would have to find the second half of the cultivation art in order to open 36 profound acupoints.

Patriarch Cold Flame had obtained the first half of these Great Universe Origin Arts from a set of ruins, so Han Li would most likely have to go to the same place to obtain the second half.

With that in mind, Han Li couldn't help but internally reprimand himself for not asking Patriarch Cold Flame more questions about those ruins.

It most likely wasn't going to be easy for him to find Patriarch Cold Flame again.

It appeared that Patriarch Cold Flame had most likely joined the Ubiquitous Pavilion, but trying to find someone from such an enormous organization was no different from searching for a needle in a haystack. Additionally, he didn't know much about the Ubiquitous Pavilion to begin with, and just like in the Transient Guild, the identities of its members were most likely kept secret from one another.

After contemplating the matter a moment further, he shook his head before stowing the stone slab away.

There was simply nothing that he could do about this for now.

With that in mind, Han Li turned and made his way back toward his cave abode, only to suddenly stop in his tracks before turning back to look out at the sea.

A burst of urgent oinking rang out, following which the surface of the sea parted with a loud splash, and the Pig Dolphin Beast flew out before landing beside Han Li.

It then opened its mouth, and a black object dropped out before rolling over to Han Li.

A sizzling sound could be heard coming from the Pig Dolphin Beast's mouth, and there were some black marks there, out of which some dark red blood was seeping out, as if that area had been corroded by something.

Han Li raised an eyebrow as he swept a sleeve through the air to send a burst of azure light flying into the Pig Dolphin Beast's body, and the injuries on its mouth quickly began to heal.

An elated look appeared in the Pig Dolphin Beast's eyes, and it oinked at Han Li while wagging its tail from side to side, as if it were trying to suck up to him.

Han Li paid no further heed to the beast as he bent down to pick up the black object on the ground.

It was a fist-sized black rock that was giving off faint black light, and even though it was already nighttime, the black light emanating from the object was still very much visible, seemingly able to devour all of the light around it.

Han Li's brows suddenly furrowed slightly as a burst of sharp pain shot through the fingers of his hand that were in contact with the rock. Immediately thereafter, a semi-transparent membrane appeared over his hand.

The black light emanating from the rock seemed to possess some type of corrosive power that was too much even for his current physical body to bear.

After inspecting the rock for a moment, Han Li injected his spiritual sense into it, upon which a hint of surprise quickly flashed through his eyes.

The rock contained a very special type of power that wasn't any law power, but it was also very profound, and he couldn't tell exactly what it was.

"Are you giving this to me?" Han Li asked.

The Pig Dolphin Beast immediately nodded in response.

"This is a very interesting rock. Where did you get it from?" Han Li asked.

The Pig Dolphin Beast turned to the distance and opened its mouth to say something, but all it could do was oink, and an agitated look instantly appeared in its eyes.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face as he released a burst of azure light from his fingertip into the Pig Dolphin Beast's throat.

In order for demon beasts to speak, they first had to refine a certain throat bone.

This Pig Dolphin Beast possessed a decent cultivation base, but it was still yet to refine that throat bone.

The azure light flashed through the beast's throat for a moment before quickly dissipating, and an ecstatic look appeared in the Pig Dolphin Beast's eyes as it began to speak in a very inarticulate fashion.

"Senior... Er..."

"Alright, can you tell me where you got this rock from now?" Han Li asked.

"Yes... This rock... Many years ago... I... Er... With my parents from elsewhere... While moving here... Er... Obtained from near an island..." the Pig Dolphin Beast stuttered in response.

Han Li's eyes immediately lit up upon hearing this. "Do you still recall which island it was?"

"It's been too long... I was too young at the time... So I don't remember..." the Pig Dolphin Beast replied, and its speech was gradually becoming more fluent.

Han Li swept a sleeve through the air upon hearing this, and a ball of seawater instantly rose up before forming a screen of water that depicted a detailed map of the Black Wind Sea.

"Can you recall roughly where it was on this map?" he asked.

The Pig Dolphin Beast stared at the map for a long time, then pointed its snout on a certain spot as it said in an uncertain voice, "I think it may have been here."

Han Li cast his gaze toward that spot on the map, and a hint of surprise appeared on his face.

As it turned out, this was a place that he had once been to. It was none other than Red Moon Island, the island on which he had carried out his first Transient Guild mission.

"So that's where you found it," Han Li murmured to himself.

"Maybe, I'm not sure," the Pig Dolphin Beast said with an uneasy expression.

"It's alright, I know it might be hard for you to remember. By the way, do you have any more of these rocks?" Han Li asked.

Chapter 359: Response

"No, I only have this one. I was going to keep it and try and figure out what it was, but it's clearly beyond my ability to comprehend, so I thought it would be best to give it to you, Senior," the Pig Dolphin Beast said as it lowered its large head in a fawning display.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face as he flicked another pill through the air, and the Pig Dolphin Beast immediately opened its mouth to swallow the pill with an ecstatic expression.

A burst of light flashed over its body once again, and its aura swelled even further.

"Go on. Make sure you don't speak a single word of this to anyone," Han Li said.

The Pig Dolphin Beast hurriedly nodded in response, then rushed back into the sea before swimming away.

Han Li watched for a moment as the beast departed, then flipped a hand over to produce a red jade box.

This box was crafted from a type of special warm jade, and it was giving off a warm and soothing aura.

He placed the black rock into the box, and after observing for a moment to ensure that the box wasn't affected by the black light emanating from the rock, he stowed the box away, then withdrew the True Extreme Film over his hand before returning to his cave abode.

Instead of returning to his secret chamber, he arrived in the section of his medicine garden where the primary bean had been planted.

He had been focused entirely on cultivation these past few decades, so he didn't have the spare time or attention to manifest time crystals. Due to the fact that he already had a sufficient supply of Myriad Axis Pill, he instructed his giant ape puppet to use all of the Heaven Controlling Vial's spirit liquid to water the primary bean.

Upon arriving in that section of the medicine garden, Han Li's eyes immediately lit up as he discovered that the primary bean had already sprouted, and a thin green seedling had poked its way out of the soil.

Even though it was only a tiny seedling, it was giving off a vast aura of vitality.

He carefully observed the seedling for a moment to find that just like before, there were some faint golden patterns on its two leaves.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this.

Having already grown a batch of Dao Warriors, he had gained some experience and wasn't as clueless as he had once been.

The most difficult and time-consuming part of the Dao Warrior nurturing process was getting the primary bean to sprout.

Once the primary bean sprouted, half of the work had already been done, and barring any mishaps, he would be able to quickly obtain another batch of Dao Warriors.

With that in mind, Han Li observed the seedling for a moment longer before leaving the medicine garden and returning to his secret chamber.

After rounding a corner, he cast his gaze toward another secret chamber.

Daoist Xie had already been in seclusion for several centuries in there, yet he still wasn't displaying any signs of coming out, and it was unclear what he was doing in there.

Han Li withdrew his gaze before entering his secret chamber and sitting down with his legs crossed. After that, he put on his Transient Guild mask, then activated all of the restrictions in the secret chamber before checking on his Dewform Herb acquisition mission, but there had still been no responses.

This wasn't a surprise to him, and after heaving a faint sigh, he released two more missions, one of which was to acquire the complete Great Universe Origin Arts, while the other was to appraise the black rock that he had just obtained.

For some reason, he felt like the rock was something quite special.

After doing all of that, he meditated momentarily before summoning his giant ape puppet to his side and taking the Heaven Controlling Vial from it.

There was already a drop of green spirit liquid swirling around in the vial, and he set the vial down in front of himself before making a hand seal.

The Mantra Treasured Axis appeared behind him amid a flash of golden light, and all of the Time Dao Runes on its surface were flashing incessantly while giving off time law power fluctuations.

He made a hand seal, and the Mantra Treasured Axis instantly flew up before descending in front of him.

At this point, the number of Time Dao Runes on the axis had reached 130.

Back when he was still at the mid-True Immortal, the number of Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis seemed to have hit an upper limit at 108.

However, now that he had reached the late-True Immortal Stage, the number of Time Dao Runes on the axis had begun increasing again.

In that case...

Han Li picked up the Heaven Controlling Vial before injecting his immortal spiritual power into it.

All of the world's origin qi around the cave abode instantly began to churn violently, forming a massive vortex that drew in countless translucent threads formed by the world's origin qi.

Gusts of fierce wind blew over the surface of the sea, raising massive waves, and this astonishing phenomenon lasted three days before fading.

Inside his cave abode, Han Li was holding a time crystal with a hint of weariness on his face.

With his current immortal spiritual power reserves, it was already far less taxing than before to manifest time crystals.

After resting for a brief moment, he made a hand seal, and the Mantra Treasured Axis appeared behind him amid a flash of golden light.

He then began to chant an incantation, the Mantra Treasured Axis began to revolve, while the Time Dao Runes on its surface radiated dazzling golden light.

A ball of resplendent golden light appeared at the center of the axis, and it quickly transformed into a vertical golden eye that cast its gaze toward the time crystals in Han Li's hand.

A faint crack rang out as the crystal shattered, and the golden thread within flew out before shooting into the vertical golden eye.

Han Li shuddered as if he had been dealt a heavy blow, and the golden light radiating from the Mantra Treasured Axis instantly became even brighter.

Moments later, a ball of dazzling white light emerged on the axis, then transformed into a semi-transparent Time Dao Rune, a very encouraging sight for Han Li.

Just as he had anticipated, more Time Dao Runes could now be added to the Mantra Treasured Axis.

He withdrew his Mantra Treasured Axis, then handed the Heaven Controlling Vial to the giant ape puppet so that it could continue to produce more spirit liquid.

The more Time Dao Runes the axis had, the more powerful it would become.

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Over two decades flew by in the blink of an eye.

Inside his cave abode, Han Li's entire body was radiating dazzling golden light, while the Mantra Treasured Axis was rapidly revolving behind him, giving waves of golden ripples that illuminated the entire cave abode a bright golden color.

The axis was riddled with rings upon rings of Time Dao Runes, which totaled 360.

During these past years, he had been constantly using time crystals to add more Time Dao Runes to the axis, yet upon reaching 360, the Mantra Treasured Axis seemed to have reached its upper limit once again, making it impossible to add more.

Han Li made a hand seal, and countless rings of golden ripples emerged before spreading outward in all directions.

These golden ripples were far brighter than before, and everything enshrouded within them came to a complete standstill.

The air and the world's origin qi had all stopped flowing, as if they had been frozen in place.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this.

The time-slowng effect of the Mantra Treasured Axis had become significantly more powerful once again, and by his estimates, time had been slowed down by a factor of roughly 1:3,000.

He swept a sleeve through the air, and the Mantra Treasured Axis disintegrated into specks of golden light that vanished back into his body.

With the increased number of Time Dao Runes on the Mantra Treasured Axis, it was also becoming more taxing to use, and even with his late-True Immortal Stage immortal spiritual power, maintaining it was no easy task.

Han Li gently exhaled as he sat down with his legs crossed.

Not only had the increase in the number of Time Dao Runes enhanced the power of the Mantra Treasured Axis, the power of time imbued within it had also increased significantly, and whenever he used the axis, it would release an enormous amount of time law powers.

Given the abundance of time law powers in the Mantra Treasured Axis, perhaps he would be able to glean the laws of time without having to rely on a dao pill.

With that in mind, he promptly devoured a recovery pill before closing his eyes again.

Close to half a day later.

The space within Han Li's secret chamber suddenly began to shudder, and even through all of the restrictions, one could sense formidable time power fluctuations emanating out from within.

Right at this moment, golden light flashed from the stone door of Daoist Xie's secret chamber, and the door slowly opened.

Daoist Xie slowly emerged from within with its entire body enveloped by countless thin arcs of golden lightning, making it appear as if he were wearing a veil of golden lightning.

Beneath the veil of lightning, its body was looking rather indistinct, as if it could vanish into thin air at any moment.

Upon emerging seclusion, its gaze quickly fell upon Han Li's secret chamber, and after standing there momentarily, it turned around and made its way back into its own secret chamber.

Several days later, the phenomenon taking place in Han Li's secret chamber finally subsided.

Inside the secret chamber, Han Li was seated with his legs crossed. His robes were rather tattered, and there were traces of blood all over his body, while his complexion was also extremely pale.

Just as like his previous few attempts, this one had also concluded in failure.

It seemed that there was some type of force that was preventing him from gleaning the laws of time.

Han Li's brows were tightly furrowed as he made a hand seal, and a burst of azure light surged over his body, upon which all of the gashes instantly healed.

He then changed into a brand new robe before taking a pill, and only after closing his eyes to meditate for another half a day did his complexion gradually return to normal.

Han Li opened his eyes and cast his gaze directly forward, and after a prolonged silence, he heaved a faint sigh.

It seemed that it was truly going to be impossible to master the laws of time without the help of a dao pill.

With that in mind, he flipped a hand over to produce his Transient Guild mask, which he promptly put on before directing his attention to the missions section.

A hint of elation immediately appeared on his face, only to be quickly replaced by disappointment.

As it turned out, there had been a response to one of his missions, but it was the black rock appraisal mission rather than the Dewform Herb acquisition mission.

Despite his disappointment, Han Li still cast an incantation seal onto the mission.

It wasn't the mission that he was most hoping for a response in, but he was also quite curious about that black rock, nonetheless.

The text of the mission began to gently pulse while fluctuating in brightness, and around 15 minutes later, the text released a beam of azure light, projecting it into the secret chamber.

A figure wearing a crimson dragon mask slowly took shape, and the number "3" was engraved onto their mask.

Han Li faltered slightly at the sight of this figure, but his expression was concealed behind his own Transient Mask.

This was the mask that belonged to none other than Wyrms 3.

Chapter 360: Full Collection

"Greetings, Fellow Daoist," the masked figure said as they clasped their fist in a salute, and judging from their voice, this was indeed Wyrms 3.

However, Han Li had never heard Wyrms 3 speak so politely to anyone, and he was rather befuddled by this, but he naturally didn't display his befuddlement outwardly, and he returned the salute before asking, "You've taken on my mission, so you must know what this object is, right?"

At this moment, he was wearing the mask of Raccoon 11, and he had also altered his voice, so he wasn't worried that Wyrms 3 would be able to identify him.

"Of course. However, prior to that, I have a question: are you in the Black Wind Sea at the moment, Fellow Daoist?" Wyrms 3 asked, seemingly on a completely unrelated note.

A hint of wariness welled up in Han Li's heart upon hearing this, and he didn't reply.

"Please don't misunderstand, Fellow Daoist. Even the same type of ore can display certain differences depending on where they came from, and that's why I'm asking," Wyrms 3 said with a smile.

Han Li hesitated momentarily, then nodded in confirmation. "I am indeed in the Black Wind Sea at the moment."

"I see. In that case, I can tell you that the rock is called Hard Ink Crystal, and I once saw it in the Black Wind Sea many years ago. The material is so hard that even direct attacks from Acquired Immortal Treasures aren't able to destroy it. On top of that, it contains a special type of power that's extremely corrosive, making it an exceptional material for refining yin-attribute immortal treasures.

"If some of this material were incorporated into an existing yin-attribute immortal treasure, not only would that immortal treasure attain corrosive properties, it would also become far sturdier as well. If you offer this rock to cultivators using yin-attribute cultivation arts, I'm sure they'd be willing to exchange everything in their possession for it," Wyrms 3 explained with a smile.

Han Li nodded in response. "Thank you for such a detailed explanation. I'll issue you the compensation right away."

It was rather surprising to him that this was such a valuable object.

"Before that, there's something else I'd like to ask you, Fellow Daoist," Wyrms 3 suddenly said.

"Go ahead," Han Li prompted.

"Where did you obtain this Hard Ink Crystal from, Fellow Daoist?" Wyrms 3 asked in a direct and straightforward manner.

"Why are you asking me this?" Han Li asked in a slightly surprised manner.

"Truth be told, this is a treasure that I've been looking for for a very long time, but I need quite a large quantity of it. If you can tell me where you obtained this piece from, I can waive the compensation for this mission and give you substantial compensation to boot," Wyrms 3 said in an earnest voice as they cupped their fist in another salute toward Han Li.

"There's no need for that. The origins of this object concern some private matters of mine that I don't wish to disclose, so I'll still issue you the mission compensation as agreed," Han Li replied with a shake of his head.

Despite the earnest tone of Wyrms 3's voice, he could tell that they weren't telling the truth. At the very least, they were omitting something important.

"Hold on a second. This is an extremely important matter to me, so please lend me your assistance, Fellow Daoist. I'm willing to pay 300 Immortal Origin Stones for this piece of information," Wyrms 3 hurriedly interjected.

Han Li was quite surprised to hear this.

No matter how precious this material was, surely 300 Immortal Origin Stones was too much to be paying just for some information on its whereabouts.

This made him even more convinced that Wyrms 3 was withholding some important information.

"My apologies, but I cannot disclose this information, so please don't pursue this matter any further. I still have some other errands to attend to, so let's end things here," Han Li refused once again with a shake of his head, and as he did so, he began to make a hand seal to conclude this communication.

All he wanted was to cultivate in peace at the moment, and he certainly didn't want to get swept up into any trouble just for some Immortal Origin Stones.

"Please wait, Fellow Daoist," Wyrms 3 hurriedly said in an urgent voice. "I noticed that you had released a mission searching for a Dewform Herb as well. I just so happen to have one in my possession, and I'm willing to exchange it for the whereabouts of the Hard Ink Crystal."

"You have a Dewform Herb?" Han Li asked as a hint of surprise and elation appeared in his eyes.

Wyrms 3 was slightly reassured by Han Li's reaction, and they replied with a smile, "I do, and it's over 100,000 years old, so it should be ready for you to use right away."

Han Li lowered his head in silence, seemingly still rather hesitant.

"Of course, the Dewform Herb is a precious spirit plant, but it's certainly no top-tier treasure, so I'll throw in an additional 200 Immortal Origin Stones. How about that?" Wyrms 3 asked, raising the stakes once again.

Han Li raised his head with a surprised expression upon hearing this.

This Hard Ink Crystal was only something that he had obtained by chance, and he had only turned down Wyrms 3 as he didn't want to attract any potential trouble. In truth, he had already decided to agree to exchange the information for a Dewform Herb, and he was only considering some matters related to dao pill refinement just now, but his silence seemed to have been misinterpreted.

"Given the generosity you've displayed, it would be rude of me to continue to refuse," Han Li said with a faint smile.

"Thank you, Fellow Daoist."

Wyrms 3 was ecstatic to hear this, and they made a string of hand seals, upon which countless azure runes instantly appeared on the azure light screen in front of Han Li to form a teleportation array.

A storage ring then appeared within the array, and Han Li picked up the ring without any hesitation before injecting his spiritual sense into it.

Instead of immediately inspecting the contents of the storage ring, he carefully inspected the entire storage ring, and only after verifying that it hadn't been tampered with in any way did he turn his attention to its contents, namely a small pile of Immortal Origin Stones and an azure jade box, which was around a foot in length and had several azure talismans adhered to it.

Han Li pulled the jade box out of the storage ring, and it was giving off a gentle azure luster.

He immediately identified the box to have been crafted from Azure Spirit Cream Jade, which was a type of premium spirit jade that was ideal for storing all types of spirit plants.

Han Li gently removed the talismans from the box before lifting its lid, and he was greeted by the sight of an azure spirit plant with long and thin leaves that were as green as jade, but its roots were white in color.

There were white spots that resembled beads of dew on the spirit plant's leaves, and it didn't appear all that remarkable, but it was giving off powerful spiritual qi fluctuations.

A cloud of white mist quickly appeared in the air around it, and within the mist were numerous transparent water droplets.

This was none other than the Dewform Herb that he had been searching extensively for, and just as Wyrms 3 claimed, it appeared to have been over 100,000 years of age.

Furthermore, its roots were completely unharmed, so he could continue to nurture it.

Han Li replaced the lid on the jade box before stowing it away, then said, "The answer to your question is very simple: I picked up the Hard Ink Crystal somewhere in the Black Wind Sea by chance."

Wyrms 3's eyes immediately lit up as they asked, "Oh? Do you still recall where it was that you picked it up from?"

"Let me think... If my memory is correct, then it was somewhere near a place called Red Moon Island," Han Li replied.

"Red Moon Island..."

Wyrms 3 faltered slightly upon hearing this.

"Is there a problem, Fellow Daoist?" Han Li asked.

"No, it's just that I've been there once, and it's quite a bleak and desolate island, so I didn't think that something like Hard Ink Crystals could be found near it," Wyrms 3 replied.

"I see. After picking up this piece of Hard Ink Crystal at the time, I searched the nearby area, but didn't find any more, so the chances of you finding more of this material there are most likely rather slim. In any case, I wish you luck," Han Li said with a faint smile.

"Thank you, Fellow Daoist," Wyrms 3 replied as they cupped their fist in a salute.

The two of them chatted for a brief while longer before concluding the communication.

Han Li took off his mask, then rose to his feet with a contemplative look on his face.

Judging from Wyrms 3's words and actions just now, there was definitely some information that they were withholding.

With that in mind, Han Li thought back to the mission that he had carried out on Red Moon Island, trying to think if there was anything special about the island, but he then quickly rid himself of that train of thought, deeming it as nothing more than a waste of time.

After that, he cast an incantation seal to open the door of his secret chamber, then made his way to his medicine garden.

While it was true that he did now have a Dewform Herb of sufficient age, a single one wasn't very much to work with.

It was almost certain that he was going to be failing many times in his attempt to refine a dao pill, so he had to prepare more batches of ingredients.

At this point, he had already nurtured many batches of all of the other ingredients, and the Dewform Herb was the only one that he had been missing.

He arrived in a corner of his medicine garden, then quickly cleared a new plot of soil before setting up some restrictions around it.

After that, he carefully planted the Dewform Herb there, and only after toiling away for close to half a day did he finally step back to examine his handiwork.

A faint smile appeared on his face at the sight of the planted Dewform Herb, and he issued an instruction to the giant ape puppet to use all of the Heaven Controlling Vial spirit liquid to water this plant, to which the puppet nodded stiffly in response.

After that, Han Li took another glance at the Dewform Herb before leaving the medicine garden.

He had only just emerged from the garden when a surprised look appeared on his face.

As it turned out, Daoist Xie was standing not far away.

"When did you come out of seclusion, Brother Xie?" Han Li asked.

"Not too long ago. I saw that you were cultivating in your secret chamber, so I didn't go to disturb you," Daoist Xie replied.

Han Li nodded in response, then asked, "It looks like your seclusion was quite successful."

"I recalled a couple of secret techniques, and I've mastered them to a decent extent over the past few centuries," Daoist Xie replied.

"Congratulations, Brother Xie," Han Li said with a smile.

"It's all thanks to the Immortal Origin Stones that you provided me with. Speaking of those, I've used them all up during my seclusion," Daoist Xie said.

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

He had given Daoist Xie over 1,000 Immortal Origin Stones last time, and if it weren't for the fact that he profited immensely from killing Tao Yu, he wasn't going to be able to afford Daoist Xie's upkeep.

Han Li flipped a hand over to produce a storage tool, then handed it to Daoist Xie as he said, "There are 1,000 Immortal Origin Stones in here. Make sure to use them sparingly as it's not so easy to get more Immortal Origin Stones here in the Black Wind Sea."

Daoist Xie nodded in response, then made its way back into the secret chamber before going back into seclusion.

Moments later, a burst of lightning power fluctuations began to emanate out of the secret chamber even through the restrictions inside.

A wry smile appeared on Han Li's face once again upon seeing this, and he returned to his own secret chamber as well.