

A Record 421

Chapter 421: Infinite Worlds

While Han Li was inspecting the scene laid out before him, Xiong Shan had already arrived at the entrance, and he only stopped for a brief moment to inspect his surroundings before rushing into the palace.

Han Li turned back to take a glance at the stone staircase to find that Xue Han and the others were still on the way up, but he wasn't far away from reaching the top.

Hence, he also didn't hesitate any longer as he passed through the gate with Lu Yuqing and Patriarch Cold Flame.

Upon arriving on the other side, Han Li caught sight of three enormous palatial buildings in the distance, all with glazed roof tiles and red painted walls, while statues of mythical beasts sat in a row atop the ridge of the roof.

The three palaces were situated in a triangular formation, with all of their main entrances facing the gate that Han Li had just passed through. They were built upon foundations that were several feet tall, making it appear as if they had been constructed atop raised platforms.

Between the gate and the palaces was a large white stone plaza that was completely empty.

Han Li swept his gaze across the plaza and the palaces, and the sense of familiarity that he had been feeling grew even more pronounced.

Before he had a chance to pinpoint the source of this feeling, Xiong Shan had already flown ahead toward the palaces.

However, as soon as he leaped into the air above the plaza, the space around him suddenly began to warp and ripple, immediately following which he vanished into thin air without any warning.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he began to inspect the plaza with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

Through his spirit eye ability, he was able to see a layer of white mist over the white stone plaza that he had previously been unable to see with his naked eye. There were faint spiritual power fluctuations surging throughout the white mist, and it was clear that there was an extremely profound illusory array inside.

Han Li withdrew his gaze as he turned to glance at the gate behind him once again, and all of a sudden, he was struck by a sense of realization.

This is the Vast Glacial Palace... [1]

The staircase with the gravitational restriction, the illusory array on the plaza, the triangular formation of the palaces... This place was very similar to the Vast Glacial Palace that he had once visited.

Could it be that there was some type of connection between the two secret areas?

Right at this moment, a heavy thud suddenly rang out from the gate behind them, and the three of them turned to discover that Xue Han had reached the top of the staircase.

"We have to go!" Patriarch Cold Flame said in an urgent voice, then immediately flew toward the plaza, while Han Li and Lu Yuqing hurriedly followed along.

The three of them instantly vanished into thin air right before Xue Han burst through the gate, and he gave a cold harrumph upon seeing this, but instead of charging blindly into the illusory array, he stopped at the edge of the plaza to inspect his surroundings.

While entering the illusory array, Han Li maintained his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, and he clearly saw himself fall into the misty array from above. In the next instant, the entire world spun around him, and he fell into another world.

"Steamed buns, warm and fluffy..."

"Top quality rouge, more fragrant than flowers and sweeter than honey..."

.....

The sound of peddling rang out from the surrounding area, and Han Li found himself standing on a crowded street that was extremely lively and bustling.

Not far away from him stood a massive city gate, and near the foot of the gate was none other than Lu Yuqing, who was looking around with an uncertain expression.

Right at this moment, Patriarch Cold Flame emerged from the city gate, then hurriedly beckoned to Lu Yuqing and Han Li.

Han Li was just about to approach him when a loud voice rang out from behind him.

"Make way! Make way! I've got a batch of cakes fresh out of the steamer!"

Han Li reflexively stepped to the side upon hearing this, right as a short and stocky man quickly strode past him, carrying a pair of steamers and on either side of a carrying pole slung over his shoulder.

Only after the man had passed him by did Han Li realize that he wasn't the one being spoken to. Instead, the man had been speaking to a well-dressed young master.

It didn't take long before Han Li came to the realization that the three of them didn't seem to exist to the people in the illusion, and everyone was able to pass through their bodies like apparitions.

However, what was most striking to him was how realistic and lifelike this illusion was, even down to the fine details like the aroma of steamed cakes and the heat coming out of the steamers.

Even with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, he was unable to see anything beyond the illusion presented to him.

Han Li made his way over to Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing, then remarked, "This illusion is extremely convincing. Even my spirit eye ability is unable to see through it at all."

"This is an array known as Infinite Worlds, and it's the most astonishing illusory array I've ever seen, bar none. The array is able to create entire illusory worlds, and if you don't know what you're doing, you could easily get lost in here and find yourself eternally trapped," Patriarch Cold Flame said.

"I see. By the way, have any of you seen Xiong Shan?" Han Li asked.

"The last time we came in here, we found ourselves on a primordial continent that was overrun by demon beasts, so that tells me that people who enter the array at different times are presented with different illusions. He came in ahead of us, and even though it was only by a slight margin, it's very likely that he's in another illusory world. Perhaps we'll only be able to see him again after we leave this array," Patriarch Cold Flame replied.

"How did you two manage to get out of this array the first time?" Han Li asked.

"At the time, there were a total of eight people in our group, and some of them were extremely proficient in the art of the array. Through observing the stars at night, they were able to slowly piece together the way to exit the array, but even so, only four of us, including myself and Xiong Shan, were able to leave the array alive," Patriarch Cold Flame explained with a wry smile.

Han Li took a glance up at the sky to find that it was still early in the morning, so they were far from nighttime.

"Does the star observation method involve using the stars to determine the location of the bases of the array, then using the bases of the array to extrapolate the location of the array's exit?" Han Li asked.

"That's right," Patriarch Cold Flame replied with a slightly surprised expression. "It sounds like you're also a master in this art, Fellow Daoist Han."

Han Li paid no heed to his attempt at flattery as he took a glance up at the plaque above the city gate, then carefully inspected his surroundings.

"The plaque here says that this is the eastern city gate, but right now, it's still early in the morning, yet the sun is in the complete opposite direction of where it should be, so one of them has to be lying. Having said that, seeing as you were able to find your way out of the array last time thanks to the stars, it's more likely that the position of the sun is the more accurate point of reference. Hence, this should actually be the western city gate," Han Li said.

An enlightened look instantly appeared in the eyes of Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing upon hearing this.

"Now that we've determined our orientation, the next step is to observe the bases of the array. My spirit eye ability is unable to see through the array. How about yours, Fellow Daoist Lu? Can you see anything?" Han Li asked.

"I already gave it a try earlier, and as soon as I use my spirit eye ability, everything around me disappears, and all I can see is a boundless expanse of gray mist," Lu Yuqing replied with a shake of her head.

"In that case, I only have one treasure that could possibly get us out of this bind," Han Li said, then swept a sleeve through the air overhead, and a giant golden eyeball instantly appeared up above amid a flash of golden light.

This golden eye wasn't actually a treasure. Instead, it was the Eye of Truth from his Mantra Treasured Axis, except he had concealed its full appearance.

He hadn't done this in order to conceal the fact that he was cultivating the laws of time. Instead, he simply didn't want them to see the 360 Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis. After all, this cultivation art was extremely renowned in the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, and there was a chance that Patriarch Cold Flame could've seen it before from somewhere else.

As soon as the golden eye emerged, Lu Yuqing and Patriarch Cold Flame immediately detected the law fluctuations emanating from it, and the latter's expression instantly changed slightly, but out of respect, both of them refrained from using their spiritual sense to examine the so-called treasure.

Han Li was naturally quite pleased to see this, and he made a hand seal while closing his eyes so that he could see this space through the perspective of the Eye of Truth.


As soon as he did this, the entire world around him instantly vanished, and all that remained were near-transparent spiritual power fluctuations flowing through the air.

Everything was laid bare to him like the back of his hand, and after he had memorized everything that he had observed, he swept a hand through the air to withdraw the Eye of Truth.

"Did you find anything, Fellow Daoist Han?" Patriarch Cold Flame hurriedly asked as soon as Han Li opened his eyes.

"I've managed to find all of the bases of the array, but there could be some fake ones among them, so we'll have to rely on your memory of the direction that you took last time to find the right exit," Han Li replied.

Patriarch Cold Flame was ecstatic to hear this, and he immediately replied, "Rest assured, Fellow Daoist Han, I'll do everything in my power to help."

1. For more information on the Vast Glacial Palace, please refer to https://a-record-of-a-mortal-is-journey-to-immortality.fandom.com/wiki/Vast_Glacial_Realm 

Chapter 422: Replicating the Ploy

"If we go three kilometers down this street, there's an old house in an alley, and inside the yard of that house is a well, at the bottom of which is one of the bases of the array..."

Han Li began to lay out the locations of the bases of the array, while Patriarch Cold Flame listened with rapt focus while nodding or shaking his head in response, using his recollection to determine whether these bases were genuine or false.

In the real world, the white stone plaza that they were situated on wasn't very large at all, but this illusion was immeasurably massive. Starting from the well in the old house, the three of them passed

through a wine shop and a brothel, and after a series of turns, they arrived in the backyard of a public office.

After that, they stepped onto a millstone to flip over a wall that was less than seven feet tall, arriving in a residential area in a quiet alley.

After emerging from the alley, they passed through seven or more streets before arriving at a school.

During this time, Lu Yuqing was gradually becoming more and more disoriented, as if she were about to lose herself in the array, but thankfully, Han Li was able to snap her back to her senses using a spiritual sense secret technique.

The tender voices of children reading aloud could be heard coming from inside the school, and outside the school gate was an elm tree that was over a century old. It wasn't very tall, but it was extremely thick, and at this moment, Han Li's trio was standing under its shadow.

"Last time, the exit of the array was the remains of a primordial demon beast, and it's completely different this time, so I can't be certain," Patriarch Cold Flame said in a hesitant voice as he looked at the old elm tree.

"The spiritual power fluctuations here are very different from what we've previously encountered, so I think this should be the place," Han Li said while observing the elm tree through his Eye of Truth.

He then cast an incantation seal toward the elm tree, and the Eye of Truth above his head trembled slightly, then released a burst of golden ripples.

The elm tree instantly brightened significantly upon contact with the golden ripples, and a blue vortex emerged within the golden light, through which a long passageway could be seen.

Patriarch Cold Flame approached the blue vortex and inspected it closely for a while, then turned back to Han Li and Lu Yuqing before nodding in confirmation as he said, "This should be the place. The passageway inside is almost identical as the one from last time."

"Alright, then let's go. We've already been delayed significantly here," Han Li said.

The Eye of Truth above his head faded as he spoke, and Patriarch Cold Flame led the way into the blue vortex, followed by Lu Yuqing, while Han Li brought up the rear.

A few minutes later, a burst of peculiar fluctuations spread through the air above the plaza, and Han Li's trio stumbled out into the open.

After taking a moment to steady himself, Patriarch Cold Flame immediately began looking around, but didn't find Xiong Shan.

"Save your energy. He's a master in arrays to begin with, and he's already passed through this array once before, so he's definitely already emerged ahead of us, and he should be on his way to the palaces by now," Han Li said, then turned around to look at plaza again with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

The mist here was churning violently, and that, coupled with the chaotic spiritual power fluctuations emanating out from within, clearly indicated that Xue Han had also made his way into the array.

"Let's get out of here while Xue Han is still trapped in the array. Take me to where the Great Universe Origin Arts is," Han Li said to Patriarch Cold Flame.

Patriarch Cold Flame nodded in response, then led the way toward the three palaces.

The central palace in the triangular formation was the one that was closest to Han Li's trio, and it was significantly taller than the two behind it.

In front of the palace were 10 golden pillars with countless runes inscribed upon them, and they had an extremely antiquated appearance.

The main gate of the palace was over 100 feet tall and entirely constructed from gold, and it was also riddled with runes. The left half of the gate was slightly ajar, and a section of its surface was charred black.

"This palace is just a trap. There's nothing inside aside from two puppets," Patriarch Cold Flame said, then skirted around the central palace as he made his way toward the palace on the right.

"Was the restriction on that palace destroyed the last time you came here?" Lu Yuqing asked.

"Do you recall how I said that a total of four of us emerged from the illusory array? The other two died in there," Patriarch Cold Flame replied.

Lu Yuqing's face paled slightly upon hearing this, and the three of them remained silent as they made their way to the palace on the right.

This palace was smaller than the other one, but it was constructed using the same materials and in the same style. The only difference was that the gates of this palace were tightly shut, and the runes engraved upon it were also undamaged.

"Fellow Daoist Han, I found the first half of the Great Universe Origin Arts in the rear hall of this palace, and the other half is also in there," Patriarch Cold Flame said.

"There must be some reason why you didn't secure both halves of the cultivation art at once last time, right?" Han Li asked.

"That's right. The cultivation art is being guarded by an early-Golden Immortal Stage puppet," Patriarch Cold Flame replied with a nod.

A hint of suspicion appeared on Han Li's face upon hearing this.

"Forgive me for being blunt, but if there's a Golden Immortal Stage puppet in there, then I don't see how it was possible for you to have stolen the first half of the cultivation art, particularly considering this was back before you cultivated the Great Universe Origin Arts."

"I understand your skepticism, Fellow Daoist Han. At the time, it was indeed true that I wasn't even able to withstand a single attack from the puppet. Hence, I didn't engage it in a direct battle. Instead, I released a few of my puppets to divert its attention, then used a concealment treasure to mask my aura

before sneaking into the rear hall, and that was how I managed to obtain the first half of the cultivation art," Patriarch Cold Flame explained.

An enlightened look appeared on Han Li's face upon hearing this.

Aside from some special puppets that possessed high levels of intelligence, like Daoist Xie, puppets were generally rather lackluster at sensing auras, so if Patriarch Cold Flame had an aura concealment treasure, then there was indeed a chance that he could've snuck past the puppet.

"However, as soon as I secured the stone slab that contained the first half of the Great Universe Origin Arts, the puppet immediately detected my presence, and I was severely injured after taking just a single punch from it. Fortunately, for some reason, it didn't chase me out of the hall, and that's the only reason I managed to survive," Patriarch Cold Flame recounted with a hint of lingering fear in his eyes.

"What level of intelligence did the puppet possess?" Han Li asked.

"Even though I only had a very brief clash against it, I could tell that it didn't possess much intelligence at all. Otherwise, there's no way that it would've fallen for my crude ploy at distraction," Patriarch Cold Flame replied.

"In that case, it most likely didn't chase you out of the hall as its former owner restricted the area that it could move around in, thereby mandating it to remain in the hall to protect the cultivation art. Hence, it should be a simple task for us to secure the second half of the cultivation art," Han Li said.

"Are you suggesting that we use the same ploy again?" Patriarch Cold Flame asked in a rather hesitant voice.

"That's correct. However, I'll need your help in the execution," Han Li replied.

"Please tell me what you need me to do," Patriarch Cold Flame prompted.

Han Li gave Patriarch Cold Flame a rundown of his plan, and after listening to what Han Li had to say, Patriarch Cold Flame nodded in response to express his approval.

Lu Yuqing had also heard Han Li's plan in its entirety, and after a brief hesitation, she asked, "Why have you not involved me in your plan at all, Brother Han? Is it because you think I'm too weak to be of help?"

"That's not the case. Our plan is to infiltrate and steal, rather than confront and rob, so the fewer the number of people we can involve, the better. On top of that, the treasure that we're going after will only benefit Fellow Daoist Cold Flame and myself, so there's no reason for you to take the risk," Han Li explained.

"In that case, I'll just focus on staying out of your way," Lu Yuqing replied with a nod.

Han Li and Patriarch Cold Flame took a pill each, then took a moment to rest before making their way up the stone steps in front of the palace.

The runes on the palace gates were still completely intact, and the spiritual power fluctuations emanating from them indicated that the seal on the gates were still in operation. Han Li examined the runes momentarily to find that it wasn't a very advanced restriction, and he raised a hand to conjure up five balls of silver lightning, one on each fingertip, then abruptly thrust his palm toward the palace gates.

A loud thump rang out, and the gates of the palace instantly swung inward. A deep indentation had appeared on the spot on the gates where Han Li's palm had struck, and the runes there had all been scorched black by the balls of silver lightning.

At the center of the palace sat a copper humanoid puppet that was around 10 feet tall, and its eyes suddenly sprang open as a furious look appeared on its chiseled face as it bellowed in a thunderous voice, "All intruders must die!"

At the same time, its feet clanged against the ground as it rushed toward the palace gates.

Han Li took a glance inside the palace, then flicked his fingers through the air several times in succession, and streaks of yellow and azure light flew out of his fingertips before transforming into seven or eight giant ape puppets in a flash.

However, instead of attacking the copper puppet, all of the giant ape puppets split up and darted away in different directions as quickly as they could.

Chapter 423: Bait

The copper puppet immediately charged toward one of the ape puppets upon seeing this, while Han Li and Patriarch Cold Flame exchanged a glance, then immediately took advantage of this opportunity to rush into the palace.

Han Li was using his Transient Guild mask to conceal his own aura, while Patriarch Cold Flame was achieving the same outcome through the use of a dark red robe, and they were rushing toward a giant screen at the rear of the palace.

However, as soon as they stepped into the palace, a string of loud booms rang out in rapid succession, and all of the giant ape puppets that Han Li had released were wiped out in an instant.

Immediately thereafter, the copper puppet stormed toward them before throwing a punch at both of them.

Han Li had his guard up for such an eventuality, so he was able to react quite calmly, crossing his arms to form a barrier in the face of the oncoming fist.

A resounding thump rang out, and both of his arms went numb as he slid along the ground before crashing heavily into the gate of the palace.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Cold Flame had fared even worse. He seemed to have been caught completely off guard, and he tumbled through the air like a ragdoll before slamming into a wall, where he threw up a mouthful of blood.

After scrambling to his feet, he immediately turned to Han Li with a stunned expression before shaking his head.

It seemed that the circumstances were different from the last time he was here.

There was no time for Han Li to blame Patriarch Cold Flame for feeding him false information, and he yelled, "I'll deal with this thing, you go get the second half of the cultivation art!"

As soon as his voice trailed off, he immediately charged directly toward the copper puppet.

Han Li's original plan was for the giant ape puppets to keep the copper puppet distracted while Patriarch Cold Flame snuck in to steal the second half of the cultivation art, and Han Li would only be required to withstand a single attack from the puppet as Patriarch Cold Flame was getting away.

After that, both of them would be able to get away, while the puppet would remain trapped in the hall.

However, this was a complete deviation from the original plan, and he had no choice but to engage the puppet in a direct battle to buy time for Patriarch Cold Flame.

Patriarch Cold Flame immediately did as he was told, charging directly toward the rear hall while making no further attempt to conceal his own aura.

At the same time, he couldn't help but wonder how the puppet had suddenly developed such a high level of intelligence, and he was also worried that Han Li would think that he had intentionally fed him false information.

If Han Li were to arrive at that conclusion, then if they could obtain the Great Universe Origin Arts, Han Li was definitely not going to be pleased.

Having dealt with Han Li on multiple past occasions, Patriarch Cold Flame had developed an understanding of Han Li's character, and he knew just how unforgiving Han Li could be to those who betrayed or hurt him.

"How dare you!"

The copper puppet immediately swung around as soon as it sensed what Patriarch Cold Flame was doing, leaving Han Li behind to go after him.

Patriarch Cold Flame had only just reached the screen when the copper puppet swung a massive fist in his direction with astounding force.

He was just about to turn around to defend himself when Han Li's voice rang out from behind him.

"Focus on grabbing the cultivation art, I'll take care of the puppet!"

After a brief hesitation, he did as he was told, ignoring the fist that was hurtling toward him from behind as he rushed toward the screen.

Right as the copper puppet's fist was about to strike him in the back, a burst of lightning suddenly flashed over Han Li's body, and he flapped the Thunderstorm Wings on his back as he flew through the air, positioning himself between the puppet and Patriarch Cold Flame.

His brows were tightly furrowed as he stacked his hands together, one on top of the other, then thrust them both upward at once.

A pair of azure palm projections erupted forth, and they were also stacked on top of one another as they opposed the puppet's fist.

A burst of tremendous force erupted out of its fist, causing Han Li's robes to flap audibly around him, but he remained still and unyielding. However, his arms were bent, and a large section of his legs had also sunk deep into the ground.

The copper puppet was furious to see that its attack had been withstood, and a starry white cloud gathered around its fist as it lashed out at Han Li again.

Han Li's fighting spirit was also ignited, and he let loose a loud roar as the muscles on his body bulged, while a layer of golden fur appeared over his body. The tips of a pair of tusks also came protruding out of his mouth, and in the blink of an eye, he had transformed into a Giant Mountain Ape.

He then threw a punch directly upward to oppose the oncoming fist of the copper puppet.

The two massive fists collided violently in mid-air, and a burst of dazzling white light appeared between them amid a resounding thunderclap. A burst of shockwaves that were visible even to the naked eye instantly swept through the air, causing the entire palace to tremble violently.

Han Li's arms bent slightly as he sank even deeper into the ground, while the copper puppet remained completely unmoved.

Even after drawing upon his Giant Mountain Ape bloodline, Han Li had still come off second best in a contest of strength against this puppet.

His brows were tightly furrowed as he pulled his legs out of the ground, then sprang up into the air, taking the initiative this time to lash out with a punch against the copper puppet. In response, the puppet lunged forward and retaliated with a punch of its own.

Han Li's entire body was enshrouded within a layer of dazzling blue light, and specks of dazzling starlight emerged on his chest and abdomen, while his aura also swelled drastically.

Specks of starlight also emerged over the copper puppet's body, and they had appeared in the exact same spots that corresponded to the profound acupoints cultivated through the Great Universe Origin Arts. However, the puppet had opened far more profound acupoints than Han Li, so the starpower that was swirling around its fist was naturally far more formidable than Han Li's.

Even before the two fists had collided, the outcome was already apparent.

However, right as the two fists were about to come into contact with one another, Han Li abruptly vanished into thin air before instantly reappearing behind the copper puppet, then threw a punch straight at the puppet's back.

A loud thump rang out as a vast expanse of starlight erupted out of the profound acupoints on the copper puppet's back, and it clashed violently against the starlight radiating from Han Li's fist, resulting in an eruption of blinding radiance.

The copper puppet's momentum was already shifting forward as a result of the punch it had thrown, and with Han Li landing a blow on it from behind, it immediately stumbled involuntarily forward.

Its enormous fist also slammed into the ground with a deafening boom as a result, and the entire palace shuddered violently as dust came raining down from the ceiling.

A bottomless rift that was over 100 feet in length had been smashed into the ground, and Han Li was very thankful for his own decision not to fight fire with fire.

Right before the clash was about to take place, he had reversed his Mantra Treasured Axis to accelerate himself, thereby allowing him to evade the copper puppet's punch. Otherwise, at the very least, he would've been missing an arm by now.

What he found most surprising was that the copper puppet was also able to use stargate power, and it seemed to have opened up an even higher number of profound acupoints than him.

Could it be that it had also cultivated the Great Universe Origin Arts?

Before Han Li had a chance to ponder this matter any further, an urgent voice suddenly rang out from the rear hall. "I've got the cultivation art, Fellow Daoist Han! Let's get out of here!"

Immediately thereafter, Patriarch Cold Flame emerged from behind the screen, holding a gray stone slab aloft. The stone slab was riddled with countless antiquated characters, and it was clearly the second half of the Great Universe Origin Arts.

Han Li immediately nodded in response, and the two of them arrived at the entrance of the palace almost at the exact same moment.

Han Li raised a hand to push the palace gates open, yet right at this moment, the entire palace suddenly began to tremble violently, and all of the runes engraved upon the entire structure joined together like squirming worms, as if they had sprung to life.

At the same time, a purplish-golden light barrier began to spread over the walls, the ceiling, and the ground, encapsulating the entire space within the palace.

An alarmed look immediately appeared on Patriarch Cold Flame's face upon seeing this.

At this point, Han Li had already reverted back to his human form, and he raised a hand before thrusting his palm toward the palace gates.

Five balls of silver lightning emerged over his fingertips as he attacked the purplish-golden light barrier, and a loud crackling sound rang out as countless antiquated runes emerged over the light barrier, accompanied by arcs of lightning that scattered the balls of silver lightning around Han Li's fingertips.

The purplish-golden lightning surged forth in a frenzy, devouring all of the scattered silver lightning, and Han Li couldn't help but draw a sharp breath as a numb sensation spread through his entire body.

At this point, the copper puppet had already returned to its feet, and it declared in a cold voice, "Unforgivable!"

At the same time, a layer of murky white light flashed through its eyes, and the purplish-golden light radiating from its body also gradually dimmed while starlight surged out of its profound acupoints, giving its entire body a translucent appearance.

In the wake of these changes, the aura that it was giving off was also elevated drastically, reaching the pinnacle of the early-Golden Immortal Stage.

"I swear I didn't lie to you, Fellow Daoist Han! None of this happened the last time I was here!" Patriarch Cold Flame hurriedly said in an urgent voice.

"I believe you," Han Li replied in a concise fashion.

Patriarch Cold Flame was quite taken aback to hear this, and he was temporarily at a loss for words.

"The restriction outside the palace isn't even comparable to the one inside it. Don't you find that strange?" Han Li asked while keeping a close eye on the copper puppet.

An enlightened look instantly appeared in Patriarch Cold Flame's eyes upon seeing this.

"This palace was never designed to keep people out. Instead, it's to ensure that those who come in aren't able to get away. Just like the other palace, this is also a trap, and perhaps the Great Universe Origin Arts is being used as bait."

Chapter 424: Collaborative Strike

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li speculated, "Perhaps it was because too much time had passed, and some issues arose in the array, so when you came here last time, the array wasn't completely activated, nor had this puppet completely awakened. I presume that's how you were able to escape with your life."

A hint of lingering fear welled up in Patriarch Cold Flame's heart, but at the same time, he was also very thankful for his own good fortune. Before he had a chance to reply, Han Li suddenly yelled in an urgent voice, "Here it comes!"

As soon as his voice trailed off, Han Li had already vanished from the spot.

In the next instant, he appeared directly above the copper puppet's head, then made a peculiar hand seal before thrust a palm directly downward.

A burst of ripples spread through the space beneath his palm, and a shimmering azure longsword emerged out of thin air in a flash, then flew down toward the copper puppet's head.

The sound of crackling lightning rang out as a burst of piercing golden light appeared over the azure longsword, and arcs of formidable golden lightning emerged over the entire sword before it crashed heavily down upon the top of the copper puppet's head.

A resounding boom rang out as a golden lightning vortex that was several dozen feet tall appeared within the palace, and arcs of golden lightning were springing out of the vortex in all directions to strike the surrounding purplish-golden light barrier.

Patriarch Cold Flame was peering intently into the lightning vortex, but he was unable to see the copper puppet at all, and he could only sense the vast and violent power contained within the golden lightning.

Is it dead?

All of a sudden, a strange sound rang out from within the golden lightning vortex, and a grim look instantly appeared on Patriarch Cold Flame's face upon hearing this.

Immediately thereafter, a thick and strong arm that was as fair and translucent as jade suddenly erupted upward out of the lightning vortex, then clenched threw a vicious punch at the azure longsword up above.

A resounding boom rang out as a white cloud of starlight erupted out of the fist with countless specks of blue light flashing within it, presenting a stunning sight that resembled a bright and starry sky.

Immediately thereafter, a burst of incredibly formidable power erupted forth, and layers upon layers of white light surged outward in all directions, expanding the golden lightning vortex further and further.

At the same time, the blue stars within the white light were snuffed out one after another as a destructive aura spread emanated through the air.

A thunderous roar rang out as the white light exploded once again, and the golden lightning vortex was finally torn apart, with countless arcs of golden lightning flying in all directions to strike the surrounding purplish-golden light barrier.

At the same time, the Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords up above was also sent flying back through the air, skidding across the purplish-golden light barrier on the ceiling to raise a trail of sparks before being repelled downward, where it was then it caught by Han Li right before it could pierce into the ground.

The azure longsword was trembling violently, and as a result, Han Li's arm was trembling slightly as well.

His complexion had also paled noticeably, while his breathing had become a little ragged.

His brows were tightly furrowed as he cast his gaze toward the copper puppet, upon which he discovered that it had taken on a completely different form. Its entire body had taken on the same hue and translucency as green jade, and there were specks of blue light all over its body.

At this moment, there were still some faint arcs of lightning flashing over its body, but it paid no heed to this at all as it took a step forward, then abruptly sped through the air as a blurry streak of light, reaching Han Li in the blink of an eye.

Instead of lashing out with a punch, it sliced its palm through the air in a chopping motion this time, lashing out at Han Li's neck with tremendous power.

It was so incredibly fast that Han Li didn't have a chance to defend himself at all, and a dull thump rang out as he was sent flying into the purplish-golden light barrier in a dizzy and disoriented fashion.

A vast expanse of lightning instantly erupted out of the light barrier, and Patriarch Cold Flame immediately called out to him in alarm.

His first instinct was to rush to Han Li's aid, but after taking a glance at the copper puppet, he decided to remain still on the spot.

However, the puppet didn't continue to pursue Han Li after striking him down. Instead, it turned to Patriarch Cold Flame with a pair of emotionless silver eyes.

A chill immediately ran down Patriarch Cold Flame's spine, and he took a glance at the gray stone slab in his hand before hurriedly tossing it away as if it were a hot potato.

It was unclear whether this was intentional, but the stone slab ultimately landed right beside Han Li, who had only just slammed down onto the ground after crashing into the purplish-golden light barrier.

There were plumes of white smoke rising up from his entire body, and many parts of his robes were also charred black.

He rose to his feet, using his azure longsword as a crutch, picking up the gray stone slab in the process, and after taking a quick glance at the stone slab, a pleased smile appeared on his face as he stowed it away.

The copper puppet seemed to have been completely infuriated upon seeing this, and it immediately sped directly toward Han Li once again as a blurry streak of light.

Once again, it lashed out in a chopping motion, and the white light on the palm of his hand took a serrated form as it thrust its hand directly toward Han Li's heart.

This time, Han Li was already prepared, and his Mantra Treasured Axis instantly appeared behind him amid a flash of golden light.

All of the active Time Dao Runes on it lit up in unison, releasing a layer of golden ripples that encompassed the area around him.

As soon as the copper puppet's arm pierced into the golden ripples, it instantly became extremely slow, as if it had been thrust into quicksand.

However, all of the specks of blue light on the puppet's body then suddenly grew even brighter, and all of the white radiance emanating from its body also surged toward its arm in a frenzy.

The light radiating from the copper puppet's hand instantly turned from white to blue, and it also expanded to around twice its original size as it tore viciously at the surrounding golden ripples.

The golden ripples released by the Mantra Treasured Axis were starting to become a little unstable, and the puppet's arm was beginning to travel forward again. It still wasn't very fast, but the time-slowng effect of the Mantra Treasured Axis was undeniably being countered, and this was something that had never happened before.

"Are you still not ready, Brother Xie?" Han Li asked while struggling to support his Mantra Treasured Axis.

"I'm ready!" Brother Xie replied, and as soon as its voice trailed off, a burst of golden radiance suddenly erupted out of Han Li's body, then expanded drastically into a flood of golden lightning that filled the entire palace in the blink of an eye.

It was as if the entire area had been inundated by a wave of golden lightning.

Ever since entering the palace, Patriarch Cold Flame had already been astonished so many times that he was beginning to feel a little numb.

At this moment, his mouth was slightly agape, and there was a dazed look in his eyes as he clung onto an azure bianzhong with all his might, conjuring up an azure light barrier to protect himself.

Within the vast expanse of golden lightning, a giant golden crab emerged, and its enormous shell was grinding against the purplish-golden light barrier beneath the ceiling, sending lightning of two different colors erupting in all directions.

A giant crab pincer shot out of the golden lightning, then snapped itself around the copper puppet's waist, and two bursts of crisscrossing golden lightning flashed past amid a rumbling thunderclap.

The purplish-golden light barrier around the palace was instantly torn apart before fading away, and a giant rift was also sliced into the walls and the ceiling of the palace.

Immediately thereafter, all of the golden lightning within the palace gradually began to subside back into the golden crab's body, and it transformed into Daoist Xie's yellow-robed human form.

"Fellow Daoist Han, I'm afraid all of the Immortal Origin Stones that you gave me earlier have been used up in that attack," Daoist Xie said as he took a glance at the copper puppet, which had been snapped into two.

"That's fine, I'll give you some more a bit later. You have my thanks, Brother Xie," Han Li replied as he withdrew his Mantra Treasured Axis.

"There's no need to thank me. This puppet is quite formidable, and even though its intelligence was intentionally suppressed during the refinement process, its very similar in power to a Golden Immortal Stage Profound Immortal, so unless we joined forces, it wouldn't have been so easy to defeat it," Daoist Xie replied, and he alluding to Han Li that it was best to keep the remains of the puppet rather than let it go to waste.

"I'll be sure to take it with me. Do you have a way to repair it once we leave this place?" Han Li asked.

"I didn't hold back at all in that attack, and I've already damaged its core, so it's hard to say whether it can be repaired or not," Daoist Xie replied in an ambiguous fashion.

At this point, the copper puppet had already reverted back to its original form, and it had been snapped all the way from its left shoulder to its right oblique. A dark golden metal ball could be seen exposed in its severed abdomen, and the ball had been severed as well.

A slightly forlorn look appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, but he knew that it couldn't be helped. After all, this was a Golden Immortal Stage opponent, and holding back could've easily spelled death.

Daoist Xie took a glance at Patriarch Cold Flame, who was still frozen in shock, then said, "If there's nothing else you need from me, then I'm going back."

After that, he flew back up Han Li's sleeve as a streak of golden light, following which Han Li stowed the two halves of the copper puppet away with a sweep of his sleeve before making his way toward the rear hall.

Patriarch Cold Flame continued to stare at Han Li as he slumped to the ground, and his entire body was already drenched in cold sweat.

Only now did he come to understand just how massive the gap between himself and Han Li was, and how foolish his earlier actions had been.

Han Li made his way around the giant screen, where he was greeted by the sight of a hidden doorway that could fit two people through at once.

He strode through the doorway to arrive in a completely isolated and windowless space, but it wasn't dark despite the lack of natural light as a layer of luminescent stone powder had been painted over the walls, giving off a faint glow that illuminated the room.

At the very center of the rear hall was a small copper platform that was only around three feet tall, with complex patterns engraved onto its surface.

On the upper face of the platform were two indentations that were the exact same shape and size as the Great Universe Origin Arts stone slabs, and there were also runes engraved inside.

Chapter 425: Treasure Hunt

Strewn across the ground behind the copper platform in a haphazard fashion were seven or eight black wooden chests with talismans adhered to them.

It was clear that Patriarch Cold Flame hadn't been able to take what was in the chests on the previous two occasions that he was here.

Han Li swept his gaze across his surroundings before striding forward, and a layer of azure light appeared over his hand as he swept his palm over one of the chests, upon which the talismans adhered to its surface instantly disintegrated into dust.

He then opened the wooden chest, and a faint smile immediately appeared on his face as the chest's contents were revealed.

Inside the chest were orderly layers of palm-sized blue crystals that totaled in excess of 100, and they were none other than Starheaven Stones.

With so many Starheaven Stones at his disposal, cultivating the rest of the Great Universe Origin Arts was going to be much easier.

Han Li suppressed the excitement in his heart as he opened all of the remaining wooden chests as well, and he discovered that all of them were also filled with Starheaven Stones, taking the total tally to close to 1,000.

With a sweep of his sleeve, Han Li stowed all of the wooden chests away into the storage bracelet on his wrist, and only after examining the rear hall to ensure that there was nothing else left inside did he exit through the secret doorway.

As he passed by the giant screen, he suddenly raised an eyebrow as he stopped in his tracks.

He raised his head to look at the starry night sky depicted on the screen, and a peculiar feeling suddenly welled up in his heart. After a brief moment of contemplation, he pressed a palm against the screen and stowed it away as well.

He then strode past Patriarch Cold Flame without even sparing him a glance before exiting the palace, upon which he was immediately greeted by Lu Yuqing with an anxious look on her face.

"Thank goodness you're finally back," Lu Yuqing hurriedly said in a relieved voice.

"Is something wrong?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"Just now, a loud commotion started over on the plaza," Lu Yuqing replied as she pointed in the direction of the white stone plaza.

As soon as her voice trailed off, a resounding boom rang out in that direction, following which a pillar of crimson fire erupted into the sky.

"It looks like Xue Han and the others are already breaking through the array. We have to get out of here," Han Li said.

"We've already completely diverted off our original route, and this area is outside of the map that I have. How are we going to get back?" Lu Yuqing asked in a concerned voice.

Han Li offered no response as he sprang up into the sky, then inspected his surroundings briefly from his new vantage point before descending back onto the ground.

"At this point, we'll just have to take one step at a time and adapt with the circumstances. There are quite a few palaces and pavilions on the mountain behind these three palaces, and I'm sure there are some treasures waiting to be found there," Han Li said.

Lu Yuqing nodded in response.

Right at this moment, Patriarch Cold Flame emerged from within the palace, then asked in a slightly uneasy voice, "Fellow Daoist Han, can I continue to follow you for the rest of the trip?"

"I'm willing to let what you did earlier slide, but don't take my kindness as a sign of weakness. I think it would be best for us to split up and go our separate ways from here onward," Han Li replied in a cold voice.

Right as they were speaking, another resounding boom rang out from the plaza, and two mow pillars of light erupted into the heavens.

Patriarch Cold Flame knew that he was at fault, so he made no attempt to argue as he replied, "Fellow Daoist Han, I no longer harbor any delusions of getting my hands on the second half of the Great Universe Origin Arts. All I ask is that you take me with you. If I go off on my own now, even if we set aside whether I'll be able to make it out of this secret area, I'll surely be killed if I run into Xue Han and the others."

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face upon hearing this, and after a brief silence, he replied, "Alright, but I'll only take you out of this area. Once we're out of here, we go our separate ways."

"Thank you, Fellow Daoist Han," Patriarch Cold Flame said as he extended a respectful bow, but Han Li stepped away to sidestep the bow, then turned and departed with Lu Yuqing in tow.

Patriarch Cold Flame heaved a forlorn sigh as he hurriedly followed along, and the three of them made their way down a mountain path, which was lined with palaces and pavilions of different sizes, but they were far smaller than the previous three.

Han Li knew that the layout of this place was very similar to that of the Vast Glacial Palace, so there was a very good chance that there would be a spirit medicine garden on the rear mountain. He was initially planning to go straight there, but he was feeling a little hesitant after inspecting the nearby buildings with his spiritual sense.

Lu Yuqing could tell that Han Li was rather distracted, and she asked, "What's wrong, Brother Han?"

"Almost all of the buildings here have restrictions set up in them, but the quality of the restrictions vary drastically. Some are extremely crude, while others are quite advanced, indicating that there are treasures sealed inside, so it would be a real pity not to explore these buildings," Han Li mused.

A hint of concern appeared in Lu Yuqing's eyes upon hearing this, and she said, "Brother Han, we still have Xue Han and the others hot on our heels, so..."

"It's fine. Even if they've found a way to break the array, it'll still take them some time to break out. On top of that, they'll be sure to be tempted into exploring the three palaces back there, so they won't come after us anytime soon," Han Li said.

A hint of excitement appeared in Lu Yuqing's eyes upon hearing this, and she said, "Alright, in that case, I suppose we could explore this area for a while."

Just like everyone else who had entered the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor, Lu Yuqing was also keen to secure some powerful treasures and useful resources for herself, so she was naturally enthused by the prospect of being able to do some exploring.

"Let's split up and search for treasures independently, then meet back up here in an hour. If anything happens during that time, we meet back up early and get out of here," Han Li instructed.

Lu Yuqing gave an affirmative response, then immediately flew away in a certain direction.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Cold Flame was standing off to the side with an uneasy look on his face, but he didn't dare to say anything.

Han Li took a cold glance at him, then flew away in the opposite direction of Lu Yuqing.

Only after Han Li's departure did Patriarch Cold Flame heave a faint sigh, then flip his hand over to produce a jade slip, upon which a gleeful smile appeared on his face.

This jade slip contained the second half of the Great Universe Origin Arts. As it turned out, he had made this replica of the cultivation art in secret while Han Li had been locked in battle against the copper puppet, so he had obtained what he had come here for, after all.

With that in mind, he stowed the jade slip away, then also flew away in a certain direction.

.....

Han Li drifted down onto a small bluestone plaza in front of a three-story pavilion.

After landing on the plaza, he examined the pavilion to find that there was a small golden bell hanging from each of the eight corners of its octagonal roof. This pavilion had to have been standing for countless years, yet the bells weren't displaying even the slightest sign of rust or discoloration.

Han Li was rather intrigued to see this, and he swept a sleeve through the air to release a gentle breeze, which swept over the pavilion, causing all of the 24 bells on the pavilion's three rooves to sway and chime.

The sound was very pleasing to the ears initially, but Han Li quickly noticed that something wasn't quite right.

The chiming of the bells should've gradually subsided over time, but instead, it was only growing louder and louder, until eventually, each strike was as loud as the strike of a gong, striking Han Li with a sense of dizziness and disorientation.

It seems that these 24 bells are a set of spiritually disruptive treasures... How intriguing...

He had already cultivated the Spirit Refinement Technique to the fourth level, and even he fell prey to the bells' disruptive effect for a moment, so he could only imagine how susceptible others would be.

In a battle, a moment of disruption was often enough to decide the outcome, and with that in mind, Han Li was tempted to take these bells for himself.

However, as he reached out to draw the bells toward him, he discovered that they were completely immovable.

A puzzled look appeared on his face as he carefully examined the entire pavilion again, and only then did he realize that the entire three-floor pavilion was a part of the set of bell treasures.

Furthermore, he speculated that the bell chime sound was only the tip of the iceberg when it came to the pavilion's full power. There was most likely much worse to come inside the pavilion, and if one were to grow complacent, thinking that they had weathered the storm after withstanding the bell chime restriction, then they would be sure to suffer once they entered the pavilion.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li swept a sleeve through the air to release Daoist Xie.

"Why have you summoned me again so soon? Have you encountered some trouble?" Daoist Xie asked.

"I do have to trouble you for something, Brother Xie," Han Li said in a slightly apologetic voice.

"Go ahead, Fellow Daoist," Daoist Xie prompted.

"This pavilion in front of us is a spirit treasure of an extremely high caliber, but it'll take me some time to refine it, so in the meantime, please search the nearby buildings for treasures. Regardless of what you find, I'll compensate you with Immortal Origin Stones," Han Li said.

Daoist Xie hesitated momentarily, then nodded in response.

All of a sudden, a thought occurred to Han Li, and he flipped a hand over to produce a yellow gourd before handing it to Daoist Xie as he said, "You can send out the Dao Warriors inside to aid you in your search."

"That's a good idea," Daoist Xie said as he accepted the gourd from Han Li, then vanished from the spot as a flash of lightning.

Meanwhile, Han Li began to focus on the task at hand, channeling his Spirit Refinement Technique as he strode into the pavilion.

This was clearly no ordinary pavilion, and its core was definitely inside. Hence, in order to refine it, the only way was to enter the pavilion itself.

Chapter 426: Mural

Around 15 minutes later, the door of the three-floor pavilion abruptly sprang open, and Han Li emerged from inside with an elated expression.

He then turned around and made a hand seal, and a vast expanse of golden light suddenly emerged over the entire pavilion.

There were countless runes flashing within the golden light, and all of a sudden, the pavilion shrank down to only the size of a lantern before being stowed away into Han Li's storage bracelet.

This treasure is more than powerful enough to trap a mid-True Immortal cultivator, and it can maybe even trap a late-True Immortal cultivator who hasn't cultivated any spiritual enhancement secret techniques, but it won't work on anyone beyond that. Having said that, I can use it in conjunction with other treasures, so it can still be quite useful.

Right as these thoughts were running through his mind, bursts of rumbling suddenly began to ring out in the distance, and he hurriedly turned to discover that the sound was coming from the three palaces. Clearly, Xue Han and the others had begun invading the palaces.

Right at this moment, Daoist Xie's voice suddenly rang out in his mind. "Fellow Daoist Han, come here right now."

He immediately responded to the call, springing up into the air, and before long, he had landed in a weed-infested courtyard.

Several Dao Warriors were in the process of searching for treasures in the side room of the residence, but the doors of the main room were wide open, and Daoist Xie could be seen inside.

Han Li made his way into the room to find that Daoist Xie was staring at a wall in the room.

"I didn't find any noteworthy treasures in here, but this mural is quite interesting," Daoist Xie said without even turning around.

Han Li immediately cast his gaze toward the surrounding walls upon hearing this, and he discovered that they were covered in vibrant and colorful murals.

The things drawn in the mural varied drastically, and the scenes depicted were also extremely chaotic, with severely ravaged landscapes that were overrun with lava, ferocious storms of lightning and fire, and it truly painted a doomsday-like scene.

As Han Li continued to observe the mural, he felt as if the depicted scenes were beginning to move. The lava on the ground was flowing, the fireballs in the sky were beginning to descend, and lightning was flashing in the dark clouds up above.

Many figures dressed in all types of attire were also flying through the air, performing all types of different actions, such as making hand seals, raising weapons, swinging fists...

Aside from the battling cultivators, there were also many mountainous beasts depicted on the mural, all of which were extremely fearsome in appearance and possessed various different formidable abilities.

Having dabbled in the 12 Awakening Transformations, Han Li knew many species of powerful ancient beasts, but he wasn't able to identify even a single one of the beasts depicted in the mural.

The mural depicted an immortal battle of an enormous scale, and even though Han Li was only witnessing the battle through the mural, he felt as if he were situated directly in the battle, and a chill instantly ran down his spine.

However, at the same time, he couldn't help but feel a little perplexed.

All of the figures on the mural with clearly visible features seemed to belong to the same camp, yet all of their enemies had blurry facial features, as if they were enshrouded in layers of gray mist.

They appeared to be cultivators, but also somehow different.

"Do you know when the battle depicted on this mural took place, Fellow Daoist Han?" Daoist Xie suddenly asked.

Han Li shook his head in response. "I don't. Do you, Brother Xie?"

He was thinking back to all of the historical records he had seen in the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, but he couldn't think of any battle that corresponded with this one.

"I don't know, either. I just thought these murals were very strange, so I wanted you to come and take a look," Daoist Xie replied with a shake of his head.

Han Li had thought that he would be able to get some answers from Daoist Xie, so he was rather disappointed to hear this response, but this wasn't an important matter anyway.

After that, he searched through some more buildings with Daoist Xie and gathered quite a few treasures of different calibers. There weren't many that he could use, but he could certainly sell them for a lot of Immortal Origin Stones once he left the immortal manor.

Once the hour was up, Han Li stowed Daoist Xie and his Dao Warriors away, then returned to the same place as before.

Lu Yuqing and Patriarch Cold Flame were already waiting there, and the former's eyes were sparkling with excitement, while the latter wore a neutral expression, making it impossible to tell what he was thinking.

After reuniting, the three of them made their way toward the spirit medicine garden on the rear mountain.

Before long, the three of them descended onto a plot of land, right in front of a square garden that was over 10 acres in area.

The garden was surrounded by walls that were roughly 40 to 50 feet tall, constructed from some type of blue crystalline material.

The material was giving off a layer of watery blue light interspersed with specks of starry light that presented a very pleasant sight to behold.

Han Li swept his gaze over the walls, and a hint of surprise immediately appeared on his face.

He had identified this blue crystal to be an extremely rare type of material called the Heavenly Crystal Rock and it could be used to refine spirit treasures. It wasn't particularly difficult to find in the outside world, but such an enormous quantity of it in one place was still a very rare sight, and using it as bricks to construct walls for a garden was a display of extreme opulence.

At each corner of the walls stood a thick stone pillar that was riddled with complex array patterns, and dazzling starlight was radiating from the pillar, forming a thick starry light barrier in the air that encompassed the entire garden.

Countless star designs were flashing over the light barrier as if they were playing out the movements of the celestial bodies in the sky, presenting a profound sight to behold.

From the outside, Han Li could see that there were all types of spirit plants in the garden, and there was a faint pleasant fragrance coming out of the garden that even the starry light barrier wasn't able to contain.

An elated look appeared in Han Li's eyes, but as he took a closer look at the starry light barrier, his brows furrowed slightly in dismay.

This light barrier appeared rather similar to the starry light barrier that had to be bypassed in order to enter the Light Frost Palace, but this one appeared even more profound, so it was most likely going to be even more difficult to break.

"This restriction is most likely going to be very difficult to break through conventional means. Having said that, the Great Five-elemental True Light that you and Fellow Daoist Xiong unleashed earlier should be perfect for breaking this restriction," Han Li said as he turned to Patriarch Cold Flame.

A slightly awkward look appeared on Patriarch Cold Flame's face upon hearing this, and he said, "While I do know the mantra for the Great Five-elemental True Light, five extremely pure five-elemental spirit treasures are required to unleash it, and I only have spirit treasures of the fire and earth attributes, so..."

"That's not a problem, I just so happen to have a spirit treasure of each of the remaining three elements, and they should be at a sufficient level of purity for the task," Han Li replied as he swept a sleeve through the air, releasing a trio of treasures, namely a golden ring, a green wooden sword, and a blue badge.

All three spirit treasures were emanating astonishingly bright spiritual light, and they weren't inferior in the slightest compared with the five spirit treasures that were previously used.

Han Li had slain countless cultivators in the Immortal Realm, most of whom were True Immortals, so he naturally had a large collection of high-caliber spirit treasures.

"You are truly a wealthy man, Fellow Daoist Han. In that case, there won't be any further issues. It's just that the mantra for the Great Five-elemental True Light is a little difficult to grasp, but I'm sure it won't be a problem for someone of your wisdom," Patriarch Cold Flame said.

He flipped a hand over to produce a jade slip as he spoke, then handed it to Han Li, who accepted the jade slip before injecting his spiritual sense into it.

The mantra in the jade slip wasn't very long, but just as Patriarch Cold Flame described, it was quite difficult to comprehend.

Han Li quickly memorized the entire thing, then sat down on the spot and closed his eyes to mull over what he had seen.

"Let's keep a lookout for Brother Han, Senior Cold Flame," Lu Yuqing suggested to Patriarch Cold Flame, to which the latter nodded in response.

Both of them then backed away to give Han Li some space while scouring their surroundings for any potential hazards.

Close to two hours passed by before Han Li abruptly opened his eyes, then rose to his feet.

Both Lu Yuqing and Patriarch Cold Flame immediately turned to him upon sensing this, while Han Li began to chant an incantation while pointing a finger at the three spirit treasures in front of him.

The three treasures instantly rose up into the sky, with each of them releasing a ball of dazzling light, and as Han Li made a hand seal, the three balls of light began to come together.

Patriarch Cold Flame was astonished to see this.

"Have you already mastered the mantra, Fellow Daoist Han?"

"I once cultivated a five-elemental ability in the past, so I was able to grasp this one a little faster than expected," Han Li explained.

He was naturally referring to the Divine Essencefused Light. Five-elemental secret techniques were notoriously profound and difficult to master due to having to incorporate and balance five elements at

once, but the mantra for the Divine Essencefused Light was rather similar to this one, and that was why it hadn't been all that difficult for him to master this mantra.

"You really are full of surprises, Fellow Daoist Han," Patriarch Cold Flame chuckled, seemingly already accustomed to expecting the unexpected when it came to Han Li.

He didn't waste any more time with words as he flipped a hand over to produce the crimson bowl and the yellow seal before also chanting an incantation, and the pair of spirit treasures instantly flew up into the sky while radiating dazzling spiritual light that fused with the spiritual light emanating from Han Li's trio of spirit treasures.

Chapter 427: Medicine Garden

Under the collective efforts of Han Li and Patriarch Cold Flame, countless five-colored runes surged out of the spiritual light radiating from the five spirit treasures, and they began to revolve incessantly around the spirit treasures.

The five balls of spiritual light quickly intertwined and fused together to form an enormous ball of five-colored light, within which the five spirit treasures had formed a circle and were rapidly revolving.

With each cycle of revolution, the five-colored ball of light would swell slightly, and it quickly reached over 1,000 feet in size, radiating dazzling five-colored light that illuminated the entire heavens, while Lu Yuqing looked on with a dazed and awestruck expression.

Right at this moment, Han Li and Patriarch Cold Flame both raised a hand in unison to cast an incantation seal toward the ball of light, and a pillar of five-colored light instantly shot out of the ball of light to strike the starry light barrier.

The two fused together, and the starry light barrier remained completely unaffected, but if one were to gaze upon this scene from afar, it would appear as if there were a five-colored passageway connected to a vast starry sky.

As Han Li and Patriarch Cold Flame continued to chant the incantation for the Great Five-elemental True Light, the pillar of five-colored light instantly became even brighter, and countless five-colored arrows that were each around 10 feet in length took shape within the pillar of light before raining down upon the starry light barrier.

The still surface of the starry light barrier instantly began to tremble violently, and balls of five-colored light appeared over its surface amid a string of resounding booms.

The light radiating from the starry light barrier quickly began to fade, and it was whittled down at a rapid rate, much to Han Li's surprise and suspicion.

The starry light barrier appeared to be extremely profound, so why was it so inept?

Despite his surprise, he continued to make a string of hand seals, and more five-colored arrows came raining down from the pillar of five-colored light.

As time passed, the starry light barrier was whittled down further and further, and after only 15 minutes, only a thin layer of it was left.

Han Li immediately switched to a different hand seal upon seeing this, and Patriarch Cold Flame did the same thing at almost the exact same time.

The pillar of five-colored instantly brightened as all of the countless arrows within it fused as one wot form a giant arrow that was over 1,000 feet in size, with streaks of five-colored light surging all over its surface.

A sharp screeching sound rang out as the giant five-colored arrow came crashing down onto the starry light barrier, and an earth-shattering boom rang out as the starry light barrier finally crumbled into countless pieces.

Han Li swept a sleeve through the air upon seeing this, and the five spirit treasures in the sky instantly split up, with his three spirit treasures flying back up his sleeve, while Patriarch Cold Flame recovered his two spirit treasures as well.

With the starry light barrier out of the way, a burst of rich spiritual qi and medicinal aroma instantly began to waft through the air.

Han Li immediately flew down, followed closely by Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing.

The three of them landed in the garden in quick succession, and as soon as they did so, balls of starlight abruptly emerged from the stone pillars situated in the four corners of the garden, and they released streaks of spiritual light that began to intertwine in mid-air.

In the span of just a couple of seconds, the starry light barrier had taken shape above the garden once again, except it was only a thin layer this time.

More streaks of starlight were being released out of the stone pillars to support the light barrier, and it was gradually becoming thicker and more resilient.

Han Li took a glance up at the starry light barrier, and his brows furrowed slightly as if he had realized something, but he then shook his head and withdrew his gaze before turning his attention to the medicine garden around him.

The garden had been split up into different sections that were separated by fences crafted from a type of green jade material, and each area was enshrouded in restrictions of different colors, with all manners of different spirit plants growing inside them.

Han Li cast his gaze toward a section of the garden beside him that was several dozen feet in size.

This section was enshrouded under a red restriction with dozens of red spirit plants growing inside. The spirit plants were around two feet tall each, and they had ovular leaves with a bright red palm-sized flower at the top of each one, resembling a ball of scorching fire.

Even through the restriction, Han Li could still detect the formidable fire-attribute spiritual power fluctuations emanating from the plan.

These are Wild Flame Herbs...

This was a type of renowned fire-attribute spirit plant that could be used to refine some top-grade fire-attribute pills and even fire-attribute dao pills, and it was extremely sought after for the fact that upon

reaching 100,000 years of age, there was a very high likelihood that a hint of fire-attribute law powers would emerge within the plant.

There were very few spirit plants that could produce law powers on their own, and most of them had to be hundreds of thousands of years of age before reaching that stage, so the Wild Flame Herb was very much an anomaly.

The law powers produced by this plant weren't particularly formidable, but it could be used for dao pill refinement, and the age requirement was also quite low, so it was extremely sought after among all Dao Pill Masters.

Furthermore, judging from the size of these Wild Flame Herbs, they had to have been at least 300,000 to 400,000 years old, so the fire-attribute law powers that they harbored were naturally going to be far more formidable than in 100,000-year-old specimens.

If he could mature them to 500,000 years of age with his Heaven Controlling Vial, then he would have a batch of priceless fire-attribute spirit plants on his hands.

However, instead of scrambling to pick these spirit plants, Han Li turned and made his way toward the other sections of the garden. It appeared that no one had been here for a very long time, so there had to be many spirit plants here more valuable than Wild Flame Herbs.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing had also gone in different directions to search for spirit plants.

A short while later, Han Li stopped beside a section of the garden that contained a series of thin purple spirit plants, each of which was only around half a foot tall, and they resembled wheat.

These spirit plants were giving off a rather peculiar odor that was both fragrant yet also a little rank.

Han Li was staring intently at these purple spirit plants, paying no heed to their peculiar aroma at all.

These were Farsight Weeds, and they were extremely renowned in the Northern Glacial Immortal Region.

Han Li had once read a story about an island by the name of Nightlight Island situated in the northernmost region of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region. There was a type of spirit hawk that resided on this island, and they only grew to an upper limit of the Body Integration Stage. Furthermore, there weren't many of them on the island, so they never attracted much attention from anyone.

That was until a True Immortal Stage itinerant cultivator caught a Nightlight Spirit Hawk by chance on the island and kept it as a spirit beast.

The Nightlight Spirit Hawk's cultivation base wasn't anything special, but it possessed extraordinary eyesight, able to see things tens of thousands of kilometers away. The True Immortal cultivator was ecstatic, and he earned himself quite a reputation through this bird.

The story of his exploits was eventually leaked, and many cultivators flocked to the island to capture these Nightlight Spirit Hawks, only to find that their eyesight was quite mediocre and nowhere near as extraordinary as the story proclaimed.

The True Immortal Stage itinerant cultivator was rather surprised to hear this, and he returned to the island to investigate. Only then did he notice that there were several spirit plants growing near the nest of the Nightlight Spirit Hawk that he had captured, and that particular hawk had only attained such exceptional eyesight after consuming this spirit plant.

After word of this spread, the spirit plant in question immediately became vastly renowned and was named the Farsight Weed, becoming extremely sought after for countless cultivators.

However, Farsight Weeds grew very slowly and only in very unique conditions, so they were very rare to begin with, and with so many cultivators going after them, they had been picked to near extinction. No specimen had appeared in the past one million years, and Han Li certainly wasn't expecting to see any here.

Furthermore, these Farsight Herbs had to have been at least 200,000 to 300,000 years old, so they were undoubtedly extremely valuable.

A hint of elation flashed through his eyes as he cast his gaze elsewhere, and there were extremely precious spirit plants everywhere he looked, many of which had already gone extinct in the outside world.

Furthermore, all of the spirit plants in this garden were hundreds of thousands of years old, which meant that they were fit even for refining Golden Immortal Stage pills.

Aside from that, there were also several types of spirit plants in the garden that were completely unfamiliar to Han Li, even with his extensive knowledge in the field.

However, all of them were brimming with spiritual power, and they were clearly extremely valuable spirit plants as well.

Sure enough, the medicine garden hadn't disappointed him.

Right at this moment, a burst of rumbling rang out from nearby, and Han Li turned to discover that Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing had also begun attacking some of the nearby restrictions.

However, these restrictions didn't appear to be all that remarkable, but they were unexpectedly resilient, remaining intact despite the attacks they were being subjected to.

Han Li immediately swept a sleeve through the air upon seeing this, and his 72 Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords instantly flew out, then circled around in the air before transforming into an azure sword array that encompassed several restrictions at once.

Immediately thereafter, countless streaks of peerlessly sharp sword qi emerged at Han Li's behest before striking the restrictions, and they were only able to hold themselves together for a few seconds before exploding violently.

With another sweep of his sleeve, Han Li released several hundred dark yellow beans, which transformed into an army of Dao Warriors, and with a third sweep of his sleeve, Han Li released hundreds of jade boxes and other types of containers amid a flash of azure light.

"Collect all of these spirit plants," Han Li instructed.

The Dao Warriors immediately picked up the containers and began to work.

At this point, Patriarch Cold Flame had only just broken through a restriction, and he was collecting the spirit plants inside one by one when he spotted what Han Li was doing, upon which a stunned look appeared on his face.

He had already been astonished by Han Li's power, and it came as another shock to him that Han Li also had an army of Dao Warriors at his disposal, considering how Dao Warriors were notoriously difficult to nurture.

Chapter 428: Split Tree

After issuing an instruction for his Dao Warriors to begin collecting the nearby spirit plants, Han Li remained still on the spot as he made a hand seal, and the azure sword array that he had conjured up immediately flew toward another nearby section of the medicine garden.

Countless streaks of azure sword qi came raining down upon the restriction, breaking through it with ease, and some of the Dao Warriors immediately flocked over to that area to collect all of the spirit plants there.

Right at this moment, all of the destroyed restrictions began to slowly re-emerged, indicating that they were capable of self-regeneration, just like the starry light barrier that encompassed the entire garden.

Han Li was very impressed upon seeing this. The fact that these restrictions were still functional after so many years was already quite astonishing, and the fact that they were capable of self-regeneration indicated that whoever had set up the restrictions had to have been an extraordinary master in arrays.

With that in mind, Han Li was even more curious about who this Infernal Frost Immortal Lord was.

Han Li's trio wasn't holding back in the slightest, and it didn't take them long to clear out the entire outskirts of the medicine garden.

However, Han Li was naturally far more efficient than Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing thanks to his sword array and his army of Dao Warriors, so the majority of the claimed spirit plants had fallen into his possession.

During this time, he had even helped Lu Yuqing break several restrictions, much to the envy and dismay of Patriarch Cold Flame.

As the three of them progressed deeper into the garden, they discovered that the sections here were far larger in area than the ones before, and the restrictions were also brighter, making it impossible to see the spirit plants within from the outside.

Han Li swept his gaze around the area to ensure that there weren't any abnormalities, then immediately unleashed his sword array to attack a glowing red restriction.

Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing also each chose a restriction of their own to attack, but this time, the sword array formed by the Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords wasn't able to inflict much damage onto the red restriction beneath it.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he switched to a different hand seal, upon which the azure sword array abruptly converged toward the center to form a giant azure sword lotus flower.

He then began to chant an incantation, and the sword lotus flower gradually bloomed, while arcs of dazzling lightning flashed over all of its petals as it swooped down toward the red light barrier.

Every single one of the lotus flower's petals latched tightly onto the red light barrier before revolving forcefully to tear into the restriction, and the red light barrier instantly began to warp violently.

This time, it was only able to withstand the assault for a short while before it exploded into countless specks of red light with a resounding boom.

Han Li was ecstatic to see this, but his expression then instantly stiffened as he caught sight of a yellowish-brown spirit tree up ahead.

Its trunk was very coarse and riddled with deep cracks, but it was giving off a vibrant sense of vitality, clearly indicating that it was no ordinary tree.

However, the tree had been severed down the middle, and only a section of the trunk still remained. The cut was still quite fresh, and there were droplets of yellow sap leaking oozing out.

Han Li made his way over to the tree trunk with a contemplative look on his face.

Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing were just about to go to work on some other restrictions, but all of them also stopped what they were doing and approached Han Li upon seeing this.

"It looks like someone got here before us. Judging from how fresh the cut looks, they shouldn't have been here any longer than a day ago," Patriarch Cold Flame surmised.

Han Li nodded in response, then took a glance up at the starry light barrier overhead.

It was no wonder that they had broken the restriction so easily, considering it had already been broken recently once before.

The restriction was capable of self-regeneration, but too little time had passed for it to make a full recovery, and that was the only reason why they had been able to bypass it with so little trouble.

"Who could it be? Xiong Shan?" Lu Yuqing murmured.

"No. Xiong Shan did get to the Light Frost Palace a little earlier than us, but there clearly wasn't enough time for him to get here and break this restriction," Han Li replied with a shake of his head.

"In that case, who could it be?" Lu Yuqing asked.

"I don't know, but that person didn't touch any of the spirit plants prior to this. I don't know if those spirit plants failed to catch their eye, or if they simply didn't have enough time, but given that there are

no signs of battle here, I'm assuming it was most likely the former. That leads me to believe that it was most likely a Golden Immortal Stage senior who passed through here before us," Han Li speculated.

There were many Golden Immortals who had entered the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor on this occasion, and he couldn't tell exactly which one was responsible for this.

Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing exchanged a glance upon hearing this, then discussed the matter a little longer before parting ways to continue to work on other restrictions.

Meanwhile, Han Li continued to observe the severed tree trunk in front of him, and he gently dipped his finger in some of its yellow sap before taking a sniff, upon which he was immediately struck by a sense of reinvigoration.

His eyes instantly lit up as he swept a sleeve through the air to release a streak of azure light, which enveloped the tree trunk before uprooting the entire thing along with the spirit soil around it.

He didn't know what this tree was, but the fact that it had caught a Golden Immortal's eye indicated that it was definitely a very precious spirit tree.

Even though the tree had been chopped down, there was still a chance for Han Li to revive it using his Heaven Controlling Vial.

After doing all of that, Han Li flew over to another section of the medicine garden before making a hand seal, and the sword lotus flower up above instantly swooped down to encompass the bright blue light barrier down below.

The thick petals of the lotus flower then began to slice against the light barrier, causing a massive commotion, and it didn't take long before the blue light barrier was destroyed to reveal what was underneath.

Han Li's expression immediately darkened slightly at the sight that was laid out before him.

The spirit plants in this section had already been taken as well, and this time, not even the roots had been left behind.

Han Li remained still on the spot for a moment before flying over to another section, and around 15 minutes later, yet another restriction was broken under the might of the azure sword lotus flower.

Once again, whatever was in this section had already been taken, and there was a hole that was several feet deep in the ground.

He shook his head as he withdrew his gaze.

At this point, most of the restrictions deep in the medicine garden had already been broken.

Of course, Han Li was the one who had done most of the work, and all of the spirit plants here had already been taken, with no exceptions.

Some of them still had their roots remaining, and Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing had no interest in such things, but Han Li picked up every single root that he encountered.

At this moment, Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing were still each working on a restriction, and Han Li took a glance at the two of them before withdrawing his gaze and turning his attention to the innermost part of the medicine garden.

There was a plot of land there that was over 1,000 feet in size, so it was far more massive than all of the other sections.

The entire section was enshrouded under a thick purple light barrier with arcs of purple lightning flashing over its surface, and it was giving off a formidable aura, almost as if it were a massive purple beast that was laying dormant on the ground.

This section was clearly different from all of the other sections, so the trio decided to leave it for last.

Han Li turned his gaze toward the purple light barrier, and he was just about to call upon his azure sword lotus flower when a resounding boom rang out nearby.

As it turned out, Lu Yuqing had just broken a restriction.

This restriction was more formidable than all of the prior ones, and her complexion was a little pale, indicating that she had severely taxed herself to break it.

She quickly summoned a pill before swallowing it while casting her gaze forward, upon which a disappointed look appeared on her face.

Whatever had been here had already been taken, with even the roots being taken and there were only two huge holes left in the ground.

However, whoever had come here seemed to have passed through in quite a hurry, as evidenced by the fact that there were still some thin pieces of roots left behind.

Lu Yuqing pouted with dismay, and she was just about to turn and depart when Han Li approached her as he said, "These appear to be the roots of some type of spirit bamboo. Bamboo is different from other plants in that it can sprout even from root fragments given the proper care, and the newly grown bamboo should be quite valuable, so it would be a waste for you to leave these roots behind."

An elated look appeared on Lu Yuqing's face upon hearing this, and she asked, "Do you recognize this spirit bamboo, Brother Han?"

Han Li shook his head in response. "I don't, but these silver roots seem quite remarkable, so the spirit bamboo that they belong to must be very precious. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been planted so deep in the medicine garden. If you can find someone who can identify these roots, you should be able to sell them for a good price."

Lu Yuqing nodded eagerly in response as she swept a sleeve through the air to release a burst of azure light, which carefully dug out the silver roots in the two holes before storing them into a pair of jade boxes.

She stowed one of the jade boxes away, then handed the other to Han Li as she said, "Thank you for your guidance, Brother Han. Otherwise, I would've passed up this entirely."

Han Li made no effort to refuse and accepted the jade box as he really was quite interested in these silver spirit bamboo roots.

Meanwhile, a burst of rumbling was coming from another direction, and Patriarch Cold Flame was in the process of attacking a light blue restriction with a set of 12 flying dagger spirit treasures, all of which were spirit treasures of a very high caliber.

However, this was yet another starry light barrier, and it was extremely resilient.

Patriarch Cold Flame had already been attacking the light barrier for quite some time, but it was displaying no signs of breaking at all.

A slightly agitated look appeared on his face as he took a glance at Han Li, and after a brief moment of contemplation, he stopped what he was doing before flying toward Han Li.

Han Li was examining the silver roots in his jade box when he noticed Patriarch Cold Flame coming toward him, and he promptly stowed the jade box away.

"Fellow Daoist Han, that restriction over there is rather difficult to deal with. Would you be able to give me a hand with it?" Patriarch Cold Flame asked as he cupped his fist in a salute.

"Of course, Fellow Daoist Cold Flame. Let's go have a look together, Fellow Daoist Lu," Han Li replied with a faint smile.

"Thank you, Fellow Daoist Han," Patriarch Cold Flame immediately said with an elated expression.

Before long, the three of them arrived at the starry light barrier, and Han Li began to examine it.

He had actually already noticed this restriction earlier, but he could tell that it was quite a formidable restriction, so he had decided to save it for later. However, it seemed that Patriarch Cold Flame had gotten to it first.

Chapter 429: Withered Vine

Han Li made a hand seal, and his azure sword lotus flower instantly descended upon the starry light barrier while revolving incessantly.

Countless streaks of formidable sword qi were released from the sword lotus flower, raining down upon the restriction, while Patriarch Cold Flame summoned the same set of flying dagger spirit treasures as before.

The 12 flying daggers then instantly swelled to over 1,000 feet in size each at his behest, and they came crashing down upon the restriction with astonishing might.

The starry light barrier was extremely resilient, but it wasn't able to withstand this joint barrage from Han Li's duo for long, and it was only a short while before the light barrier was shattered to reveal what was underneath.

Beneath the light barrier were around a dozen blue spirit plants, each of which was several feet tall.

The stems and leaves of these spirit plants were all glittering and translucent, as if they had been fashioned out of some type of semi-transparent blue jade, and they were also giving off radiant starlight.

Much to Han Li's surprise, these blue spirit plants hadn't been taken by the person who had passed through this place before them.

A surprised look had also appeared on Lu Yuqing's face, while Patriarch Cold Flame's expression remained unchanged, indicating that he seemed to have already anticipated this.

These are Starlight Herbs!

A hint of elation flashed through Han Li's eyes as he identified these blue spirit plants.

This was a type of renowned spirit plant that contained starpower gathered from countless nights of exposure to starlight, resulting in the accumulation of extremely pure starpower, thereby making it an exceptional ingredient for refining starpower-related pills.

Judging from their size, they had to have been at least 500,000 years of age.

If he could get his hands on even just one or two of these Starlight Herbs and refine them into pills, then that would drastically shorten the amount of time it would take for him to cultivate the second half of the Great Universe Origin Arts.

Right at this moment, a streak of light suddenly flew past him, then enveloped all of the Starlight Herbs before uprooting them and sending them flying toward Patriarch Cold Flame.

He then immediately stowed all of the Starlight Herbs away without any hesitation, and Han Li's expression changed slightly upon seeing this, but he didn't say anything.

"Thank you for your help, Fellow Daoist Han. If you require my assistance for anything, please feel free to call upon me," Patriarch Cold Flame said with a smile, making no mention of splitting the Starlight Herbs between them.

Han Li turned to look at Patriarch Cold Flame in silence, while Lu Yuqing's brows furrowed slightly as she protested, "Fellow Daoist Cold Flame, you and Brother Han worked together to..."

Han Li raised a hand to cut her off before she could finish her sentence.

"Fellow Daoist Cold Flame was the one who discovered these Starlight Herbs first, so they naturally belong to him. There's no need to dwell on this matter," Han Li said in an indifferent voice, then turned and began to make his way toward the plot of land in the innermost section of the medicine garden.

Lu Yuqing took a cold glance at Patriarch Cold Flame, then departed behind Han Li.

Patriarch Cold Flame also followed along with a gleeful look in his eyes.

Having interacted with Han Li on multiple past occasions, he had developed a decent grasp of Han Li's personality and character. His original plan was for Han Li to bring up the matter of splitting the Starlight Herbs, in which case he would oblige, but in the process make Han Li owe him a favor so that he could continue to leverage Han Li's assistance.

However, to his surprise, Han Li didn't even bother to make such a request, seemingly as he didn't want to lose face.

This was even better as he could continue to exploit this personality trait of Han Li's to keep claiming more things for himself, but of course, he would do so in moderation so that he didn't turn Han Li entirely against himself.

The three of them quickly arrived at the final plot of land in the medicine garden, and Han Li briefly examined the purple restriction in front of him before making a hand seal, upon which a flurry of petals of his azure sword lotus flower flew off one after another, transforming into around a dozen massive translucent swords that came crashing down upon the purple light barrier.

All of the giant swords were giving off extremely fearsome aura fluctuations and immense spiritual pressure that was making the nearby space tremble and quiver.

The giant translucent swords struck the light barrier with immense power, but all of them were repelled one after the other.

Meanwhile, the purple light barrier merely shuddered slightly before falling still again.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this. The purple restriction was far more resilient than even what he had anticipated.

Lu Yuqing was also eager to help, and she began attacking the restriction with a series of giant azure blades of wind, while Patriarch Cold Flame was also contributing to the effort with his flying daggers.

The collective barrage of attacks from the trio was quite formidable, but the purple restriction remained strong, managing to hold itself intact without much difficulty.

"It looks like we won't be able to break this restriction through conventional means, so let's use the Great Five-elemental True Light again," Han Li said as he summoned the three elemental spirit treasures from before, and Patriarch Cold Flame also summoned his two flying treasures.

Moments later, a thick pillar of five-colored light came crashing down from the heavens, releasing numerous balls of five-colored light that rained down upon the purple light barrier.

A burst of rumbling rang out incessantly, and the entire medicine garden was trembling.

The purple light barrier was extremely resilient, yet even it was no match for the Great Five-elemental True Light, and after one barrage of attacks after another, the light barrier was quickly whittled down to just a thin layer.

A sharp gleam flashed through Han Li's eyes upon seeing this, and he immediately made a hand seal, upon which the dozen or so giant translucent swords came crashing down upon the purple light barrier at his behest.

Finally, the purple light barrier was unable to hold itself together any longer, and it imploded to reveal what was underneath.

Han Li's trio immediately turned their attention to what had been revealed, and as it turned out, down below was a swamp that was filled with viscous dark purple mud, with the occasional purple bubble appearing on its surface before popping with explosive force to release waves of heat coupled with bursts of purple gas.

A faint layer of purple mist was hanging over the swamp, and countless tiny arcs of lightning could be seen flashing within it, giving off a fearsome aura.

The dark purple mud was rather hideous in appearance, but it was imbued with extremely abundant spiritual power, indicating that it was no ordinary soil.

This is Lightning Aura Soil!

In order to best nurture different types of spirit plants, Han Li had invested a great deal of time into improving his understanding of spirit soils, and at this point, he could be considered to be a master in this field.

The Lightning Aura Soil was a type of extremely precious spirit soil that was ideal for nurturing lightning-attribute spirit plants, but the method to prepare it had already gone missing long ago.

Han Li had tried extensively to search for this soil or its recipe in the past, all to no avail, and he certainly wasn't expecting to see some here.

With a sweep of his sleeve, two Dao Warriors instantly appeared amid a flash of golden lightning.

He then summoned a pair of storage pouches that he tossed at the pair of Dao Warriors as he instructed, "Collect all of this soil."

The two Dao Warriors immediately obliged, beginning to collect the spirit soil in the area, and Patriarch Cold Flame's expression changed slightly upon seeing this as he also swept a sleeve through the air to collect some of the dark purple mud beside him.

Meanwhile, Lu Yuqing was looking on with slightly furrowed brows, seemingly rather disgusted by the dark purple mud.

Han Li took a glance at Patriarch Cold Flame, then turned his attention to the center of the plot of land, where there was another hemispherical purple light barrier, this one far smaller than the previous one.

He flew over to the light barrier, followed closely by Lu Yuqing, and Patriarch Cold Flame also hurriedly followed along.

This purple light barrier was identical to the one from before, except it was far smaller and nowhere near as formidable.

Han Li was able to break the light barrier with his Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords without having to rely on the Great Five-elemental True Light, and a purple stone altar that was around 10 feet tall was revealed.

The altar had been entirely constructed from a type of purple crystal, and there were lightning patterns engraved upon it, seemingly forming some type of profound array.

At the top of the stone altar was yet another purple light barrier that resembled a box that concealed the top of the altar, making it impossible to see what was inside.

"How many layers of restrictions are there?" Lu Yuqing couldn't help but complain.

All of a sudden, Han Li noticed that there were two humanoid puppets laying on the ground beside the stone altar.

The puppets were dark golden in color, and they were identical to the copper puppet that Han Li had encountered while securing the Great Universe Origin Arts.

However, one of the puppets had been split in half down the middle lengthwise, while the other had been decapitated, and both of them were laying on the ground in a lifeless fashion.

The wounds on the puppets appeared to be quite fresh, clearly indicating that they had been inflicted not long ago.

Han Li's expression darkened slightly upon seeing this.

As expected, this place had already been visited as well, so whatever treasure on the stone altar had to have already been taken.

The same thought had clearly also occurred to Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing, and a hint of dismay appeared on both of their faces.

Han Li shook his head with a hint of disappointment in his eyes, then turned his attention back to the pair of copper puppets. In particular, his gaze lingered on the decapitated puppet as a peculiar look flashed through his eyes.

In the next instant, he swept a sleeve through the air to release a burst of azure light, which swept up the pair of puppets before stowing them away.

With these two puppets, particularly the decapitated one, which still had a completely intact core, Daoist Xie would surely be able to scrounge together a complete, functional puppet.

Han Li had witnessed the power of these copper puppets, and they would definitely be of great assistance to him in battle.

Patriarch Cold Flame's brows furrowed slightly with displeasure upon seeing this, but he quickly reverted back to a neutral expression.

After gathering the puppets, Han Li flicked a finger toward the stone altar, releasing a pair of azure flying swords that swept over the purple light barrier.

The restriction wasn't all that powerful, so it was torn apart with ease, revealing a wooden frame, around which was wound a long vine that still hadn't been taken, much to Han Li's surprise.

However, the vine had withered away, and it seemed to have perished long ago.

Chapter 430: Pursuers

"What kind of vine is this? It has to be something very precious to have been kept here so securely. It's just a pity that it seems to be long dead," Lu Yuqing sighed.

"Regardless, for whatever reason, it seems like the person who came here before us was unable to take this vine," Patriarch Cold Flame said with a hint of schadenfreude in his voice.

All the while, Han Li merely remained silent as his gaze roamed over the withered vine.

All of a sudden, he seemed to have noticed something, and he began to inspect the vine intently with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

"What is it, Brother Han?" Lu Yuqing immediately asked.

Instead of answering her question, Han Li flew directly toward the vine, immediately followed by Lu Yuqing and Patriarch Cold Flame.

After landing beside the vine, Han Li lifted up a section of it for closer inspection, and the blue light in his eyes grew even brighter.

After a while, he suddenly heaved a forlorn sigh as he set down the withered vine with a disappointed look on his face.

Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing were both quite perplexed to see this, and they each picked up a section of the vine for themselves for closer inspection.

As it turned out, there were patterns on the vines that were rather similar to beveled silver text or golden seal text, but these patterns were more profound, as if they were the embodiment of the Great Dao itself.

The patterns were very faint, and they would've never been able to notice them had they not been scrutinizing the vine so closely.

"These are Profound Heavenly Patterns!" Patriarch Cold Flame exclaimed.

"There's no mistaking it. These patterns that are imbued with the aura of the Great Dao can only be present on Profound Heavenly Treasures. This was most likely a Profound Heavenly Vine, but the Profound Heavenly Treasure on it has already been taken, and the vine has wilted on its own as a result," Lu Yuqing said with a wry smile.

Han Li pointed at a spot on the vine, and both Patriarch Cold Flame and Lu Yuqing turned their attention to that spot to find that there was a tiny incision, which wasn't very pronounced due to how withered the vine had become, but it was still distinguishable upon closer inspection.

The incision had clearly been formed after something was taken off the vine.

Lu Yuqing heaved a faint sigh upon seeing this.

Profound Heavenly Treasures were extremely precious and could be used to refine Essential Immortal Treasure, yet it had slipped through their grasp.

"There's no point in crying over spilled milk. It looks like we're simply not in luck on this occasion," Han Li said.

Right at this moment, the two Dao Warriors arrived on the scene, holding a pair of bulging storage pouches, having stuffed them with virtually all of the nearby Lightning Aura Soil.

Han Li took the pair of storage pouches before stowing the two Dao Warriors away, yet before he had a chance to do anything else, the starry restriction above the medicine garden suddenly began to tremble violently as a resounding boom rang out.

Han Li's trio immediately looked up at the sky with startled expressions.

At this point, the starry light barrier had only recovered a tiny fraction of its power, and it quickly shattered in the face of the formidable attacks being directed at it.

"What a rich medicinal aura! This is definitely the medicine garden!"

A burst of cackling rang out overhead, and the voice belonged to none other than Xue Han.

Patriarch Cold Flame's complexion immediately paled upon hearing this, and he hurriedly made a hand seal while chanting an incantation.

Immediately thereafter, he vanished into the ground beneath his feet.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he also quickly made a hand seal, upon which a faint light barrier enveloped himself and Lu Yuqing's body before the two of them also vanished into thin air.

Meanwhile, the destroyed starry light barrier dissipated into countless specks of light, and not long after Han Li's trio had concealed themselves, Xue Han and the group of Ghost Wail Sect cultivators descended onto the scene.

Upon landing in the medicine garden, Xue Han immediately began to inspect his surroundings, upon which his smile instantly stiffened.

Everyone else was also rooted to the spot.

There was not a single spirit plant left in the entire medicine garden. Not only had everything been completely uprooted, even the spirit soil nurturing the spirit plants that were previously here had also been taken. The entire place had been left in a state of complete chaos, and it would've been impossible to identify this place as a medicine garden had it not been for the rich medicinal aura lingering in the air.

"Someone got here before us!" a yellow-skinned middle-aged man beside Xue Han spat in a vengeful voice.

Xue Han was clearly enraged, and there was a look of burning fury on his face.

Everyone else instantly fell silent at the sight of Xue Han's incensed expression.

After a while, Xue Han exhaled as the fury on his face receded, and he snapped, "Don't just stand there like idiots! Go and see if there's anything left!"

Everyone hurriedly did as they were told, dispersing throughout the medicine garden to conduct a search.

Meanwhile, Xue Han remained still on the spot as he began to inspect the medicine garden with both his eyes and his spiritual sense.

At this moment, there was a faint shadow hovering behind a large rock in a corner of the medicine garden.

Within the shadow stood a pair of blurry figures, and they were none other than Han Li and Lu Yuqing.

There was a solemn look on Han Li's face as he chanted an incantation while flicking his fingers through the air to release a string of incantation seals, which slowly vanished into the space around him.

Xue Han's spiritual sense swept over the two of them without pause, clearly having failed to discover their presence.

Han Li's expression eased slightly upon seeing this, but he still continued to make more hand seals to ensure that they were hidden more securely.

Right at this moment, Xue Han cast his gaze toward the stone altar deep in the medicine garden, and he swept a hand through the air to release a burst of black light, which vanished into the stone altar in a flash before quickly flying back with the withered vine enveloped within it.

None of the other Ghost Wail Sect cultivators were able to find anything, and they all returned to gather around Xue Han upon seeing this.

"This is... a Profound Heavenly Vine!" Xue Han exclaimed with an astonished expression as he carefully inspected the vine.

"Looking at the patterns on the vine, that's definitely a possibility! That means that the Profound Heavenly Treasure on it had to have already been taken by the scoundrel who got here before us!" the yellow-faced man cursed.

"This Profound Heavenly Treasure and all of the other spirit plants here had to have been taken by Cold Flame and the others! Thankfully, this Light Frost Palace isn't a very big place, and they seemed to have only come through here recently, so if we go after them now, we should be able to catch them," a tall and thin daoist priest immediately said.

A hint of elation flashed through Han Li's eyes as he eavesdropped on Xue Han and his entourage.

As soon as Xue Han left this place, he and Lu Yuqing would be able to sneak away unnoticed.

He wasn't actually all that fearful of Xue Han. With his current powers, even if he couldn't defeat Xue Han in battle, he would at least be able to ensure self-preservation, but it would be difficult for him to protect himself as well as Lu Yuqing, and he was quite interested in the map in her possession, so he didn't want to lose her.

After hearing what everyone had to say, Xue Han raised his head and slowly swept his gaze over the medicine garden, then suddenly made a hand seal to release a ball of black light.

The ball of black light squirmed around in mid-air like a living creature for a while, then abruptly swelled to form a huge black net that encompassed the entire sky above the medicine garden.

Han Li's expression immediately darkened slightly upon seeing this.

"It's possible that whoever took the spirit plants and the Profound Heavenly Treasure haven't gone far, but it's also possible that they could still be hiding here! We can't afford to pass up any opportunity to claim the Profound Heavenly Treasure!" Xue Han declared as a hint of yearning flashed through his eyes.

If he could obtain an immortal treasure refined using a Profound Heavenly Treasure, then his powers would be significantly enhanced, and that would allow him to leapfrog many figures currently ahead of him in the Ubiquitous Pavilion hierarchy.

"But there's no one here," the yellow-faced man said with furrowed brows.

"Perhaps they used some type of secret technique to conceal themselves, and we've simply been unable to detect them up to this point. Master Xue Han is right, we can't ignore any possibility!" the tall and thin daoist priest said.

"That is indeed possible," the yellow-faced man mused with a contemplative expression.

Xue Han paid no heed to the discussion taking place around him as he began to chant an incantation, and a ball of silver light flew out of his body, containing a pristine white miniature pagoda that was around half a foot tall with a series of profound patterns engraved upon it.

The miniature pagoda quickly swelled to in excess of the height of a grown man, and all of the patterns on its surface had lit up at once.

A series of dazzling white ripples began to proliferate outward from the pagoda, and all of the surrounding world's origin qi instantly began to tremble, as if it were resonating with these white ripples.

The white ripples quickly spread over the entire medicine garden, and Han Li and Lu Yuqing had also become encompassed within them.

The faint light barrier around the two of them instantly began to tremble, and they were slowly being exposed.

Han Li's expression changed slightly upon seeing this, and he began to chant his incantation and make hand seals with more urgency.

However, his efforts proved to be futile, and it seemed that they were inevitably going to be exposed.

Right at this moment, a burst of faint light emerged from another corner of the medicine garden, then exploded with a dull thump to reveal Patriarch Cold Flame with a panicked look on his face.

"I knew it was you, Cold Flame!" Xue Han said in a cold voice.

Patriarch Cold Flame shuddered as a hint of despair appeared in his eyes, and he began to frantically look around as if he were searching for something.

"Traitors must die! Kill him!" Xue Han declared, and all of the Ghost Wail Sect cultivators instantly pounced at Patriarch Cold Flame, led by none other than the tall and thin daoist priest and the yellow-faced man.

The former swept both sleeves through the air to release balls of azure light that contained arcs of azure lightning, which hurtled directly toward Patriarch Cold Flame, while the latter instantly transformed into a pillar of crimson light.

A massive ghostly projection emerged within the pillar of light before biting down upon Patriarch Cold Flame with ferocious power, while a layer of starlight emerged over Patriarch Cold Flame's body as he fled from the scene as quickly as he could.

"Layman Bone Flame! Daoist Clear Bright! How could you..."

Before he had a chance to finish, he was bombarded by a string of spirit treasures.