

A Record 461

Chapter 461: The Mystique of Laws

With his nascent soul trapped within the lightning pool, every single passing second was an extremely grueling one for Han Li, and seven days felt like seven years.

On this day, a resounding boom rang out in the night sky, and a vast expanse of golden lightning surged through the heavens.

It was only for an instant, but it illuminated the entire night sky to be as bright as day.

Following this flash of golden lightning, the golden lightning pool also faded away, completely vanishing into nothingness.

Han Li's nascent soul slowly descended out of the heavens with a smile on its face, and its entire body was radiating dazzling golden light, giving it the appearance of a miniature golden sun from afar.

It slowly landed on the top of Han Li's head, then looked around for a moment before vanishing into Han Li's head.

Han Li's eyes instantly sprang open, and two radiant beams of golden light erupted out of his eyes, extending for around three feet in front of him, presenting a rather peculiar sight to behold.

After just a few blinks, the beams of golden light gradually began to recede until they vanished altogether, but there was still a very bright gleam in his eyes.

All of a sudden, he summoned his Mantra Treasured Axis, and it flew around him until it was situated in front of him, hovering in mid-air while revolving incessantly.

The axis was shimmering brightly, while the Time Dao Runes on its surface were flashing incessantly. All 360 of the Time Dao Runes on its surface had already recovered, and at this moment, there were as many as three time law threads wrapped around the axis.

A hint of elation emerged in Han Li's eyes upon seeing this.

During that brief moment of heightened sensitivity immediately after consuming the Golden Soul Pill, he had been struck by an indescribable feeling, one that granted him a hint of enlightenment when it came to the power of time laws.

At the time, he had already felt the time law thread in his body beginning to undergo a transformation, but a Golden Immortal Stage breakthrough was imminent, so he didn't have time to dwell on the feeling.

During the few days that his nascent soul had been baptized within the lightning pool, he had constantly been in a state of excruciating torment, but at the same time, that same indescribable feeling emerged once again, triggering some minute changes in the power of time within his body. Before he knew it, he had already manifested two more time law threads.

In order to manifest his first time law thread, he had gone to extreme lengths, leaving no stone unturned and even going as far as to directly swallow the spirit liquid produced by the Heaven Controlling Vial, but still to no avail. In the end, it was only by refining a Time Dao Pill that he was able to attain the time law thread, so he was naturally ecstatic to have manifested two more so easily.

However, now that the nascent soul refinement process had concluded, he was unable to return to that mystical state of enlightenment again.

Han Li heaved a faint sigh as he made a beckoning motion, and the three time law threads instantly flew toward him from the Mantra Treasured Axis before wrapping themselves around his finger.

By injecting his spiritual sense into them, he could immediately feel bursts of formidable time law fluctuations.

Right at this moment, a burst of blinding light suddenly emerged over the Mantra Treasured Axis, and the Heaven Controlling Vial abruptly flew out of Han Li's robes on its own, hovering in mid-air as it also began to glow as radiantly as a green sun.

The two were resonating with one another, and both were giving off bursts of formidable fluctuations.

All of a sudden, the three time law threads wrapped around Han Li's finger shot forth through the air, hurtling toward the Heaven Controlling Vial like a trio of arrows before vanishing into it in a flash.

A dull thump rang out, and the spirit patterns on the surface of the Heaven Controlling Vial flashed as the green light it was radiating became even more blinding to behold. At the same time, the vial itself was also rapidly expanding, and it didn't take long before it had swelled to the size of a millstone.

Countless green runes surged out of the surface of the vial while a green cloud gathered within the vial, forming a violently churning green vortex.

Bursts of special aura fluctuations were emanating out of the vial incessantly, while the green cloud within it transformed into a thick pillar of green light that tore through the space before it, then manifested that same strange translucent wall of light that Han Li had seen on several past occasions.

Here it comes again!

Before long, the vortex had already swelled to the size of a house, and a burst of tremendous suction force abruptly surged out from within it, enveloping his entire body.

His soul was instantly sucked out of his body before vanishing into the vortex in a flash.

Han Li felt a sharp pain in his head, immediately following which his vision faded, and he lost all consciousness.

In the next instant, he felt as if he could hear a loud commotion ringing out around him, coupled with the sound of howling wind.

He hurriedly opened his eyes, and only then did he discover that he was situated high up in the sky and was flying rapidly through the air, while the commotion was ringing out from behind him.

Given the last experience in which his soul had been placed into the body of that old man, Han Li already knew what to expect this time, so he wasn't overly panicked, and he continued flying through the air while looking down to examine his own body.

To his surprise, his entire body was a shimmering golden color, and he was very short and stubby. On top of that, he was clutching a green storage bracelet in his arms. It seemed that he wasn't a cultivator. Instead, he was a nascent soul that was frantically fleeing for its life.

A wry smile appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this. While it was true that Ling Yunzi had been on the brink of death, at least his physical body was still intact!

Having said that, even though this was only a nascent soul, it was far more powerful than Ling Yunzi had been.

Han Li attempted to recollect some of this nascent soul's memories, and he immediately felt as if a rumbling thunderclap had erupted in his mind, causing his head to ring incessantly.

A series of fragmented memories and indescribable emotions instantly surged into his mind, and the sensory overload was so immense that he almost fell out of the sky.

Thankfully, this sensation only lasted an instant, and he was quickly able to stabilize himself again, but as a result, he had also been stopped cold in his tracks.

Instead of continuing to flee, he turned around to look behind him with a peculiar look on his face.

In the distance, large chunks of the heavens and the earth were encompassed within spherical light barriers of different colors, and even though he was already very far away from them, he could still sense extremely formidable energy fluctuations emanating from the light barriers.

Those were dozens, perhaps even close to 100 formidable spirit domains that were giving off tremendous law power fluctuations, and these spirit domains were either overlapping or clashing against one another in a spectacular sight to behold.

This is the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace...

At this point, Han Li had already figured out the identity of the nascent soul that he had possessed. It belonged to a man by the name of Jin Hai, and he had once been a Golden Immortal Stage disciple of the Boundless Sword Sect.

The nascent soul had just fled from the sect, and the memories that Han Li had recalled were quite chaotic and jumbled, with most of them containing images of horrific battles that seemed to have taken place quite recently.

Only after some extensive contemplation was Han Li able to extrapolate some things from these fragmented memories.

It seemed that for some reason, the Reincarnation Palace's forces had suddenly stormed into the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace two days ago, and even though the Immortal Palace was prepared for the invasion, they were still unable to keep the enemy at bay.

As a subsidiary power of the Immortal Palace, the Boundless Sword Sect naturally had to make a final stand alongside the Immortal Palace's forces. They were planning to unleash the sea of swords on the enemy, even though doing so would completely ruin the foundation of the sect, but right as they resorted to this plan, an enemy High Zenith Stage Jade Immortal unleashed their spirit domain to trap the entire sect.

The spirit domain was filled with a type of unidentifiable law power that was able to suppress the vast sword qi within the sea of swords, thereby preventing the Boundless Sword Sect from using it in the battle.

The disciples of the Boundless Sword Sect had no choice but to form an array to force their way out of the Jade Immortal's spirit domain, but after that, they found themselves right in the midst of the battle between the cultivators of the Immortal Palace and the Reincarnation Palace. Jin Hai's martial brothers perished one after another, with some managing to flee in the form of their nascent souls, while others perished altogether.

After inadvertently stumbling into the spirit domain of a cultivator at the pinnacle of the Golden Immortal Stage, Jin Hai's luck finally ran out, and he also met his demise. In the instant before he

perished, he detonated his own bonded flying sword using a secret technique, and only then was his nascent soul able to escape.

Even so, his nascent soul was already severely wounded and on the brink of disintegrating. If it weren't for the influx of Han Li's spiritual sense, it would've most likely already completely disintegrated into nothingness.

Why did the Reincarnation Palace attack the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace? Does this have something to do with the fall of the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace?

With all these questions in his mind, Han Li turned his gaze to his left, and sure enough, the faint projection of his Mantra Treasured Axis was hovering there.

The Time Dao Runes on its surface were flashing with semi-transparent light, and around a dozen of them had already faded.

Han Li was rather perplexed to see this.

At this point, he had definitely already been in the wall of light for at least 30 seconds, so 30 Time Dao Runes should've been snuffed out at a minimum, so why was that not the case?

Could it be...

A thought occurred to Han Li, and he began to scrutinize the Mantra Treasured Axis intently with an unblinking gaze.

Moments later, his brows unfurrowed, and a hint of elation appeared on his face.

He discovered that each Time Dao Rune was now able to last three seconds before fading away instead of one.

Perhaps this was because he now possessed three time law threads.

If the accumulation of each additional time law thread really could extend the duration of time that each Time Dao Rune could last, then as he continued to manifest more time law threads in the future, this duration would most likely only continue to extend!

With that in mind, Han Li couldn't help but wonder if some other changes would take place once the number of time law threads in his possession passed certain thresholds, if such thresholds truly did exist.

Chapter 462: Astonishment

After a brief moment of contemplation, Han Li decided to fly back toward the Immortal Palace instead of continuing to flee.

He didn't want to waste the limited time that he had, and he wanted to confirm some things.

Firstly, he wanted to see if he could figure out exactly how the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace had met its demise. After all, he was still trapped in the ruins of the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace and didn't know how to get out.

Secondly, he wanted to find out why the Reincarnation Palace had attacked the Immortal Palace. At the moment, he was a Reincarnation Disciple, so knowing more about the Reincarnation Palace certainly couldn't hurt.

Thirdly, he wanted to observe all of these spirit domains at a closer proximity.

He had actually already come into contact with a spirit domain back in the Spirit Realm, but that had only been a Profound Heavenly Spirit Domain unleashed by Bao Hua, which was really only just a faux spirit domain unleashed with the help of a Profound Heavenly Treasure. [1]

After arriving in the Immortal Realm, Han Li had spent some time searching for information pertaining to spirit domains, but opportunities to personally witness spirit domains had proven to be very few and far in between, so he naturally didn't want to pass up this prime opportunity.

This nascent soul was quite powerful to begin with, and following the injection of Han Li's spiritual sense, its speed had been enhanced by severalfold, so it didn't take long before Han Li arrived near the battlefield.

At this point, a decent number of the Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis had already faded.

Not far in front of him was an enormous yellow spherical light barrier, and even without entering it, Han Li could already sense a burst of tremendous earth-attribute energy fluctuations emanating from it.

Through the light barrier, Han Li could clearly see that all of the trees and buildings in the area encompassed within the light barrier had been crushed under some type of tremendous force.

He could also just barely make out some cultivators in the extremely far distance, and all of them were doing everything in their power to oppose this force, but it was clear that they were fighting a losing battle, and they were so severely restricted that they could only fly at a very slow pace several dozen feet above the ground.

The other side of this light barrier overlapped with a silver spirit domain, within which were countless streaks of bright sword qi that were severely ravaging the space encompassed within the spirit domain.

Further away in the distance, there were spirit domains that were even larger and brighter, and each of them had their own unique properties.

Han Li was completely flabbergasted by what he was seeing, and he was wondering if he should venture into the spirit domain directly before him when he heard a thunderous roar ring out from extremely far away.

A burst of formidable soundwaves pierced straight into his mind without encountering any resistance, and it was like a giant blade threatening to cleave his soul apart.

Han Li's consciousness was instantly plunged into a state of extreme turbulence and disarray, and he felt as if his spiritual sense were about to fall apart, causing him to involuntarily fall out of the sky.

However, right at this moment, his Spirit Refinement Technique was activated on its own, and a layer of black light instantly spread over his consciousness to protect it.

In the instant before Han Li plummeted into the ground, his spiritual sense was finally stabilized again, and a stunned look appeared on his face as he hurriedly flew upward again to regain his elevation.

He turned to the direction where the roar had come from to find that most of the spirit domains there had already been broken. It was unclear whether they had been directly broken by that roar or if the spirit sense of the cultivators who had unleashed those spirit domains had been destroyed, thereby resulting in the disintegration of their spirit domains.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Han Li turned back to the same direction in which he had previously been fleeing and flew away even faster than before.

The power imbued within that roar wasn't unfamiliar to Han Li. It was the power of the Spirit Refinement Technique, and it was similar in nature to the Spirit Stun Thorn, but enhanced by sheer orders of magnitude.

If Han Li were to remain on this battlefield, he wasn't sure if he would be able to withstand another one of those attacks, or perhaps an even more formidable spiritual attack, and that was why he decided to flee again.

Even after fleeing for close to 100,000 kilometers, Han Li still displayed no intention of stopping, and only after he had reached the sea did he finally slow down slightly.

He swept his gaze across the surrounding area to find that on the surface of the sea not far away was a long and slender island shaped like a willow leaf. Vegetation on the island was very sparse, and the ground was littered with exposed gray rocks.

Isn't this the island inhabited by the Cold Crystal Race? Is this the Black Wind Island?

Somehow, it seemed that he had arrived in the Black Wind Sea.

Right at this moment, he was struck by another burst of sensory overload, and fragments of Jin Hai's memories began to surface once again.

However, the memories this time had nothing to do with the ongoing battle. Instead, they pertained to a treasure map.

Prior to the commencement of this battle, Jin Hai seemed to have made an arrangement with someone to leave the Boundless Sword Sect to travel to another immortal region in search of treasures, but he never got the chance to make good on that promise.

The map appeared to lead to quite a remarkable treasure, as evidenced by the deep regret and disappointment from Jin Hai attached to this memory. Perhaps that was why this memory had sprung up in Han Li's mind.

Only then did it occur to Han Li to examine the contents of Jin Hai's storage bracelet, and in doing so, he discovered that the storage bracelet was filled with a vast abundance of resources, including a huge number of Immortal Origin Stones, as well as many treasures, pills, and ancient scriptures.

Many of those treasures and pills were unrecognizable to Han Li, but he was familiar with what those ancient scriptures were.

Jin Hai's memories indicated that he treasured these ancient scriptures as much as his own life, and they contained the sword techniques and sword arrays of the Boundless Sword Sect.

If it weren't for the fact that his time in this state was very limited, Han Li would've definitely decided to study these scriptures. After all, the Boundless Sword Sect was vastly renowned as one of the most brilliant sword sects in history, so which sword cultivator wouldn't want to study its sword techniques?

Among the items in the storage bracelet, Han Li noticed a strange silken handkerchief, which, according to Jin Hai's memories, was supposed to hold the treasure map. The handkerchief was cool to the touch, and there was rainbow light flashing over its surface, indicating that it was no ordinary handkerchief.

However, as he attempted to carefully observe the patterns on the handkerchief, he discovered that he wasn't able to see anything clearly, so he was naturally unable to identify the map on it.

In order to conduct a better examination, Han Li called upon his Eye of Truth, and a beam of golden light shone down onto the handkerchief from the eye.

However, with his usage of the Eye of Truth, the rate at which the Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis were fading was accelerated, and he only had fewer than 20 active ones left.

The rainbow light on the surface of the handkerchief rippled before spreading outward from the center, and a very complex map soon appeared on the handkerchief.

Han Li scrutinized the map intently, carefully looking over every single detail in order to commit everything to memory.

After that, he took a glance at his Mantra Treasured Axis, on which only several Time Dao Runes remained lit, and he stowed the map back into his storage bracelet before plunging down into the sea near the white island as quickly as he could, plummeting into the water like a meteorite.

He descended rapidly through the water, leaving a white line in his wake as he hurtled directly toward the seabed.

Meanwhile, the Time Dao Runes on the Mantra Treasured Axis hovering above him continued to fade one after the other.

With only five Time Dao Runes left, Han Li had already plunged over 10,000 feet into the sea, and he broke through the 100,000 feet mark with only three Time Dao Runes left.

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Finally, Han Li reached the seabed, then pierced a hand straight into the seabed's rocky surface to create a deep hole. After that, he tossed the storage bracelet into the hole, then lifted a huge rock before placing it over the hole.

Before Han Li had a chance to verify whether the opening of the hole had been properly sealed, the final Time Dao Rune was snuffed out, and a vortex abruptly appeared right next to him.

Another burst of sharp pain speared through his mind, following which his spiritual sense returned to his body.

Han Li looked on as the wall of light before him gradually faded, and he continued to recollect what he had just witnessed with a contemplative look on his face.

Only after some time had passed did he sweep a sleeve through the air, and all three of his time law threads emerged, having been reduced to a dull and lusterless state, and they returned to his Mantra Treasured Axis at his behest.

Immediately thereafter, the Mantra Treasured Axis also vanished into his body.

Han Li rose to his feet before sweeping a sleeve through the air once again, and a new azure robe appeared over his boy. He then summoned a white jade hairpin and briefly arranged his own hair before securing it with his hairpin.

Right at this moment, Daoist Xie flew over from afar before landing beside him.

"Congratulations on making such an important breakthrough, Fellow Daoist Han," Daoist Xie said as it cupped its fist in a salute.

"Thank you for keeping a lookout for me all this time, Brother Xie," Han Li replied with a smile.

"There's no need to thank me, my fate is directly intertwined with yours. Now that you've reached the Golden Immortal Stage, I'm sure your Mantra Treasured Axis will have made a full recovery. Should we go and take another look at that dream concealment restriction?" Daoist Xie suggested.

Han Li smiled as he replied, "My thoughts exactly..."

However, his voice then abruptly cut off as he recalled that all of the Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis had been snuffed out again.

"Is there something wrong?" Daoist Xie asked.

A wry smile appeared on Han Li's face, but he shook his head as he replied, "No, let's go take a look at the restriction."

Thus, the two of them arrived in the abandoned garden once again, and everything remained much the same compared with during their last visit.

Han Li strode over the stone platform and carefully examined it with his spiritual sense. Immediately thereafter, his Mantra Treasured Axis appeared behind him, and sure enough, all of the Time Dao Runes on its surface were dull and devoid of luster.

He made a hand seal with both hands, and a beam of golden light shot out of the Eye of Truth at the center of the axis before striking the center of the stone platform.

A layer of light emerged over the stone platform, but it quickly faded, and nothing else happened aside from that.

"I guess I shouldn't be surprised," Han Li murmured to himself with a faint sigh.

A thought then occurred to him, and his three time law threads flew out of his Mantra Treasured Axis at his behest before flying straight into the stone platform.

All of a sudden, the entire stone platform began to glow with dazzling golden radiance, and the golden light instantly spread in all directions like a complex system of tree branches, extending all the way to beyond the forest in which the stone platform was situated.

1. For more information on Bao Hua, please refer to https://rmji.fandom.com/wiki/Bao_Hua ?

Chapter 463: Underground Palace

"Looks like not only has the core of the dream concealment restriction been revealed, even all of the array's hidden points have surfaced as well," Daoist Xie said as it looked at the radiantly glowing stone platform.

"In that case, can you see if you can break the restriction now, Brother Xie?" Han Li asked.

"Judging from the repaired stamen, this should be a Nine Nightmares Restriction, the most special type of all dream concealment restrictions. It's a good thing that we did try to break it by brute force. Otherwise, if we had activated this entire array, then this secret area would've been turned on its head! Having said that, now that all of the points of the array have been revealed, it'll be far easier to unravel," Daoist Xie replied.

With that established, Daoist Xie borrowed some array flags and array tools from Han Li, then began to fly back and forth through the secret area, making the required preparations to break the restriction.

Meanwhile, Han Li remained still on the spot as he waited patiently.

Around 15 minutes later, Daoist Xie returned to the stone platform while holding a white jade plate with complex patterns engraved onto its surface.

Han Li was rather perplexed to see this, but he didn't ask any questions.

Daoist Xie paused momentarily in front of the stone platform, then stepped onto it and placed the jade plate at the center of the platform. The jade plate was just the right size to slot into the empty area where the stamen of the restriction was supposed to be.

"I'm using this jade plate as a substitute for the damaged part of the array. I hope it'll work," Daoist Xie explained.

It then made a hand seal while chanting an incantation before pressing its palm down onto the center of the stone platform.

A beam of golden light surged out of the palm of its hand before passing through the jade plate and into the stone platform, and the entire platform instantly shuddered violently before lighting up with blinding golden radiance.

All of the patterns on the stone platform glowed radiantly as a shimmering golden projection rose up into the sky.

The higher the projection ascended, the more it expanded, and in the end, it formed an enormous flower projection that encompassed the entire secret area.

The points at which the golden lines on the nine flower petals met each corresponded with an important point in the array, and Daoist Xie had also already set up array flags at those points.

All of a sudden, hundreds of threads of golden light rained down from the dream flower projection to connect with these array flags, while a pillar of golden light erupted out of the floral projection's stamen to strike the center of the stone platform down below.

A burst of rumbling rang out as a system of cobweb-like golden patterns instantly began to spread across the ground at the foot of the stone platform, but these patterns only lingered for a few moments before fading on their own.

Immediately thereafter, the sound of rock grinding on rock rang out as the entire stone platform split apart into two down the center to reveal a hole that had a diameter of around five feet.

Han Li approached the hole for a closer inspection to find that there was nothing but inky darkness inside, but he could hear the sound of wind ringing out deep within the darkness.

His brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he casually swept a sleeve through the air to summon seven or eight crimson fireballs, each of which was around the size of a human head. All of the fireballs descended into the hole, and it didn't take long before they struck the ground, then bounced a few times before rolling deeper into the hole.

Thanks to the light radiating from the fireballs, Han Li was able to see that the hole was only several hundred feet deep, and that its bottom was paved with stone slabs. It seemed to be a passageway, but it was clear that this wasn't the exit of this secret area.

"It looks like we won't be able to leave this place just yet," Han Li remarked with a forlorn sigh.

"The fact that this place was concealed under the dream concealment restriction indicates that it must be a special place. Perhaps there's a major opportunity waiting for us in there," Daoist Xie said.

"I don't really care about that, all I want is to be able to get out of this place as soon as possible," Han Li replied with a wry smile.

"I didn't have to expend much energy while keeping a lookout for you, but I've had to remain in the outside world for over 10 years, so I'll need some time to rest and recuperate. You can call upon me if you need me," Daoist Xie said.

"Thank you, Brother Xie," Han Li said in a heartfelt manner.

Daoist Xie merely gave a dismissive wave of its hand, then flew into Han Li's sleeve as a streak of golden light and vanished in a flash.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Han Li leaped into the hole in the ground.

Upon making a landing at the bottom of the hole, he quickly discovered that the ground beneath his feet and the walls beside him were all very even and uniform. Directly in front of him was a passageway that led deeper into the darkness, and it was over 20 feet tall and around six feet wide.

Han Li activated his Brightsight Spirit Eyes while simultaneously releasing his spiritual sense, attempting to examine the depths of the passageway, and only then did he discover that he was situated in a massive underground palace, one that was no smaller than the city on the surface.

The underground palace was completely undetectable to him due to the dream concealment restriction, but he was able to see in its full glory now.

Han Li made his way several hundred meters down the passageway before reaching its conclusion, and a bare stone wall appeared in front of him.

He laid a palm flat against the stone wall before pushing it forcefully, and a burst of rumbling rang out as the entire stone wall slowly slid back several feet to reveal a horizontal passageway.

Han Li stood at the center of the passageway, and he took a glance in either direction before making his way down the right.

The passageway down the right hand side wasn't very long either, and he reached the end after traveling for less than 200 meters. However, there was no crossroads here. Instead, there was a room that was comparable in size to a normal lounge.

Han Li pushed the door of the room open before making his way inside.

In contrast with the dark passageway outside, there were around a dozen palm-sized luminescent rocks embedded into the ceiling, and they were giving off a cold white glow that illuminated the entire room.

With just a single glance, Han Li was able to see the entirety of the room before him.

In a corner of the room was a black wooden shelf that had already decayed into an almost unrecognizable state. The vials and containers previously placed on the shelf were strewn over the ground, and their contents were mixed together with the wood scraps on the ground to produce an indescribable odor.

With a sweep of his sleeve, Han Li drew a black porcelain vial out of the putrid rotten wood, and the vial drew to a halt in mid-air in front of him.

The stopper of the vial flew out at Han Li's behest, and a peculiar medicinal aroma instantly wafted out from within.

Han Li took a whiff of the aroma, then heaved a faint sigh as he lowered his hand, allowing the black vial to fall to the ground before rolling away to the side.

The vial once contained a type of pill that would've been useful even to True Immortals, but their medicinal effects had completely faded after such an extended period of time spent in storage.

Han Li carefully inspected the rest of the room, but was unable to find anything useful, so he promptly departed and made his way toward the left branch of the passageway.

After walking for a few minutes, he arrived in front of another stone door, this one riddled with a series of antiquated sealing runes.

After a brief hesitation, he raised a hand, and five balls of light lit up over his fingertips as he pressed them into the stone door.

As soon as the five bursts of spiritual light entered the stone door, all of the complex runes spread across the entire door began to converge toward the center to form a strange circular pattern.

Han Li pressed the palm of his hand against the circular pattern, and the stone door began to rise up on its own amid a burst of dull rumbling.

As the stone door was raised up, a glimmer of light began to pass through it.

Almost as an instinctive reaction, Han Li summoned Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword into his own grasp with a flick of his wrist.

After the stone door was completely raised, Han Li discovered that there was another passageway beyond it. The walls of this passageway were lined with a series of slots, within which some type of oil was slowly burning to give off a faint glow.

The oil seemed to be some type of fish fat, as evidenced by the fishy odor in the air, and Han Li took a quick whiff of the odor in the air before continuing onward.

From this point onward, the number of crossroads that he encountered began to increase, and there were also more rooms to explore, but barely any of them held anything important.

Initially, Han Li would enter those rooms to conduct an examination, but after a while, he began to inspect the rooms using his spiritual sense only, and he wouldn't bother to enter the room at all if he couldn't sense any special energy fluctuations inside.

Several hours later, Han Li emerged through a stone door and arrived in a straight passageway that was around 30 feet wide.

At the conclusion of the passageway was a pair of gates that were around 10 feet tall, both of which were tightly shut. Each gate had half of a fierce-looking beast's head engraved upon it, and a series of twisted patterns spread out to cover the entirety of the gates from the beastly head at the center.

Han Li wasn't able to identify the beast, but he could tell that this was a very complex restriction.

Hence, he made a hand seal and began to examine the gates through the use of his Eye of Truth.

Moments later, he withdrew his Mantra Treasured Axis, and his brows furrowed slightly in contemplation as he began attempting to unravel the restriction.

A string of incantation seals flew into the stone gates, and the runes engraved upon them began to give off a dull yellow glow, while the eyes of the beastly head also lit up like a pair of jewels.

A faint roar rang out as a beastly projection pounced out of the stone gates, and Han Li hurriedly took evasive measures by dodging to the side.

The beastly projection was only able to make it several feet out of the stone gates before vanishing in a flash, following which light glowing from the runes on the gates and the eyes of the beastly head also faded.

Han Li strode over to the gates before pressing a palm against one of them, then exerted force through his hand to push the gate inward, opening up a gap that was several feet wide.

Through this gap, Han Li was able to see a dim light source within the hall beyond it, and a series of indistinct humanoid shadows were being cast onto the ground in front of him.

His brows were tightly furrowed as he released his spiritual sense into the hall for a careful examination, but he didn't discover anything abnormal.

However, upon entering the hall, he was instantly taken aback by what he saw.

There was a series of white stone statues around the same height as grown men spread throughout the hall, and thanks to the faint light emanating from the braziers hanging from the walls, Han Li was able to see that there were seven or eight of these statues in total.

The shadows that he had seen just now had been cast by the two stone statues closest to the gates.

Han Li made his way toward the center of the hall while carefully examining these stone statues, and in doing so, he discovered that they seemed to be acting as pillars that supported this underground hall.

The statues didn't depict any formidable warriors or ferocious beasts. Instead, they were extremely lifelike statues of a collection of male and female figures, all of which were standing straight with their arms hanging down by their sides.

Chapter 464: Unmatched Genius

Han Li swept his gaze across the statues, and he discovered that a pair of statues among them, depicting an elderly daoist priest and a woman in a palace dress, were the most intricately crafted statues of the collection.

The elderly daoist priest was quite thin with a goatee on his chin, and the creases and folds on his daoist robes were quite pronounced, as if he were in the process of flying through the air, giving him quite a graceful and elegant appearance.

As for the woman in the palace dress, she was just as tall and imposing as a man, and her features were also rather sharp and angular, giving her an appearance that was rather unbecoming of her attire.

In Han Li's opinion, it would've looked far more appropriate for her to have been presented in a suit of armor instead.

All of a sudden, Han Li raised a hand before lashing out to his left.

"Owie!"

A cry of pain rang out, followed by a loud crack, and a skeleton that was as fair and translucent as jade was sent flying by the burst of power released by Han Li's hand, crashing heavily into the wall before shattering into countless pieces.

"Who are you?" Han Li interrogated in a cold voice.

A faint glimmer of green light slowly rose up from the shattered skeleton, forming the indistinct projection of an elderly daoist priest that looked as if it were comprised of countless fireflies.

Upon closer inspection, Han Li discovered that this was a soul fragment, and that it was identical in appearance to that statue of the elderly daoist priest.

"What a rude little bastard you are! What am I supposed to use as a vessel now that you've destroyed this skeleton of mine?" the soul fragment complained in a furious voice.

Han Li's brows were tightly furrowed as he asked, "Who are you? Answer me or I'll erase you from existence!"

The projection of the elderly daoist priest was completely unfazed, and it placed its hands on its hips as it scoffed, "Looks like you're an arrogant little bastard too! Back when I reigned supreme over the Infernal Frost Immortal Region, you probably weren't even born yet!"

Han Li's heart stirred slightly upon hearing this. "Infernal Frost Immortal Region... Are you from the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor?"

The soul fragment took a glance at the longsword in Han Li's hand, then remarked, "I can see that you're a sword user. I'm sure you've heard of the Boundless Daoist, right?"

"Even to this day, the Boundless Sword Sect is still a vastly renowned sect across the entire immortal region, so of course I know of its founder," Han Li replied.

The soul fragment erupted into a furious fit upon hearing this, and it spat onto the ground as it yelled, "Ptui! Don't try to trick me, you little brat! After what happened to the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor, there's no way that the lineage of the Boundless Sword Sect wasn't severed! After all this time, I'm sure the sect has already completely fallen into obscurity."

A hesitant look then appeared on the soul fragment's face as it murmured to itself, "Could it be that that side branch managed to continue the sect's lineage? No, that's impossible. Those bastards wouldn't have been capable of anything other than bringing disgrace to the sect's name. How unfortunate. Back in the day..."

The soul fragment seemed to have recalled some unpleasant memories, and it began mumbling to itself, completely lost in its own thoughts.

Han Li was becoming more suspicious by the second, and he interjected, "Who are you? Don't make me ask again!"

The soul fragment stood up a little straighter, seemingly trying to lend itself more prestige as it declared, "Listen up, kid! I am none other than the founder of the Boundless Sword Sect that you speak of! I am the Boundless Daoist!"

"What proof do you have to support that claim?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

The soul fragment was furious to hear this, and it retorted, "Proof my arse! Do you know I am? Why do I need to prove my identity to a little shit like you?"

"Regardless of who you were in the past, I'm the one who calls the shots here, do you understand?" Han Li said with a faint smile as he raised the sword in his hand.

The soul fragment took a glance at Han Li's longsword, and it seemed to have been intimidated into submission as it sighed, "How do you want me to prove my identity to you? You've already shattered my skeleton, so I can't even demonstrate my sect's sword techniques to you."

Han Li was silent for a moment, then asked, "Aside from the Profound Myriad Sword Badge, does your Boundless Sword Sect have any other inherited treasures?"

A mocking sneer appeared on the soul fragment's face upon hearing this, and it scoffed, "Don't think that you can get me with your sneaky little trap! There are two inherited treasures in our Boundless Sword Sect, one of which is the Myriad Sword Iron Scripture, which was passed down in the sect, while the other is the Boundless Sword Core, which was given to the side branch of the sect."

Han Li's expression eased slightly upon hearing this.

"Let me ask you this: does my Boundless Sword Sect still exist in some form?" the soul fragment suddenly asked.

Han Li thought back to Elder Qi Heng of the Holy Puppet Sect, and at this point, it had become clear to him that Qi Heng had to have been a member of the Boundless Sword Sect's side branch.

"The lineage of the sect has indeed already been severed. As for the side branch, that's also fallen into obscurity."

A hint of disappointment appeared on the soul fragment's face upon hearing this, but it seemed to have already anticipated this answer.

"What about the legacy of myself and the Boundless Sword Sect? Are my sect and I still mentioned with reverence by everyone in the immortal region?"

Instead of answering the question, Han Li raised one of his own. "If you really are the Boundless Daoist as you proclaim, then how did you end up getting sealed in here?"

"Who told you I've been sealed in here?" the soul fragment asked with a furious expression.

Han Li offered no response to this. In reality, he had also been rather perplexed as it simply didn't make sense to go to so much trouble just to seal away a soul fragment.

"Can't you tell? I willingly sealed myself in this place!" the soul fragment declared as it puffed out its chest in a proud manner.

"Alright, then why are you hiding here?" Han Li asked.

The soul fragment was instantly infuriated once again upon hearing the word "hide", but in the end, it could only heave a forlorn sigh as it replied, "It's all because I have to take care of her."

"Her?" Han Li took a glance at the statue of the woman in the palace dress upon hearing this. "Who is she?"

"She's a pain in the arse is what she is!" the soul fragment snapped.

After a brief pause, the soul fragment took a glance at the statue of the woman, then continued, "She's a High Zenith Stage Gray Immortal from the Gray Realm. "

"The Gray Realm?"

Han Li was only becoming more and more confused.

"The Heavenly Court has been hiding the existence of the Gray Realm this entire time, to the point that none of you are even aware of its existence. Perhaps that's a blessing, perhaps it's a curse, who knows?" the soul fragment sighed.

"What is this Gray Realm?" Han Li asked as the tone of his voice softened a little.

"You know what? I haven't had anyone to speak to in a very long time, and I'm in a pretty good mood right now, so I'll tell you about the Gray Realm. Just like our True Immortal Realm, the Gray Realm is another boundless realm inhabited by living beings unique to that realm, and those who attain immortality in the Gray Realm are known as Gray Immortals," the soul fragment explained.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this, and he asked, "Does the fall of the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace have something to do with this woman?"

Instead of answering Han Li's question, the soul fragment raised one of its own. "Why are you so interested in what happened to the Immortal Palace?"

"I still don't trust you one bit, so I want to hear you talk about what happened to the Immortal Palace in order to help me form my judgment," Han Li said with a cold smile.

The soul fragment's expression stiffened slightly upon seeing this, and it was about to put on an enraged facade once again, but it could tell that Han Li wasn't going to be intimidated, so it could only heave a deflated sigh.

A reminiscent look then appeared on its face as it began to recount the events of the distant past. "Back in the day, I had just become the master of the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace, and I was at the height of my powers, but this troublesome woman..."

"What did you just say?" Han Li interjected. "You became the master of the Immortal Palace? Wouldn't that make you the Infernal Frost Immortal Lord?"

The soul fragment seemed to be rather displeased with Han Li's rude interjection, and it raised an eyebrow as it retorted, "Who told you that the Boundless Daoist can't also be the Infernal Frost Immortal Lord?"

Han Li's brows furrowed tightly with skepticism upon hearing this.

"Hmph, I suppose I can't expect a mere mortal like yourself to comprehend my unmatched genius. Listen up, kid, you better not go interrupt me again! Young people these days don't even know how respect is spelt!" the soul fragment scoffed in a disgruntled manner.

Han Li adjusted his grip on the hilt of his sword in a subtle fashion as he prompted, "Please continue."

The soul fragment cleared its throat in a sheepish manner upon seeing this, then began to give Han Li a long-winded recount of his past.

According to the soul fragment, his name was Lu Yun, and he was originally a member of a side branch of a medium-sized cultivating clan on the Infernal Frost Continent. His aptitude was quite mediocre, so he didn't receive much attention from the clan, and he wasn't given any of the clan's best cultivation arts.

Hence, he had no choice but to turn to the body refinement scriptures in the clan, which no one wanted to pursue.

Through a series of strokes of fortune, he was able to embark on the path of becoming a Profound Immortal, and he discovered that he was quite suited to using these body refinement cultivation arts.

After experimenting with countless body refinement methods, he was suddenly struck by inspiration one night while looking up at the stars in the sky, and he invented a way to refine one's body using starlight. Ultimately, that led to the creation of the Great Universe Origin Arts, using which he was able to make rapid progress in his cultivation and progressed all the way to the Golden Immortal Stage.

At some point, he faced a Golden Immortal Stage sword cultivator who was half a cultivation rank above him in battle, and the battle concluded in a tie. Despite holding his own against an opponent of a superior cultivation base, he was extremely humiliated by this outcome, and he turned to cultivating the way of the sword in a fit of rage and indignation.

After over 3,000 years in obscurity, he finally re-emerged into the world as the Boundless Daoist, reaching the pinnacle of the Infernal Frost Immortal Region and founding the Boundless Sword Sect.

Eventually, he was able to reach the High Zenith Stage, allowing him to reign supreme over the entire Infernal Frost Immortal Region, and he was able to become the master of the Infernal Frost Continent's Immortal Palace without even having to join the Heavenly Court.

The soul fragment was telling the story in an extremely spirited and enthused fashion, and if it weren't for the fact that it possessed no physical body, spittle would've been flying everywhere out of its mouth.

Han Li's expression remained unchanged as he listened to the story, but internally, he was quite astonished.

If this soul fragment were telling the truth, then Lu Yun's feats went far beyond just "unmatched genius"!

Chapter 465: Core

Han Li suppressed the bewilderment in his heart as he continued to listen to the soul fragment's story.

"Her name is Mo Yu, and back then, she used a secret technique to conceal her cultivation base before infiltrating my Infernal Frost Immortal Palace. She possessed decent aptitude, so I decided to take her under my wing as my disciple, teaching her my sword techniques and imparting upon her a spirit domain, but alas..."

After a brief pause, the soul fragment continued in a slightly forlorn voice, "In the end, she tried to use my Immortal Palace as an entrance for a passageway to the Gray Realm so that the living beings of the Gray Realm could invade this immortal region. The Reincarnation Palace was colluding with the Gray Realm, and they also attacked my Infernal Frost Immortal Palace alongside the army of Gray Realm beings. Ultimately, things completely spiraled out of control and..."

The soul fragment's voice trailed off there with another forlorn sigh, and Han Li concluded in his stead, "Your Infernal Frost Immortal Palace was defeated."

"We were indeed defeated, but they didn't manage to reap any benefits from their victory, either! It's just a pity that my Infernal Frost Immortal Palace was torn to pieces during the battle, and many of its regions have most likely already been completely lost," the soul fragment said in a forlorn voice.

All of a sudden, a thought occurred to Han Li, and he hurriedly asked, "Is there a region in your Infernal Frost Immortal Palace known as the Vast Glacial Realm?"

"There is. Why do you ask?" the soul fragment asked as it raised an eyebrow.

A hint of enlightenment instantly welled up in Han Li's heart upon hearing this. The Vast Glacial Realm had most likely been lost from the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace in the wake of that battle, and it had since become a secret area in the Spirit Realm.

With that in mind, the Myriad Sword Scroll that he had obtained from the Vast Glacial Realm most likely once belonged to the Boundless Sword Sect as well.

The soul fragment was unbothered by the lack of response from Han Li, and it continued, "You've asked me a bunch of questions, so it's only fair that you answer a few questions for me now, right?"

Han Li completely ignored this request as he asked, "How did that battle conclude, and how did you end up in here?"

The soul fragment was rendered completely speechless for a moment, following which it exclaimed in an indignant voice, "How could you be so rude?"

Han Li remained completely expressionless as he subtly adjusted the positioning of the longsword in his hand once again.

"Ahem... To be honest, I don't know how the battle ended. After the reinforcements from the Reincarnation Palace arrived, I was forced to battle Mo Yu and another formidable enemy on my own. I was able to severely injure both of them, but ultimately, I was defeated, and my physical body was destroyed. In the end, only this soul fragment of mine survived, and I was forced to flee here before sealing myself away so I could wait to be saved," the soul fragment explained.

"Why didn't you receive any reinforcements from the Heavenly Court? Haven't they always been sworn enemies of the Reincarnation Palace?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"Even though I was the master of the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace, I was used to living with full freedom and autonomy, so I was unwilling to join the Heavenly Court, and I didn't follow any of their orders. Hence, they were happy to see me go down in that battle so they could swoop in and reap the spoils. My guess is that the Infernal Frost Immortal Region has already been completely taken over by the Heavenly Court by now, right?" the soul fragment asked.

"The Infernal Frost Immortal Region has already been renamed to the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, and the current Northern Glacial Immortal Palace is indeed under the control of the Heavenly Court," Han Li confirmed with a nod.

The soul fragment faltered slightly upon hearing this, then fell into deep thought.

Han Li stowed his Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword away, then took a glance at his surroundings before asking, "Where did these statues come from?"

"I have nothing to do in here anyway, so I made them to help pass the time. What do you think? They're not bad, right?" the soul fragment chuckled.

"If you sealed yourself in here, did you not think to make a way out so that you could leave at some point?" Han Li asked.

The soul fragment took an exasperated glance at Han Li, then replied, "I created this place for my own protection. If I left a way out, there would've been a way for my enemies to get in as well. Besides, I was in a real hurry when I fled into this place, so I didn't have time to think things over."

Han Li was silent for a moment, then asked, "In that case, you don't know how to get out of this secret area, either, right?"

At the very most, Han Li was only willing to believe half of what the soul fragment was telling him. He had a feeling that the soul fragment was hiding some things from him, but he could find any holes in its story, either.

The soul fragment took a quick glance at Han Li, then shook his head as he scoffed, "You're dreaming if you think you can get out of this place at your current level of power!"

"What do you mean by that?" Han Li asked.

"Unless this secret area is opened from the outside, the only way to get out of here is to destroy its core. However, this core is directly connected to this entire secret area, and as soon as it's attacked, it'll draw upon all of the world's origin qi within the entire secret area to defend itself.

"At the peak of my powers, I would've been able to get out of this place with ease, but at the moment, you're only at the early-Golden Immortal Stage, right? I suggest you resign yourself to your fate and stay here to keep me company," the soul fragment chuckled.

"May I ask what your past cultivation base was, Senior?" Han Li asked, adopting a much more polite and respectful tone this time.

A smug grin appeared on the soul fragment's face as it humble-bragged, "My cultivation base wasn't that advanced, I was only at the late-High Zenith Stage."

Even though Han Li was already somewhat mentally prepared for this answer, he still couldn't help but feel astonished upon hearing his suspicions confirmed.

"In that case, are you saying that only a late-High Zenith cultivator will be able to break the core of the secret area?" Han Li asked.

"Not necessarily, you should be able to pull it off starting from the early-High Zenith Stage, but you're clearly not... Oh, by the way, what cultivation art are you using? Have you mastered the power of laws yet?" the soul fragment suddenly asked.

"How is that relevant?" Han Li asked.

"It's extremely relevant! If you've only mastered some normal law powers, then you would naturally have to be at the High Zenith Stage to have a chance of breaking the core of this secret area, but if, by some miracle, you've mastered one of the three paramount laws to a decent extent, then the mid-Golden Immortal Stage should suffice," the soul fragment explained.

Instead of immediately showing his hand, Han Li asked, "Could it be that the core of this secret area is somehow related to the three paramount laws?"

"The core of this secret area is an item that contains the power of time laws. By my estimates, if you try to break it through brute force alone, you'll need to be at least at the early-High Zenith Stage. If you deconstruct it using the power of spatial laws, then you'll have to be at the late-Golden Immortal Stage, and if you've mastered the power of time laws, you'll only have to be at the mid-Golden Immortal Stage," the soul fragment explained.

"May I ask where the core is? Would you be able to lead me to it, Senior?" Han Li asked.

The soul fragment seemed to be rather hesitant to oblige with this request, and it remained silent for quite some time.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly as he asked, "Is there something wrong?"

"There are some restrictions in this place that... I'm unable to enter in my current state," the soul fragment replied, seemingly rather embarrassed by its own admission of weakness.

"That's not a problem. I have a Soul Nurturing Burner that you can temporarily reside in," Han Li said as he flipped a hand over to produce a small dark purple incense burner that was crafted from Soul Nurturing Wood.

"I suppose there's no other option," the soul fragment sighed as it flew into the incense burner.

"Where do I need to go, Senior?" Han Li asked while holding the incense burner.

"To the left of this hall is a secret door. After you go through the secret door, keep going straight."

The soul fragment's voice was sounding a little muffled, coming from inside the incense burner.

Han Li was constantly scouring his surroundings with his spiritual sense while making his way deeper into the underground palace under the soul fragment's instructions.

After traversing through a maze-like system of passageways for around two hours, he finally arrived at the entrance of another hall.

"This is the place?" Han Li asked.

"The core of this secret area is just inside. I won't go in with you, just place this burner down at the entrance," the soul fragment replied.

Han Li activated his Brightsight Spirit Eyes as he swept his gaze over the stone door of the hall, only to find that it was completely devoid of any markings or spiritual power fluctuations.

All of a sudden, a sly grin appeared on his face, and he tossed the incense burner into the hall.

The burner clattered onto the ground, and countless hidden patterns on the ground instantly lit up with dazzling golden radiance to illuminate the entire hall.

"Get me out of here, you little bastard! You're going to kill me!" the soul fragment wailed in panic.

Han Li briefly observed the golden light radiating from the hidden patterns on the ground, and he discovered that it had a suppressive effect on ghosts and spirits, much like his Divine Devilbane Lightning.

With a sweep of his sleeve, the incense burner was drawn back to him, and the soul fragment inside was still moaning and groaning incessantly, looking as if it could fade out of existence at any moment. It seemed that the soul fragment had been so severely weakened by that brief ordeal that it didn't even have the energy to curse Han Li anymore.

Han Li flipped a hand over to produce a soul stabilization talisman, then adhered it to the incense burner before placing it down by the entrance before stepping into the hall.

As soon as he entered the hall, Han Li immediately noticed an increase in the surrounding air temperature, and only then did he discover that the floor was entirely paved with Yang Melt Rock, a type of yang-attribute material that was extremely harmful to souls and spirits.

The hall was quite large, but it was also very empty, with nothing inside aside from a stone platform that was around half the height of a grown man.

Han Li strode over the stone platform before conducting an examination to find that it was riddled with all types of complex patterns that stretched all the way down to the floor.

At its center was a circular indentation, within which sat a round stone plate that was white in color.

The stone plate was placed on a slant with a series of markings engraved onto its edge, marking out the 24 hours of the day, and at its center was an upright black metal needle that was around half a foot in length. As it turned out, this was a sundial.

Han Li activated his Brightsight Spirit Eyes as he examined the sundial, and he noticed a faint layer of light surging over it like a gently rippling pond under the delicate light of the moon.

After some observation, Han Li wasn't able to spot any amiss, so he reached out to touch the sundial, but as soon as his hand extended into the indentation that the sundial was sitting in, an unexpected turn of events instantly unfolded!

Chapter 466: Shady Cultivation Art

The black needle on the stone plate shuddered slightly, immediately following which an arc of black lightning shot out like a springing viper to strike Han Li's fingertip.

A burst of sharp pain speared straight into Han Li's soul, and he snapped his hand back as he winced involuntarily.

At this point, the soul fragment in the Soul Nurturing Burner had already recovered some of its strength, and it began to cackle in schadenfreude upon hearing the commotion ringing out within the hall.

However, in the next instant, the Soul Nurturing Burner was swept up by a streak of azure light before being wrenched into the hall.

The soul fragment instantly began to wail in panic and agony as the same burst of golden light rose up from the ground once again.

With a casual sweep of his sleeve, Han Li summoned a spherical light barrier that enveloped the entire Soul Nurturing Burner, and only then did the soul fragment's wailing subside.

"I can't believe I'm at the mercy of a rude little brat like you! Back in the day..."

Before the soul fragment had a chance to finish its sentence, Han Li extended the incense burner toward the sundial on the stone platform as he interjected, "What is this supposed to be?"

"How the hell am I supposed to know? Hey! Hold on, let's be civilized now..."

Once again, before the soul fragment could say anything else, Han Li threatened to withdraw the spherical light barrier, and the soul fragment hurriedly began begging for mercy.

"This is an Extreme Yin Sundial, and it's also the core of this secret area. Only by completely destroying it will you be able to leave this secret area," the soul fragment explained in a deflated voice.

A hint of intrigue appeared in Han Li's eyes upon hearing this. "All I have to do is destroy this thing?"

"It's not as easy as it sounds, kid. You're dreaming if you think you can destroy this thing through brute force at your current cultivation base. If you're not careful, the yin lightning backlash from the sundial could easily send you to an early grave!" the soul fragment warned in a solemn voice.

"You were saying earlier that mastering the laws of time or space would be very helpful to breaking the core of this secret area, right?" Han Li asked with a contemplative expression.

"Of course! Time and space are two of the three paramount laws, and normal laws are completely incomparable to them! All spatial barriers and restrictions are built upon the basis of spatial laws, so mastery of spatial laws will allow you to tackle this restriction directly at its roots. As for the laws of time, that's also relevant as the Extreme Yin Sundial is a pseudo-immortal treasure that contains the time law powers," the soul fragment explained.

Han Li's brows instantly furrowed tightly upon hearing this.

During that brief inspection that he had just conducted, he wasn't able to sense any time law powers from the sundial.

"I'll be honest with you, Senior. I just so happen to be cultivating the laws of time, so why is it that I wasn't able to detect any time law powers in this sundial just now?" Han Li asked.

The soul fragment faltered slightly upon hearing this, following which a mixture of elation and skepticism appeared in its eyes as it exclaimed, "What did you say? Is that supposed to be a joke? Don't try to fool me! Have you managed to manifest any time law threads? If so, how many?"

"Answer my question first," Han Li said in an expressionless manner.

"Fine, I'll believe you just this once. Honestly, from the moment I first laid eyes on you, I immediately knew you were no ordinary person! My eye for talent is unmatched, and I saw the talent in you right away! As for why you weren't able to detect any time law powers from the Extreme Yin Sundial, that tells me that you've only manifested fewer than five time law threads," the soul fragment said.

"Are you saying my mastery of the laws of time is insufficient?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"Let me put it in simple terms for you: even if you're cultivating the laws of time, you'll have to at least be at the mid-Golden Immortal Stage and have manifested at least six time law threads in order to have any chance at destroying the core of this secret area," the soul fragment replied.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this, and he said, "Truth be told, I've only recently reached the early-Golden Immortal Stage, so it'll take me at least 10,000 years to progress to the mid-Golden Immortal Stage."

"What an impudent little brat you are! You think you can reach the mid-Golden Immortal Stage in just 10,000 years? For someone who's cultivating one of the three paramount laws, it'll take you at least a million years to get to the mid-Golden Immortal Stage!" the soul fragment scoffed.

Han Li fell silent upon hearing this. The soul fragment wasn't exaggerating. Indeed, without a supply of suitable pills, Han Li had no idea how long it was going to take for him to reach the mid-Golden Immortal Stage.

"Having said that, don't be disheartened. You're extremely fortunate to have met me, and I just so happen to have a way to help you drastically accelerate your cultivation. It's just a matter of whether you have the courage to pursue such a path," the soul fragment said with a hint of provocation in its voice.

"What do I need to do?" Han Li asked.

"The main obstacle to reaching the mid-Golden Immortal Stage is the 24 immortal acupoints that must be opened. These 24 immortal acupoints are far more difficult to open than the 36 immortal acupoints of the True Immortal Stage, but I have a cultivation method that can allow one to channel the power of baleful qi to drastically speed up the process," the soul fragment said.

"Baleful qi? I'm assuming using such a cultivation method will result in a whole host of future complications, right?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"I'm not denying that. That's why this is a matter of courage. Let me finish what I have to say, and after that, you can decide whether you want to pursue this path or not. In essence, baleful qi is just like magic power in that both are inherently present in your body, except baleful qi doesn't show itself under normal circumstances.

"Using this cultivation method will leave residual baleful qi lingering in your immortal acupoints. As for exactly what impact this will have, that varies from person to person, so I can't tell you," the soul fragment explained.

All of a sudden, a thought occurred to the soul fragment, and it hurriedly added, "Oh, by the way, there's another downside to using this cultivation method. Just like the Spirit Refinement Technique, this cultivation art is forbidden by the Heavenly Court, so you'll be in a lot of trouble if you run into any immortal envoys in the future."

Han Li fell into deep thought upon hearing this.

This cultivation art sounded extremely shady, and Han Li was confident that the soul fragment definitely hadn't revealed all of its downsides. As for the fact that it was forbidden by the Heavenly Court, that didn't matter to Han Li as he had already cultivated the Spirit Refinement Technique anyway, so it hardly made a difference.

After some contemplation, Han Li asked, "How much will this cultivation art shorten the amount of time that I'll need to reach the mid-Golden Immortal Stage?"

"That also varies from person to person. Those with more baleful qi... In other words, those who have killed more will harbor more baleful qi in their bodies, and that'll make it easier for them to open their immortal acupoints using this cultivation art. As for those with less baleful qi, progress won't be as fast.

"You don't look like the type who's done much killing, so I'd guess that your rate of progress will only be sped up by twofold at most. Having said that, this is still a drastic enhancement that you may not be able to achieve even with top-tier pills!" the soul fragment said.

"How can I check how much baleful qi my body harbors?" Han Li asked.

"That's easy. I'll teach you a baleful qi manifestation mantra. Listen up."

With that, the soul fragment recited a peculiar mantra to Han Li, who quickly memorized the mantra before repeating it himself.

As the final syllable of the mantra was uttered, the entire hall shuddered violently, following which plumes of black smoke began to rise up from the top of Han Li's head before spreading through the hall like a black cloud.

Before long, the entire ceiling of the hall was completely concealed behind a dense black cloud that was as dark as ink.

Even then, there was still more and more viscous black qi constantly surging out of Han Li's body.

The soul fragment's mouth had completely gaped open in astonishment upon seeing this, and if it possessed a physical body, its jaw would've most likely already dropped onto the ground!

"This is incredible... How many people have you killed?!" the soul fragment murmured to itself in a flabbergasted voice.

After releasing all of this baleful qi, Han Li was feeling much more relaxed, as if a heavy load had been lifted from his shoulders, but at the same time, a series of wild and aggressive impulses were springing up in his heart.

Han Li suppressed these impulsive urges as he asked, "How is my baleful qi looking?"

"I've seen quite a few people with baleful qi as abundant as yours, but most of them also harbor immense bloodlust, so their baleful qi has a dark red coloration. However, your baleful qi is completely different. Suck pure black baleful qi is an extremely rare sight, and I'm sure that'll help you significantly mitigate the negative side-effects of using this cultivation art of mine," the soul fragment praised.

Han Li nodded in response, then withdrew his hand seal, and the churning black qi around him instantly receded back into his body.

"Why are you in such a hurry to withdraw your baleful qi? You haven't even released all of it yet," the soul fragment complained.

Han Li paid no heed to its complaints as he demanded, "Teach me your cultivation art."

"So you've decided to use it? Don't take this decision lightly," the soul fragment chuckled.

Han Li offered no response to this. He hadn't decided whether he was going to use the cultivation art yet. Instead, he was going to secure it first, then make up his mind on whether he was going to use it later.

After obtaining the cultivation art by the name of the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts from the soul fragment, Han Li returned it to the same hall as before.

In order to help the soul fragment stabilize itself, he left the Soul Nurturing Burner with it as well.

He still didn't know just how much he could trust the soul fragment, but it did seem to know quite a bit about the Infernal Frost Immortal Palace, and a mere soul fragment wasn't going to be able to pose any threat to him anyway, so he decided to keep it around for now.

With that in mind, Han Li arrived in a large secret chamber in the underground palace, and after closing the stone door of the secret chamber, he summoned a stack of array tools and began to set up some restrictions.

Chapter 467: Harnessing Baleful Qi

Close to an hour later, Han Li returned to the center of the secret chamber, then set down a cushion before taking a seat with his legs crossed.

After that, he pulled the storage pouch that had been given to him by Daoist Hu Yan out of a pocket of his robes.

Inside the storage pouch was a white jade slip with golden patterns engraved onto it, and Han Li injected his spiritual sense into the jade slip to inspect its contents.

The jade slip contained the fourth level of the Mantra Axis Scripture.

In contrast with the second and third levels of the cultivation art, which had led Han Li down a deep rabbit hole searching for that mysterious valley, the fourth level of the cultivation art had been obtained so easily that it almost felt a little surreal to Han Li.

However, it then occurred to him that the broken monument in White Finch Valley was most likely something that Dao Lord Baili had placed there as a red herring to convince people that the Blaze Dragon Dao only had the first three levels of the cultivation art.

As for the jade slip in his hand, just like the first level of the cultivation art that he had received, it was only a replica.

The fourth level of the Mantra Axis Scripture was longer and also more complex than the third level, and it took Han Li over a month of arduous reading to finally read through the entire thing once.

Even after mastering the first three levels of the cultivation art, he had only developed a rough understanding of how the cultivation art worked, but there were still some key points that were outside of his realm of comprehension for now.

However, there was one discovery that he had made that had been very encouraging for him.

Apparently, due to the fact that those who had already mastered the first three levels of the Mantra Axis Scripture had already accumulated a great deal of time law power in their body, once they began cultivating the fourth level, they would be able to actively manifest time law threads.

As for how many time law threads one could attain, that was dependent on how much time law power one had accumulated and how deep their understanding of the laws of time was.

Over the next three months, Han Li didn't immediately begin cultivating the Mantra Axis Scripture. Instead, he carefully revised the first three levels, then compared them with the fourth level of the cultivation art.

This was quite a time-consuming process, but it barely yielded any benefits, and Han Li's understanding of the cultivation art on a fundamental level wasn't really deepened at all.

However, this was no surprise to him, and he was already prepared for such an outcome. Seeing as he couldn't leave this place for now anyway, he may as well work on his cultivation while examining the entire cultivation art again. Perhaps that would reap him some unexpected rewards.

On this day, Han Li meditated for half a day in the secret chamber, then took a cultivation enhancement pill before commencing his cultivation of the Mantra Axis Scripture.

His Mantra Treasured Axis emerged in front of him amid a flash of golden light, and as soon as he caught sight of the axis, a surprised look instantly appeared on his face.

As it turned out, one of the Time Dao Runes on its surface had already been restored, much to Han Li's befuddlement.

He had been too busy reading through the Mantra Axis Scripture prior to this, so he had completely failed to notice.

Only less than four months had passed since all of the Time Dao Runes had faded, so theoretically speaking, none of the Time Dao Runes should've recovered yet. Could this be due to the two extra time law threads that he had attained?

The time law threads were very mysterious, and even now, Han Li still had no idea what purpose they could serve. However, if they could accelerate the recovery of his Time Dao Runes, then that was certainly fantastic news.

After taking a moment to settle his own emotions, Han Li began to cultivate the Mantra Axis Scripture.

He made a hand seal while quietly chanting an incantation, and the Mantra Treasured Axis slowly drifted through the air until it was hovering behind him above his head while giving off dazzling golden radiance.

The golden light that it was radiating instantly filled the entire secret chamber.

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Over a century passed by in the blink of an eye.

Inside the secret chamber, Han Li remained seated with his legs crossed like a statue, but there was faint golden light all over his entire body.

Some time later, he slowly opened his eyes, and the faint golden light inside them quickly faded.

At this rate, I don't think I'll be able to open an immortal acupoint even after 1,000 years of cultivation. Will I really have to resort to the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts?

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly in hesitation as he mulled over this matter.

After some more contemplation, he decided to seek out another opinion, so he called out to Mo Guang.

The shadow that he cast onto the ground instantly warped slightly before elongating forward, and a shadowy figure emerged from Han Li's shadow before rising to its feet.

After taking so many years to rest and recuperate, Mo Guang had already made a full recovery, and its aura was even superior to back when it was at its peak.

"You've finally called upon me again, Fellow Daoist Han," Mo Guang said with a faint smile, following which its expression changed drastically as soon as it detected the aura emanating from Han Li's body.

Han Li paid no heed to its reaction as he said in an indifferent manner, "I've been through a lot over these past years, and there's never been a suitable opportunity to call upon you. I have a question for you today, and I'm hoping you can help me, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang."

"I didn't think you would already be a Golden Immortal, Fellow Daoist Han. Looks like I've gotten much better than choosing masters since last time. What is it that you want to ask me?" Mo Guang prompted with a smile.

"How much do you know about the Gray Realm?" Han Li asked.

"The Gray Realm? That's always been considered to be a taboo subject in this immortal region, and even Ma Liang didn't get involved much with it back when he was alive. [1] Hence, I'm afraid I don't know much about it. All I know is that it's a realm that's just as vast as the Immortal Realm," Mo Guang replied.

Han Li was a little disappointed to hear this, but he then asked, "What do you know about baleful qi?"

"When it comes to baleful qi, cultivators like yourself should know more than I do. Whenever one engages in the act of killing, baleful qi would naturally form in their body. It's just like how Extrarealm Heavenly Devils like myself can absorb devilish qi through killing. However, baleful qi normally can't be manifested unless someone has accumulated so much baleful qi through slaughter that their baleful qi has gained a substantial form," Mo Guang explained.

Han Li nodded in response with a contemplative expression, then asked, "Have you heard of any cultivation arts in the Immortal Realm that draws upon baleful qi to advance one's cultivation base?"

"I am aware of the existence of such cultivation arts, but generally speaking, no cultivators would willingly choose to pursue such cultivation arts. I've heard that doing so will impact a certain part of one's cultivation later down the line, essentially placing a bottleneck on oneself and sacrificing one's long-term future for short-term gain," Mo Guang replied.

Han Li was silent for a long while upon hearing this, and Mo Guang also remained silent.

After some time, Han Li looked up at Mo Guang and said, "Thank you for answering my questions, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang. I'll summon you for a chat once I'm out of my current predicament."

He then swept a sleeve through the air, and Mo Guang vanished back into his shadow.

"I can't afford to wait tens of thousands of years..." Han Li sighed to himself as he made a strange hand seal, and a vast expanse of baleful qi instantly surged out of his body, inundating the entire secret chamber.

He then began to chant an incantation, and all of the baleful qi that was churning in a chaotic and haphazard manner was suddenly reined in, ceasing their outward expansion before gradually converging into a single cloud.

As a result, the color of the baleful qi was becoming darker and darker, and it was also becoming more and more dense.

As soon as the baleful qi came into contact with Han Li's skin, he was immediately struck by a peculiar feeling that struck a hint of apprehension into his heart, but he didn't stop what he was doing as he continued to guide the baleful qi toward the acupoints in his body.

The baleful qi surged toward an acupoint beneath his ribcage, just like magic power would, and the acupoint immediately displayed signs of loosening in the face of the violent influx of baleful qi.

Han Li's heart stirred slightly upon seeing this, and he immediately closed his eyes to focus on his cultivation.

Some time later, a faint pop rang out from within Han Li's body, immediately following which a tiny vortex emerged beneath his ribcage, and the vortex began drawing in all of the surrounding world's origin qi in a frenzy.

Close to a minute later, a speck of golden light emerged on that spot on Han Li's body, signaling the opening of his 37th immortal acupoint!

Han Li inspected the immortal acupoint momentarily to find that not only was it filled with a vast volume of immortal spiritual power, there was also a wisp of black baleful qi inside, but it was very faint in color and didn't appear to be all that harmful.

Han Li was slightly reassured to see this, and with a sweep of his sleeve, he brought his Mantra Treasured Axis around until it was hovering in front of him.

Not only had quite a few of the Time Dao Runes on the axis already recovered, two more Time Dao Runes had emerged on its surface, taking the total to 362.

It seemed that the Time Dao Rune limit had been lifted once again, so perhaps he would be able to keep adding Time Dao Runes to his Mantra Treasured Axis using the time crystals manifested by his Heaven Controlling Vial, but that was something that he was going to save for a later date.

With that in mind, Han Li switched to a different hand seal to inject some immortal spiritual power into his Mantra Treasured Axis. The axis immediately began to glow radiantly while releasing layers of golden ripples, and it appeared to be no different from before.

During the next two days, Han Li paused in his cultivation and spent that time carefully examining his own internal condition, and only after confirming that there was nothing amiss did he recommence his cultivation.

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Over 1,000 flew by in a flash.

On this day, gusts of ferocious wind suddenly began to sweep over the ruined city, and tremendous volumes of the world's origin qi converged toward a garden in the city.

Before long, a vortex that hung over the entire city had taken shape in the sky, and it was like an all-encompassing funnel that was directing all of the world's origin into a large black hole in the garden in a frenzy.

The surging world's origin qi instantly filled the entire hole, flowing into a secret chamber deep in the underground palace like a vast, never-ending river.

Chapter 468: Spirit Domain

At this moment, the entire secret chamber was filled with a churning sea of murky golden light.

Cloaked in the golden light, Han Li was seated with his legs crossed and his eyes closed at the center of the secret chamber, and all that could be seen of him was a blurry outline.

Immense world's origin qi converged from all directions, swirling around the center of the room to form a powerful vortex, causing all of the restrictions that Han Li had set up to sway and ripple incessantly.

Only after several hours did the disturbance gradually begin to subside, and right at this moment, Han Li's eyes sprang open as he let loose a thunderous roar.

Beams of bright golden light shot out of his pupils, lingering for a long while in the air without fading.

Some time later, he exhaled before immediately inhaling again, and all of the golden light in the entire secret chamber instantly converged together before being sucked into his belly.

Immediately thereafter, a speck of golden light appeared beneath his throat. The speck of golden light was extremely bright, and it was constantly absorbing the lingering world's origin qi in the surrounding area.

With that, the final immortal acupoint required to reach the mid-Golden Immortal Stage had been opened.

Right at this moment, Han Li's Mantra Treasured Axis flew around from behind him until it was hovering in front of him, and it was radiating dazzling golden light, as were all of the Time Dao Runes on its surface, of which there were now more than 400.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face as the golden light in his eyes faded, and he made a beckoning motion, upon which six time law threads instantly shot out of his Mantra Treasured Axis toward the palm of his hand.

Right before they struck his hand, the time law threads drew to an abrupt halt, then curled around his fingertips momentarily before falling onto the palm of his hand.

Through this latest bout of arduous cultivation, Han Li had managed to manifest three more time law threads.

He had thought that he would be able to manifest at least one more time law thread now that he had reached the mid-Golden Immortal Stage, but that didn't turn out to be the case.

Over the course of the past 1,000 years, he had constantly been immersed in cultivation, and he had only awakened three times.

Each of those times came immediately after a state of enlightenment, which led to the formation of a time law thread, seemingly completely by chance.

With each additional time law thread that he attained, his understanding of the laws of time also seemed to have deepened, and as always, any bottlenecks that he encountered during the course of his cultivation of the Mantra Axis Scripture were simply resolved on their own, resulting in very smooth progress.

For a mortal, 1,000 years could span the course of several dynasties, yet for a cultivator, it was essentially only an instant. It was said that there were some immortals using special cultivation arts that could sleep for extraordinarily long periods of time, and even a nap for them could be thousands of years.

Hence, Han Li was astonished that he had managed to reach the mid-Golden Immortal Stage so quickly, and he was amazed by just how effective the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts had been.

Of course, at the same time, he was also feeling a little uneasy. After all, channeling baleful qi to accelerate one's cultivation was sure to come with negative side-effects. However, aside from the wisps of baleful qi in his immortal acupoint, which he was unable to eradicate, despite his best efforts, it seemed that there were no other negative side-effects.

Given the current situation, he could only hope for the best. Now that he had reached the mid-Golden Immortal Stage, he finally stood a chance of leaving this place, and everything else would just have to wait until after he made his escape.

With that in mind, Han Li immediately rose to his feet, then withdrew all of the surrounding restrictions before leaving the secret chamber.

Upon arriving at the hall where the soul fragment was situated, even before entering the hall, Han Li could already hear the soul fragment mumbling to itself.

As he stepped into the doorway, Han Li caught sight of the soul fragment hovering in mid-air, talking to its own statue.

"I was so graceful and handsome back in the day. Not only was I an immortal lord, just the title of the Boundless Daoist was enough to have countless beautiful celestial maidens clamoring over me. How long have I been trapped in here? I'm sure all of my past lovers would've been distraught at my disappearance..."

Han Li was struck by the urge to roll his eyes in exasperation, and he cleared his throat to alert the soul fragment to his arrival as he said, "Looks like you're recovering quite well, Senior. You're certainly much more energetic than when I first saw you."

The soul fragment immediately turned around to look at Han Li with a surprised expression, following which an ecstatic look appeared on its face.

The soul fragment then began counting on its fingers as it exclaimed, "How could this be? It's only been just over 1,000 years and you've already reached the mid-Golden Immortal Stage? This is preposterous! Unless..."

"Unless what?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly, thinking that there was something wrong.

The soul fragment looked up at him with a serious expression as it said, "Unless you're also an unmatched prodigy like myself!"

Han Li was instantly rendered speechless upon hearing this.

"I came here to bid you farewell, Senior. Now that I've become a mid-Golden Immortal cultivator, I'll be able to leave this place. As for that Soul Nurturing Burner, it's not anything precious, so you can keep it as a parting gift," Han Li said as he cupped his fist in a parting salute, then prepared to turn and leave.

However, he was immediately interrupted by an urgent cry from the soul fragment.

"Hey, aren't you going to take me with you?" the soul fragment yelled as it flew around to position itself in front of Han Li.

"When did I ever say I was taking you with me?" Han Li asked with a faint smile.

"You ungrateful little..."

The soul fragment's voice abruptly cut off here, and it didn't dare to hurl any insults at Han Li for fear of retaliation.

Han Li was completely unbothered as he raised an eyebrow, seemingly encouraging the soul fragment to continue.

The soul fragment immediately changed tactics, putting on a pitiable expression as it said, "At the very least, I told you the way out, so you can't just leave me here. Besides, once you destroy the core of this secret area, this underground palace will most likely be destroyed, so how am I supposed to survive?"

Han Li intentionally put on a contemplative expression, as if he was hesitating about how to proceed.

After a brief silence, he said, "I suppose you're right. How about this? You teach me how to manifest a spirit domain, and I'll take you with me."

The soul fragment was immediately struck by the urge to slap itself.

It had boasted to Han Li earlier that it had taught Mo Yu how to manifest a spirit domain, and only now did he come to realize that Han Li had most likely been plotting this well in advance.

"I can teach you how to manifest a spirit domain, but what if you change your mind?" the soul fragment asked with a serious expression.

"If you have doubts about my character, then I suppose we'll just have to part ways. I don't want to force you to do anything against your will," Han Li replied with a casual shrug.

"You... You... Fine, you win! I'll do as you say," the soul fragment sighed in a resigned manner.

"A wise decision, Senior!" Han Li praised with a faint smile.

The soul fragment was still feeling quite exasperated, and it asked in a sullen voice, "What do you know about spirit domains?"

"Not much, I'm afraid. Please start from the basics, Senior," Han Li replied.

The soul fragment rolled its eyes upon hearing this, then continued, "I'm sure you've already witnessed your fair share of spirit domains in the past. Essentially, spirit domains are a manifestation of the effect that a cultivator has on the environment around them once they've mastered a certain type of law power. The size and potency of the spirit domain is directly correlated to the cultivator's level of mastery over law powers."

"Can a spirit domain only be unleashed after mastering a certain type of law power?" Han Li asked.

He recalled that back in the Spirit Realm, Bao Hua was able to unleash a spirit domain even without mastering any law powers.

"Mastery over law powers is a prerequisite to whether one can unleash a spirit domain, but that's not set in stone. Cultivators who haven't mastered law powers can unleash spirit domains through the use of certain special treasures coupled with special cultivation arts. However, those spirit domains are nothing but low-quality counterfeits with many fatal flaws, and they can't even begin to compare with true spirit domains," the soul fragment explained.

"I see. Seeing as law power is so integral to spirit domains, is law power also required to maintain a spirit domain?" Han Li asked.

"That's correct. Furthermore, the stability and the power of a spirit domain is also correlated to how advanced the cultivator's mastery over law power is. The more law threads you possess, the more powerful your spirit domain should be," the soul fragment replied.

As the conversation continued, the soul fragment imparted more knowledge pertaining to spirit domains upon Han Li, and in the end, the soul fragment concluded, "The cultivation art that I'm about to teach you has no name. It's one of the most common spirit domain manifestation methods in the Immortal Realm, and it's a method that's both very prevalent and very safe. Listen carefully."

With that, it began to recite the mantra of the cultivation art to Han Li.

The soul fragment was making this cultivation art sound very mundane, as if it were something that one could easily find at any streetside stall, but that was only the case for a High Zenith cultivator as he had been in the past. For someone of Han Li's current cultivation base, such a cultivation art was much more difficult to come by.

Back when he was cultivating in the Blaze Dragon Dao, he had tried to search for cultivation arts of this nature, and there were some in the inner sect, but they could only be accessed by those at or above the Golden Immortal Stage. He was also able to find certain spirit domain manifestation cultivation arts in the Transient Guild, but all of them were being sold at an extremely lofty price.

"Have you memorized all of it?" the soul fragment asked.

"I have. It doesn't seem very difficult, but I'll have to give it a try first to find out," Han Li replied with a nod.

"I knew you wouldn't believe me until you've given the cultivation art a try," the soul fragment grumbled in a disgruntled voice.

"It shouldn't take too long, so please wait here for me for a bit longer," Han Li said with a smile, then departed from the hall, leaving the soul fragment behind to continue mumbling to itself.

Chapter 469: 2,000 Years in an Instant

Several more years flew by in a flash.

At this moment, Han Li was making his way slowly into a hall in the underground palace while holding a dark purple incense burner in his hand.

Traces of golden light emerged on the ground in the hall, giving off a faint hint of warmth.

"Please pardon me, Senior, but I'll have to seal this Soul Nurturing Burner for your protection while I break the core," Han Li said as he drew to a halt at the center of the hall.

Perhaps the soul fragment was simply very eager to be finally getting out of this place, or perhaps it was already accustomed to the disrespect that Han Li constantly directed toward it. In any case, it didn't say anything to retaliate, merely sitting with its legs crossed in the incense burner in silence.

With a flick of his wrist, Han Li summoned a pair of golden sealing talismans before plastering them across the incense burner, completely cutting off the soul fragment's connection to the outside world.

After that, he raised his left hand and tucked the incense burner up his sleeve.

He then took a deep breath before making his way over to the stone platform at the center of the hall, where the sundial was sitting.

In contrast with the last time he was here, this time, he could clearly sense the time law powers contained within the sundial.

The sundial's time law powers remained as still as the surface of tranquil lake when undisturbed, but now that Han Li was inspecting it with his spiritual sense, it immediately began to churn like a turbulent river.

Han Li was slightly taken aback by this, and he made a hand seal, upon which his Mantra Treasured Axis appeared behind him amid a flash of golden light.

He then closed his eyes as he made a hand seal, and a beam of golden light shot out of the Eye of Truth at the center of the axis, heading straight for the Extreme Yin Sundial.

Even before the beam of golden light completely descended upon the sundial, it suddenly shuddered slightly before rising up into the air.

At the same time, the black needle at its center began to revolve rapidly while blasting forth an arc of black lightning to clash against the beam of golden lightning.

A loud crackling sound rang out as the beam of golden light was shattered into a flurry of golden powder that encompassed the entire stone platform.

A resounding boom instantly rang out in Han Li's mind, and he entered the same special state that he had been in while manifesting his past time law threads.

However, this time, instead of having his senses heightened, an illusion was displayed to him.

All of the sudden, the golden powder formed by the shattered beam of golden light swept upward like a golden river to swallow up his entire body.

He felt as if he were flying through a river of time, and there were translucent golden threads constantly passing him by. He desperately wanted to grasp onto these threads, but each time he tried, he would simply grasp onto empty air.

His agitation was growing by the second, and he unconsciously began to channel his Mantra Axis Scripture. As a result, the Mantra Treasured Axis behind him began to revolve, while all of the Time Dao Runes on its surface lit up in unison.

Situated within the river of time, a burst of golden light appeared over Han Li's hand as he reached out again, and this time, he was able to grab onto one of those golden threads, which was none other than a time law thread.

Han Li was ecstatic, and he immediately reached out toward another golden thread.

As soon as a second time law thread fell into his grasp, the entire river of time instantly became extremely fast-flowing and turbulent, making Han Li feel as if he were drowning, and even breathing had become a struggle.

He began to struggle with all his might, but was unable to free himself from the powerful current.

Right at this moment, a massive golden wave came sweeping directly toward him, and all of a sudden, Han Li arrived at a decision.

A steely look appeared in his eyes as he charged directly at the oncoming wave while reaching out with both hands toward two more golden threads within the wave.

With that, two more time law threads fell into his grasp, and the entire river of time completely fell apart with an earth-shattering boom.

Almost at the exact same moment, Han Li's eyes abruptly sprang open, and he was gasping for air.

He looked down at his hands to find that they were completely empty, and a hint of disappointment appeared in his eyes.

However, he then suddenly detected something, and he immediately turned to his Mantra Treasured Axis to find that there were now 10 time law threads wrapped around it!

As it turned out, that illusion hadn't been an illusion at all, and he had obtained four additional time law threads in the blink of an eye!

Han Li was naturally ecstatic, and he returned his attention to the stone platform.

At this point, the Extreme Yin Sundial had already returned to the slot inside the stone platform, and the black needle at its center was still rapidly revolving, but the markings around the sundial that indicated the 24 hours of the day had become extremely blurry and were completely indistinguishable.

Han Li made a hand seal once again, and another beam of golden light shot out of the Eye of Truth, releasing formidable time law power fluctuations as it surged into the indentation on the stone platform.

This time, the Extreme Yin Sundial displayed no reaction. Instead, a series of golden patterns lit up on the stone platform, then began to spread like a system of cobwebs, instantly filling the entire ground in the hall before extending to every single corner of the underground palace.

Before long, golden patterns began to spread over the ruined city outside of the underground palace as well, basking the entire secret area in a golden glow.

All of a sudden, Han Li reached out with both hands to grab onto the edge of the stone platform, then injected his time law power into it in a frenzy. At the same time, the Time Dao Runes on his Mantra Treasured Axis began to fade one after another.

A faint crack rang out, and a series of thin cracks began to appear over the surface of the stone platform, spreading outward in all directions alongside the golden patterns.

At the same time, countless tiny black lines began to appear in the space around Han Li, and they intertwined with one another in a chaotic fashion. As the Time Dao Runes on Han Li's Mantra Treasured Axis faded one after another, these black lines continued to grow thicker and more concentrated.

A solemn look appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, and he immediately began holding his breath while his True Extreme Film appeared over his body.

Right at this moment, the 60th Time Dao Rune on his Mantra Treasured Axis faded, and an earth-shattering boom rang out as the entire secret area began to tremble violently.

Han Li's eyes narrowed slightly as a radiant golden sun with a diameter of around 10 feet emerged up ahead, releasing blinding golden radiance before exploding violently.

Amid the eruption of golden light, all of the surrounding black lines instantly became warped and misshapen, then converged toward the center incessantly to form an enormous black vortex that was releasing boundless suction force, sucking in everything within the secret area.

Before Han Li had a chance to do anything, he was also wrenched into the vortex like a tiny raft in a turbulent sea.

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The entire world spun around him for a moment, following which he stumbled out into the open, and he quickly inspected his surroundings, upon which a stunned look appeared on his face.

He discovered that he was standing in front of a golden palace, and the gates of the palace were behind him, while none other than Lu Yuqing was standing nearby, staring at him with her mouth slightly agape in shock.

In the distance, a girl with golden hair who appeared to be around eight or nine years of age was locked in a standoff against a barefoot silver-robed woman.

Around the woman was a ring of gray light that was several hundred feet in size, while above her was a massive dragon head projection with its cavernous mouth wide open. A pillar of three-colored light was blasting out of its maw, while the girl's arms had exploded to form a pair of translucent threads that swept toward the oncoming pillar of three-colored light.

The two combatants were none other than Jin Tong and Qu Ling, and this was the exact same scene that Han Li had left behind prior to entering the golden palace over 2,000 years ago!

The only thing that was different was that the layer of golden light around the golden pattern had become a little dim and was no longer as radiant as before.

What's going on...

He had spent over 2,000 years inside that palace, yet it seemed nothing had changed in the outside world.

At this point, everyone else had also already noticed Han Li, and they were also very surprised to see him.

Lu Yuqing was just about to say something when the two translucent golden threads finally clashed against the pillar of three-colored light in the distance with an earth-shattering boom.

A burst of blinding light erupted forth as the entire sky was split in half, with one half filled with radiant three-colored light, while the other half was inundated by dazzling golden radiance.

The two halves of the sky clashed violently against one another, and the entire space rumbled violently. In particular, the space where the two intersected was warping violently, looking as if it could shatter at any moment.

Everything on the ground below instantly melted away like snow under the scorching sun under the vast expanse of light, and the ground was also rapidly melting.

An alarmed look appeared on Lu Yuqing's face upon seeing this, and she hurriedly flew to a safe distance away as a streak of azure light.

In contrast, Han Li remained still on the spot as he conjured up his True Extreme Film, and at the same time, 36 specks of bright starlight emerged over his body.

Beams of light fell upon his True Extreme Film to produce an ear-splitting grating noise, and the True Extreme Film began to tremble slightly, but it displayed no signs of breaking or being worn down.

Han Li looked up at the sky with an intense, unblinking gaze as the pillar of three-colored light became brighter and brighter, rapidly overwhelming the opposing translucent threads.

A grim look appeared on Jin Tong's face upon seeing this, and she let loose a delicate roar as a new pair of arms emerged to replace the ones that had just exploded, but these new arms were semi-transparent.

She thrust the palms of her hands through the air, and two bursts of translucent golden light shot forth before transforming into another pair of translucent golden threads.

The pair of translucent threads crossed over one another to oppose the pillar of three-colored light, but the latter was still advancing forward with unstoppable force, and the situation was quickly turning dire for Jin Tong.

Chapter 470: Intervention

Han Li could see that Jin Tong was being overwhelmed, and he immediately vanished from the spot.

In the next instant, he appeared right beside Jin Tong as if by instantaneous teleportation, and a glowing golden fist shot out of his sleeve like lightning.

The fist looked as if it had been carved out of radiant gold, and it was riddled with countless golden runes.

A pillar of golden light that was as thick as a bucket erupted out of the fist with countless golden runes flashing within it, and it was giving off bursts of fearsome time law power fluctuations.

The pillar of golden light clashed against the pillar of three-colored light with a resounding boom, and the nearby space shuddered violently as a series of ripples spread through the surrounding area.

Much to Jin Tong's relief, the pillar of three-colored light was instantly stopped cold in its tracks, but as she turned to Han Li, a stunned look instantly appeared on her face as she exclaimed, "Your cultivation base..."

Qu Ling was also scrutinizing Han Li intently from afar, and she was just as incredulous to sense the enormous Golden Immortal Stage aura that was emanating from his body.

Han Li loosened his fist before pointing a finger forward, and a near-transparent golden thread instantly appeared within the pillar of golden light.

The golden thread was quite similar in appearance to the translucent threads unleashed by Jin Tong, but this one was clearly more powerful and was giving off incredibly formidable time law power fluctuations.

As soon as the golden thread appeared, the entire sky instantly dimmed in contrast.

The golden thread shot through the air, appearing much like an extremely thin streak of golden sword qi, leaving a long tail of golden radiance behind it.

In the blink of an eye, it vanished into the pillar of three-colored light before piercing directly toward Qu Ling, and the pillar of three-colored light was being rapidly destroyed.

Jin Tong immediately pounced on this opportunity, making a hand seal to release two more translucent threads that also hurtled directly toward Qu Ling.

In the face of the three law threads, the pillar of three-colored light fell away even faster, and most of it disintegrated in the blink of an eye like a mountain in an avalanche.

Qu Ling's expression changed slightly upon seeing this, and she immediately shot back in retreat.

All of a sudden, Han Li pointed a finger forward, and the thin golden thread abruptly vanished into thin air.

In the next instant, the space in front of Qu Ling buzzed slightly as the golden thread reappeared without any warning.

Countless bright golden ripples were sweeping out of the golden thread, instantly encompassing the entire surrounding area with a radius of several hundred feet, and Qu Ling was caught in the ripples as well.

As a result, she was instantly slowed down significantly. Even though she was still flying back, she was suddenly doing so at less than a tenth of her original speed, much to her alarm and astonishment.

In contrast, the golden thread didn't slow down in the slightest as it continued to hurtle directly toward her.

Qu Ling's expression changed drastically as countless patterns that resembled scales appeared over her entire body.

Plumes of gray mist surged out of these patterns, and the law power fluctuations emanating from this gray mist was completely unaffected by the golden ripples as they enveloped her entire body to form a dense gray cloud that was several dozen feet in size.

The gray cloud had only just taken shape when the thin golden thread vanished into it in a flash, and the cloud was instantly sliced into two, only to immediately fuse back together again.

A muffled groan rang out from within the gray cloud, following which a section of an arm fell out from within, and it was still bleeding profusely.

After slicing through the gray cloud, the golden thread continued to fly onward for several thousand feet before finally stopping.

At the same time, the gray cloud abruptly began to churn violently while radiating dazzling gray light, and it was able to struggle free from the golden ripples before flying to several thousand feet away in a flash.

All of this had transpired in the blink of an eye, so Han Li didn't have a chance to stop her, and his brows furrowed slightly as he made a beckoning motion, upon which the golden thread flew back to him in a flash like a spirit snake before vanishing into his body.

Immediately thereafter, the gray cloud began to churn even more violently while rapidly swelling to several thousand feet in size, and Qu Ling's furious voice rang out from within it. "I didn't think you were hiding your cultivation base. I'll admit that you managed to fool me, but don't think that you've got the better of me! I've lost count of how many Golden Immortals I've killed, and you'll be the latest addition to the list!"

A burst of tremendous law power fluctuations erupted out of the gray cloud before spreading in all directions, and all of the surrounding world's origin began to churn and buzz, while a series of ripples that were visible even to the naked eye surged through the nearby space.

Enveloped within this burst of law power fluctuations, Han Li was immediately struck by a sense of feebleness, and a sense of panic also welled up in his heart, as if he had fallen into a nightmare that he was unable to wake up from.

Jin Tong's brows also furrowed slightly as her complexion paled slightly.

Han Li quickly made a hand seal, and a burst of golden light erupted out of his body, forming a golden light barrier that encompassed both himself and Jin Tong.

Bursts of time law powers were surging through the golden light, keeping the law powers released by the gray cloud at bay, and the feebleness and inexplicable panic that Han Li was experiencing instantly faded, while Jin Tong's expression also eased slightly.

"You go and rest, I'll take care of her on my own," Han Li said as he turned to Jin Tong.

"Mind your own business! This bitch imprisoned me for so long, I've been plotting her downfall this entire time! She may be strong, but there's no way she can break through my defenses. I'm more than capable of taking her down on my own, but I suppose I'll give you a chance to redeem yourself," Jin Tong harrumphed as she raised a hand to make a beckoning motion, and the pair of translucent threads flew back into her body.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face, and he made no attempt to argue with Jin Tong as he turned his attention back to the gray cloud in the distance.

The law power fluctuations emanating from the gray cloud were very similar to those from the spirit domain from before, but also slightly different.

It seemed that she had mastered several types of laws and was able to switch between them at will.

However, Han Li was now a mid-Golden Immortal cultivator, and not only had his physical prowess been significantly enhanced thanks to his complete mastery of the Great Universe Origin Arts, his body was also brimming with tremendous immortal spiritual power, so he didn't fear Qu Ling at all.

Right at this moment, the gray cloud churned momentarily before suddenly fading away to reveal a gray dragon that was several thousand feet in length, giving off an immense aura.

There was not a single scale on the dragon's body, but it was riddled with countless thick hooked spikes, and there were several particularly enormous bone spikes on its back, resembling a series of huge spears. The dragon's claws also resembled giant swords, presenting a harrowing sight to behold.

I knew it!

A hint of excitement appeared in Han Li's eyes at the sight of the gray dragon.

"Looks like you've figured it out as well. Qu Ling's true body is the true spirit, Nightmare Dragon, and her bloodline is quite pure, so she's not going to be easy to defeat. You better redeem yourself! I'm not gonna follow someone who gets beaten by the same person twice!" Jin Tong scoffed with a disdainful look in her eyes.

After that, she turned and flew away into the distance to observe the battle from afar.

Meanwhile, Han Li cast his gaze toward the Nightmare Dragon in the distance, and he instantly shot forward through the air as a streak of golden light.

In response, two balls of gray flames appeared within the Nightmare Dragon's eyes, and it opened its mouth to release a gray fireball the size of a house in retaliation.

The gray fireball was giving off scorching heat interspersed with bursts of tremendous law power fluctuations, causing the surrounding space to ripple violently.

Han Li's expression remained completely unchanged, and he swept a hand through the air to release a dazzling streak of azure light, which transformed into a giant azure sword.

The giant azure sword was giving off huge streaks of azure sword qi that threatened to tear the surrounding space to shreds, while thick arcs of golden lightning surged over the blade of the sword.

The nearby world's origin qi erupted into a frenzy as countless specks of five-colored light emerged, then fused together to transform the entire nearby space into a vast expanse of chaos.

Now that Han Li had reached the mid-Golden Immortal Stage, using his Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords no longer placed much of a strain on him, and he was able to unleash its true power.

Han Li made a hand seal, and the giant azure sword swept through the air to stroke the giant gray fireball, slicing it in half with ease.

Han Li flew straight through the split fireball, only for two bursts of light, one black and one white, to shoot out of the two halves of the gray fireball like lightning, sweeping toward Han Li from two different directions.

The burst of white light transformed into a giant white python that was several hundred feet in length, and it opened its mouth to release a cloud of white mist that was giving off fearsome glacial qi that was interspersed with countless snowflakes and white ice spikes.

In the blink of an eye, the white mist formed a circular area of white ice and snow, and it descended from the heavens to completely inundate Han Li.

Meanwhile, the burst of black light transformed into an inky black fish of comparable size. Its body was long and thin and covered in black spots, and its mouthful of sharp fangs gave it an extremely fearsome appearance.

Arcs of black lightning were springing out of the black spots all over the black fish's body amid rumbling thunderclap, and they intertwined to form a forest of black lightning that also completely swallowed up Han Li in the blink of an eye.

Concealed within the fireball, the pair of beasts had managed to get extremely close to Han Li and execute all of this in an instant.

The white cloud and the forest of black lightning resembled a pair of enormous millstones with Han Li caught between them, and both were giving off tremendous law power fluctuations that threatened to crush Han Li into powder alongside his nascent soul.