

Emperor 2451

### [Chapter 2451: New Path](#)

Li Qiye couldn't help but smile while staring at this thick and tough dao fruit. He gave it the name, "Acorn". It contained massive and overbearing power.

"Time for the third dao fruit, but this will be tough." Li Qiye murmured: "It will open a new beginning once ripened, but every fruit after will need a more potent area to support them."

Once all three fruits were ripened, this presented a challenge for both Li Qiye and the Primordial Tree.

In the beginning, Li Qiye speculated that once the tree matures into a sky-blotting creation, it would have a total of twelve dao fruits.

It wasn't going to be easy. The more dao fruits, the greater the pressure and challenge. In fact, adding one more fruit was doubling the stress.

After all, from birth to maturity, not to mention the previous fruits, these things required a massive amount of primordial energy. Adding one more fruit meant requiring more supply.

The tree itself needed to grow as well. At this moment, these powers and life relied on Li Qiye's personal power as the fuel.

In order to open a new cultivation system, suppressing the old world wasn't enough. One needed enough force to open a new world.

Massive energy, ability to withstand the stress, and an immovable dao heart were necessary for this process.

Otherwise, one wouldn't be able to handle the alternation of the old and the new world. Their dao heart would crumble along with their grand dao. The frames of these worlds would be destroyed, resulting in the death of the cultivator since they would turn to ashes.

Perhaps death wasn't even the worst outcome of this endeavor. If the dao heart were to falter and succumb to the evil path, that would be the most terrifying consequence.

Breaking the old and starting the new required a daring decisiveness only found in the apex existences in each epoch. However, when these apex masters fell to the evil path, they would start a disaster, robbing their epoch of light.

Nevertheless, Li Qiye remained calm despite the frightful pressure mounting on him. His dao heart remained resolute.

From the start of time, eras came and went, epochs replaced one another. In the river of time, there have been geniuses with insane talents and brave overlords. These beings were incredible. The current prodigies right now were insignificant in comparison, like a speck of dust.

Li Qiye naturally couldn't compare to these beings in terms of talents. The only thing he had was an immovable dao heart - his greatest possession and power.

It didn't matter how tough the road was in the future, he could move forward, step by step. No problems could stop him; no disasters could hope to slow him down.

Li Qiye - the man with the eternally unwavering dao heart.

Some time passed before he returned from his meditation. Though he had recalled the tree, some of its light still shone upon him - bringing new hope and a new dawn for the world.

At this moment, just a single wave of his hand contained an epoch-crushing power.

The light slowly dispersed and he hid his terrifying aura. He returned to the origin just like a simple and natural stone, devoid of any carving.

He smiled, realizing that only the true overlords could see through his mysteries at this point.

When he walked outside, Jianchuan has been waiting. The youth happily walked up and quietly said: "Your Majesty, the sect master and fellow ancestors are here to see you."

"Oh? Look like a big crowd." Li Qiye chuckled after hearing this.

"Quite a few, please be lenient, Your Majesty." Jianchuan hesitated before softly speaking.

Li Qiye leisurely smiled: "Sounds like something will happen then."

"Well... I'm only speculating." Jianchuan smiled wryly: "The great ancestor is still at the capital, so I don't really know what will happen."

Despite saying so, as the person responsible for intelligence in Godstep, he naturally knew what was going on but didn't dare to reveal it. He was powerless anyway.

Li Qiye didn't care too much if the youth didn't dare to speak. The two of them quickly made their way into the main hall.

The room was full of people - the influential ancestors sitting down. Many important disciples were standing behind them, crossing their arms in front of their chest.

All eyes fell on Li Qiye instantly - some were disdainful, others sneered, a few were simply curious...

"Your Majesty, please excuse us for interrupting your session." Heavenly Crane Enlightened Being cupped his fist and smiled.

Heavenly Crane still sat down on his chair, not bothering to stand up.

In the past, they would be on their knees to greet the king of Nine Secrets right now. Unfortunately, because of recent events, they no longer give a damn about this fallen king. Even the disciples here looked down on him.

Li Qiye sat down and briefly observed the crowd. Splendorous Saintess and White Crane Young Noble were present as well, standing next to the sect master.

The saintess stared coldly at him with clear contempt in her eyes. Meanwhile, the young noble sneered, trying to hide his murderous intent.

This was beyond Jianchuan's control so he stood quietly to the side. A third-generation disciple like him couldn't speak before the sect master and ancestors.

"Everyone's here." Li Qiye lazily said.

"Your Majesty, you have been staying here for a long time but the ancestors never got a chance to see you. This is why everyone is here today." Heavenly Crane smiled.

In fact, a few ancestors have seen Li Qiye already during the coronation since they tagged along with Wind God. Of course, Li Qiye never gave a damn about them, not to mention the massive crowd back then. Who could remember certain individuals?

"This is Cloudflash Ancestor, the fastest in our sect. This is Solitary Dragon Ancestor, responsible for dao teaching. This is Skywalk Ancestor, he is..." The sect master introduced the ancestors one by one with a smile.

"Alright, no need for such needless courtesy." Li Qiye interrupted him with a wave: "No need to pretend in front of me, just say what you have to say, everyone is busy."

The ancestors didn't expect this; some put on an unfriendly expression. Meanwhile, the disciples didn't try to hide their anger.

These ancestors were all prestigious big shots in all of Imperial, not just Nine Secrets.

Heavenly Crane was giving Li Qiye face by introducing them yet the guy dared to act so rudely? It was a blatant insult.

How could a downtrodden dog needing their protection act arrogantly like this before them?

The atmosphere became tense instantly. The previous cordial pretense disappeared.

"Well..." Heavenly Crane's smile slowly went away. He then nodded towards the saintess.

"We are here today for one thing only. Just one demand, hand over the marriage pact. It will be nothing but beneficial for you." The saintess said coldly.

#### [Chapter 2452: Bride Token](#)

The other ancestors calmly sat there after Splendorous made her demand without being taken aback. This was all part of their plan.

The disciples outside the hall were staring at Li Qiye with different emotions - mainly negative towards Li Qiye.

They didn't know what was about to happen. Only the members of the upper echelon were part of the planning.

Li Qiye looked at the saintess and smiled: "So ultimately, all of you wish to deny this marriage and have it annulled."

"That's right." The saintess coldly said: "Marriage is the most significant event in life where the parties' social status must be in harmony. You are no longer the king of Nine Secrets, and War Saint is heading

for destruction, no longer on the same level as Godstep Sect! Be smart and personally back off instead of doing something so senseless.”

Splendorous made it clear enough without holding anything back. This was indeed the case - marriage was of the utmost importance. Before everything became decided, she grasped the best opportunity in order to change her fate.

She would never marry this incapable king and be connected with him in the future.

She had unlimited potential, not only beautiful but also talented. How could she agree to a husband like him? She was a phoenix soaring on the horizon and couldn't be tied down to a man like this. The nine firmaments were her goal!

“Social status must be in harmony? You? You aren't qualified to bring that up before me.” Li Qiye smiled and shook his head.

“You!” The saintess turned red and glared at him, anger churning deep inside.

“You're just a homeless dog right now, stop boasting so shamelessly!” A disciple outside yelled with indignation.

Even White Crane Young Noble scoffed in response: “Can't even appreciate a favor.”

“Ahem.” Heavenly Crane interrupted everyone and revealed a smile: “Your Majesty, the young ones are too impetuous, please forgive them.”

Li Qiye didn't respond, only staring at Heavenly Crane with a thick smirk.

The sect master said seriously: “Your Majesty, we are one of the five great powers in Nine Secrets, so we can keep our words and have no intention of changing our mind about the marriage...”

“Father!” The saintess was alarmed. This was completely different from her request so she became afraid that her father might actually marry her off.

“Ahem.” Heavenly Crane coughed again and continued: “Your Majesty, our saintess should indeed marry you as long as everything fits...”

“Father! I rather die than marrying this useless king!” The saintess was astounded and cried out.

“Behave!” Heavenly Crane acted awe-inspiringly just like a sect master and raised his voice: “It is not your place to speak during an important event for the sect.”

The saintess angrily stomped her foot before stepping to the side. She didn't dare to act impudently before the ancestors.

Meanwhile, White Crane Young Noble was surprised. He didn't expect this development after hearing his master.

Heavenly Crane continued: “Your Majesty, because of our sect's status, the marriage of our saintess is a grand event and can't be taken lightly. Don't you agree?”

“And?” Li Qiye smiled, seemingly amused.

“Your Majesty, my daughter will marry you soon, so it is about time for you to present the bride token. May I ask what you have in mind?” Heavenly Crane smiled heartily.

“What do you want?” Li Qiye leisurely asked.

Heavenly Crane went on: “Your Majesty, as you already know, I only have one daughter and Godstep only has one saintess. Her marriage should be grand, that’s only appropriate for a man of your stature. In my opinion, the bride token requires five True Emperor Treasures, at the very least.”

The saintess’ eyes became wide open. This was the opposite of her expectation.

White Crane Young Noble smirked, realizing his master’s intent.

The ancestors remained calm, not surprised in the slightest.

Meanwhile, the disciples outside the hall took a deep breath. This was definitely a big ask. Their sect didn’t have that many imperial treasures, and definitely couldn’t afford to give them away for any reason, whether it be a dowry or bride token.

They calmed down then stared at Li Qiye with a gloating smile, full of disdain. They believed that this fallen king would never be able to afford this much.

“And if I can’t?” Li Qiye smiled.

Heavenly Crane replied: “Your Majesty, if you can’t afford this bride token, then there is nothing we can do. After all, how can we marry away our golden daughter without enough consideration? This is your inability to marry her, meaning that this marriage will be nullified, and the fault is on you, not us. Please understand.”

The initially-unhappy saintess revealed an excited expression, finally understanding what her father was trying to do. He came up with a perfect excuse to end the marriage without suffering criticism.

If Li Qiye couldn’t handle this bride token, then the marriage would be over. It was his own fault for being unable to fulfill his obligation, no longer an issue of their sect reneging.

“Can’t even handle the bride token? Stop dreaming about marrying our saintess then.” The ones outside started whispering among themselves.

Everyone was waiting for Li Qiye, including the ancestors and Heavenly Crane. They all had a flash of greed in their eyes, albeit barely noticeable.

This was because Li Qiye used his sphere to injure White Crane yesterday. This was an incredible treasure.

It wasn’t surprising for him to possess something like this since he must have had access to War Saint Dynasty’s treasury - the largest one in Nine Secrets.

Thus, Heavenly Crane wanted to know how many treasures Li Qiye took with him. Just thinking about this made him greedy.

If Li Qiye had enough on him, perhaps even an ancestral weapon, it would be a godsend opportunity for their sect. They would never stop until they take it all from him.

During his reign, Lucidity King had taken numerous treasures from Imperial and filled the dynasty's vault. It contained highly-coveted items. Perhaps Li Qiye had taken some or even all of them before leaving War Saint Dynasty.

"Five imperial treasures? It's no big deal." Li Qiye casually said.

Everyone was stunned, including Heavenly Crane. He didn't expect for Li Qiye to agree so fast.

"Nonsense! Do you think imperial treasures are mere cabbages? That someone can just take out five of them?" White Crane sneered.

"Only five imperial treasures, not five ancestral treasures - it's no problem." Li Qiye smiled.

### [Chapter 2453: Courting Death](#)

"Take it, I can handle this much for the bride token." Li Qiye casually threw out five treasures. Sure enough, their imperial aura permeated the area.

A jewel, armor, divine garment... all five were resplendent with a distinctive aura.

"Imperial treasures..." The disciples outside became tumultuous. They stood on their toes and stretched their neck in order to get a better view.

Although Godstep Sect could come up with similar treasures, they couldn't just throw them away in such a careless manner, treating like them cabbages.

After a while, the sect master and the ancestors calmed down then glanced at each other. They didn't expect for Li Qiye to be so generous so they didn't know what to say, only standing there awkwardly.

This request was to get Li Qiye to back off on top of probing him out.

If Li Qiye couldn't come up with this bride token, then their sect could annul the marriage without any problem. It would no longer be them breaking their promise but rather Li Qiye's inability to marry the saintess.

All of them realized something. If Li Qiye could do this to items considered great treasures by others, it meant that he had many more than just five.

This naturally startled them. Lucidity's treasury must have been incredible. Though he was dead and War Saint was done for, his treasury must have been inherited by Li Qiye.

Greed appeared in their eyes now, just imagining the potential of their sect if they could obtain this treasury.

They would be able to take another step forward, gaining new resources and ace cards against the other four powers when vying for the world.

"No, I will not marry!" Splendorous Saintess stepped out and protected: "Not even for one hundred imperial treasures, I'm not a piece of merchandise! I don't agree with this transaction!"

"Is that so? I've given you the bride token, from now on, you are my woman." Li Qiye leisurely said while staring at her.

“In your dream!” The saintess barked back with a derisive stare: “You can have the entire royal treasury, a million imperial treasures, and I still wouldn’t marry a useless fool like you!”

Her existing-prejudice regarding him rendered her unable to accept this marriage. How could a proud heaven’s favorite like her care for this piece of trash, let alone marrying him?

“Let her come warm my bed tonight.” Li Qiye stared at the saintess while rubbing his chin, amused. He then turned towards the sect master: “I will have fun tonight educating this girl to be more obedient.”

The saintess’ expression became extremely ugly; a fire was about to spew from her eyes. The disciples outside were outraged as well after hearing their goddess being insulted!

“Watch your foul mouth!” White Crane Young Noble angrily shouted.

“Oh? You’re against it? Only a woman - it is her honor to be on my bed and being trained by me.” Li Qiye lazily said.

“You court death!” White Crane obviously had a crush on the saintess so how could he take this lying down? Unable to swallow this anger, he took out his sword and aimed it straight for Li Qiye’s throat.

He was aware of Li Qiye’s heaven-defying treasures so he needed to make this first move count, not giving the guy a chance to retaliate.

The lightning-fast thrust made the upper echelon stare at each other. They didn’t try to stop him or even shout for him to stop. They thought that it wouldn’t be a bad thing if Li Qiye were to die right now.

They could see that his cultivation was negligible and that he only relied on the treasures left behind by Lucidity. As long as the young noble could deliver the fatal blow first, Li Qiye would never have the chance to take out a treasure.

“Clank!” The thrust was fast to the point of being imperceptible by the disciples outside.

“Bang!” His sword instantly collapsed to the astonishment of the crowd. Before they could recover, Li Qiye had caught the young noble, lifting him up in the air by the neck.

Everything happened so quickly. Everyone didn’t know what the hell was going on or how Li Qiye did it, only the result.

“Mere ants daring to prance in front of Li Qiye.” Li Qiye nonchalantly said: “I’m only here to kill the boredom and play with you all, to actually think that I’m weak, hah.”

“Poof!” The young noble got crushed into a mist of blood. He never had the chance to react, let alone beg for help.

“No!” The disciples in the sect screamed.

No one expected this sudden reversal, not even the ancestors and Heavenly Crane.

“Clank! Clank! Clank!” The shocked elders instantly stood up and unsheathed their weapons, glaring intensely at Li Qiye.

“Oh? Want to go together, that’s fine, I’ll see what you all can do.” Li Qiye gave them a quick glance and smirked.

“Brat, you’re too arrogant!” Heavenly Crane had a cold expression, same with his tone: “Daring to kill in our sect, you think we can’t do anything?”

He no longer addressed Li Qiye as “His Majesty” and had a murderous flash in his eyes. Though White Crane was his disciple, the youth was also like a son to him. Revenge was in order.

Li Qiye didn’t care for them at all: “Godstep is nothing more than an ant nest to me, can’t reach the apex.”

“Ignorant fool!” One ancestor roared. With a loud explosion, he swung his huge hammer straight for Li Qiye.

“Boom!” Before the actual impact, the entire hall has already collapsed from the force.

“No big deal.” Li Qiye smiled and raised his hand.

A powerful shockwave vibrated in the air. The hammer struck an item and was repelled.

“The Null Slate!” Many were astounded after seeing the item in Li Qiye’s hand.

Heavenly Crane and the ancestors gasped before staring at each other. Not even in their dream would they expect Li Qiye to summon the Null Slate on their ancestral peak so easily.

Ever since Godstep True Emperor left it there, no one has been able to move it in the slightest. But now, Li Qiye just needed to raise his hand and the slate from the faraway peak came to him - simply astonishing.

#### [Chapter 2454: Mere Ants](#)

Everyone present felt dread while staring at the Null Slate in Li Qiye’s hand because no one has been able to move it, let alone controlling it.

He even used it as a weapon to stop the incoming hammer - shocking everyone to the core.

Ever since its appearance, no one knew of its effect or actual usage. Who would have thought that an outsider like Li Qiye could do it so effortlessly? The ancestors and disciples of the sect became slack-jawed, unable to close their mouth for a long time.

“Boom!” Li Qiye interrupted the astonishment with an attack. The tablet in his hand directly flew for the ancestor.

“Boom!” The ancestor’s hammer crumbled from the force while the tablet continued on its path.

“Ah!” He couldn’t resist at all. The tablet seemed to have a power capable of sealing the heaven, not letting anyone escape. After a shrill scream, this ancestor turned into a mist of blood.

“Ants.” Li Qiye nonchalantly said after catching the tablet again, completely indifferent as if killing an ancestor was no big deal.

On the other hand, the entire sect was shaken by this “insignificant” murder.

“Kill him!” When the upper echelon regained their composure, they instantly felt fear and all had the same thought - Li Qiye must die!

“Boom!” The ground quaked and mountains shook. Pavilions and buildings crumbled with debris and mud flying everywhere. They finally made their move - utilizing their strongest attack.

Mighty weapons rose to the sky, aiming for Li Qiye without mercy. The heaven fell and the earth split due to the murderous intent. The frightened group’s first reaction was to kill Li Qiye instantly or they would be the next victims.

“Fools.” Li Qiye chuckled and the tablet in his hand went back to work. It came out with the force of a meteor and ravaged the land.

“Rumble!” The weapons from the other side started collapsing against the tablet, unable to withstand a single blow.

Finally, the tablet loomed above and suppressed them all. They thumpingly fell to the ground on their back, unable to move a single finger. It felt as if there were a hundred thousand mountains pressing down on them.

“How should I kill you now? Maybe some torturing first?” Li Qiye smirked while staring at the group.

“You dare?!” Some disciples outside shouted and rushed forward with their sword despite being overwhelmed with fear. They only wanted to save their sect master and ancestors without thinking too much.

“Quite brave though you all overestimate yourselves.” Li Qiye chuckled and flicked his finger.

“Boom!” The swords broke down and they were blown flying while vomiting blood, subjected to the same pressure as their seniors - unable to stand up.

These disciples were far inferior to their ancestors whom Li Qiye also easily subdued.

Fear permeated the hall because Li Qiye far exceeded their imagination. They thought that he was only a useless king with no cultivation to speak of. However, he proved them wrong in a terrifying manner.

A realization struck them - no wonder why he viewed them as ants earlier. This was indeed the truth.

The group felt a cold chill, making their hair stand on end. It wouldn’t be difficult for Li Qiye to destroy their sect at all.

“Running?” Li Qiye noticed the pale saintess with fear in her eyes trying to turn and run.

He simply raised his palm and she fell into his control, completely sealed. Her body started flying towards him. Being grabbed by him left her stricken with horror.

“Didn’t you look down on me earlier? But now, I can do whatever I want and who can save you?”

“You, you dare?!” She quivered and shouted.

“There’s not an act in this world that I don’t dare to do.” Li Qiye grinned.

With a loud rip, he tore her dress, revealing her white-as-snow and shiny skin, albeit mostly covered by her inner garment. Of course, the lack of full visibility only made it even more seductive.

Her round and soft breasts couldn't be completely covered, almost falling out. If one looked hard enough, they could see two red dots pointing up like two little strawberries, ripe and ready for the taking - tempting others into taking a bite.

Li Qiye wasn't shy at all and slipped his hand beneath to grab the round softness. He rubbed and kneaded without holding back.

Splendorous was an innocent girl and has never been subjected to this type of harassment before. Under his appreciation, they seemed to be sticking out even more, adding to the enticement.

"No..." She cried out - the shame of being in public made it even worse.

"You won't die a good death!" Heavenly Crane bellowed after seeing this public humiliation.

"Shut up." Li Qiye flicked his finger again, striking the sect master's mouth and spilling blood.

Li Qiye continued speaking to the saintess: "You think too highly of yourself. If I want a woman, I just need to wiggle my finger and numerous goddesses will come running. As long as I am willing, I can do you whenever, so do you still think you're an imperious princess? But even an imperious princess isn't worth a single coin before me."

Tears started to flow down her cheeks but she didn't even dare to cry, afraid that it might stimulate Li Qiye.

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty..." Jianchuan standing beside him finally got on his knees and started begging, shivering with fear.

"Oh? Asking me for mercy?" Li Qiye smiled and looked at him.

"This low-lowly one is from Godstep... it is my home..." The shivering youth quietly beseeched.

He was the only one on scene qualified to beg for mercy and the only one that Li Qiye would give some consideration to.

Li Qiye smiled and casually threw that saintess to the side: "A bit interesting. Fine, I'll spare you for now."

The saintess hurriedly pulled up her dress and covered herself before looking on the ground. She didn't dare to weep loudly while continuously quivering, scared out of her mind.

"Actually trying to take my treasures, can't be any stupider." Li Qiye smiled and said.

The moment he finished, warning gongs resounded across Godstep.

"Rumble!" Detonations and strands of light oozed out. A majestic aura billowed from the horizon, akin to a massive tsunami.

### [Chapter 2455: Casually Invincible](#)

"Boom!" The boundless light illuminated both the sky and Godstep.

An invincible aura of emperors permeated through every inch of the land. It seemed as if these great beings were awakening along with Eternals. This powerful aura was more than enough to crush the heaven and earth, suppressing the eight directions.

Not to mention the birds and fish, even the disciples here shuddered. Some crawled on the ground from the pressure.

“Our true power is awakening.” Some disciples became excited and emotional.

A few disciples lucky enough to escape have informed the other ancestors. After hearing this news, these ancestors gathered and hastily activated the supreme formation of their sect, resulting in this majestic power.

After the start of the formation, the grand momentum of the sect began to flow. This woke up the ace cards and resources.

These things have been blessed and augmented by the late emperors and gods of the sect for generations. This accumulated was incredible, capable of suppressing just about anything.

“Boom!” Eventually, the bright torrent of power came together to form a seal in the sky larger than a mountain. It carved into the void with a golden brilliance and took the shape of a Buddha’s foot.

In the next second, it was as if an invincible True Emperor was standing on the sky vault, above the nine firmaments. Just one wave from this being could defeat all foes and take down the ages.

Li Qiye laughed in response: “Know your place. Even your progenitor can’t do anything, let alone a grand momentum.”

“Boom!” The seal answered by stomping down on Li Qiye. Space crumbled before this force. All evil creatures and demons would be rendered to dust.

This stomp combined the momentum from the geography of the sect along with generational blessings - truly an apocalyptic strike.

Mountains and rivers collapsed; even the stars and celestials turned into nothingness.

“Break!” Li Qiye didn’t mind at all and raised the Null Slate.

“Buzz.” The center of the tablet became a whirling vortex, gathering all the strength in this world.

“Boom!” Something unbelievable happened. The tablet actually broke down, revealing its true appearance inside - a great shield.

This shield was made from stone, looking both simple and ancient - adorned with tiny runes that were brimming with power. Raising this shield was akin to raising an entire world.

“Bang!” Li Qiye slammed this shield straight for the foot. The shield emitted blinding lights, capable of tearing the world asunder.

The foot was crushed from the impact. Pieces fell down after another before a total collapse.

“Boom!” The sect quaked as a result while huge boulders from the sky started falling down.

The impact didn't stop there. It continued going, seemingly wanting to crush the momentum of the sect completely.

"No!" The ancestors screamed in horror.

They knew that if their momentum were to be destroyed, then the sect wouldn't be able to escape the same fate.

Thus, they crazily poured their power and true energy to fuel this momentum. This force became bright once more after the empowerment, wishing to stop the shield slam.

"Poof!" A few ancestors couldn't handle the shockwaves and became blood instantly without the chance to scream.

"Your Majesty, please show mercy!" A loud roar came from the horizon.

A might as vast as an ocean of stars came forward and aided the momentum. Finally, this momentum was able to stop the onslaught of the shield. Nevertheless, the areas around the sect were devastated.

In this split second, someone arrived in Godstep with the speed of the wind. His godlike aura carried a world-destroying capability.

"Great ancestor!" The members of Godstep became ecstatic after seeing this old man.

"Geezer, try this." Li Qiye laughed and casually slammed his shield forward again.

Wind God had only just returned and saw this terrible scene. He rushed here only to be met with a shield slam.

"Activate!" He performed his strongest attack, turning into the most terrible storm in existence.

"Rumble!" This violent storm shot to the sky, destroying everything in its path.

Unfortunately, regardless of how terrifying and mighty this storm was, it was still extinguished by the shield. The shield was as feeble as little breeze going up against the swing of a gigantic, magical fan.

Wind God fell from the sky like a meteor before smashing into a peak, reducing it to rubble.

The sect members were speechless. Wind God was their Supreme Ancestor, one of the five in Nine Secrets.

They were matchless with the exception of Lucidity and Sun Lengying. But now, someone as powerful as him still couldn't stop a single blow from this shield. If this terrifying news were to spread, all of Imperial would tremble with fear.

"Boom!" Dirt and rocks went flying as Wind God crawled out of the mess - bloodied and injured everywhere.

The sect members heaved a sigh of relief. If their strongest ancestor were to die to a single strike, it would be too hopeless.

“Your Majesty, please...” Wind God prostrated on the ground, afflicted with fear: “My disciples are idiots, please think about our past relationship and the ancestors of Nine Secrets and spare us, we will accept any punishment.”

He finally realized that Li Qiye was the real monster. Even Lucidity King back then wasn't at this level.

### [Chapter 2456: Stone Aegis](#)

Li Qiye looked down at the prostrating Wind God and shook his head: “Some don't know how deep the world is until they see blood.”

Just this casual comment from him left everyone with trepidation. Everyone was on the ground, from the regular disciples to the powerful ancestors.

They finally realized what true terror was - the real behemoth. They were mere ants in comparison despite being one of the five great powers of Nine Secrets. Their ancestors consisted of some powerful Eternals, but these beings couldn't reach the apex compared to Li Qiye.

This inconspicuous youth could push them to the edge with a single wave of his hand, rendering them to ashes with a smile on his face. Others considered them to be a behemoth, but they were only a speck of dust in comparison.

Heavenly Crane Sect Master was filled with regrets. He wasn't worried about his life but rather the wellbeing of the sect. He didn't wish that the sect's demise would come from his foolishness.

The current situation was indeed his fault. If it came to fruition, he would never be able to face his ancestors in the afterlife due to the shame. He was pale, understanding why Li Qiye said that they were the one reaching up in this marriage.

His daughter being a bed warmer was indeed an honor for her. Unfortunately, he was too blind to see it and missed this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

It was already too late for regrets. He felt that a hundred deaths weren't enough to make up for this sin. If they were, he would be more than willing to die as atonement.

Li Qiye became bored while looking at the trembling disciples: “Forget it, killing all of you doesn't prove my invincibility anyway. Scram.”

“Thank you, Your Majesty.” From top to bottom, everyone in Godstep felt as if they have just been pardoned and immediately bowed nine times before daring to quietly leave. They were drenched in cold sweat at this point.

Li Qiye found this boring and casually threw the stone shield to Jianchuan: “You have served me in the past several days and I do not mistreat my people. This stone shield is yours, consider it fate.”

Jianchuan was astounded after receiving this gift. He stood there, slack-jawed, and couldn't calm down.

The people who were leaving were petrified. They were afraid earlier but this emotion was replaced by shock instead. They could see that this shield was an incredible treasure with power comparable to an ancestral treasure, perhaps even stronger!

If it were to be lost outside, it would start a bloody conflict. Any sect would spill blood in order to gain this great treasure. But now, Li Qiye gave it away so easily to Jianchuan.

The first to calm down was Wind God. He quickly reminded the youth: "Show your gratitude already."

He was quite happy at this moment. Though their sect had committed a grave sin from a stupid mistake, one of their disciples was still liked by Li Qiye. At the very least, it could be considered a stroke of fate.

Jianchuan regained his wits and quickly got on his knees again: "Thank you for the gift, Your Majesty."

"The power of this Stone Aegis is not predicated on your cultivation, only your dao heart." Li Qiye said: "As long as your dao heart is tough enough, you will be able to control it. Moreover, the harder your dao heart, the harder the shield. If your dao heart becomes unbreakable, the shield will stop the majority of powerful attacks. Few in this world will be able to injure you."

"I understand." Jianchuan bowed again.

"How boring." Li Qiye then turned his glance towards the rest of the crowd before turning to leave.

Wind God wanted to speak but Li Qiye was nowhere to be found now.

He was considered the fastest person in the present, virtually omnipresent. However, he wasn't on the same level as Li Qiye in terms of speed.

He sighed after analyzing the situation. This was a godsend opportunity yet they just let it slip away from their grasp.

After a while, he spoke with a grim expression: "From today on Godstep will be closing our doors. No disciples will leave without permission. Also, no one is allowed to speak on the event today, or kill without mercy!"

He was aware that regardless of Li Qiye's intention, the guy certainly had his reasons for putting up this act and didn't want to be exposed.

Doing this wrong could result in a calamity for their sect, so he ordered for all disciples to keep this a secret.

"We understand." The remaining disciples respectfully said while on their knees.

Wind God then turned his attention towards Heavenly Crane. He shook his head with disappointment: "Go reflect on your errors in isolated confinement. You have disappointed me and failed to uphold the responsibility of a sect master, nearly brought damnation to the sect."

"I obey." Heavenly Crane prostrated while overwhelmed with embarrassment.

Wind God then looked over at Jianchuan who was still frozen with the Stone Aegis in his hand. He became quite sentimental - Li Qiye only spared their sect not out of consideration for him nor the old ancestors. It was because of this disciple.

"Train hard, come ask me if you have any questions." Wind God told Jianchuan: "We still have a long way to go, the sect needs you."

Normally, a disciple like Jianchuan wouldn't be personally taught by a supreme ancestor like Wind God.

After all, he was low on the seniority-ranking. Many before him wanted to be caught by Wind God. Furthermore, he wasn't the most talented nor the one with the most potential and could only be considered a regular prodigy.

A disciple like him, if lucky, could only be given a few pointers from Wind God at best under normal circumstances.

This was no longer the case. Jianchuan had turned into the pillar of Godstep. Its very survival in the future relied on him. That's why Wind God would certainly train him as preparation.

Jianchuan got on the ground and said: "Thank you, ancestor."

"No, the sect should be thanking you for saving it. Keep on working hard." Wind God raised him up and replied sentimentally.

Finally, he shifted his gaze towards the petrified Splendorous Saintess and couldn't help but sigh.

He agreed to this marriage with Lucidity out of fear and willingness to repay his debts. After Lucidity's death and War Saint's decline, he hoped for Li Qiye to give up on the marriage on his own volition.

Who would have thought that the tables would turn in this manner? Splendorous Saintess no longer had a chance and this marriage was over.

Prior to this, the disciples here believed that Li Qiye was reaching above his station. Now, the opposite was clearly the case. They no longer had this opportunity either.

Wind God was lamenting that they have wasted this incredible fortune and nearly brought forward a disaster. He had all kinds of emotions while looking towards the departing direction of Li Qiye.

He finally understood why Lucidity King would pick Li Qiye to be the successor - old ginger is indeed hotter than young ginger. Lucidity's vision far exceeded theirs.

This new king was untouchable! The people in this world would be shocked after finding out. The so-called "trash" king was even more terrifying than Lucidity King. Lineages would quiver in response.

Lucidity was unbeatable enough. If the new king were to take back his reign, who could actually stop him?

Wind God gazed towards the direction of Skywrap. The great powers and legions were still vying for power, confident in victory. Little did they know that they were mere chess pieces on the board.

Despite being drenched in cold sweat, Wind God found optimism in a bad event since this could actually be a good thing. Their sect could stop mingling with the other bad parties now and have a clearer direction for the future to avoid a terrible fate.

#### [Chapter 2457: Nine-linked Mountains](#)

Li Qiye headed southward after leaving Godstep. He wasn't in a rush for there were beautiful sceneries awaiting him.

Nine Secrets System was built in the distant past. After many eras, it wasn't only an independent world but also had its own creations and fortunes. Its dao source was unfathomable. The location of this dao source remained a secret within the territory of Nine Secrets.

One would find it difficult to sense the rhythm and order of the dao land. It seemed that it was only a regular place, lacking the majestic power found in other systems. In fact, Nine Secrets has returned to a state of original simplicity.

For millions of years, some have been able to control the power of Nine Secrets, but this was only at a surface level. People even said that outside of a selected few, no one could even garner ten to twenty-percent of the system's power.

As for the whole thing? Only Nine Secrets Ancestor. The brilliant Eternals and True Emperors failed to do so.

He finally stopped before a mountain range. This place looked like an ocean of green, filled with a majestic life force.

"Nine-linked Mountains." Li Qiye smiled and said: "Let's see if I can find what I'm looking for here. After all, Nine Secrets is still Bao Pu's disciple."

This place was a famous location in Nine Secrets. Some even considered it as holy ground.

An aerial view of this place was beautiful and verdant with nine peaks standing out from the rest. They formed a circle, almost creating a crown with nine sharp tips. Inside this circle were nine lakes of varying colors. From above, they would look like nine jewels engraved on the crown.

If one were to go even further above and looking down, they would find that the mountain range would look like a long chain instead of a crown. The nine peaks and nine lakes would serve as the decorating bells instead.

Li Qiye took his first step inside and was met with a chilling aura. After taking a deep breath and smacking his lips, he felt a sweet and oceanic taste.

This was quite unexpected because this inland place was full of mountains. How could it have the aura of an ocean?

"How interesting, just how large of a world did Nine Secrets refined back then?" Li Qiye continued forward.

Despite its terrain, the place wasn't desolate and bereft of people. With the same name as the mountain range, Nine-linked Mountains was actually another lineage in Nine Secrets, one of the oldest and most mysterious.

Some claimed that it was the direct branch of the progenitor. The sect itself never confirmed nor denied this rumor.

No one knew how strong it was. They only knew that it has existed since the very foundation and never interfered with external matters. Its disciples didn't come out to the world in order to maintain a neutral stance.

As time passed, the place became a sacred place or an ancestral ground of the system. Many came here to train and search for the dao. Moreover, the dynasty or sect in charge would perform ceremonial rites in this place in order to further legitimize their reign.

Because of this, the dao source was believed to be in this mountain range. Of course, Skywrap Mountain was another candidate but War Saint Dynasty never commented on this.

However, the long-living ancestors felt that the former was the more likely candidate.

Ultimately, whether the dao source was located in Sky Wrap or not didn't affect War Saint Dynasty. Most people have already accepted Nine-linked Mountains as the ancestral ground.

Nine-linked Mountains didn't have that many disciples per generation, only a few dozens or so. Due to its vast territory, its disciples spread far away from each other so it looked very desolate, unlike a thriving sect.

Strange enough, this cold and cheerless sect continued to survive. Nine Secrets System had many different rulers at this point; heroes have turned to ashes but Nine-linked Mountains remained.

"Who are you?" Someone asked as Li Qiye reached the base of a mountain with a wooden hut.

The entrance to this mountain wasn't an impressive gate made out of stone, only by three pieces of wood. It looked like it could fall down at any moment.

There was a tiny plaque with the words, Nine-linked Mountains. The calligraphy was slovenly and ugly. Even a new learner could do a better job.

A shabby gate and terrible plaque... If it wasn't for the massive mountain range, people would wonder if this was an impersonating sect.

The one who called Li Qiye out was a middle-aged man wearing an ordinary robe. This robe was clean but it had many patches. The guy looked more like a farmer than a cultivator.

"Nine Secrets System's reigning king." Li Qiye smiled in response.

The man wasn't startled and gave him a brief glance: "Have proof of identity?"

"Indeed." Li Qiye casually threw the jade seal of Nine Secrets to him.

The man took a quick look before adding him to the list: "New king of Nine Secrets." He didn't try to verify whether the seal was real or not at all.

"May I ask what you are here for, Your Majesty? Dao search, sightseeing, or just curious?" The man asked while writing down the registration.

"Just taking a look. If I'm in a good mood, maybe I'll train in the nine secrets for fun." Li Qiye chuckled.

The man took another analyzing look at him after hearing this.

Others would think that he was insane, claiming to train the nine secrets in such a casual manner. Since the start of time, only one or two could do so, and this was limited in the legend.

“For fun, I see.” The man seriously added this line to the registration despite Li Qiye’s carefree comment.

Li Qiye only smiled and didn’t care at all about what the man was writing down.

“May I ask where do you want to stay, Your Majesty?” The man continued.

“The place closest to the Great Desolate Heavenly Prison.” Li Qiye answered.

“Closest to Great Desolate Heavenly Prison? Are you sure, Your Majesty?” The old man was surprised and tried to confirm.

“Yes.” Li Qiye said.

“That would be Great Desolate Mountain. We have several halls there that aren’t too bad, you can stay in one of them.” The man added.

“No problem.” Li Qiye wasn’t picky about his dwelling.

“His Majesty will stay at Great Desolate Mountain.” The man earnestly recorded.

#### [Chapter 2458: Nine Secrets](#)

After finishing the registration, the middle-aged man gave Li Qiye a wooden badge to hang by his waist and said: “Your Majesty, Great Desolate Mountain is at the very south of this mountain range. Just keep heading south and you’ll see it, the highest peak of that place. The prison will be on the opposite side.”

He added: “Please don’t lose the badge, your Majesty, it will let you go freely in this region.”

Strangely enough, this man didn’t bother confirming Li Qiye’s identity, only telling him to not lose the badge. This was indeed an interesting place.

Li Qiye smiled and said goodbye to the man before entering Nine-linked Mountains. He took one look at the plaque before leaving the entrance, amused.

There was a long way to go before reaching his destination so he took his time resting and enjoying the views.

These nine peaks here had wonderful and unique scenes. Each had a lake accompanying them - a perfect combination that accentuates the beauty of the mountains. The lakes also had varying colors - deep blue, light green, green jade...

All in all, there were sights to behold. One wouldn’t be able to forget these scenes, only perhaps their way home.

Among the valleys and hills were buildings and shrines situated all over the place - at the pinnacle, cliffs, or the waists of the mountains. The architecture here also helped make the place unique.

Plenty of these buildings were unoccupied because Nine-linked Mountains was indeed too large. It had more than one thousand buildings despite the limited number of disciples.

Some had people, not necessarily the disciples of Nine-linked Mountains. In fact, an accurate census hasn’t been done. Nevertheless, outsiders said that the number couldn’t exceed one thousand.

In Nine Secrets, having less than one thousand disciples almost disqualify a group from being called a sect. For example, War Saint or Godstep had several hundred thousand disciples scattered across the realm, perhaps even more.

Outside of its own disciples, there were invited guests as well - all from Nine Secrets System.

The majority came to Nine-linked Mountains with a similar goal - dao enlightenment!

Some were willing to stay up to several hundred years. Most wanted to learn the foundation of Nine Secrets - the nine words.

Everyone knew about the existence of the nine words, but no single sect ever had all of them. Even the five great powers and War Saint Dynasty only had pieces.

War Saint Dynasty and Calm Lotus Monastery had two words each. The former had Dou and Zhe while the latter had Jie and Lie. The rest only had one each.

In case of them deciding to hand over their secrets to each other, it still wouldn't result in nine words.

The word, Qian, has been missing for a very long time now. If there was a place that could have all nine in this system, it would have to be Nine-linked Mountains. This sect itself never denied the rumors.

Whether true or not, dao searchers came to visit. A common belief stated that the nine words were hidden in the rhythm of Nine-linked Mountains. When one could figure this out, they would obtain the nine secrets.

For millions of years, people chose to believe this legend. Alas, they came and left empty-handed.

Just imagine, staying for several hundred years or even longer without a single gain? Anyone would feel disappointed and that they have wasted their time after failing.

As time passed, people became less interested in the nine secrets so the number of visitors subsided. Nevertheless, some still came each year for dao enlightenment, choosing to trust the legend.

The most famous among the dao searchers were Emperor Zhang and True Emperor Jiu Ning. Godstep True Emperor also came here once.

Why were the first two so heavily discussed on this matter? Because future generations believed that they have figured out the nine secrets - two cases of success after the progenitor of the system.

Not all believed in this particular legend. Some thought that Emperor Zhang didn't cultivate all nine, but the actual number remained a mystery. However, a few ancestors stated that because he didn't cultivate the complete version, he was able to jump out of it and eventually created the Lucidity Scripture.

This group of ancestors found more support later on. They believed that only True Emperor Jiu Ning successfully figured out all nine.

One thing was confirmed - she had access to four words - Dou, Zhe from War Saint Dynasty, and Jie, Lie from Calm Lotus. She paid her respect at this sect and was given permission to cultivate in these two words. The rest was most likely learned at Nine-linked Mountains.

As for Godstep True Emperor, he only figured out the word, Xing. The origin of his understanding was also highly debated. One speculation was that he found it in Nine-linked. The other was that he figured it out from the roots of the dao land itself.

These legends were deeply rooted in Nine-linked Mountains, thus, one could see cultivators from the sects in Nine Secrets System traveling in the region. They consisted of prodigies and ancestors; those who choose to stay for only a few days or several hundred years.

The guests actually outnumbered the disciples of Nine-linked. However, the sheer size of this mountain range made it hard to find people. A few thousand people were negligible.

Because of this, Li Qiye didn't meet many on his southward journey. Even in the rare chance that he did, they were cultivating, meditating, or was just in a hurry. No one paid attention to an ordinary guy like him.

He finally made it to Great Desolate Mountain and climbed to the top. There were several palaces made out of rocks, unoccupied for a very long time now.

This was one of the nine highest peaks, reaching to the clouds and locating in the southern region.

Unfortunately, few disciples of Nine-linked and Guests wanted to stay here.

The temperature was wintry and accompanied by a powerful murderous energy, seemingly traveling from the primordial past to the present. Though billions of years have passed, this energy wouldn't disperse. It would greatly interfere with regular cultivation, let alone a dao enlightenment session.

Standing at the top, one would find a lake right behind it and an abyss to the front. This abyss wasn't especially large. Perhaps calling it a large pit was more suitable.

It looked like a jaw belonging to a devil that had just climbed out of hell. After awakening, it was time to devour everything on the surface.

The murderous energy originated from this pit and perhaps from the core of the ground, aiming straight for Great Desolate Mountain.

It was a blessing to have such a great mountain blocking this energy. Otherwise, it would infiltrate Nine-linked Mountains, robbing the land of its beauty and staining it with bloodthirst.

The name of this pit was very impressive - Great Desolate Heavenly Prison.

Why was it called a heavenly prison instead of earthly prison or underground dungeon? No one knew.

In everyone's memories, this place has been around since the foundation of Nine Secrets with the name of heavenly prison. No one knew who gave it this name.

#### [Chapter 2459: Old Woodcutter](#)

Li Qiye remained aloof about the mountain and the lake, only caring about the great pit.

He smiled while gazing at the prison: "Looks like Lucidity King himself coveted this place despite not being able to see through the mysteries."

In fact, many people knew the name of Grand Desolate Heavenly Prison. It wasn't because of the prison in and of itself, but rather Lucidity King.

Rumor has it that back in the olden days, this prison had imprisoned very powerful beings. There was no escaping either.

Another one stated that the progenitor of Nine Secrets used it to imprison a few murderous people. The system also repeated this in future generations.

This practice stopped later on because of a very simple reason. If one could subdue the enemy enough to put them into the prison, it meant that the enemy was helpless and could just be killed easily.

Moreover, there was no escaping after entering this prison. Throwing someone into this place was no different than killing them.

If this was the case, then why bother wasting energy to trap a monster or an enemy in this place? Killing them was far simpler.

For some unknown reasons, after Lucidity obtained sovereignty and reached the peak, he began using this prison for some of his foes.

They were his mighty enemies, some used to be even stronger than him! No one knew why he chose this to painstakingly capture them alive instead of just killing them.

A few ancestors speculated that it wasn't meant to be a punishment. He was using them to find something - perhaps an item he wanted to locate was in the heavenly prison.

Some wise sages and True Emperors extended this notion back to the ancient ages. Perhaps even their progenitors or forefathers didn't send prisoners here to trap them. They were meant to be experimental subjects for something.

Thus, the prison must contain something coveted even by Nine Secrets Ancestor. Unfortunately, the progenitor couldn't obtain it.

"It's my turn if others can't get it." Li Qiye smiled before entering a stone hall.

His stay at Grand Desolate Mountain began just like that. Though he was a guest, no disciples from the sect came to serve him.

Of course, this was the case for just anyone. Even Lucidity himself didn't have servants and was only registered. That's why when he came to dao search, he brought his own servants.

The brilliant Emperor Zhang didn't have any special treatment either in the past. Nine-linked Mountains has always been like this - a very unique place indeed.

Nevertheless, no one would find this offensive. For millions of years now, no one dared to go crazy, not even the invincible emperors. They kept a low-profile and just carried out their business in peace.

Li Qiye didn't mind the lack of hospitality. For him, staying outdoors to weather the wind and early-morning dew was fine as well.

He didn't immediately start looking into the prison. He chose to take in the air here for dao enlightenment instead. Whenever the sun rose, he would already be sitting on top of the mountain facing the prison in a meditative state.

There was no brilliant aura or auspicious phenomena; he didn't look different from a mortal meditating.

The Primordial Tree appeared inside his palace. The pine cone and acorn were mature enough to fall at any moment. Meanwhile, the third dao flower had a golden luster, seemingly made out of gold and looking quite pure.

The blossoming of this third flower filled the tree with primordial energy and a source of life. The tree itself couldn't handle producing another flower and fruit by itself but everything was going well because Li Qiye added his own power.

The tree required a massive amount of supporting energy, but it also brought endless primordial aura to him. He could turn this force into his own as he fused them into his flesh. His physical constitution became different from everyone else - far superior.

Days of serenity and dao enlightenment went on. The entire world seemed so tranquil.

After all, this was the deep south of Nine-linked Mountains, its most deserted area. No one was here to bother him with the exception of another soul.

It was an old man wearing a woodcutter outfit - a shabby and old robe made of cheap cloth with a hemp rope around his waist holding up an axe meant for wood cutting. The handle was entirely rusted but the blade was still as sharp as ever.

He was full of wrinkles with a dark-yellow complexion, seemingly polished by the harsh weather across the years - the picture of a worker grounded in reality.

His eyes weren't exceptional outside of being as clear as the water in a stream. One could sense something cool out of them even in hot weather.

He would be at the foot of the mountain before sunrise and meditate before the heavenly prison. He faced the murderous energy coming out, seemingly wanting to devour it.

Once the sun came up, he would stop and begin cutting wood. After filling two full loads held on a shoulder stick, he would go down to the lake and wash his face before leaving.

"A mortal like me shouldn't go to the immortal garret..." He loudly sang a folk song while departing.

The warm sunlight illuminated the mountain range while his song echoed. It was as if this was the scene of a painting - lasting for the ages. Li Qiye seemed to enjoy this work of art with a smile on his face.

This process would repeat each day, seemingly part of the natural order in this mountain.

On this day, the man started chopping wood and Li Qiye finished his meditation early. He leisurely strolled around and saw the old man.

"Young friend, calling it early today?" The old man stopped and asked.

It looked like he was aware of Li Qiye's stay at the peak but never bothered him.

“Just having nothing to do.” Li Qiye smiled and stared at the axe. The blade seemed to be made from mortal steel.

“Not a bad axe.” He casually praised.

“Oh, need it for a living, you know?” The old man smiled back: “I polish it each day so it gets sharper. Cutting wood is very easy now.”

“The axe isn’t the only thing being polished, your dao heart is as well.” Li Qiye shook his head and said.

The old man was raising his axe for another chop but paused after hearing this. He looked at the youth and said: “Wise words from you, young friend.”

“Just running my mouth without thinking.” Li Qiye sat down on a dried trunk lying on the ground.

The old man became interested and put down the axe. He sat down as well and took out a tobacco pipe. He inhaled once then said: “And just running your mouth is enough to spew out priceless words. I’m not educated but I know that much.”

“It’s not called knowing for you but rather, profound understanding.” Li Qiye praised.

#### [Chapter 2460: Great Desolate Heavenly Prison](#)

“It’s an honor to be praised by you, young friend.” The old man inhaled his pipe again before breathing out a long puff of lingering smoke.

The mood was good as if they were old friends.

Li Qiye then continued into the forest, no longer chatting with the old man.

He came before a cave - the entrance to the great prison leading all the way to hell. It was unfathomable and as dark as ink.

No one could see what was inside regardless of their cultivation and heavenly gaze. This has always been a mystery. Was it an actual prison or something else?

The ones pushed inside couldn’t come back out so no one knew anything about the inside.

While standing at the entrance, he was naturally met by the powerful murderous energy resembling a violent gale. Each strand was as sharp as a blade, capable of flaying a person.

His eyes narrowed, intending to pierce through the darkness to see the deepest area.

“It’s bottomless, who knows how far it goes without entering?” A person clicked their tongue behind him.

The old man from before appeared out of nowhere and was sitting on a boulder nearby while smoking his pipe.

Li Qiye smiled and agreed: “Indeed, or perhaps there is no bottom so one can’t see it.”

With that, he sat down on the boulder as well and glanced at the old man: “Using murderous energy to train, it’s not a bad method.”

"I'm just a clumsy man using a silly method." The old man puffed out smoke, clearly happy with the praise: "No talents, not cultured, just a brute compared to the geniuses but I love cultivation. I'm aware that only through arduous hardship will I be able to reach perfection."

"It's good logic, you're not quite cultivating for power but rather just training your dao heart." Li Qiye said.

The old man replied: "I don't understand grand logics but I always remind myself to not be shaken with temptation or weakness. There are many ways in this world to train the mind and dao heart, I'm simply using a method suitable for me and probably can't try anything else."

"A different method might not yield the same harvest." Li Qiye turned towards the entrance: "This energy is tough to handle for so long but also certainly beneficial."

"Right." The old man didn't deny this: "It was outside of my expectation. I only wanted to toughen up mentally in the beginning, not expecting to gain so much."

"If we were to discuss the various grand dao, this is an orthodox path." Li Qiye smiled: "Using the heart to find Buddha will result in finding Buddha, gaining buddhist laws is only a side benefit. A clear disparity between the dao and laws."

The old man shook his head: "You think too highly of me, young friend. I'm not that smart and only got lucky. It must be a blessing from heaven."

Li Qiye's eyes became profound: "This dao grants you longevity. Whether it be by chance or through planning, it is still an incredible choice."

The old man put down his pipe for a bit, lost in rumination. It took a while before he started smoking again. The nearly extinguished pipe lit up once more with tiny sparks.

"It is thanks to this dao that I can live for so long." The old man said with a serious tone.

"Because of this, Lucidity King was interested in this place, searching not for treasures but rather - lifespan." Li Qiye chuckled.

The old man was surprised to hear this. He eventually puffed out a smoke ring and said: "Longevity is one thing, but eternal life is too greedy."

He was referring to Lucidity's reign for three long generations. This was an incredible miracle in Imperial. The only way to continue surviving was to enter Immortal. "It's a shame that Lucidity didn't completely understand." Li Qiye said.

"How many can truly understand Nine Secrets?" The old man murmured: "Comprehending is one thing, but to actually grasp them? Easier said than done. So many wise sages and progenitors have experimented but failed across the ages. Lucidity's ambition was only a pipe dream."

"That old man was ambitious indeed. Unfortunately, throwing people in there is the same as throwing a meat bun at a dog." Li Qiye smiled and shook his head.

Lucidity threw several powerful enemies and ferocious characters into the prison across a long period of time. However, he had no choice but to give up eventually.

“Lucidity was only testing the water but throwing more and more still didn’t yield any feedback.” The old man said.

“Because they weren’t strong enough, that’s all.” Li Qiye smiled.

The old man paused for a bit before replying: “There were many powerful foes during his reign, mainly Eternals and five stood out the most with one easily occupying the first place.”

He then stared at the entrance and said: “These five, whether it be power or influence, weren’t inferior to Lucidity. The top person was exceedingly strong.”

“To what extent?” Li Qiye smiled.

The old man stared deeply into the cave and said: “A big shot that had lorded over Imperial. Lucidity back then wasn’t his match and had lost too. If it wasn’t for True Emperor Jiu Ning, the capital would have been gone. Later on, several clans worked together with Nine Secrets System and managed to capture him alive. Lucidity then threw him into the prison. Unfortunately, this guy didn’t come back out either. The guy was one of the strongest Eternals in Imperial, famous at the same time as Yugu Yifei. Very few could match him.” The old man said sentimentally.

An outsider would be stunned right now. Remember, Lucidity King reigned for three generations. His power was immense and unquestionable, not just in Nine Secrets but all of Imperial. Some even said that he could be placed among the top three of masters.

But this powerful foe overwhelmed Lucidity King. Virtually every power in Imperial joined in the coalition just to capture him alive, just how powerful was this guy?

Yet, an existence of this level still disappeared after entering the prison, seemingly dead without a grave. The prison was a frightening location.

“Still too weak.” Li Qiye said flatly: “Maybe throwing in a progenitor can be effective, the rest are only going there to die.”

The old man had no response after hearing this.

In this world, how many people can throw a progenitor into this prison? Only another being at the progenitorial level. Anyone inferior would find this harder than reaching the sky.

The old man puffed out smoke rings and said: “It’s understandable. Nine Secrets Ancestor failed too, so everyone else is just being overly optimistic.”

Back in the ancient era, this progenitor also researched the prison but didn’t dare to go in. Perhaps a progenitor could come back out alive, but the cost must have been unimaginable.

“Nothing is certain in this world.” Li Qiye smiled and left for his peak.

The old man knocked his pipe to get out the ashes before putting it away. He placed his axe on his waist since he had finished collecting his wood and began to leave.

This process would repeat every day. He would gather wood then sell it in the city outside in exchange for food.

“A mortal like me shouldn’t go to the immortal garret...” His song would always echo in these parts, becoming eternal. It would still be there a hundred years from now.