

Tang Sect 461

Chapter 461.1: Overt Plot of the Mysterious Marshal

Huo Yuhao knew that it was almost time. If he went any further, he would hurt her.

He didn't immediately remove his spiritual pressure. That wouldn't be good for Nan Qiuqiu. Instead, he slowly lowered the pressure and let her gradually adapt to it. As the pressure decreased, Nan Qiuqiu's spiritual state of mind also started to weaken.

Finally, she collapsed to the ground after Huo Yuhao removed all the pressure.

Huo Yuhao came to her side. He lifted his hand and rubbed the perspiration off his forehead. While he only let out at most forty percent of his spiritual power, he was carefully controlling it throughout this one hour. He had to get close to Nan Qiuqiu's limit without hurting her, which was sort of a test of his control. If this was before he had formed his soul core, he wouldn't have been able to do it.

He squatted down beside Nan Qiuqiu and placed his hand on her brow. After sensing for a brief moment, he was sure that her spiritual sea was undamaged. It was just that she had been overly drained. After this, he nodded satisfactorily.

The method of using spiritual pressure to strengthen someone else's spiritual power was built on the premise that the person possessed immense spiritual power in the first place. Otherwise, the other party might be critically hurt if things went wrong.

However, this was undoubtedly the best method, and it was the most effective on the first try. Huo Yuhao estimated that Nan Qiuqiu's spiritual power would experience a significant increase after this experience.

However, she was overly drained, and wouldn't wake up anytime soon. Huo Yuhao spontaneously opened his spectral demiplane and placed her inside. After unleashing some enchantments, he chased away some specters and protected her inside the demiplane. At the same time, he left behind a streak of his spirit to protect her inside the demiplane. The moment she woke up, he would be aware of it.

After finishing all that, he stood up before continuing his journey.

Without Nan Qiuqiu slowing him down, Huo Yuhao was as quick as lightning as he flew in the air. This time, he didn't use any flying-type soul tools. He relied on his soul power to fly.

As he flew, Huo Yuhao sensed that his soul power was slowly being drained.

After forming his soul core, he hadn't had time to carefully test it yet. He had only briefly tested it in the Sea God's Pavilion. After the fusion, his soul power had actually jumped two ranks. He was now at Rank 76. Such an increase left him close to Rank 80. In just a year, he had managed to improve by leaps and bounds.

However, Huo Yuhao wasn't satisfied with his current cultivation. The war might carry on at any time. A seven-ringed Soul Sage was considered pretty high-ranked, but he wouldn't be of much help if he wanted to affect the situation at the highest tier. He needed greater strength.

Due to the rank of his soul power, his soul power was obviously being drained at a slower speed. Huo Yuhao was more astonished with the recovery speed of his soul power.

After more than ten percent of his soul power had been drained, he didn't need to deliberately do anything. On his forehead, the black whirlpool that belonged to a different dimension naturally opened. There was boundless darkness inside this whirlpool. A strong suction force instantaneously appeared and sucked all the origin energy in the air to replenish Huo Yuhao's body. He recovered as quickly as he was drained. It was as if he wasn't affected at all.

No wonder it was only a Titled Douluo that could possess a soul core! Given this recovery speed, he wasn't afraid of being drained in the process of flying.

Furthermore, Huo Yuhao was stunned to discover that his soul core didn't just replenish his soul power. It also replenished his spiritual power.

To help Nan Qiuqiu earlier, his spiritual sea was revolving in a weird trajectory, but his spiritual power was now recovering too.

Simply put, this soul core was like another Huo Yuhao in a different dimension. In this world, Huo Yuhao might be flying. However, he was resting and cultivating in the other dimension. This feeling wasn't just new; it was fantastic too.

Huo Yuhao understood that his cultivation speed had doubled at the very least after obtaining this soul core. Within a year or two, he could become a Soul Douluo.

Right now, he was just twenty years old.

As he flew and sensed the changes in his soul core, Huo Yuhao's flying speed kept on increasing. He was like a beam of flowing light in the air. More magically, this beam of flowing light was slowly dimming as it flew. It was as if it were combining with heaven and earth.

If Elder Mu could be by Huo Yuhao's side right now, he would be shocked. He would also tell Huo Yuhao that this was the Unity of Heaven and Man. Even Transcendent Douluo might not reach such a realm. After reaching such a realm, not only would one's life energy decrease at a slower speed, but his affinity with the origin energy of heaven and earth would also increase. During the process of cultivation and recovery, such a soul master would do better than other soul masters of the same cultivation. In addition, such a soul master would also be better at concealing himself.

Huo Yuhao was delayed because he was helping Nan Qiuqiu earlier, but he soon caught up with his astonishing speed. In the evening, he could already see the outline of Dragon City.

Dragon City was considered a huge city in the Heavenly Soul Empire, located in its northeast region. Its temperature was comparatively lower than the other regions. Moving north from Dragon City, Huo Yuhao could reach the Extreme North in less than four hours. He could reach the core of the Extreme North in at most eight hours. This clearly showed how low the temperature was in Dragon City.

Huo Yuhao could only see ice and snow all around.

In fact, he clearly knew why the Sun Moon Empire chose to occupy more than two-thirds of the territory of the Heavenly Soul Empire. They wanted to continue expanding their territory starting from the north.

One reason was that it was very difficult for ordinary soldiers to resist the cold in the north. This was even more advantageous for their soul engineer legions. Even the Dou Ling Empire wasn't able to provide stronger support. Another reason was naturally because of Shrek Academy.

If the Sun Moon Empire attacked the south first, they were very likely to face the combined forces of the Star Luo Empire, Heavenly Soul Empire, Dou Ling Empire and Shrek Academy. Just like Huo Yuhao's second plan, such a situation would lead to a final showdown between the Sun Moon Empire and the rest of the other empires and Shrek Academy.

Without the Star Luo Empire's attack on the Sun Moon Empire's territories, the Sun Moon Empire might perhaps still choose a final showdown. With the Holy Ghost Church to support them, a few soul engineer legions and two Ultimate Douluo, they were confident of winning.

However, if the Sun Moon Empire's territories were attacked, they would be greatly threatened, and would have no choice but to send troops to protect their own territories. Under such a condition, the situation at the frontlines was bound to be less intense.

Invading from the north could at least help them avoid the Star Luo Empire and Shrek Academy. The remaining troops of the Dou Ling and Heavenly Soul Empires would at most delay them, but not stop them. Evidently, attacking from the north instead of the south was more advantageous.

At the same time, the Sun Moon Empire needed some buffer time. Although the Heavenly Soul Empire wasn't as huge as the Star Luo Empire, it was still much bigger than the Dou Ling Empire. Compared to the Sun Moon Empire, it was still two-thirds as large. After occupying the Heavenly Soul Empire, the Sun Moon Empire still needed time to pacify the citizens and strengthen their rule. This was why the Sun Moon Empire had toned down over the past month or so.

An invasion couldn't be pulled off so easily. This was because it wasn't just an invasion. It was an annexation; the Sun Moon Empire wanted to expand its territory.

It was Huo Yuhao's first time here in Dragon City. Now that the first city in the north of the Heavenly Soul Empire was already occupied, how could one not feel hopeless?

The Heavenly Dragon and Earthdragon Sects were the two most representative sects of Dragon City. However, they were still lacking compared to the Sun Moon Empire.

The Earthdragon Sect saw it coming, and had already moved more than half of their resources and disciples to Shrek City under Nan Shuishui's charge. They only had some resources left over, but they weren't greatly affected. The situation that the Heavenly Dragon Sect was in right now was unknown.

Huo Yuhao could still clearly remember how strong the captain of the Earthdragon Sect's team, Yu Tianlong, was during the Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. His pure Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon was extraordinary. Nan Shuishui had also mentioned that the Heavenly Dragon Sect was stronger than the Earth Dragon Sect, whose sect leader was a Titled Douluo. Even though it wasn't as strong as the Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon Sect in the past, it was still an elite sect.

As he thought, Huo Yuhao was already getting closer and closer to Dragon City. He unleashed his spiritual power in the direction of Dragon City. Just as he had expected, there were already aerial surveillance soul tools over Dragon City.

However, there were fewer aerial surveillance soul tools here compared to the Ming Dou Mountain Range. After all, manufacturing aerial surveillance soul tools wasn't cheap. Unless they were used at particularly important places, there wouldn't be a congregation of them.

At the same time, Huo Yuhao saw that there were no troops stationed outside the city. There were only some guards on the city wall.

It seemed like the Sun Moon Empire's defense of Dragon City wasn't very strong.

Huo Yuhao found a small tree that could conceal him as he descended when he was around eight kilometers from Dragon City. He revealed himself before walking towards the city.

Nan Qiuqiu was still in a deep sleep. Huo Yuhao predicted that she would only awaken the next morning. This period of time was particularly important to her. One couldn't increase their spiritual power under normal conditions. This was why he decided to enter the city and find a place to stay first before going to the Earthdragon Sect after Nan Qiuqiu was awake.

He would need some time to walk eight kilometers. However, he wasn't in a rush, and walked slowly. There wasn't much security outside the city, and he was only briefly checked before he was allowed to enter.

Chapter 461.2: Overt Plot of the Mysterious Marshal

After entering Dragon City, Huo Yuhao felt much less cold air blowing against him. With the city wall as a barrier, the temperature inside the city was naturally higher than outside the city.

Everything inside the city seemed to be very ordinary. There weren't any signs of suffering or misery. Although the streets weren't completely empty, they weren't bustling with life either. In a city as cold as this, the population was bound to be much less than a city in the south.

As Huo Yuhao walked forward, he observed his surroundings and sensed the changes.

There was a simple soul formation at the top of the city wall. However, there weren't many soul engineers stationed there, and they were only accompanied by a few ordinary soldiers.

Given such a defense, the Heavenly Soul Empire could possibly overcome it if they could divide their troops and attack the city with one or two regular legions.

Shrek Academy didn't have any information about this city either. Naturally, Huo Yuhao didn't know anything. In a city, there wasn't a place more suitable than an inn to find out information. Huo Yuhao decided to find an inn and gather information about the situation in Dragon City before making any plans.

It was very easy to find an inn in such a cold city. Drinking could warm one's body, and this was why many northerners considered it their hobby. Even some ladies shared the same hobby too.

Huo Yuhao soon found an inn and entered. The sign board of this inn wasn't very big. However, Huo Yuhao immediately sensed a bustling atmosphere the moment he entered.

A warm feeling swept over him the moment he entered. He felt engulfed by a heatwave, and the coldness he felt in his body immediately disappeared.

The size of the inn wasn't very big, and it was much hotter inside this inn. Some people were even sleeveless as they consumed alcohol.

There were four or five tables as well as a bar. There were twenty to thirty people in the inn, which contributed to the rowdy atmosphere. However, the atmosphere also felt very friendly.

Huo Yuhao noticed that there were a few scantily-clad ladies behind every table and the bar. However, these ladies weren't young. They looked to be in their thirties. Although they were scantily-clad, they weren't very physically attractive. They were all dressed in the same way. Evidently, they belonged to this inn. They were there to drink with the customers, but they didn't provide any further services. Even though the customers were also drinking and joking with them, they were seated pretty far away. It seemed like this was a culture of inns in Dragon City. Ladies were only there to provide an atmosphere for drinking.

"Welcome, sir." A scantily-clad lady who revealed her shoulders and cleavage walked over and greeted Huo Yuhao, who had just entered. She had a strong northern accent. Her voice was very smooth, but it was slightly nasal. Although her yellow dress was very revealing, it also exuded the elegant style of the Heavenly Soul Empire. It was just that the dress was made of slightly inferior quality.

"Hi." Huo Yuhao nodded slightly to acknowledge her. "Are there still seats?"

The lady in yellow said, "There are only seats at the bar. Will that do?"

"Yes." Huo Yuhao nodded again.

The lady brought him to a corner of the bar before sitting down. Huo Yuhao was dressed rather lightly. After all, he came directly from Shrek Academy. Naturally, he didn't need to take off a coat. However, all the customers in the inn were already drunk, and didn't notice this at all.

The lady brought a glass of warm water for Huo Yuhao before asking, "Sir, you must be a foreigner."

Huo Yuhao nodded, "Yes! Dragon City is really cold."

The lady laughed, "You're right. Seeing the way you're dressed, you must be feeling very cold. You'll be fine after having some alcohol. What do you want?"

Huo Yuhao said, "Give me something local."

"Alright, wait a minute then."

Not long afterward, a glass of amber alcohol was brought in front of Huo Yuhao. It had a strong alcoholic fragrance.

Huo Yuhao lifted his cup and sniffed the alcohol. Suddenly, a strong alcoholic scent swept his nose. Evidently, the alcohol was very strong.

As he sniffed the alcohol, he couldn't help but recall how there was too much origin energy of Ultimate Ice in his body during the tournament in Radiant City, and how he had to rely on distillate to neutralize it. Time had passed so quickly. Wang Dong'er was no longer with him, and he was now in this northern city.

After tasting a sip of the alcohol, a malty, acrid taste filled his throat. It warmed his body as it went all the way into his belly. That feeling was indeed refreshing.

Huo Yuhao didn't use his soul power to neutralize the strength of the alcohol. As he sensed the burning stimulation, his face also turned a bit red.

Even though he wasn't the most handsome person, he was still very charming because of his great spiritual power. The lady's eyes brightened when she saw his flush. "Sir, where are you from?"

Huo Yuhao said, "I'm from the south, and I'm here to visit a friend."

The lady smiled and replied, "You must be careful then. It's wartime now. Don't go to war-prone places where there's a lot of fighting."

Huo Yuhao wasn't moved as he said, "I heard that Dragon City has already..."

The lady didn't hide anything from him and responded to his question. "Yes, Dragon City has already been occupied by the Sun Moon Empire. We were initially very worried, but it seems like things aren't that bad."

"Oh?" Huo Yuhao was a little astonished as he looked at her. He asked, "How's the war situation?"

She replied, "Ordinary citizens like us wouldn't know anything. At least the Sun Moon Empire hasn't done anything to ordinary citizens like us after occupying Dragon City. Instead, they've sent out announcements that they won't plunder from us or kill anyone. They want us to maintain order and not leave our houses easily."

"Just like that?" Huo Yuhao was a little astonished. The Sun Moon Empire had greatly alleviated the suffering that ordinary citizens generally experienced in such cases by not touching them. If this was the case, it was a blessing amongst all the suffering.

The lady said, "Yes! They have occupied Dragon City for many days, and only left behind a few soldiers to maintain order. After that, businessmen started to enter the city. The soldiers retreated from the city two days after arriving. You should have seen how there isn't much damage to the city at all. I only heard that a few soul master sects were forced to temporarily leave Dragon City by the Sun Moon Empire's troops. However, I'm not sure where they went."

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow and started to ponder. From the start when Xu Tianran started the war and held many elite talents from the Soul Dueling Tournament captive, he thought that lives were bound to be lost in this war.

Furthermore, the Holy Ghost Church aided the Sun Moon Empire. Given such a situation, how was it possible that they spared the citizens? This was something that Huo Yuhao hadn't expected.

Before Huo Yuhao even asked anything else, the lady also got herself a glass of malt alcohol from behind the bar and said, "Those businessmen were also very weird. After entering the city, they didn't trade.

Instead, they were giving out stuff. I heard that they gave many of the nobility in the city weird items. I heard they are related to soul tools. Their empire occupied our city, but they're giving us stuff. I don't get what's going on."

Huo Yuhao was also confused when he heard her words. Why has something like this happened? What is the Sun Moon Empire planning to do?

Huo Yuhao only got this information. He didn't obtain anything useful after speaking to other patrons.

After inquiring about the mayor's house in the city, he left the inn upon finishing his alcohol.

Right now, the sky had already turned dark, and the flow of people on the streets had evidently decreased. The temperature had also dropped significantly.

To prevent himself from being too conspicuous, Huo Yuhao retrieved a coat from his storage-type soul tool and wore it. He slowly walked the streets.

He had originally intended to find a place to stay, and would only go to the Earthdragon Sect after Nan Qiuqiu woke up. However, he had some new ideas now.

He was curious. The Sun Moon Empire had not plundered the citizens nor touched them in any way. They even allowed businessmen to enter the city to give them stuff. What were the empire's intentions here?

He went to the mayor's residence to take a look. At least there were people from the Sun Moon Empire there. Perhaps he could obtain some information.

As he thought until here, Huo Yuhao turned into a dark alley and slowly disappeared into the dark under the concealment of his Imitation.

The mayor's residence was located in the city center just like in most other cities. The mayor's residence looked pretty big, and was visible from afar.

There were two soldiers standing at the entrance. They wore thick winter wear. Huo Yuhao jumped up and silently entered the residence. He moved like a falling leaf, and didn't alarm anyone.

The residence was very quiet. It was only after a while that a patrol of troops could be seen passing by. Huo Yuhao snuck in and quickly came to the core structure of the residence.

He drifted up towards a second-story room that was lit. At the same time, he unleashed his spiritual power, engulfing the entire residence. He didn't believe there were any spiritual detectors here.

Very soon, he quickly grasped the situation in the residence. There were about a hundred and fifty troopers inside this residence. Of them, twenty were soul engineers. Their cultivations were slightly weak – they were only two or three-ringed soul engineers. In the central room of the residence, there was a six-ringed Soul Emperor. Huo Yuhao could only tell if he was a soul engineer by seeing him directly.

He's only a Soul Emperor, but he's taking charge of the entire city? The Sun Moon Empire is really throwing caution to the wind.

Chapter 461.3: Overt Plot of the Mysterious Marshal

As he thought, Huo Yuhao drifted up and charged towards the room where the Soul Emperor was.

Very soon, he was outside the door. Given the number of people that were in this residence, he was absolutely confident of defeating all of them by himself. However, he didn't want to alarm anyone. He remained quiet outside the window. His spiritual power was focused inside the room, and he silently listened and observed.

There was a fifty-year-old Soul Emperor reading some documents in the room and nodding occasionally. To only be a Soul Emperor at such an age meant that he had no future. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao also sensed the presence of soul tools in the room. Undoubtedly, he had to be a Class 6 soul engineer.

Someone came. Huo Yuhao felt something, and sensed a few people outside the residence. From their dress, it seemed like they were all businessmen instead of military personnel. These people quickly entered the residence after sending word of their arrival before rushing into the room where this Soul Emperor was.

"Sir, people from the Sun Moon Chamber of Commerce are here." A soldier respectfully reported from outside the room.

"Alright. Let them in." The Soul Emperor said calmly.

The few businessmen were led into the room under the guidance of the soldier. At the same time, they bowed towards the Soul Emperor.

"How is it? How's the plan going?" The Soul Emperor asked.

A lanky businessman replied, "We experienced some difficulty at the start. The nobility of the Heavenly Soul Empire discriminated against us. However, after you sent out instructions not to confiscate their land and wealth, they didn't dare to openly express their hate towards us even if they secretly hate us. They only resisted our efforts in the shadows. Over these few days, we've already demonstrated how magical soul tools can be, which I believe is slowly moving them. This is especially true for our thermal radiators, which I believe they are most interested in. Thermal radiators can greatly conserve costly coal. Every other week, we'll just need a soul engineer to pour in his soul power. That'll be sufficient to power a thermal radiator to keep a plot of land not bigger than five hundred square meters warm. We can even avoid the smell of burning coal. They are all very surprised."

The Soul Emperor nodded in satisfaction and responded, "Alright, continue to advertise. Give them everything. Don't feel heart-ache over that. The marshal has mentioned that even though we'll experience some temporary monetary losses, they'll eventually be reliant on us once they adapt to a life of soul tools, and won't be willing to return to their obsolete lives. After we win over the nobility and convince them to work for us, we'll then turn our efforts to the citizens. In a few years, we'll win the hearts of the entire city."

"Yes." The businessmen nodded respectfully. After this, they carried out a series of reports. They were talking about how to transport soul tools into the city for the noble families and teaching them how to use them. They were also talking about how to move the nobility, as well as who were the ones who had been moved, and who were the ones who were still very stubborn.

The entire report lasted roughly an hour before the businessmen left.

After sending them to the door, the mayor returned to his room and muttered in awe to himself, "Marshal, you are far-sighted! This method is much better than performing a massacre. The Sun Moon Empire can't just rely on military power to rule the entire continent. This method to use soul tools to win the hearts of the people is indeed impressive. We've lessened the number of troops in the city, making them relax their guard. After that, we used soul tool technology to infiltrate their lives, although we're the ones who control the core technologies. In the future, there'll only be the Sun Moon Empire. The funny thing is that the Heavenly Soul Empire, Star Luo Empire and Dou Ling Empire are still trying to resist us. Perhaps they'll discover in a few years that their citizens in the territories we've occupied are no longer loyal to them. Haha, brilliant. This is indeed brilliant. The Marshal is indeed the person I admire the most! Conquering hearts without using force. That's the most advanced of all strategies."

Huo Yuhao stood outside for two hours and listened to everything. After listening to this point, his expression had already turned slightly pale.

Impressive. This 'Marshal' that he's talking about is too impressive.

Using soul tool technology as a means of infiltration. What kind of brilliant idea is that?

The air outside was extremely cold, but Huo Yuhao was dripping with perspiration. An overt plot, it was a true overt plot! Perhaps he could destroy everything in Dragon City with all his strength. However, if the Sun Moon Empire did the same throughout the entire Heavenly Soul Empire, there was no way he could stop them unless he could drive them out quickly.

Who exactly was this marshal? He actually had such a strategy. He was indeed a brilliant strategist.

Huo Yuhao had seen Xu Tianran before. He didn't have a good impression of him. Without a doubt, Xu Tianran was an anti-hero. However, it was perhaps because of his disability that he seemed very sinister and vicious. Right now, the strategy that Huo Yuhao heard of was definitely something that an anti-hero couldn't have thought up.

This was a true overt plot. It was upright, but perhaps only effective in the long-term. However, if it worked, it would be extremely effective! If they succeeded, the Heavenly Soul Empire would find it extremely challenging to regain hold of the territories they had lost.

Given the current situation in all the empires, the foundation of every empire was the nobility. The nobility controlled almost all the resources in an empire. The most powerful of the nobility were naturally the imperial families of each empire. This was the foundation of a monarchy.

This was why the Sun Moon Empire had a very specific target. First, they chose to penetrate the hearts of the nobility of the Heavenly Soul Empire. Once the nobility slowly sided with the Sun Moon Empire and helped them promote soul tool technology in their own empire, they could only be subjected to manipulation, given that they didn't possess any core technologies. They would forever be reliant on the Sun Moon Empire.

The longer they were under occupation, the more evident this would become. This was too terrifying. The person who came up with this strategy left Huo Yuhao in awe.

There weren't any massacres. It was through pure soul tool technology penetration that the Sun Moon Empire demonstrated their advantage to the fullest. Before today, Huo Yuhao would never have expected the Sun Moon Empire to use such a method of invasion.

How should he react to such a strategy?

Huo Yuhao silently left the residence and found a hotel to stay the night. He was sleepless the entire night.

It was only when the sky had already brightened that Huo Yuhao retracted his thoughts. To him, it was fine that he couldn't sleep the entire night. It was just that he couldn't think of a proper way to deal with the Sun Moon Empire's strategy even though he had been thinking the entire night.

What an overt plot! It was an overt plot that one found difficult to counteract.

It wasn't completely foolproof. The simplest way of dealing with it was to quickly reclaim all the lost territories. At the same time, the Sun Moon Empire had to be stopped. It was only through this way that they could possibly hang on.

However, what about the long-term?

Within the Sun Moon Empire's borders, the empire had already promoted soul tool technology to ordinary citizens. Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to reclaim the cities that they had taken from the Heavenly Soul Empire. In the area of soul tools, the Sun Moon Empire was simply leading by too much.

As time passed, the cities that had fallen to the Sun Moon Empire would likely yield to the Sun Moon Empire even if they didn't attack, and only maintained the current situation. With more resources and support, the Sun Moon Empire's soul tool technology would advance faster and faster. This would further the gap between them and the other empires of the original Douluo Continent.

The current peak of soul tool technology right now was the Death God. However, the Death God was undoubtedly an exception. It was a soul tool that everyone feared. It could only be operated after killing people. One Death God wasn't considered too terrifying to Huo Yuhao. Its threat would cease to exist once the soldiers of the Sun Moon Empire couldn't handle it anymore.

However, soul tool technology was continuously improving. As it continued to develop, there would be a day in the future where it could possibly threaten Titled Douluo, and even Ultimate Douluo. If that was the case, the Sun Moon Empire's rule over the entire continent was bound to happen!

Huo Yuhao didn't reject soul tool technology. He was also a soul engineer. As soul tool technology kept on developing, it represented societal progress. It was an evolution of the entire Douluo Continent. However, he didn't wish to see the Sun Moon Empire ruling over the entire Douluo Continent. This was something that he couldn't accept.

However, there wasn't any stopping them. Over the past few thousand years, the three empires of the original Douluo Continent had already told him the answer using the current situation that they were facing – closing their empire and refusing to accept development as a reality, as well as unwilling to learn the qualities of others. The end result was that they were on the verge of becoming obsolete.

The three empires of the original Douluo Continent were too huge. All the authority lay in the hands of the nobility. Even if the imperial families wanted to promote soul tool development, it wasn't something that was effective in the short-term. Most noble families were still discriminative towards soul tools.

Perhaps the only hope lay in the academy.

Shrek was only a city. It was mainly led by Shrek Academy. Over the past ten years, ever since Elder Mu had recognized the importance of developing soul tools, and after Elder Xuan had taken the reins, Shrek Academy had been continuously developing its Soul Tool Department, and the Tang Sect was established to encourage the speedy development of Shrek City. Furthermore, there weren't any noble families in Shrek City. Perhaps the future Shrek was the only hope left for the original Douluo Continent.

After thinking until here, Huo Yuhao seemed to have thought of something. There was something extra in his head. However, he couldn't tell what it was yet.

Just as he was gradually clearing his thoughts, his spiritual sea moved slightly. Nan Qiuqiu was awake.

Chapter 462: The Earthdragon Sect's Secret Base

Nan Qiuqiu looked very depressed as she exited his spectral demiplane.

Huo Yuhao smiled as he asked, "What's wrong, Qiuqiu?"

Nan Qiuqiu looked at the weather outside and said, "Surely this isn't the second day already, right?"

Huo Yuhao shrugged.

Nan Qiuqiu snorted and said, "What's so impressive about bullying me? Your spiritual power is just a little stronger. There'll be a day where I'll surpass you."

When she said that last sentence, she didn't seem to have any confidence at all.

Huo Yuhao didn't mock her. He only smiled and said, "I'm waiting for that day to come. How're you feeling? Are you feeling unwell?"

Nan Qiuqiu snorted and replied, "No. I'm great. For someone who doesn't know how to appreciate beauty, hmp!"

Huo Yuhao shook his head helplessly. He didn't try to explain himself either. He believed that Nan Qiuqiu would understand his intentions in the future.

"Let's go. I'll bring you back to your sect." After he finished speaking, Nan Qiuqiu started walking out, but Huo Yuhao stopped her and took her somewhere to eat first. After eating, they checked out of the inn and came to the streets of Dragon City.

Nan Qiuqiu was very familiar with Dragon City. After making turns within the city, they came to the center of the city that was facing the north. She looked to the street sides and corners of walls. Evidently, she was still displeased with Huo Yuhao, and refused to acknowledge him.

Huo Yuhao was very quiet as he followed her.

After walking for some time, Nan Qiuqiu's eyes brightened. She stopped in front of a cloth shop and twisted her head to Huo Yuhao before gesturing towards him.

"Quick, come."

Huo Yuhao hurried forward and entered this cloth shop behind Nan Qiuqiu.

It was a little empty in the shop. Perhaps it was because it was still morning, and they had just opened shop. There was a shopkeeper at the counter, and there were two workers outside.

Seeing Nan Qiuqiu, the shopkeeper evidently appeared to know her. His eyes brightened and he rushed over. After taking a few glances, he whispered, "Young mistress, you're finally here."

Nan Qiuqiu also lowered her voice and asked, "Where's my mother?"

The shopkeeper answered, "She's in the back. This is?" He was doubtful as he looked at Huo Yuhao.

Nan Qiuqiu replied, "He's my friend. My mom knows him. Bring us to see her."

"Yes." The shopkeeper led both of them to a small door and proceeded towards the backyard of the shop.

Huo Yuhao thought to himself. The foundation of the Earthdragon Sect is so deep in this city. It's not easy for the Sun Moon Empire to chase them away.

Nan Shuishui had just finished her breakfast, and was basking in the sun in the backyard. Seeing that Huo Yuhao and Nan Qiuqiu had arrived, she was delighted. She smiled as she received them.

"Elder Nan." Huo Yuhao greeted her with a bow.

Nan Qiuqiu stood at one side and shouted, "Good kid!"

Nan Shuishui glared at her daughter. "How can you take such advantage of him? Don't be so mischievous."

Nan Qiuqiu laughed cheekily, and her displeasure at Huo Yuhao seemed to disappear.

Huo Yuhao lowered his voice and said, "Elder, how is the situation in Dragon City? I heard that the soul master sects in the city have been taken away by the Sun Moon Empire?"

Nan Shuishui sighed and said, "It's too quick. In just a few months, the Sun Moon Empire have already occupied this city. Their powers are beyond our imagination! You're right. Most of the large sects in Dragon City, apart from us, have been forced outside of Dragon City. The rest have also been taken away. The Sun Moon Empire has performed a clean sweep of the soul master sects in the city. However, it's fortunate that they've not done anything to the people. This is the reason why we've been able to preserve some of our resources. I'm sure there are others who are still here, but have yet to reveal themselves."

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow slightly and said, "I wonder what the Sun Moon Empire is planning by taking away so many of the soul master sects."

Nan Shuishui laughed coldly and said, "What else can they want? They'll probably tempt them to join them. If it's not possible, they'll just kill all of them. There're only two possibilities. There'll be those who are cowardly and afraid of death. I heard that the Sun Moon Empire added two more soul engineer legions after occupying the Heavenly Soul Empire's territories. These two soul engineer legions were divided and sent to the original soul engineer legions. The soul engineers in these legions are equipped with basic soul tools and have become part of their fighting forces. This Sun Moon Empire is really devious. Those who lack backbone also deserve to be killed!"

They were fueling the war through what they'd won from the war! After Huo Yuhao listened to Nan Shuishui's words, he couldn't help but feel a sense of helplessness. After the Sun Moon Empire started its invasion, he felt that their strategy was flawless, and they completely had the upper hand.

From the initial feint attack on the Star Luo Empire to restrain them to the massive invasion of the Heavenly Soul Empire to the series of targeted strategies later on, the Sun Moon Empire had achieved the greatest advantage in the shortest period of time.

Marshal. Are those strategies devised by that marshal mentioned by the mayor? I didn't expect Xu Tianran to have such a powerful figure under him. I wonder what kind of clash will occur when we face him on the battlefield in the future.

Nan Shuishui said, "Since you're here, let's exploit the opportunity that there aren't many Sun Moon Empire soldiers here right now and get things done. Come on, I'll bring you there."

"Alright."

Nan Shuishui dressed herself up and put on a bamboo hat with a veil before leading both of them out of the shop. She proceeded in a northerly direction.

Nan Qiuqiu whispered to Huo Yuhao beside her, "Before Dragon City was occupied, the Earthdragon Sect occupied the city's north, and the Heavenly Dragon Sect occupied the city's south. We've never touched each other."

"The Heavenly Dragon Sect is more powerful. Their sect leader is even a Titled Douluo. I'm not sure what their situation is right now either."

Nan Shuishui turned her head to Nan Qiuqiu and said, "Speaking of it, I'm really in awe of Old Tianlong. When the Sun Moon Empire's troops arrived, that old fellow led his sect to defend the city along with the Dragon City Defense Army. I heard he killed many enemies. After the city was breached, the Heavenly Dragon Sect suffered massive losses, and Old Tianlong died in battle. I heard Yu Tianlong disappeared, but I'm not sure where."

After hearing Nan Shuishui's words, Huo Yuhao and Nan Qiuqiu were both in awe too. Someone who defended the city until the very last moment deserved massive respect. If Yu Tianlong had run away, it meant that the lineage of the Heavenly Dragon Sect could still be carried on.

Nan Shuishui said heavily, "I have been fighting Old Tianlong for my entire life, and have always been restrained by him. I didn't expect him to die earlier than me. The Heavenly Dragon Sect has been half wiped out, while the remaining ones have been taken away. The hateful thing is that there were a few

sects that secretly surrendered to the Sun Moon Empire. If they didn't open the city gate, things wouldn't have..."

Nan Shuishui turned more and more grim as she spoke until here.

Nan Qiuqiu rushed forward a few steps and grabbed her hands. "Mom, we'll avenge Uncle Heavenly Dragon one day in the future. Your actions were right. We can't fight the Sun Moon Empire given our strength. It's only through surviving that we can take revenge in the future. Uncle Tianlong is sometimes too stubborn. If he were willing to listen to you and move to Shrek City, he wouldn't have..."

"Shut up!" Nan Shuishui shouted, and Nan Qiuqiu was stunned in place.

Nan Shuishui looked very strict as she said, "He wasn't being stubborn. He just couldn't give up the city. Dragon City is the place where the Heavenly Dragon and Earthdragon Sects were established. I couldn't lead the Earthdragon Sect to fight the enemy along with the Heavenly Dragon Sect, and I'm very guilty over that. Unless I can avenge him one day, the Earthdragon Sect can never lift its head in front of the Heavenly Dragon Sect again. I already regret my decision. If I had known, I would have been willing to fight to the death with the Old Tianlong."

As she spoke until here, her eyes filled with tears and she clenched her fists.

Huo Yuhao sighed in his heart when he sensed Nan Shuishui's deadly aura. Seeing that the city where her sect had been established had been sacrificed, and her old friend and foe had died in battle, Nan Shuishui must be feeling very down.

"Elder Nan, we'll get Dragon City back. Elder Tianlong was a hero of Dragon City, and so are you." Huo Yuhao said sincerely.

Nan Shuishui lowered her head slightly and gently shook it. She didn't say anything else, and turned around before continuing to walk forward.

Nan Qiuqiu stuck out her tongue and looked scared. Her mother was normally very nice to her. She was hardly so strict.

After passing streets and alleys, an extremely large courtyard appeared in their vision. After seeing this courtyard, both Nan Shuishui and Nan Qiuqiu seemed to be very sad. Undoubtedly, this was the Earthdragon Sect.

There were seals all over the gate of the Earthdragon Sect, but no one was guarding it.

"Mom, there shouldn't be too many guards in the city. Why don't we kill them and snatch Dragon City back?!" Nan Qiuqiu said hatefully.

Nan Shuishui glared at her and said, "How is it so simple? If the Sun Moon Empire dared to put so few guards in the city, they must have their reasons. There's another announcement on the noticeboard at the side. If any soul master dares to revolt, they'll kill all the soul masters they took from Dragon City. If this wasn't the case, do you really think I would have waited until now?"

"Scoundrel!" Nan Qiuqiu shouted furiously.

Nan Shuishui's eyes turned cold. Seeing that there wasn't anyone around looking at them, she nodded to the other two before drifting up. She entered the sect first.

Huo Yuhao tugged Nan Qiuqiu's sleeves before they followed Nan Shuishui.

It was a mess inside the Earthdragon Sect. Many areas had been damaged. There were broken walls all around. Evidently, the place had been ransacked.

Nan Qiuqiu hadn't returned in a long time. Upon seeing the condition of the place, her eyes turned red, and she wanted to turn around and rush off. Nan Shuishui grabbed hold of her, but it took some effort to restrain her.

"We need to take care of business. Yuhao was right. We'll come back one day."

Nan Shuishui led both of them to the backyard of the Earthdragon Sect. It was a huge garden. Right now, the garden was in ruins. When the Sun Moon Empire's troops searched the place, the garden was greatly damaged. It would be difficult for it to return to its former look in the future.

Nan Shuishui shut her eyes in torment as she saw all this. The Earthdragon Sect's legacy had been passed down for more than a thousand years, but it died in her generation. Undoubtedly, she was in great pain right now.

However, she didn't stop. She led the two of them to the depths of the backyard, where there was a well.

Huo Yuhao was slightly moved as he came closer and closer to the well. He could subtly sense movements from the Ice Empress, and his own Ice Jade Empress Scorpion seemed to want to be released. There seemed to be something very attractive within the well.

"It's here. This is a cold spring. There is concentrated spiritual energy in this spring. It's very nourishing for soul masters. However, only the sect leaders of the Earthdragon Sect know about this. At the bottom of this spring, there is actually a cave. However, we've isolated it from the well using some mechanisms. Inside that cave, there are many exotic mineral stones. It's just that the temperature inside the cave is too low. Even our ancestors that were Titled Douluo couldn't stay inside it for long. Our ancestor managed to mine a small mineral stone once. It contained a strong ice-type aura inside it."

"It also seemed to be a metal. This is why our ancestors believed that there is a mine inside this cave – a mine that contains an ice-type metal. As to its standard, we have no clue."

As she spoke until here, Nan Shuishui looked at Huo Yuhao and said, "Yuhao, your martial soul is of Ultimate Ice. You should be able to survive in this cave. If the stones below are of use to you, try to mine them. After all, we won't be back here anytime soon. Just take it as our contribution to the Tang Sect. The Tang Sect has been very nice to us in Shrek City. I hope we can work together more closely in the future."

"Thank you, elder." Huo Yuhao didn't stand on ceremony. Although the ice spring was a barrier, he could clearly sense that the stuff in the cave was indeed useful to him.

Nan Shuishui told him how to open the cave in detail before saying, "Go on down. I'll guard this place with Qiuqiu. Don't force it. Although you possess an Ultimate Ice martial soul, I almost got frozen when I

tried to go down for even just a few seconds. The temperature below is simply too low. It doesn't seem like a human can handle it."

"Alright." Huo Yuhao acknowledged her words. Nan Shuishui wouldn't warn him without reason. Naturally, he wouldn't be careless.

After slightly adjusting his own state, he gestured to both Nan Shuishui and Nan Qiuqiu before drifting up and dropping into the well.

The moment he entered the well, a sinister cold breeze swept over him. However, the cold could only serve to strengthen Huo Yuhao. Even without unleashing his martial soul, he wasn't affected at all.

However, for safety's sake, Huo Yuhao still unleashed his Ice Jade Empress Scorpion before entering the well, and used his Ice Empress' Armor. After a layer of diamond ice crystals covered his body, he sank deep into the spring.

Chapter 463.1: Divine Ice Crystal

The cold spring was icy-cold. Its temperature was at least in the negatives. However, the strange thing was that it didn't freeze up. After entering the spring, Huo Yuhao could clearly sense chilly origin energy rippling through the water. Although such ice-type origin energy didn't affect him, the chilly aura that it possessed was very pure. No wonder Nan Shuishui claimed that this spring could nourish a human's body.

The spring was very deep. Huo Yuhao circulated his soul power and sank down. The deeper he went, the lower the temperature became. If it were any other ordinary soul master here, his soul power would be drained very quickly. However, Huo Yuhao wasn't affected at all. His martial soul was even being nourished.

The lights around also started to dim. However, this didn't affect Huo Yuhao at all even though the darkness and cold would have greatly affected a soul master of the same rank as him.

Although his spiritual power couldn't reach as far in the water, it was already very strong. Apart from the fact that it extended at a slower speed, Huo Yuhao wasn't drained much in this aspect either.

The deeper he went, the faster his spiritual power extended downward. Even the Earthdragon Sect wasn't clear on what was going on down below. Of course, Huo Yuhao had to be cautious to keep himself from getting into any trouble.

Nan Shuishui had told Huo Yuhao that this spring was around thirty meters deep. At the very bottom, even a Soul Douluo like her wouldn't be able to resist it. The cave was located at around a depth of between thirty to thirty-five meters.

However, Huo Yuhao sensed that the depth of this spring didn't seem to be only thirty meters. When he was thirty meters down, he felt a very strong surge of cold. It felt as if it were coming the bottom, just below where the strong surge of cold originated from. However, he discovered that the mouth of the spring seemed to be down there at the bottom. The mouth was very large – a person could get through it. Huo Yuhao could sense a strong, deep-blue color using his Spiritual Detection. This showed how cold it was down there.

He was very curious about this spring mouth. The colder a place was, the better it was for him to cultivate his Ultimate Ice soul power. To him, it felt very similar to the Icefire Yin Yang Well. This was something that he hadn't expected at all.

However, Huo Yuhao needed to breathe even though he wasn't affected by the cold and darkness. Even though he could hold his breath for a long time, he couldn't do it forever.

Let me find the cave opening first.

As he thought, Huo Yuhao continued to use his soul power to control his body as he dived down.

Very soon, he was at a depth of twenty-five meters. His diving speed was much quicker than the ancestors of the Earthdragon Sect. After all, he didn't have to protect himself from the cold.

The walls around the spring were cold and slippery. Touching them was like touching Manifold Mysterious Ice. As Huo Yuhao dived down, he kept on searching for the cave opening.

This cave was rumored to exist naturally. It was originally not a well, but the natural mouth of a spring. After the Earthdragon Sect gained control of this place, they built a well specifically for it. This was why they designed mechanisms when they first constructed the well. If one wasn't the leader of the Earthdragon Sect, it was very difficult to find these mechanisms.

Huo Yuhao followed the walls and felt his way to the cave opening. With the help of his spiritual power, he quickly located a bulge. Normally, one would press down on such a bulge when they felt it. However, the Earthdragon Sect designed it in the reverse. Huo Yuhao grabbed hold of that bulge and pulled it up. He used more than forty percent of his soul power before the bulge moved up slightly.

After this, he turned around and swam to the wall on the other side. He felt an ordinary dent on it. This dent didn't exist previously. It only appeared after he meddled with the bulge earlier.

He pressed hard on the dent, and a soft 'za za' sound was heard. Huo Yuhao returned to the bulge and pressed it down this time. He pressed it all the way down until it disappeared.

The entire wall started to shake slightly. Huo Yuhao turned around, and saw a door that could only fit a single person slowly opening.

The weird thing was that there was a strong surge of cold as the door slowly opened. Even Huo Yuhao could sense a tinge of chill, though he possessed an Ultimate Ice martial soul.

What a low temperature! Huo Yuhao was in great awe, and focused his attention on it.

The door slowly opened, and Huo Yuhao rushed forward.

It was clearly a cold spring outside. However, this door seemed to possess some magical force. Not a drop of the cold spring water seeped past it. Even as Huo Yuhao entered, the cold spring water was filtered from his body. He instantly became very dry.

As he was dried, he felt an extreme sense of chill sweep over him.

Gusts of chilly air carried visible icy elements that surged towards Huo Yuhao's body. However, it was a pity that they were stopped by Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Armor. Not only did they not cause him any harm, but they even stimulated Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice soul power.

Even though Huo Yuhao was using his Ice Empress right now, he could still sense the situation in the cavern using his spiritual power.

This cavern couldn't be considered very large. It was filled with unknown mineral stones, and the temperature was very low. It was similar to the Extreme Chill Icespring. Its temperature was comparable. If Huo Yuhao's abilities were still at the level they were when he had first encountered the Extreme Chill Icespring, he wouldn't be able to bear such a low temperature.

He didn't rush to venture in. He only carefully observed his surroundings at the cave opening. At the same time, the Ice Empress started calling out in his spiritual sea.

Although it was unknown what kind of ice-type treasure belonged here, it was clear that such an extreme level of cold wouldn't exist for no reason. Even at the core of the Extreme North, the temperature wasn't so low!

Jade-green lights flashed, brightening their surroundings. The Ice Empress silently appeared beside Huo Yuhao. The light from her body lit up everything around them. Huo Yuhao was immediately stunned.

Huo Yuhao wasn't the only one who was stunned. The Ice Empress was also stunned.

The cavern looked extremely beautiful as it was lit up by the Ice Empress' jade-green light. It almost seemed surreal. The entire cavern was formed using all types of crystals. These crystals were jade-blue, but it was likely that the Ice Empress' jade-green light had affected their color a little. They should, in fact, be deep-blue in color.

These crystals were smooth and transparent. They looked ethereally beautiful under the jade-green light. Their beauty was almost indescribable. It was as if Huo Yuhao and the Ice Empress had entered an immortal realm.

The ground, walls and ceiling were filled with such crystals. They varied greatly, and were all glowing brightly. The different intensities of the jade-blue crystals brightened the cavern such that every minor detail could be clearly observed.

Huo Yuhao was in awe as he asked, "Ice Empress, what is this?"

The Ice Empress was a little stunned as she looked at everything around her. After this, her figure flashed before she drifted away. Although she existed as a Spirit and a spiritual entity, her affinity with the ice element was still very strong. She could sense that the chill in the cavern was surging towards her as she flew out. After this, the chill started to revolve around her.

"This, this seems like the legendary Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern. How is this possible? Why is there such a place here? God! This is unbelievable." The Ice Empress' voice seemed to have turned hysterical. It was Huo Yuhao's first time seeing her so shocked.

"No, no, this isn't the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern yet. This is the Divine Ice Crystal that accompanies the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern. There are so many Divine Ice Crystals here. I'm sure the Manifold

Mysterious Ice Cavern exists here. This is too unbelievable. How is it possible that such a place exists in the human world?"

The Ice Empress appeared to have gone a little crazy as she kept on dancing in the cavern. The light from her body lit up the entire cavern.

The cavern couldn't be considered very large. It was only thirty meters in length, but Huo Yuhao could sense that there were streaks of light blue mist revolving around the Ice Empress as she flew within the cavern. Even he was in awe of the extremely low temperature of these streaks of mist.

Such a low temperature was completely unimaginable.

The Ice Empress flew for a good fifteen minutes before she stopped. Huo Yuhao breathed in the cold air and felt as if he had to circulate his Ultimate Ice soul power to dispel the chill. This meant that the cold here even surpassed his Ultimate Ice. It was close to absolute zero.

"Yuhao, how did you find this place? How did you find it?" The Ice Empress quickly regained her awareness and returned to Huo Yuhao. She grabbed his shoulders. Apart from the look of excitement on her face, she was also greatly sentimental.

"An elder brought me here. It's the location of their sect. What's wrong, Ice Empress? What's the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern? And the Divine Ice Crystal?"

The Ice Empress took in a deep breath and tried to calm her emotions. She said, "The Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern is an ice-type ultimate place. Let me give you an example. If the Snow Empress and I could have found the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern before we become your Spirits, we wouldn't have needed to find any way to achieve a breakthrough. Our abilities would have been able to overcome any bottleneck we faced. In the near future, we would have definitely been able to challenge Di Tian."

Chapter 463.2: Divine Ice Crystal

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"To be more direct, the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern is a treasure ground for ice-type cultivators like us. Why was Di Tian able to overcome eight consecutive bottlenecks and become the god of all beasts, and even invincible? This is because he managed to gain control of a treasure ground – the Lake of Life in the Core Region of the Great Star Dou Forest. He used the immense life energy there to nourish himself, allowing him to achieve what he has today. However, the truth is that the Lake of Life can nourish any soul beast. He's not the only one who can benefit from it. This is because the Lake of Life is life-type."

"In fact, it isn't completely compatible with his darkness-type. Even so, he is still able to cultivate to such a level. But the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern is completely compatible with us! It is as valuable as the Lake of Life to us."

After hearing her words, Huo Yuhao was instantly astonished. He had personally seen the Lake of Life before! At the core of the Lake of Life was Life Gold. In addition, it wasn't even lacking in amount. It was the place that held the lifeline of the entire Great Star Dou Forest. If the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern

could compare to the Lake of Life like what the Ice Empress had said, it would be completely unbelievable.

“Ice Empress, is there no Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern at the core of the Extreme North?” Huo Yuhao asked.

The Ice Empress was in a bit of daze. She seemed to still be struck with disbelief.

Another voice sounded at this moment. “Yes, there’s at least another one.” As a light projection flashed, the Skydream Iceworm appeared beside the Ice Empress. He was also as emotional.

Huo Yuhao was puzzled as he looked at the Skydream Iceworm. The Ice Empress also glanced at him in the same way, but there was an extra weird look in her eyes.

The Skydream Iceworm asked, “Yuhao, did you forget how I managed to survive for so long?”

Huo Yuhao’s body shook. “You mentioned that you spent most of your time sleeping, and a million years passed just like that. I remember that you consumed some kind of ice essence and fell into a deep sleep. Don’t tell me...”

Skydream nodded. “That’s right. The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence that I consumed came from the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern! I discovered that place unintentionally. The essence of an ice cavern lies in the ice essence. I was just an iceworm, but I relied on the benefits of the ice essence to cultivate into a million-year soul beast. Ice also wanted to kill me because of this.”

“Hmph.” The Ice Empress snorted, “If you had let me have the ice essence then, the Beast God might not be Di Tian. The Snow Empress would also...”

The Skydream Iceworm leisurely replied, “Ice, stop whining. This is called fate and destiny.”

“Are you looking for a beating?” The Ice Empress snorted furiously, and the Skydream Iceworm immediately stopped making any sound.

The Ice Empress turned to Huo Yuhao and said, “I didn’t expect there to be a second Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern in this world. Your luck is simply too good. Furthermore, this ice cavern is different from the one that Skydream encountered the other time.”

Huo Yuhao was delighted. From the Ice Empress’ agitated look, and how the Skydream Iceworm described the situation, he must have had gotten extremely lucky. No matter what the difference was, it should be extremely beneficial to him.

The Ice Empress said, “The ice cavern that Skydream was in had a huge amount of Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. That thing is very nourishing for ice-type soul beasts like us. It’s a real treasure.”

“It’s of the same tier as your Life Gold. However, we didn’t see any Divine Ice Crystals.”

“A Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern is in fact formed when Mysterious Ice is converted into it under huge pressure after being hidden for more than ten thousand years. Hundreds of thousands of years, and even upwards of a million years might be needed for it to be formed. The right opportunities are also required.”

“This ice cavern is filled with so many Divine Ice Crystals. As for how much Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence can be produced, it’s difficult to tell. However, there’s bound to be some. I had a look over there earlier – there isn’t any here. If it’s not here, it should be in the well. It feels like this ice cavern isn’t much smaller than the ice cavern that Skydream saw, even though it’s smaller. If there’s some ice essence here, it would be very useful for the four of us and you.”

The Ice Empress revealed yet another heavy look in her eyes when she spoke until here. She really wished that she had encountered this ice cavern before she had given up her body! If that were the case, everything would have been different.

The Skydream Iceworm said, “Alright, Ice. Don’t think too much. Honestly speaking, one must be very fortunate to bump into a Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern. I’m not afraid that you’ll dislike my words, but both you and the Snow Empress don’t have such fortune. You are only here because of Yuhao. If you didn’t choose to fuse with Yuhao before, you wouldn’t have been able to experience something as good in your entire life. This is why you shouldn’t look for problems for yourself.”

What surprised Huo Yuhao was that the Ice Empress wasn’t furious after hearing the Skydream Iceworm’s words. Instead, she nodded and mocked herself, “Yes! I am indeed finding problems for myself. Let’s not talk about this. Yuhao, you must not give up such a rare opportunity. We must tap the resources here effectively.”

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “Ice Empress, what is this Divine Ice Crystal? What’s its use for us?”

The Ice Empress replied, “Divine Ice Crystals might not be as valuable as Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, but they’re still extremely valuable. They are the strongest and toughest ice-type metal. They appear as crystals, but they possess the properties of metals. To put it in human words, a Divine Ice Crystal is a top-grade rare metal. As for how their special characteristics are used, it will depend on the user.”

Huo Yuhao was delighted, and said, “It seems like Elder Nan Shuishui was right. The Divine Ice Crystals here are very suitable for me.”

As he spoke, he lifted his right hand. His Darkgolden Terrorclaws revealed sharp, dark-golden blades as he swept it towards the Divine Ice Crystals.

Piercing sounds resonated, and five streaks of sparks flashed. However, only shallow marks were left on the ice crystals.

It was an extremely tough metal!

It was pertinent to note that Huo Yuhao would often use his terrorclaws to sculpt his soul tools when he manufactured them. The sharpness and strength of his terrorclaws were great, and they were one of his best offensive weapons. However, they weren’t enough to damage the ice crystals. This showed how tough they were.

Huo Yuhao was confused as he looked at the Ice Empress. “The Divine Ice Crystal is so tough. How can we mine it?”

The Ice Empress smiled and said, “There are many items that clash with one another, but there’s always something that can overcome another thing. Don’t worry, others might find it difficult to find a way, but

it won't be difficult for us to leave with these crystals. You can't use your Life Guardian Blade. It'll destroy the internal structure of the ice crystals."

"This Divine Ice Crystal is in itself one of the best ice-type soul conductors and amplifiers. Try pouring your soul power into it."

"Alright." Huo Yuhao agreed to her words and retracted his terrorclaws. He put his right hand on the ice crystals beside him.

He was stunned that this ice crystal didn't feel cold even though the cavern was at such a low temperature. It was as if all its cold was contained within it.

He slowly poured in his Ultimate Ice soul power. After this, his body shook, and he revealed a shocked look on his face.

He could clearly sense an affinity when he poured his soul power into the ice crystal. Yes, it was an affinity.

It was clearly a metal, but it seemed to have emotions. It felt very close to his soul power. After this, Huo Yuhao felt the ice crystal in his hand softening a little. He tightened his five fingers and exerted strength as he pulled, and a huge piece of ice crystal was pulled out just like that.

Once this piece of ice was separated from the cavern and landed in his hand, his body immediately emitted a deep-blue glow. Lights subtly flashed. It was as if the piece of ice crystal had a life of its own.

"You sense it, don't you?" The Ice Empress asked. "The reason why it's called the Divine Ice Crystal is because it has evolved into a realm with some life of its own. Animals and plants have their own lives. For minerals and metals, they can exude their own life aura and emotions when they reach a certain quality. It's just that it's much more difficult for them compared to animals and plants. What you are sensing is correct. It's all real. If you want to dig out some ice crystals, there's only one way – your Ultimate Ice soul power. You, me and the Snow Empress can do it. Skydream can't do it, and Star Anise is slightly lacking too."

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, "I'm using your power anyway. Why do I feel that it's no longer hard, but soft, yet resilient? It's as if..." After speaking to this point, he paused for a moment and thought of a way to describe it before saying, "It's as if it's a huge piece of crystal jelly. It's too magical."

The Ice Empress nodded and replied, "You must try to communicate with the life aura inside with your Ultimate Ice soul power. Such a life aura is also called an ice spirit in the Extreme North. You can only try to retrieve it for now. It's only when you can fully communicate with it that you can completely own it. Don't think that just because there's a lot of ice crystals here, you can retrieve as many ice spirits as you want. Not many of them can nurture ice spirits. The remaining ice crystals can be dug out, but they don't have ice spirits. This means that there's a lack of spirit inside. You are in luck. This piece of ice crystal contains a life spirit."

Chapter 463.3: Divine Ice Crystal

Seeing the flashing Divine Ice Crystal in his hand, Huo Yuhao's eyes brightened. He was in awe. "The miracles of this world indeed have to be continuously explored! Ice Empress, what should we do now?"

The Ice Empress laughed, "Isn't it obvious? Whether it's a Divine Ice Crystal that has nurtured an ice spirit or not, it's still very valuable. Quickly, leave with them. The temperature of this place cannot be matched by the temperature of the outside world. I can sense that the icy spring has entered a state of deterioration. In another few hundred to few thousand years, the temperature here wouldn't be sufficient to maintain this Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern. When that happens, everything here will be slowly damaged and destroyed."

"Alright." Huo Yuhao acknowledged her words and started moving. How could he let go of so much good stuff? As his eyes flashed, a layer of gentle, icy jade-green light was released from his body. It was his Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice.

His Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice contained immense Ultimate Ice soul power, and quickly engulfed the entire cavern. Suddenly, the Divine Ice Crystals in the cavern all lit up, and Huo Yuhao started to extract them.

Without Ultimate Ice soul power, the price to pay for extracting even a small piece of ice crystal would be huge. Even an Ultimate Douluo wouldn't be able to operate in such a low temperature. Furthermore, he wouldn't be able to communicate with the ice spirits. However, Huo Yuhao found it much easier to extract these ice crystals.

Pieces of Divine Ice Crystals were pulled out of the walls of the cavern. Not only were they preserved, but it also didn't take much effort for him to extract them. Without the need for the Ice Empress to remind him, he would differentiate the ice crystals with ice spirits from those that didn't have ice spirits, and stored them separately in his Starlight Sapphire Ring.

Divine Ice Crystals were very special – they contained immense ice-type energy. However, they didn't feel cold on the surface. They only felt slightly colder than ordinary metals to the touch. However, one could guide the Ultimate Ice origin energy inside them just by pouring in one's soul power. Without Ultimate Ice soul power controlling the origin energy inside, it would instead be unleashed in an explosive manner.

The reason why this cavern was so cold was because there would be times when the ice crystals would become unstable internally, causing a leak of their origin energy. This cavern had been filled with Divine Ice Crystals for a long time. The accumulated cold caused this place to turn into a danger zone.

As the pieces of ice crystal disappeared into Huo Yuhao's storage-type soul tool, the temperature in the cavern rose noticeably. The surrounding walls also contained layers of crystals. They looked like huge pieces of ice sludge, and were also very sturdy. However, they were far inferior compared to the Divine Ice Crystals.

Finally, Huo Yuhao placed the last piece of Divine Ice Crystal into his storage-type soul tool. At this moment, he was suddenly jolted by something, and instantly turned around. He only saw a huge current of water surging towards him.

Without the magical power of the ice crystals, the spring water finally surged into the cavern, given that the door wasn't closed either.

Huo Yuhao laughed. Both the Skydream Iceworm and Ice Empress fused into his body. He forcefully swam upwards.

Outside the well.

Nan Shuishui and Nan Qiuqiu were already very anxious from waiting.

It had been an hour since Huo Yuhao had descended into the well. However, they hadn't heard anything from the well yet. It had been a long time, and Nan Shuishui doubted that she would be able to hang on for so long if she were the one inside.

However, both of them had a similarity – they had absolute confidence in Huo Yuhao's abilities.

They had seen Huo Yuhao fusing with Wang Qiu'er's abilities before, and witnessed the great improvement in his abilities after he formed his sixth soul ring.

Although Nan Shuishui wasn't completely confident that Huo Yuhao could deal with the extremely low temperature of the ice cavern, she deeply believed that Huo Yuhao wasn't going to be hurt in any way, given his seven-ringed cultivation.

Nan Qiuqiu was slightly worried as she asked, "Mom, why don't you go down and take a look? It's been such a long time, but Yuhao still isn't coming up."

Nan Shuishui smiled slightly and said, "Why? Are you anxious? It seems like my precious daughter really has fallen for someone. No matter how hard you work, you'll never be his wife. Why don't you try becoming his concubine?"

Nan Qiuqiu was stunned for a moment, then was in disbelief as she stared at Nan Shuishui. After this, she asked, "Mom, are you my biological mother? You're actually asking me to be someone's concubine?"

Nan Shuishui laughed, "It's precisely because I'm your mother that I'm giving you this suggestion. At times, you can't think too highly of yourself. As people always say, it's difficult for guys to chase girls, but it's easy for girls to chase guys. There are many ways for a girl to earn the liking of a guy. I'm not literally asking you to be his concubine. I'm saying that if you really like him, you should try your best to chase him. I support you. If I can have such a son-in-law, I'll laugh even in my sleep."

Nan Qiuqiu's face turned red, and she replied, "No way. Who's going to chase him? You don't know that he's such a mule in terms of relationships. Apart from Wang Dong'er, he can't have anyone else in his heart. Didn't you see what happened with Wang Qiu'er? Qiu'er was so outstanding, but she could only be his sacrifice. She can't even be with him. This guy is very stubborn once he likes someone. Even a girl who looks like Wang Dong'er can't catch his eye. What about me? I'm not going to do that to myself."

Nan Shuishui sighed and replied, "I know it's difficult. Haih, just do as you please. Matters of the heart can't be forced. However, I'm experienced in this matter. If you really like him too much, you must take the initiative. It's only then that you'll have an opportunity. If you choose to give up, you won't stand a chance at all."

Nan Qiuqiu was silent. She revealed a pensive look in her eyes. After a brief moment, she nodded silently.

At this moment, the sound of splashing water could be heard. Following this, a figure flew out from the well.

The intense chill caused Nan Shuishui and Nan Qiuqiu to stagger backward a few steps. Huo Yuhao slowly revealed himself from the icy fog that covered him.

“Yuhao, are you fine?” Nan Qiuqiu asked concernedly.

Huo Yuhao shook his head and smiled at the both of them before saying, “I am. I’m very fine. This cavern is indeed a treasure ground. Elder Nan, you were right. There’s indeed a special rare metal contained inside. Take a look.”

As he spoke, Huo Yuhao flipped his wrist, and a piece of Divine Ice Crystal that hadn’t nurtured an ice spirit appeared in his palm.

The color of the Divine Ice Crystal was clearly evident outside. It was icy-blue, resembling the color of the sky, whereas the glow that it emanated was deep-blue. Under sunlight, even such a small piece of Divine Ice Crystal gave off an ethereal feeling. It was extremely magical.

“Wow, it’s beautiful.” Nan Qiuqiu squealed in delight. She wanted to touch it, but she was stopped by Nan Shuishui.

Nan Shuishui had entered the cavern on her own before. She didn’t dare to be impulsive with regards to the stuff inside it.

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, “Elder Nan, it’s fine. This metal is called a Divine Ice Crystal. It indeed contains immense Ultimate Ice origin energy, but it’s very stable. As long as you don’t pour your soul power into it, things will be fine.” As he spoke, he passed the crystal to Nan Qiuqiu.

Nan Qiuqiu received the crystal and looked at it under the sun. Suddenly, the surrounding plot of ground under the crystal was covered by a layer of blurry blue light.

Nan Shuishui smiled as she looked at Huo Yuhao and said, “Yuhao, is this ice crystal useful to you? Can it be extracted?”

Huo Yuhao nodded and answered, “I can do it. You need to possess Ultimate Ice soul power to extract this Divine Ice Crystal. I’ve already extracted all the crystals from the cavern. This was why I took such a long time. Sorry to have made the both of you wait.”

Nan Shuishui smiled, “It’s good as long as it’s useful for you. Quickly, put it away. I hope your abilities will improve much further.”

As she spoke, she took the crystal from Nan Qiuqiu’s hand. After taking a look at it for a moment, she returned it to Huo Yuhao.

After receiving the crystal, Huo Yuhao pondered for a moment before saying, “Elder, this crystal can only be molded and extracted using Ultimate Ice soul power. Don’t worry, I won’t steal what belongs to the Earthdragon Sect. When I turn them into soul tools, I’ll give a share of the soul tools I produce with it to the Earthdragon Sect. What do you think?”

No matter what, this Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern belonged to the Earthdragon Sect. Although Nan Shuishui mentioned that she was offering it to him, this gift was simply too precious.

Nan Shuishui and seemed to be unbothered, "In fact, I wanted to use this place as Qiuqiu's dowry. However, I discovered you were the most suitable person to take control of this place after working with the Tang Sect. Since I've decided to give you this place, you can choose what you want to do with it. You don't really have to distinguish between the Earthdragon and Tang Sect either. Don't call me elder either. You're Qiuqiu's friend. You can call me 'Aunty'."

Huo Yuhao could infer the double meaning from Nan Shuishui's words. However, he could only act stupid, and respectfully replied, "Thanks, Aunty."

He didn't go into the details of how to allocate these ice crystals. He would definitely compensate the Earthdragon Sect after he turned them into finished products. Actions spoke louder than words.

Nan Qiuqiu glanced at her mother before looking at him. She jumped excitedly towards Huo Yuhao and laughed, "Yuhao, I don't care about others, but I demand to be part of it if you are using such a beautiful treasure to manufacture soul tools."

Huo Yuhao smiled as he nodded and said, "Definitely. When I return, I'll start researching how to manufacture them."

Nan Shuishui smiled and said, "Alright, let's go then."

Huo Yuhao replied, "Auntie, give me a moment."

Chapter 464.1: Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence

"Eh?" An inquisitive look appeared in Nan Shuishui's eyes.

Huo Yuhao said, "Auntie, when I went down to investigate, I discovered that there is a mouth of a spring deep within this well. The water within this spring has a very low temperature, but there seems to be something else hidden inside. I went into the cave to investigate, and now I wish to enter that icy spring to see if there's anything down there. This place can form rare metals that can be considered one of the most precious between heaven and earth, so there must be something that they originate from."

A thought occurred to Nan Shuishui as she said, "There's such a thing? There aren't any records in the Earthdragon Sect's archives about that. The temperature in the icy spring is very low. Will that hurt you?"

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "Don't worry, auntie. I have Ultimate Ice soul power. I'll be able to judge if I can't bear it, but there should be no problem protecting myself."

Huo Yuhao was protected by the Snow Empress and the Ice Empress, and he was also supported by the Star Anise Mysterious Ice Grass. If he couldn't enter that icy spring, then nobody else in the world could.

"Alright. Go, then. Qiuqiu and I will keep watch for you outside." Nan Shuishui didn't advise him further. Huo Yuhao was a very reliable fellow in her eyes, and he was definitely sure of himself if he said he was. The more she looked at Huo Yuhao, the more she liked him – those eyes clearly belonged to that of a mother-in-law gazing upon her son-in-law. Even Huo Yuhao couldn't take her gaze any longer.

Huo Yuhao bowed at Nan Shuishui before he leapt into the well and dove deep into the icy spring.

The Ice Empress had mentioned that Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence had to exist here, whether in small or large amounts. The ice essence wasn't just useful for him – it was also beneficial to different degrees for his four Spirits, and he couldn't give up on that.

Normal soul masters could still use soul tools crafted with Divine Ice Crystals with the help of formation arrays, but only a person with ice-type abilities like Huo Yuhao could use the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. Furthermore, this was his own discovery, and thus using it wouldn't weigh on his conscience.

Quite a bit of spring water had surged into the cave, and the surface level of the spring had dropped a little.

Huo Yuhao swiftly dove deeper than he had reached before, and he continued going down while the water pressure around him began to increase, and the temperature swiftly plummeted.

The temperature of the spring water closer to the surface rose a little without the Ice Divine Crystals, but the temperature below didn't change at all. Huo Yuhao quickly arrived near the mouth of the spring.

Such low temperatures! Huo Yuhao was full of admiration even though he had just arrived. He could clearly feel that his soul power was circulating much more slowly due to the low temperature here.

He possessed Ultimate Ice soul power, and yet his soul power was being affected. It wasn't hard to imagine how normal soul masters would be affected after coming to a place like this. Even Titled Douluo could probably only remain here for a few breaths, and even an Ultimate Douluo might not have the courage to investigate deep within this icy spring.

Two shadows gradually appeared behind Huo Yuhao's back – the Ice Empress and the Snow Lady. The Ice Empress pulled the Snow Lady along like an elder sister holding her younger sister. They felt the extreme chill around them, and their faces began to show expressions of enjoyment.

Bluish-green and dark blue colors glowed at the same time. These two lights merged together and turned a deep bluish-green, while this light entered Huo Yuhao's body and formed a layer of protection over his skin.

The Star Anise Mysterious Ice Grass came out from his shoulder. A layer of faint blue light emerged, and absorbed the chills that were invading Huo Yuhao's body.

Huo Yuhao realized with slight amusement that his soul power wasn't weakening around this icy spring. Instead, with support from his three Spirits, his soul power was increasing continuously. This situation was similar to when he was in meditation. If he didn't have to hold his breath in this place, he would truly wish to spend more time cultivating here. His cultivation would be more effective.

Things that were most suitable for him were always the best. Perhaps the origin energy of heaven and earth here was inferior to the Lake of Life, but the pure elements of ice were most suitable for his cultivation.

Huo Yuhao stopped one meter away from the mouth of the icy spring as he thought.

Huo Yuhao would never be blindly optimistic or careless even though he was confident. He had gone through far too many lessons and experiences, and no matter what, he wouldn't let himself be placed in harm's way so easily. That was always the best decision.

Huo Yuhao gathered spiritual power and transformed it into formless energy as it went through the mouth of the spring. Huo Yuhao's spiritual power was like his eyes, and he would be able to accurately judge the situation as long as he could see inside the mouth of the spring.

However, Huo Yuhao was immediately astonished, as his spiritual power felt as if it had entered a sticky swamp. There was great difficulty in pushing it forward, and he would have to expend far too much spiritual power.

What...

How can elements affect spiritual power?? This was the first time Huo Yuhao had encountered something like this.

"Pull your spiritual power back, Yuhao. Let me go down and take a look." The Ice Empress' voice rang out from behind him.

Huo Yuhao turned around to look at her and asked, "Why is this happening, Ice Empress?"

The Ice Empress answered, "Energies may be different, but they are all of the same kind once they reach a certain standard. Spiritual power is different from elemental energy, but it is still a form of energy. The elements of ice within this icy spring are as extreme as they can get, and your spiritual power will be affected by it by going inside. That is very evident. You might be able to send your spiritual power inside if you use the power of your soul core, but that will expend too much energy. Furthermore, the situation is unclear, so it's better not to take this risk. Let me take a look inside. My origin is inside your body, and a thread of my consciousness will have no problem going inside."

"Alright, thank you for your trouble," Huo Yuhao acknowledged.

The Ice Empress transformed into a beam of flowing light and disappeared into the mouth of the spring. Huo Yuhao's four Spirits were evolving at different rates as he became stronger.

Amongst Huo Yuhao's Spirits, the Skydream Iceworm wasn't the most intimately related to him – it was the Ice Empress. The Ice Empress was his martial soul after all! What the Ice Empress meant when she said that her origin was inside his body was that she was Huo Yuhao's martial soul, so damage to a single thread of consciousness wouldn't cause too much trouble.

His other three Spirits all took the true form of Spirits. The Skydream Iceworm and Huo Yuhao were inseparable, and their integration level was comparable to him and the Ice Empress. However, the Skydream Iceworm's half-spiritual and half-ice abilities were inferior to the Ice Empress in a situation like this.

Huo Yuhao waited quietly outside the icy spring. He wasn't hasty, as he had faith in the Ice Empress' abilities. Even though only a thread of her consciousness went in, Huo Yuhao still knew far less than the Ice Empress did about the element of ice.

It didn't take long before the Ice Empress emerged from the icy spring. She waved at Huo Yuhao excitedly and said, "Everything is fine, come in."

“Alright,” Huo Yuhao couldn’t hold his breath for much longer. He was starting to feel stifled in his chest, and he passed a message to the Ice Empress with his spiritual power before he activated his soul power and dove in.

Huo Yuhao went into the mouth of the icy spring, and he immediately felt an intense wave of cold that invaded his body like millions of steel needles. The temperature of this wave of cold was something that Huo Yuhao had never seen before. From his perspective, this extreme cold exceeded every ice-type energy that he had ever encountered before. He felt as if his entire skeleton were glowing as he was immersed in it.

Huo Yuhao had the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion’s skeleton and left arm bone to protect those parts. However, the other parts of his body were clearly feeling a little stiff.

The Star Anise Mysterious Ice Grass and the Snow Empress displayed their powerful abilities in this moment. They had absorbed a large amount of the elements of ice around them, and now formed a protective layer around his body so that he could continue diving downward, as the Ice Empress took point in front.

This icy spring was far deeper than Huo Yuhao had judged. He went thirty meters down, and the chills around him became increasingly strong. Huo Yuhao had to continue channeling soul power to resist the cold. He was starting to fall apart because he had been holding his breath for a long time, and this environment put a lot of pressure on him.

A suffocating feeling was starting to appear, and that stifling feeling in his chest was starting to make his inner breathing a little unbalanced.

Oh no, problems might occur if this continues! Huo Yuhao was beginning to feel a little hesitant.

The Ice Empress clearly felt the changes in his body. She waved her hand at him to show that everything was fine as they continued descending into the depths.

The Ice Empress was a part of his body. The Ice Empress couldn’t live by herself if something happened to him, so Huo Yuhao had absolute faith in the Ice Empress as he gritted his teeth and continued downward.

Forty meters, forty-five meters, fifty meters...

Huo Yuhao almost couldn’t bear it anymore at this depth. His body was starting to tremble as the water pressure increased, and with the agony of the intense chill in addition to the harsh suffocating sensations, his body was starting to reach its limits.

Huo Yuhao was like Nan Qiuqiu when she was resisting his spiritual pressure before. He was relying only on his willpower to support his body under that enormous pressure.

The Ice Empress paused in front of him at this moment before she suddenly accelerated and continued downward.

Huo Yuhao paused for a moment. He still had a chance to return if he went back now, but if he went deeper in and if he couldn’t extricate himself from this situation, then he would probably be in big trouble.

Should I trust the Ice Empress, or should I go up and take a breather before I prepare myself to return?

Those two thoughts resonated in his mind for but an instant before he made his choice. He gritted his teeth and channeled all his soul power before he pressed his hand backward. Two waves of soul power surged and propelled his body as he suddenly burst forward and went deeper down.

Chapter 464.2: Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence

In this moment, Huo Yuhao felt as if the icy spring water around him had already reached absolute zero. The extremely low temperatures were starting to make his body go numb. However, the soul power within his body was greedily absorbing that extreme chill.

“Whoosh—” Huo Yuhao’s body suddenly lightened, and he suddenly felt the pressure around him plummet as he fell into a small cave.

Everything was completely dark inside the cave, but there wasn’t any spring water at all. Huo Yuhao almost subconsciously opened his mouth to breathe.

A wave of terrifying and chilly air followed his breath into his body. In that moment, Huo Yuhao felt as if everything – including his own spirit – had frozen. His entire body went stiff as he just stood there, motionless.

Huo Yuhao thought that he had a very deep understanding of the element of ice, but only in this moment did he truly understand that everything that he knew was insufficient. At least, he had never believed that ice could cause even spirits to freeze. Was this the true element of ice?

His Eye of Destiny opened on his forehead. The deep, profound, and tranquil vertical eye opened as the soul core in his body rotated hysterically. Tremendous spiritual power rippled outward and forcefully helped Huo Yuhao’s spirit struggle out from the icy rigidity.

Bluish-green light glowed in front of him at the same time. The Ice Empress hovered in front of him quietly, and Huo Yuhao could finally see everything around him with clarity.

He was inside a very small cave. It was only about ten square meters, and about one and a half meters high. Huo Yuhao had to come inside with his body bent down.

There were strange pillars of ice inside the cave. There were more than ten of various sizes, some big and some small, and they were all intertwined with each other. Every pillar was white, and they were still white and clean even when the Ice Empress’ bluish-green light shone on them.

Liquid seemed to flow within those white, icy pillars. The frightening chill came from these icy pillars.

The extreme cold here was different from that contained inside the Divine Ice Crystals. The cold here couldn’t be contained, and even the air seemed to be sticky. The elements of ice were so thick here that even Huo Yuhao couldn’t absorb them, and only the Ice Empress, the Snow Empress, the Star Anise or other Spirits like them wouldn’t be too affected in such an environment. That wasn’t because they were in spiritual form, but because their original bodies were formed from Ultimate Ice.

“We are here. This is the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence.” The Ice Empress spoke with much sorrow.

The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence!

Huo Yuhao's spirits were rekindled when he heard those words. Huo Yuhao couldn't move at all, and his entire body seemed like it was frozen. However, with his soul core helping him, his thoughts and spirit were very normal.

The Ice Empress said, "Don't worry, Yuhao. You're just not used to the extreme cold in this place. The area here is too small, and there is too much Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, and that's the reason why the temperature is so low. The temperature here is about five degrees from absolute zero. Even though these five degrees are still calamities, this is the lowest temperature I have ever come across."

Thoughts spun in Huo Yuhao's head as he turned to the Ice Empress and asked, "Does that mean our Ultimate Ice isn't absolute zero?"

The Ice Empress shook her head and said, "Of course not. Temperatures can be considered at the extremes when they are one hundred and fifty degrees below zero. That is already a range forbidden to life. However, that threshold is still quite far from absolute zero. But this place is different. This place is truly a place with a temperature close to absolute zero! There isn't as much Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence as the place that the Skydream Iceworm discovered by chance, but the space here is small, and the cold air cannot be released outside. The cold air has been accumulating and trapped here. Therefore, low temperatures such as this are few and far between even in our lives. Don't do anything now – just stay here quietly, and it will be beneficial for you. We will absorb the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence to reduce the icy air's thickness, and then you can slowly adapt. Just make sure that your mind remains clear."

"Alright," Huo Yuhao said nothing more. He understood what the Ice Empress was saying – that he had to feel and experience more of a place like this that hardly ever occurred in the world, if at all. It would be very beneficial for his cultivation with Ultimate Ice.

Huo Yuhao concentrated his spiritual power and began to quietly feel everything around him. Even though his body was frozen, there was an icy-blue layer around his body that was protecting him. Huo Yuhao's martial soul had Ultimate Ice, and he couldn't be frozen to death. The only problem was that the chilly air here was too strong, and he didn't know how to deal with it yet.

Light flickered as the Skydream Iceworm emerged from Huo Yuhao's body. Even though the Skydream Iceworm didn't originally have Ultimate Ice, he was undoubtedly one of the most experienced in dealing with Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence.

"What do you plan to do?" The Skydream Iceworm asked the Ice Empress.

Their consciousnesses were the most intact amongst Huo Yuhao's four Spirits. The Star Anise was similar, but it was a plant-type soul beast, and it only had a hundred thousand years of cultivation, so its intelligence was relatively lower. The Snow Empress' memories were sealed after she became Huo Yuhao's Spirit, so she couldn't help them make a decision.

The Ice Empress lowered her voice and said, "We are without our bodies. However, the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence is the purest and most valuable treasure for our elements of ice. We may be able to recreate our bodies if we use this ice essence as materials and absorb them through our origin energy. These bodies will still be based on energy, but if our fusion is to be successful, we will be able to

leave Yuhao for a certain distance in the future and still be able to live. At the same time, if anything happens to Yuhao, we can still..."

She paused here and glanced at Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao passed his message with his thoughts. "Can what?"

The Ice Empress took a deep breath and spoke with radiating eyes that were trained on him. "We can leave you, and we can find another person who can help us attain eternity. With the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, our spiritual origins can possess a vessel that isn't so easily dissipated."

Huo Yuhao said, "That's great! That is a good thing. Hurry up and absorb it."

The Skydream Iceworm's eyes became a lot deeper than before. "That's not good."

The Ice Empress stared at him coldly and said, "What's not good?"

The Skydream Iceworm frowned. "I can understand what you are feeling. However, since we have chosen to follow Yuhao from the beginning, we have to give our entire hearts and souls. Everyone has been through life and death struggles so many times – have you forgotten?"

The Ice Empress paused momentarily and said, "I just wish to use the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence to strengthen my origin so that my spiritual origin can rely on something. What's wrong with that?"

The Skydream Iceworm shook his head. "No, that's not all you are thinking of. I understand that you want to try to recreate your physical body with all this Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. I can tell you two things – first, you can't possibly do that. This ice essence is a very valuable ice-type treasure, but there isn't enough here for you to recreate your physical body. How can you recreate your body without any dependence? Secondly, even if you manage to do that, you will no longer be with us. I understand how you feel about seeing all this Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, but I have to stop you. This is not our path. Have you not seen hope in Yuhao? Since we already have hope, why do you have to take this risk?"

The Ice Empress retorted defiantly, "I didn't think of hurting him. I just..."

The Skydream Iceworm's voice suddenly became very severe. "Shut up. I know you never wished to harm him, but why didn't you tell him that he would have to sustain such enormous pressure in the process of coming in? You didn't want him to stop you after coming here. Absorbing the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence to strengthen your own body is alright, but I'm afraid that your mentality will become unstable. Don't take the wrong path!"

The Ice Empress fell silent. Even though she didn't want to admit it, she understood that the Skydream Iceworm was telling the truth.

The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence had caused a ripple in her heart that had always been calm, and she felt as if she had seen hope. She had never fused with a treasure such as this before, but she held onto that tiny thread of hope, that she could use it to try and recreate her physical body. She did see hope by following Huo Yuhao, but she craved freedom more.

"Brother Skydream," Huo Yuhao called out.

The Skydream Iceworm turned around and looked at Huo Yuhao with an apologetic look on his face. “I’m sorry, Yuhao. She didn’t do it intentionally. The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence is unimaginably alluring to any ice-type soul beast.”

“I understand. I don’t blame her,” Huo Yuhao continued, “I understand the value of freedom. Brother Skydream, I called you because I wanted to ask if I can truly help you guys recreate your physical bodies by leveraging the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence – or rather, by using it as the main material. If that’s possible, I am willing to help you. Really. I don’t mind even if you absorb every single inch of the ice essence here.”

The Skydream Iceworm frowned even more tightly. “What do you mean, Yuhao?”

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, “Brother Skydream, Ice Empress – I’ve always known that you guys have high expectations and hopes on me, and this expectation has been an enormous burden for me! If you guys can recreate your physical bodies, then this burden will naturally disappear. I can do some things that I wish to do with a lightened heart. You guys don’t have to worry about anything – my Spirit Eyes have grown, and even if the Ice Empress leaves me and takes my second martial soul, that’s not a big deal. I am very clear about how valuable freedom is. Therefore, if you have a solution to this, brother Skydream, please help the Ice Empress and yourself. There will be no problem if the Snow Empress can awaken because of this. The original rationale of becoming my Spirits was to live better lives! Since you guys have this opportunity, why are you giving it up?”

The Skydream Iceworm’s knotted eyebrows relaxed, but his expression became one of astonishment. He could tell that Huo Yuhao’s words were very sincere, and there wasn’t a single trace of sarcasm.

Chapter 464.3: Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence

The Ice Empress stared at Huo Yuhao with a blank look on her face, and she seemed a little lost.

Huo Yuhao heaved a faint sigh and said, “I have always had three wishes. My first wish is to avenge my mother, and for everybody who hurt her to pay. This is my duty as a son. My second wish is to find Dong’er again so that we can be together, and that is for my own happiness. My third wish is to help you guys live on, and in a better life. You guys are the reason why I have achieved everything that I have, and to me, you are both teachers and friends. The only responsibility that remains after I have completed these three wishes will be to fight for Shrek and the Tang Sect.”

“I truly wish to see my three wishes fulfilled. Therefore, brother Skydream, every one of you can leave if you are able to. I will not be upset at all. I only wish that we can still be friends afterwards.”

The Skydream Iceworm’s voice became a little lower. “But you know that if we leave you – perhaps what we have fused with you will remain in your body – but the Ice Empress, the Snow Empress, and I will take with us all the soul skills that we have bestowed upon you. Even the soul bone that the Ice Empress has given you will disappear. Your second martial soul will likely crumble, and your Spirit Eyes’ fourth soul skill will vanish with me. Even though you are a Soul Sage, your strength will very likely plummet.”

Huo Yuhao chuckled. “I have considered all of that. That’s not a problem, because I am not worried about all that as long as I can fulfill my three wishes. Brother Skydream, you don’t have to worry for me. I am no longer the same me as I was back then. With your help, at the very least, I am still a Soul Sage.

Furthermore, I already have my soul core. I trust that I can regain my prowess with my own abilities. Even if I only have Spirit Eyes, I am still quite powerful! Don't worry."

The Skydream Iceworm sighed and turned around to look at the Ice Empress. "Have you heard him?"

The Ice Empress nodded silently.

The Skydream Iceworm said plainly, "So what is your decision?"

The Ice Empress didn't answer directly. Instead, she asked the Skydream Iceworm a question. "If I choose to leave, then what about you? Will you leave with me?"

The Skydream Iceworm shook his head almost without hesitation as he said decisively, "No, I won't."

The Ice Empress frowned. "But you've said before that you like me. Why aren't you willing to be with me?"

The Skydream Iceworm replied plainly, "Yes, I like you. No, I should say that I love you. You are one of the most important components of my life. However, Yuhao is the same."

"Yes, it was because of me that Yuhao's strength has risen so quickly. However, on the other hand, I would probably no longer exist if I hadn't run into him. We have always been relying on each other for survival and helping each other, and only then have we reached where we are today. Therefore, no matter what, whether Yuhao will touch that level successfully in the future, I will accompany him on his path. I will always be by his side whether he is successful or not. I am his companion, and I am also his elder brother. Just as you are, he has long become one of the most important parts of my life."

"Yuhao is right – he has a tremendous burden on his shoulders because of us. I trust that everything that he has said is sincere. Our departure for him might be a kind of liberation, but I will not leave, no matter what the future holds for us. I will stand with my brother."

The Ice Empress' expression turned a little bitter. "What about me? We both hold important places in your heart. Why won't you choose to be with me?"

The Skydream Iceworm sighed and said, "How I wish I could be with you! I will wish the same in the future. However, I cannot follow you if you choose to leave. I will look for you only after I accompany Yuhao to finish the last days of his journey. If you are still alive then, I will come to you to protect you, and to accompany you. If you are no longer there, then I will find you in another world. Even though I am very afraid of death, I have to admit that I have been alive long enough. Love and friendship cannot be had at the same time – if your choice is right, and Yuhao's choice is not right, then I will choose you. But now, you should understand what my choice is."

"Hmph!" The Ice Empress grunted angrily. "You wait!"

The Skydream Iceworm revealed a pained smile. "Perhaps this wait will bring me agony for the rest of my life."

The Ice Empress stared at him coldly and said, "Yes, it will give you pain for the rest of your life."

She turned and floated towards Huo Yuhao as she spoke. The Skydream Iceworm felt his heart skip a beat as he hurriedly followed her.

The Snow Empress had lost her memory, and she only recognized Huo Yuhao. She immediately flew next to Huo Yuhao as she stared at the Ice Empress warily.

The Ice Empress smiled – she stared at Huo Yuhao, and her smile was very happy.

“You are all wrong. I do want to absorb this Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, and I have to admit that greedy thoughts did appear in my head when I saw it. I believe that is something that any ice-type soul beast cannot avoid. However, that avarice is insufficient to sway my faith. So what if I recreate my physical body? In Di Tian’s life, he has cultivated for more than eight hundred thousand years with the help of the Lake of Life, and even then, he doesn’t have a single chance of touching the God Realm. The God Realm has always been very harsh and strict towards us soul beasts. However, I have truly seen hope in Yuhao. The call from the God Realm and the formation of his soul core proves that my judgment wasn’t false all those years ago. Since that’s the case, why would I give up my roots to chase something so trivial?”

The Skydream Iceworm stared at her with widened eyes and slack jaw. “You... you’re not recreating your physical body anymore?”

The Ice Empress rolled her eyes and said, “When did I say that I wish to do that?”

The Skydream Iceworm stammered, “But... but you said that if something happens to him, you can choose another host!”

The Ice Empress replied, “I did say that! But I was just speaking casually. Why are you so serious? Do you think I don’t know how illusory recreating my physical body is? You are too tensed up. Yes, Yuhao did sustain enormous pressure coming in here, but that pressure was within my control. If I sensed that he had reached the limits of what he could bear, I would have immediately helped him relieve that pressure.”

The Ice Empress’ green light suddenly flourished as she spoke, and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion’s original form glowed behind Huo Yuhao’s back. The chill that had been assaulting him from the beginning to the end, that had frozen him over instantly, disappeared as Huo Yuhao regained his senses.

“How can he improve without pressure? Did he not do the same to Qiuqiu? Don’t you know how difficult it is to give Yuhao pressure? This place is as suitable as it gets. This experience will be very beneficial for him when he absorbs the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence later.”

“However, I have to absorb at least half of the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence here,” the Ice Empress was very serious, “I have never considered recreating my physical body, or to change hosts in the future. To be honest, I don’t think anybody can be better than Yuhao, and I was just commenting casually. However, such a thing is possible, and I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that. As for why I have to absorb large amounts of Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence to consolidate and strengthen my origins, the reason is simple.”

“Why?” The Skydream Iceworm asked.

The Ice Empress rolled her eyes and said, “You’re such an idiot. You had nothing better to do, so you decided to help Yuhao form his soul core with only seven soul rings. This will allow his cultivation to

increase more quickly, but have you considered that forming a second soul core is a challenge for an Ultimate Douluo? He'll probably need more than thirty, or even fifty years."

"The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence is your great luck. The amount that he can absorb is limited, while my absorption is equivalent to his martial soul absorbing more. All this will be unleashed when he breaks through in the future, and when he is forming his second soul core. I will infuse my origin power into his body so that he has a chance at success."

The Skydream Iceworm's jaws were still agape. "Very wise!"

The Ice Empress shot him a disdainful glance and said, "Of course I am wise, unlike you – you're such an idiot. You hadn't even clarified anything before you came running to express your loyalty. Please, continue!"

"I..." The Skydream Iceworm gave her a sheepish look. "I was wrong, Ice Empress. I have aggrieved you."

The Ice Empress laughed coldly and said, "No! Do not speak of grievance. You're so good to Yuhao, you guys are brothers. I am an outsider. Yuhao is the generous one – what about you? You are projecting your own despicable thoughts to judge honest people. Leave me alone next time."

"I was wrong, Ice Empress. Isn't it enough that I have apologized? I will do whatever you wish me to, my lady. I was wrong, I truly understand that I was wrong now." The Skydream Iceworm finally understood what the Ice Empress meant about giving him pain for the rest of his life. He finally felt it deep in his bones.

Huo Yuhao turned toward the Ice Empress with a forced laugh. "This is all just a misunderstanding, jeez... I was also wrong. Everything is my fault. Don't blame brother Skydream."

The Skydream Iceworm secretly gave Huo Yuhao a thumbs-up.

The Ice Empress chortled and said, "It's not so easy to toss us away, Yuhao. You will only have motivation when there's pressure. It's fine – I don't blame you. I have always treated you like a younger brother. Furthermore, your speech just now was pretty touching. Quite unlike a certain crawling bug, heh!"

"I... I was wrong! Ice Empress," the Skydream Iceworm hurriedly stepped forward to pull on the Ice Empress, but she shrugged him away.

"That's enough, I'll deal with you later. We have to discuss this matter with the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. You also have to absorb some, Skydream, not just me. The Snow Lady and the Star Anise have to do it as well. The Snow Lady has to take more, and perhaps that will help her regain her strength. Yuhao can only absorb a little for now. The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence is too effective, and if you absorb too much of it, you may very well end up in a deep slumber like the Skydream Iceworm all those years ago. If that happens, you may sleep for a good ten years. I'm sure you won't want that."

Chapter 465.1: Absorbing the Ice Essence

The Ice Empress said, "It's a lot easier for us to absorb the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. We are all your Spirits, and our origin will absorb some of it, while more of it will be sealed into our bodies. These energies will be useful when you attempt to form your second soul core."

“Alright, I’ll listen to you,” Huo Yuhao hurriedly responded.

The Ice Empress continued, “Okay, then I shall begin, and the Snow Empress will go next, then Skydream, and the Star Anise goes last. You will take your turn when we finish.”

Huo Yuhao nodded understandingly.

The Skydream Iceworm stared anxiously at the Ice Empress beside her and said, “Do you need help, Ice Empress?”

“Scram,” the Ice Empress pushed him away as she floated before a single pillar. Intense green light lit up every corner of this tiny cavern. Every single pillar of ice essence seemed to come alive under the green luster.

The Ice Empress shifted as an enormous green scorpion tail glimmered into view behind her. The shiny hook stabbed ferociously into the pillar in front of her.

“Tch!” There was a soft sound that caused the cold air within the cavern to shake. Huo Yuhao could clearly feel even stronger waves of cold permeate around him, but the energy undulations were also becoming stronger within all those chilly waves.

However, everything happened for only an instant. Huo Yuhao could see in the next moment that waves of dark blue liquid swiftly flowed into the Ice Empress’ body through the sharp hook on her tail, and she absorbed the liquid within.

The Ice Empress was Huo Yuhao’s martial soul after all, and Huo Yuhao could sense something changing once she began to absorb it. The rigid soul power within his body began to circulate once more. Furthermore, his soul power began to strengthen as the pure elements of ice immersed into his body.

The Ice Empress stretched out her arms to both sides, and they transformed into two enormous pincers that waved rhythmically in the air as they carried bluish-green hues.

The green lights intertwined and curved through one another in midair as strange bluish-green runes and glyphs took shape one after another behind her before they imprinted on her body.

Huo Yuhao’s soul power was increasing at a slower rate. However, the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion’s pattern was vividly imprinted behind his back. That wasn’t all – the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion’s skeleton shone lustrously.

The Ice Empress’ origin resided within these bones. The Ice Empress was starting to fuse with and seal away the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, and that essence was naturally sealed into her skeleton.

The process was very quick. Fifteen minutes passed as the first pillar dimmed, and the liquid that was so lively and full of vitality completely disappeared.

The pillar of ice essence shattered with a light pop and transformed into a mass of icy dust.

The Ice Empress’ body evidently became much more material after fusing with this pillar. Even though it still couldn’t compare to her real body, Huo Yuhao could tell that she was a lot more lively than before.

Two pincers stretched out from her sides, and each clamped down on a pillar as she continued to absorb more!

The Skydream Iceworm flew quietly behind the Ice Empress. Nobody was as experienced as he was in absorbing the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, and back when he had first absorbed it, he went into a deep slumber for a long time because there was too much energy inside the ice essence, even after absorbing but a little bit. He could absorb more as he became stronger over time, and he managed to accumulate his tremendous ice-type origin energy after a million years. Unfortunately, those energies were “gifted” to someone else when he arrived at the Great Star Dou Forest. He wasn’t adept in battle, and so he became a source of great nutrition to the Beast God, Di Tian and a bunch of the Great Star Dou Forest’s Savage Beasts.

Just as the Ice Empress had said, if she were the one who had absorbed all that Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence back then, it was hard to say who the number-one soul beast in the world would be.

The Skydream Iceworm protected the Ice Empress from behind, so that if she absorbed too much, he could help her draw some away.

However, the Ice Empress was very powerful. She already had four hundred thousand years of cultivation before fusing with Huo Yuhao. Even though the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence was very potent, her origin power was much stronger than the Skydream Iceworm’s back then.

She absorbed one pillar after another. Her body became increasingly material, as if she were a real human. Huo Yuhao could feel that the Ice Empress’ consciousness and the tremendous power contained within the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence gradually caused her to take a form that was completely formed with ice energy. Just as the Ice Empress had said, she could be far away from Huo Yuhao for a period of time in such a state without running into any problems. This was an improvement in her intrinsic qualities. She would possess her own fighting strength even without relying on Huo Yuhao. Of course, she was still quite far away from how she was a long time ago.

The Ice Empress only began to slow down when she had absorbed seven pillars of ice essence. Some of those energies integrated with her origin, while she began to seal the others into her origin. She was starting to exert a lot of effort after the seventh one.

She could still absorb the eighth one on her own, but she couldn’t absorb two at the same time, while the cavern became a little warmer after those pillars disappeared. The Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence wasn’t so unbearable anymore.

The ninth one!

Thick icy bluish-green mist began to appear around the Ice Empress when she absorbed her ninth one. The icy mist would transform into drops of liquid in the air and plop to the ground. Her body was starting to tremble, and it was clear that she was reaching her limit.

It was quite difficult to digest the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. She could only store that much with her origin power.

The Ice Empress struggled to finish absorbing her ninth pillar. She took a deep breath as she glided away. Green light flickered on her body, and flourishing ice-type origin energy undulations gave everyone a feeling as if she had restored herself to her peak strength.

“I’m good. Yuhao, let the Snow Empress absorb some.” The Ice Empress heaved a long exhale as she floated next to Huo Yuhao. She had to absorb some ice essence to fuse with her consciousness – otherwise, she could explode at any moment, because she had absorbed too much energy.

Huo Yuhao communicated with the Snow Lady as she flew into the air and came before the ice essence.

The Snow Lady was a lot more direct than the Snow Empress. She opened her palms and grabbed a pillar with each one, and everyone could see her pulling circles of blue light into her body before they merged with her.

The Snow Empress was in a different state than the Ice Empress. The Ice Empress was Huo Yuhao’s martial soul, and she had only retained her consciousness. The Snow Empress was possibly the strongest Spirit in the continent. Even though she didn’t have soul bones to rely on, her consciousness and soul power had merged to become a Spirit so that she could survive. She was much more material than the Ice Empress’ pure consciousness, and she began to display strength superior to the Ice Empress once she started to absorb the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence.

The Snow Empress finished absorbing two pillars in less than five minutes. What was even more surprising was that her body, which was already relatively material, seemed to be growing. n//OVELBIn

She had looked like a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old teenager before this, but now she seemed to grow a year older after absorbing the two pillars. She grew a little taller, and her frame seemed to become more developed.

Dense ice elements spiraled around her, as if they had found an owner that they loved, and they were radiating excitement.

Two pillars, and then another two.

The Snow Empress was absorbing the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence at a speed that was twice as fast as the Ice Empress, and was growing continuously amidst it all.

Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen – she gradually grew up from a small girl. Her body became long and slender as she chest grew larger, while her long legs could be faintly seen within her white dress. The Snow Empress’ stunning features became increasingly crisp and cold.

She slowly left her look as the Snow Lady behind, and transformed continuously into the Snow Empress.

A confused look gradually appeared in her clear dark-blue eyes, before that confusion turned into bewilderment, and her eyes slowly became clear once more. The pillars of Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence disappeared continuously amidst her transformation.

Thirteen pillars – she finally paused when she absorbed her thirteenth pillar. She stopped growing when she reached the state of a twenty-year-old lady, but the aura of Ultimate Ice emanating from her body was extremely strong. Her white dress now had snow-white ribbons on it – six of them – and every

ribbon wrapped around her in different ways that complemented her slender and exceedingly beautiful body.

Huo Yuhao could clearly feel that she was different, but as for how different she had become, there seemed to be something else besides her increased strength.

The Snow Empress raised her hands once more.

Does she still want to absorb more?

Huo Yuhao stared at her in astonishment. However, the Snow Empress didn't grab any pillars with her hands this time. Instead, she waved her hands in front of her. She first made the shape of an arch before her ten slender fingers began to waltz in midair.

Dark blue patterns rippled in the air, and they transformed continuously as they congregated to form strange runes that resembled snowflakes.

The Ice Empress had her eyes closed while she absorbed the origin energy of heaven and earth, but her eyes suddenly burst open because of these glyphs. She stared in shock at the Snow Empress in front of her, and when she saw the glyphs that resembled snowflakes appear one after another in front of her, her eyes widened in excitement as tears welled up in her eyes.

The Snow Empress took a good fifteen minutes to draw and create those frosty runes, and in the end, a total of seven snowflakes hovered in front of her.

"Go!" The Snow Empress growled as the seven snowflakes floated forward and each landed on a single pillar of ice essence.

Chapter 465.2: Absorbing the Ice Essence

All seven pillars glowed at the same time. The snowflakes that were originally pristine white sparkled along with the ice essence and gradually became dark blue. The auras of those dark blue shadows became stronger every time they transformed.

Several minutes later, all seven pillars crumbled at the same time, and the seven snowflakes floated into the air as they shrank. They transformed into a bracelet of snowflakes as it wrapped itself around the Snow Empress' left wrist.

The Snow Empress slowly turned around. She still had a clean and cold look on her face, but she said plainly, "I'm good."

Huo Yuhao stared at her with jaws agape and wide eyes as he said, "You... you've recovered your memory?"

Huo Yuhao could feel that his connection with the Snow Empress hadn't really changed from before, and their thoughts were still connected. However, there seemed to be something else in the Snow Empress' consciousness – that was like a kind of will. Yes, after absorbing the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, the Snow Empress had probably...

"Yes," the Snow Empress gave a very clear answer.

Huo Yuhao's eyes instantly became very complicated, a look that the Skydream Iceworm shared.

The Snow Empress was still number three amongst the Ten Great Savage Beasts after all! She was inferior only to the Beast God, Di Tian, and the Evileye Tyrant King. The Snow Empress had recovered her memory – would she still be willing to remain as Huo Yuhao's Spirit? Just as the Ice Empress had said, she could find a new host after fusing with the ice essence. Since that was the case, she could possibly even recreate her physical body.

The Snow Empress had become the Snow Lady ever since she merged with Huo Yuhao and remained by his side. She was like his daughter when she was younger and became like his little sister when she gradually grew up. She was someone that Huo Yuhao felt like he had to care for and protect in his heart, so how could he not develop an attachment after so long?

Huo Yuhao stared at the Snow Lady, who was standing in front of him. She had unrivaled beauty that matched even Dong'er, and Huo Yuhao could feel a thread of fear in his heart. He really didn't want the Snow Empress to leave, and deep in his heart, he would rather the Snow Empress had remained as the Snow Lady.

As for the Skydream Iceworm, the reason for his complicated emotions was a lot simpler. The Ice Empress liked the Snow Empress! The Snow Empress was his rival in love! The Ice Empress was hot and cold to him from the beginning to the end, but now that the Snow Empress had regained her memory, had his chances not dwindled even more? How could he not be dejected?

The Snow Empress seemed to feel the changes in Huo Yuhao's emotions as she said plainly, "I'm the Snow Empress, and I am also the Snow Lady."

Huo Yuhao felt a tremble in his heart, and his eyes were overcome with pleasant surprise.

The Ice Empress transformed into a beam of green light at this moment and rushed to the Snow Empress. She opened her arms and hugged her tightly.

"You're back, Snow. That's great, that's just great. You're finally back."

The Snow Empress hugged the Ice Empress as well, and a faint smile finally appeared on her beautiful, ice-cold face. "I'm good, Ice Empress."

The Skydream Iceworm flew next to Huo Yuhao with a depressed expression on his face. His eyes were dreary, and Huo Yuhao turned towards him amusedly and said, "Be strong, brother Skydream."

The Skydream Iceworm heaved a sigh. He didn't say anything as he flew directly towards the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence.

He wasn't like the Ice Empress or the Snow Empress, who both absorbed two or more at a time. Instead, he targeted a single pillar and began to absorb it.

Less than half of the pillars were left inside the cavern after the two ladies had finished absorbing theirs. Huo Yuhao did a rough count; there were a total of forty-five ice pillars inside the cavern. The Ice Empress had absorbed nine, the Snow Empress had absorbed thirteen, and in addition to the seven pillars that she had sealed away with an unknown method, twenty-nine pillars were gone and sixteen were left.

The Skydream Iceworm was evidently a lot slower at absorbing the ice essence in comparison to the Snow and the Ice Empress. Not too long ago, he had fused almost all his origin power with Huo Yuhao, and his element of ice was used as a medium for Huo Yuhao's second martial soul back then. Therefore, even though he still had some left, those elements were far inferior to the Snow and Ice Empress. If he hadn't absorbed the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence in the past, he probably wouldn't even be worthy of absorbing any now.

The two ladies hugged for a moment before they gradually separated. The Snow Empress' eyes were full of lament, while the Ice Empress' eyes were filled with elation.

The Snow Empress turned around and nodded at Huo Yuhao. "Thanks for taking care of me over these years."

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "I didn't do much."

The Snow Empress flashed him a faint smile and said, "I have always been very clear about favors and grudges. I will always accompany you for allowing me to live again, and we will always follow you if you manage to break through that level. And even if you fail, I will follow you to the end of your life, and make my own plans after you leave this world."

Evidently, Huo Yuhao didn't think the Snow Empress would say such things, as he stared at her with an astonished look on his face. The Snow Empress' icy features melted into a slight smile as she suddenly raised her hands and grabbed Huo Yuhao's collar.

"Eh?" Huo Yuhao stared at her in shock.

The Snow Empress pulled her hands open to both sides, taking Huo Yuhao's shirt along with them, and revealing his chest.

Huo Yuhao was immediately embarrassed as he grabbed the Snow Empress' hands. "What are you doing, Snow Empress?"

The Snow Empress' pretty eyes squinted slightly as she stared at Huo Yuhao's chest. She muttered to herself, "Beast God Di Tian! Hmph!"

Huo Yuhao realized then that her attention was focused on the reverse scale on his chest. His embarrassment ebbed as he released the Snow Empress' hands.

The Snow Empress' hands were smooth but cold, and they were like tender snow and ice that were without warmth, yet perfect and without blemish.

The Snow Empress glanced at him and said, "Don't worry. With our help, once your strength reaches a certain level, you will undoubtedly be able to shake off the burden from Di Tian's reverse scale. But that's not possible now. Even though I have awakened, I will suppress my own strength. Otherwise, Di Tian will make a move against you once he realizes that I am inhabiting your body."

"When you manage to get your eighth ring, take a trip to the Extreme North. There is a place there that is suitable for helping your cultivation breakthrough. Not even Di Tian will have an easy time killing you once you become a Titled Douluo."

Huo Yuhao tilted his head in acknowledgement. The Snow Empress was just that intimidating! He was the only one that was working hard to break free from the Beast God's shackles when it was just the Ice Empress and the Skydream Iceworm with him. But when the Snow Empress woke up, and her words clearly meant that she wanted to help him break free. This was the difference between their strengths.

The Snow Empress closed his shirt as she turned around at the Ice Empress and said, "Ice, my origin has stabilized. With help from the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence, I can regain some of my strength from a long time ago. From now on, we will teach him the art of controlling ice."

"Alright," the Ice Empress nodded as she agreed.

The Snow Empress turned towards Huo Yuhao and said, "Last time, you were too weak, so you couldn't have learned even if we did try to teach you. You have a certain foundation in your spiritual power at this point, and your soul power is sufficient to control relatively more powerful ice-type abilities, so you can start learning now. You have to break through to become a Titled Douluo within two years. Afterwards, you have to work hard toward that."

Huo Yuhao nodded. He suddenly realized that his belief that the Snow Empress would probably leave him after she woke up was entirely wrong. The Snow Empress' awakening made him feel a lot less pressure instead, and oftentimes, it was usually the most relaxed for him when he didn't have to consider his own future. With the Snow Empress and the Ice Empress giving him pointers, if his ability to control ice could continue to improve, his overall strength would undoubtedly increase.

Huo Yuhao had twin martial souls, but his main martial soul had been his Spirit Eyes from the beginning to the end. Even though he had invented his Three Ultimate Haodong Skills, those skills had their foundations in spiritual power, and his ice-type abilities were all purely channeled through soul skills. His control over ice was achieved mainly through spiritual power to control the elements of ice. The "method" that the Snow Empress was speaking of clearly wasn't so simple.

The Skydream Iceworm was relatively slower at absorbing the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. He managed to absorb one after a long while, and there were fifteen pillars left.

The Snow Empress said, "You should absorb some too, Star Anise."

The Star Anise Mysterious Ice Grass swayed on Huo Yuhao's shoulder and glided over. It flew next to the Skydream Iceworm and landed stably on the ground. It shook his head from side to side as it released circles of blue hues that encased a pillar.

Light rippled as the pillar shone. The Star Anise was starting to absorb it.

The Star Anise's element was also ice. Furthermore, it had been living next to the Icefire Yin Yang Well's Extreme Chill Icespring over its entire life, and its attributes were not weak at all. Even though the Star Anise didn't have a very strong cultivation, it was still absorbing the ice essence more quickly than the Skydream Iceworm.

The Ice Empress stood next to the Snow Empress. She was clearly subsidiary. Huo Yuhao had a strange feeling in his heart – the Snow Empress' awakening immediately made her the leader of his four Spirits, and she seemed like a big sister taking care of everyone else. How unfortunate for brother Skydream! I wonder if he can still be together with the Ice Empress. I hope he can.

The Snow Empress said, “While they’re absorbing the ice essence, let me take you on a walk through the world of ice.”

She raised her right hand as she spoke and gently placed it on Huo Yuhao’s forehead.

Huo Yuhao immediately felt an extreme chill pierce into his brain, and his consciousness seemed to travel to another world in the next moment.

That world was white – everything was white, but it was also very quiet, and there wasn’t a single sound at all.

A single droplet suddenly appeared soundlessly. It hovered in midair and emanated gentle water-based ripples.

“Water is the foundation of snow and ice. Water is the source of all things, and of all life. The power of water is that it can flow into anything.”

The droplet immediately increased in size as she spoke. When it had become so large that even Huo Yuhao’s consciousness had to “look up”, it suddenly exploded and transformed into countless water droplets that splattered in all directions.

There were large and small ones, and all Huo Yuhao felt was moisture as they flew through the air.

Yes, water could flow into everything. Only with water would there be life and nature. Yes, water was the source of all life.

Chapter 465.3: Absorbing the Ice Essence

A droplet paused in front of Huo Yuhao. He tried to control himself with his thoughts, and he realized to his surprise that he actually had a body – and he was raising his hand to gently touch this droplet.

The water droplet stopped on the tip of his finger, and the moist feeling soaked into his finger. Perhaps it was because this world was too spacious and quiet, but Huo Yuhao felt very real when his finger touched the water droplet.

Water – when there was water, there was life.

Suddenly, the droplets around him changed, and the temperature in the air plummeted. The droplets gradually became ice.

“Ice and snow all come from water, no matter what state they are in. Water becomes ice due to low temperatures. Ice is water in solid form – it’s water that is hard, and water that is tough.”

Tiny ice grains splattered on Huo Yuhao’s body. He could feel waves of piercing pain course over his body, and he tried to block them subconsciously, but realized that he could no longer control his body. He could only let those ice crystals assault him.

It’s so painful! Ice is the toughness of water?

Large masses of ice crystals stuck to his body as they billowed toward him. However, Huo Yuhao could only feel cool and refreshed instead of cold.

“The art of controlling ice lies in controlling temperature. Once you have grasped the secret of temperature and the characteristics of water, you will have made some headway into the art of controlling ice. Today, I will let you feel the first level of controlling ice – temperature changes.”

The ice spheres that were pressed against Huo Yuhao’s body suddenly changed, and they all melted. The cool and refreshing feeling instantaneously became one of coldness and chill that pierced his bones, and Huo Yuhao couldn’t help but shiver from the cold.

“Water solidifying into ice will release large amounts of heat, while ice melting into water requires large amounts of heat. Therefore, you won’t feel cold so quickly when ice is pressed against you, but the ice will suck the heat from your body when it melts, and then the cold will come.”

The Snow Empress’ words resonated in Huo Yuhao’s mind. He suddenly realized that he had never really understood ice, in spite of his possession of Ultimate Ice – he had overlooked many things about the very origins of ice.

Coldness wasn’t just about controlling temperature – more importantly, it represented an understanding of ice itself.

The whiteness around him dissipated amidst the silence, and Huo Yuhao returned to the Manifold Mysterious Ice Cavern. However, he had entered a state of epiphany in this moment.

The Snow Empress didn’t teach him much, but she spoke of foundations and roots.

The Ice Empress looked at the Snow Empress with a faint smile on her face. “I never expected you to become a teacher one day.”

The Snow Empress smiled faintly and said, “Have I not been a teacher to you before?”

The Ice Empress took a few steps forward and grabbed one of the Snow Empress’ hands. She leaned gently against her and said, “Snow, I have missed you so much. It’s great that you’re back.”

The Snow Empress raised her hand and stroked the Ice Empress’ face gently. “You silly girl – you are lucky and happy whether or not I am here. At least, you are much more blessed than I am.”

The Ice Empress was momentarily stunned as she stood up straight. “Why do you say that?”

The Snow Empress glanced at the Skydream Iceworm, who was still absorbing the ice essence effortfully, and said, “Because you have him.”

The Ice Empress’ expression changed as she lowered her head and said, “You mind his presence?”

The Snow Empress’ eyes changed slightly, and her expression suddenly became cold as she said plainly, “Yes, I do mind his presence. Go kill him for me.”

“Ah?” The Ice Empress exclaimed in shock. She released the Snow Empress’ hand as she stumbled backward, and she stared at the Snow Empress with a look of disbelief. “Why? Why do you want to kill him? He will not be a threat to you. It’s true – you’re the one I like.”

The Snow Empress answered plainly, "Since I'm the one you like, and he keeps sticking with you, then what use is there to keep him around? Are you still the Ice Empress that was full of a desire to kill back then? Kill him."

The Ice Empress was momentarily stunned. Her frame was trembling a little, and she snapped her head around and stared at the Skydream Iceworm, who was still working hard at absorbing the ice essence. Her eyes sparkled incessantly.

She knew that the Skydream Iceworm could definitely hear what the Snow Empress was saying even though he was absorbing the ice essence. However, he didn't have any reaction at all. Does he not know how to speak for his own life? Why, why is not talking?

The Snow Empress said plainly, "He's useless. He's an iceworm, and he's only managed to accumulate some strength by relying on his long life because he absorbed the Manifold Mysterious Ice Essence. However, his strength was absorbed by the Beast God and the Great Star Dou Forest's Savage Beasts. He fused with Huo Yuhao afterwards, and not too long ago, he fused all of his spiritual origin with him. Right now, he is completely useless. Killing him will not affect us, and neither will it affect Yuhao. We can be together without him coming between us. What are you waiting for, Ice? Do it."

"I..." The Ice Empress shivered vigorously as watery mist appeared in her beautiful eyes.

The Ice Empress was very conflicted as she stood there. The Skydream Iceworm, who was deeply in love with her, was standing behind her, while the Snow Empress, who she had always been in love with, was standing in front of her.

Do I really have to choose between them?

The Ice Empress was a soul beast, but she had long possessed intelligence that wasn't inferior to that of humans. The rise of intelligence would undoubtedly enrich feelings and emotions.

How could she not feel how good the Skydream Iceworm was to her? That was especially so when danger was knocking on her doorstep over several episodes, and the Skydream Iceworm had defended her with his life every single time. How could she not feel anything for him, when he would give everything for her?

She had been spending every single day with the Skydream Iceworm ever since she went into Huo Yuhao. Top-tier soul beasts also had feelings, and at this moment, the Snow Empress was asking her to kill him. How could she not be conflicted?

"Snow, have you not said before that he's been very good to me, and that I should..." The Ice Empress spoke with a trembling voice.

The Snow Empress said plainly, "That was before. I couldn't give you a sense of security back then, and I couldn't be with you. I was willing to have someone around to protect you. But it's different now, and I have returned. There is nobody else in this world better suited to protect you than me. His existence will only be a distraction for us when we are together. I don't wish to see that. Why aren't you making a move!?"

"Snow!" The Ice Empress said agonizingly.

The Snow Empress said coldly, "That means you can't bear to move against him? That's fine. If you don't want to, then I'll do it." The Snow Empress floated forward as she spoke, and arrived in front of the Ice Empress in an instant.

The Ice Empress hadn't even reacted when the Snow Empress' left hand pressed gently on her shoulder.

Snowflakes condensed one after another, and swiftly wrapped around the Ice Empress' body. The snowflakes fixed her to the spot and immobilized her. Even though they were all energy forms that originated from their consciousnesses, the Snow Empress' strength was superior to the Ice Empress. Furthermore, the Ice Empress was caught off-guard.

The Ice Empress was fixed in place by the Snow Empress, and her body was swiftly half-turned. She watched in shock as the Snow Empress brushed past her, and her palm that was clear and dark blue pressed against the back of the Skydream Iceworm's heart.

"No –" The Ice Empress screamed. Her voice was filled with fear and agony as intense green light erupted from her body while she struggled to free herself from the Snow Empress' shackles.

The Ice Empress was far too familiar with the Snow Empress' palm – Snowless Glacier, the Snow Empress' strongest attack! Even she probably wouldn't survive if this attack was used against her, let alone the Skydream Iceworm.

The Ice Empress felt as if her heart had just skipped a beat, and an unspeakable fear filled her heart.

He's dead, he's dead – Snow has killed him. Snow has killed him!

The Ice Empress' eyes gradually turned red as she screamed hysterically. The ice auras that were coming from her body climbed rapidly as green light erupted, and the Snow Empress' snowflakes that were holding her down were melting at an incredible speed.

The Skydream Iceworm stood there motionless. There was a dark blue layer over his body. The Ice Empress was only far too familiar with that dark blue color that was filled with the stench of death. Snowless Glacier took away all life, and even an individual as powerful as the Beast God would probably be severely injured if the Snow Empress had struck him when she was at her full strength.

There was only one method to fight against Snowless Glacier, and that was to not let the Snow Empress come close. *n/(0Veb1n*

But how easy was it not to let the Snow Empress come close? The Skydream Iceworm was also defenseless, and he was struck just like that. His vitality seemed to vanish in but an instant. Snowless Glacier was something that could freeze even spirits!

"Bam!" Snowflakes scattered in all directions. The Ice Empress finally broke through her shackles as she pounced hysterically towards the Skydream Iceworm.

The Snow Empress blocked her with a flash. Countless snowflakes billowed in all directions as they became a barrier that barricaded the Ice Empress.

The Ice Empress screamed as she pressed her hands forward. The Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's shadow glimmered behind her as intense green light transformed into an enormous pillar that went straight for the Snow Empress.

“You dare to attack me, Ice?” The Snow Empress shouted angrily.

“Why? Why did you have to kill him? He would never be a threat to you. Why did you kill him? Why!?” The Ice Empress cried and howled sorrowfully. Her hands blasted with the light of Ultimate Ice, which hammered continuously against the Snow Empress. She seemed to have gone insane in this moment, and her emotions were a little out of control.

The Snow Empress used but one hand as she defended herself against the Ice Empress’ crazy assault. However, she didn’t answer her question.

“Why? He was never a threat to anyone, and he had only lived a little longer than everyone else. But everyone wants to target him, to harm him. What wrong has he ever committed? Why, Snow, why did you have to hurt him?”

Tears dripped from the Ice Empress’ eyes like waterfalls, and they swiftly transformed into ice crystals. Those ice crystals even contained her soul power as they were tinged with green colors.

“You’re in love with him, Ice?” The Snow Empress pushed out with her hand and pushed the Ice Empress back.

The Ice Empress was momentarily stunned as she stopped attacking, and she just allowed her body to be pushed a few meters out.