

A Record 321

Chapter 321: Kindred Mark

Han Li offered no response to Shu Tiansheng, but his mind was racing.

At this point in the auction, the value of the auction items was gradually beginning to increase, with the exception of a few items that bucked this trend.

The Blood Crystal Lotus Root was quite a precious spirit plant, but it was already slightly lacking in value compared with the past few auction items, so it seemed increasingly unlikely that it was going to appear.

The same thought seemed to have occurred to Shu Tiansheng as well, and he was becoming more and more agitated. After all, if the Blood Crystal Lotus Root didn't appear in the auction, then he wouldn't be able to obtain a Blush Cloud Fire Crystal from Han Li, and he would most likely lose some trust from Han Li as well.

At this moment, an item had just been auctioned off, and a new item was brought out to replace it. The new item was a fist-sized fire-attribute True Immortal Stage demon beast core that was giving off a fiery red glow, within which were circles of tiny crimson runes.

"This is the demon core of a Golden Scale Red Wurm at the pinnacle of the late-True Immortal Stage, meaning it was one step away from the Golden Immortal Stage at the time that it was slain. Its core is imbued with tremendous fire attribute law powers, making this an object of immeasurable value for those using fire-attribute cultivation arts. The starting price is 60 Immortal Origin Stones," the short figure declared.

Han Li nodded slightly to himself upon seeing this.

According to the provided description, the demon beast that the core had been procured from had been at an extremely lofty cultivation base, and the law power fluctuations emanating from its core was far superior to that of the demon core of Zhong Luan's black crane steed. With that in mind, even Han Li was feeling a little tempted to participate in the bidding.

However, such a precious demon core was undoubtedly going to be quite expensive. He had already saved up quite a large number of Immortal Origin Stones, but after the past 200 years of cultivation and pill refinement, he only had just over 1,000 left, so he couldn't afford to make unnecessary purchases.

"60!"

Shu Tiansheng had made the first bid.

"80!"

A female voice rang out, this time from Han Li's other side.

Han Li turned in that direction to find a petite figure seated on a chair to his left near the edge of the venue, and judging from her voice, she seemed to have been quite young.

Han Li had some recollection of her as she was the last person to arrive at the auction venue, and she was giving off a cold and unapproachable aura.

"90!"

This bid had come from a tall cultivator seated to the right side of the venue.

"100!" Shu Tiansheng called out.

"120!"

The female cultivator seemed to have been insistent on placing bids in increments of 20 Immortal Origin Stones.

Shu Tiansheng hesitated momentarily, then decided to drop out of the bidding war. This was already a very high price, and it wasn't worth making any further bids.

"130!"

The tall cultivator raised the price once again.

"140!"

The female cultivator was completely unfazed.

Han Li shook his head slightly upon seeing this.

140 Immortal Origin Stones was quite a large sum, even for a mid-True Immortal cultivator, and it was already far too much to pay for a late-True Immortal Stage demon beast core.

The tall cultivator was silent for a moment, then placed another bid. "145!"

"150!"

A hint of disdain had crept into the female cultivator's voice, and she seemed to have been losing her patience.

This time, the tall cultivator finally fell silent and didn't place any further bids.

Everyone present immediately turned to the female cultivator while shaking their heads, but she merely ignored them.

The short figure on the auction platform was naturally extremely pleased, and he quickly announced the sale of the demon core.

"A True Immortal Stage demon beast core is quite a precious object, but the next auction item is even more valuable, so be sure not to pass up on it," the short auctioneer declared as he swept a hand through the air, and a large crimson jade box appeared on the stage.

The entire box was giving off a layer of translucent crimson light, as well as a faint sweet fragrance that was wafting through the air in all directions.

The short auctioneer made a hand seal, and the lid of the jade box flew off on its own amid a flash of light.

Inside the box was a length of crimson lotus root that was around the same thickness as a human arm. It was preserved extremely well, and even the whiskers on the roots hadn't been damaged in the slightest.

Furthermore, the lotus root was glittering and translucent, looking as if it had been carved out of blood jade.

The lotus root was giving off a gentle crimson glow that formed a band of crimson light several inches above it, and the rich aroma of sweetness that it was giving off was quite reinvigorating even to all of the formidable mid-True Immortal cultivators present.

Shu Tiansheng was both ecstatic and relieved to see this, as was Han Li.

It seemed that he had made a misjudgment. The Blood Crystal Lotus Root was indeed very hard to find, but as long as it wasn't over 50,000 years of age, it would've been lacking in value compared with the previous few auction items. However, this one was definitely no less than 100,000 years of age.

However, in the next instant, his brows suddenly furrowed slightly.

He had noticed a subtle detail, which was that there was a gray area on the Blood Crystal Lotus Root that was around the size of a fingernail, and it seemed that the area had been contaminated.

"This is a Blood Crystal Lotus Root. Normally, a Blood Crystal Lotus Root wouldn't have made an appearance this late in the auction, but this one is already 150,000 years of age, making it an extremely

rare specimen. I'm sure some of you have already noticed this gray spot on the lotus root. This is not a result of the lotus root being damaged. Instead, it's a rare kindred mark," the short auctioneer declared.

Many of the auction-goers erupted into chatter upon hearing this.

"Some of you may not be aware of what a kindred mark is. Essentially, if two spirit medicines are growing too close to one another, their spiritual power will impact each other, thereby resulting in the emergence of kindred marks," the short auctioneer continued.

"According to my knowledge, kindred marks can be both good or bad, and in bad cases, the energy in the spirit medicine will become very chaotic and weak, making it completely unusable," one of the auction-goers declared.

Even though his body was concealed within a blue and white light barrier, just like everyone else, it appeared that this was quite a portly individual.

"That is indeed true, Fellow Daoist. Kindred marks can have different effects on spirit medicines, but we've already had this lotus root appraised by masters in spirit plant agriculture, and they've determined that this kindred mark has a positive influence. Not only is the energy in the Blood Crystal Lotus Root not chaotic in the slightest, it's abnormally pure and dense, so all of you can rest assured," the short auctioneer replied.

This declaration was followed by another smattering of chatter.

"The starting price for this item will be 80 Immortal Origin Stones, and each successive bid must go up by increments of at least five Immortal Origin Stones," the short auctioneer declared.

"85!"

"90!"

"100!"

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The purported special characteristics of the Blood Crystal Lotus Root made it an even more desirable item to everyone. Not only was it an exceptional spirit plant for bodily nourishment, it was an extremely prized treasure for anyone using body refinement cultivation arts, and even before Han Li had placed a single bid, the price had already exceeded triple figures.

Han Li merely sat still in his chair, seemingly contemplating something.

He was determined to acquire this Blood Crystal Lotus Root, but instead of being in a hurry to make a bid for it now, he was going to enter the bidding war at the end.

He turned to Shu Tiansheng as he said, "Looks like your sources were correct, after all. This is for you."

He flipped a hand over to produce a fist-sized Blush Cloud Fire Crystal as he spoke, then offered it to Shu Tiansheng.

They were seated near the back of the venue, and there weren't many people around them, so they didn't have to hide what they were doing.

The female cultivator who had purchased the fire-attribute demon core just so happened to look over at them at this moment, and she immediately sat up noticeably straighter at the sight of the Blush Cloud Fire Crystal.

Shu Tiansheng was ecstatic, and he hurriedly accepted the crystal. "Thank you, Fellow Daoist!"

Han Li offered no response as he turned his attention back to the ongoing auction.

After a few rounds of bidding, the price had climbed all the way to 150 Immortal Origin Stones, and that bid had been made by none other than the portly figure from before.

In the wake of this bid, all of the other bidders fell silent.

"160!"

Han Li had finally made his first bid.

The portly man turned to take a glance at him, then harrumphed coldly as he called out, "170!"

"190!"

Han Li's voice remained calm and level, and it seemed that had absolute confidence.

The portly man hesitated momentarily, then placed another bid.

"200!"

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and he didn't want this to drag on any longer, so he decided to put his foot down once and for all.

"250!"

Shu Tiansheng turned to Han Li with a stunned expression, as did many of the other auction-goers.

A 150,000-year-old Blood Crystal Lotus Root was indeed extremely precious, but this was far too heavy a price to pay.

Han Li paid no heed to everyone else, and even though he was looking directly at the Blood Crystal Lotus Root on the stage, he was also keeping tabs on the portly figure out of the corner of his eye.

This time, the portly figure hesitated once again before deciding to concede.

The short auctioneer was already very pleased with this price, and with no further bids coming in, he declared the Blood Crystal Lotus Root as having been sold to Han Li.

Han Li heaved an internal sigh of relief as an excited look appeared in his eyes.

He had finally gathered all of the materials required to refine the Myriad Axis Pill, and all he needed was a piece of the Blood Crystal Lotus Root to grow more.

As these thoughts were running through his mind, the next auction item was brought out.

It was a piece of artwork that depicted a mountain, a river, and a palace.

The scroll that contained the artwork was blue in color, and it was giving off a glacial aura. It was clearly a formidable treasure, and the glacial qi that it was giving off was also interspersed with law fluctuations, indicating that it was an immortal treasure.

However, one corner of the scroll was slightly damaged, and that was the only imperfection.

"This is an immortal treasure by the name of the Profound Glacial Scenic Painting. It contains extremely formidable profound glacial qi and can unleash several types of glacial attacks. Unfortunately, it's a little damaged. The starting price will be 65 Immortal Origin Stones," the short auctioneer declared.

Han Li's eyes lit up slightly at the sight of the blue scroll.

This was indeed quite a formidable treasure that didn't contain any less law powers than the blue immortal sword from before, and the fact that it was a scroll indicated that it definitely had to have been more versatile than the sword and much more difficult to refine.

Even though it was slightly damaged, it was still quite a powerful treasure, and at this point, the bidding had already begun, with the price quickly rising to 90 Immortal Origin Stones.

"95!"

Han Li had also placed a bid.

He was quite interested in this immortal treasure, so he would be willing to purchase it as long as the price wasn't too high.

"100!"

This bid was placed by the female cultivator who had purchased the fire-attribute demon core.

Han Li took a glance at the female cultivator, and right as he was considering whether he would continue to participate in the bidding, another voice rang out from the front row of the venue.

"150!"

Han Li immediately shook his head and decided to drop out of the bidding war. This was already higher than the price that the immortal sword had been purchased for, and all of the other bidders fell silent as well.

Chapter 322: Astronomical Bidding War

"200!"

To everyone's surprise, the female cultivator who had purchased the demon core didn't give up, and she had raised the price by 50 more Immortal Origin Stones in a single bid.

Everyone faltered slightly upon hearing this before turning to her with peculiar looks in their eyes.

200 Immortal Origin Stones wasn't exactly a massive sum. All of the auction-goers present were at least at the mid-True Immortal Stage, and they had come to participate in this auction, so they could naturally afford this sum.

However, Immortal Origin Stones were extremely useful. Not only could they speed up one's immortal spiritual power replenishment, they could also assist one in opening up immortal acupoints. Hence, True Immortal cultivators were perpetually in need of more Immortal Origin Stones, and they were very prudent with their spending of this resource. With that in mind, it simply wasn't worth spending 200 Immortal Origin Stones for a damaged immortal treasure.

However, this still wasn't the end of the bidding war.

"230!" the owner of the sharp voice retorted.

"250! The female cultivator wasn't backing down, either"

"300!"

"350!"

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Both of them seemed to have been determined to acquire the scroll, and in the blink of an eye, the price had been raised to an incredible level.

Many of the auction-goers present were astonished by this turn of events. There was no way that a damaged immortal treasure would've been worth this much unless it was harboring some type of secret.

With that in mind, some other people began to throw in bids as well, and the price was quickly pushed above 800 Immortal Origin Stones.

At this point, everyone else dropped out of the bidding war, and it reverted back to a two-horse race.

Blue light was flashing in Han Li's eyes as he carefully inspected the blue scroll with slightly furrowed brows, but no matter how he scrutinized it, he wasn't able to identify anything special about it aside from the profound glacial qi that it contained.

On the surface, his glacial qi didn't appear to have been special in any way, but he noticed there seemed to have been more to it than met the eye after he inspected it with his spiritual sense a few times.

This was a feeling that Han Li couldn't really describe, and if he had to compare it to something, then it was a little like the Essence Fire Raven.

After inspecting the scroll for a while longer, he withdrew his gaze.

There was no way that he was going to spend so much money to acquire the scroll, so what was the point in thinking about all of this?

"1,000!"

At this point, the owner of the sharp voice had already lost their composure, and it was clear that they were approaching their limit.

"1,200!"

The female cultivator's voice remained as steady as ever.

This time, the owner of the sharp voice was silent for a long while, yet right before the short auctioneer declared the scroll as sold, they made one final last-ditch effort.

"1,500!"

"2,000!"

The female cultivator seemed to have finally run out of patience and placed an astonishing bid.

Everyone was stunned beyond belief. This was a sufficient sum of Immortal Origin Stones to purchase more than 10 immortal treasures!

The owner of the sharp voice fell silent once again, and only after a long while did they give a cold harrumph. "Your determination is truly impressive. In that case, I'll relinquish the scroll to you."

After that, they stood up and departed from the auction venue.

Han Li looked on at their departing figure, and he was speculating whether they were leaving early as they were preparing to take the scroll from the female cultivator by force after the auction.

With that in mind, he took a glance at the female cultivator, only to find that she appeared to have been completely unconcerned.

The short auctioneer seemed to have been a little stunned as well, and it took him some time before he finally declared the sale of the Profound Glacial Scenic Painting.

Even though the scroll could only go to one person, everyone else felt as if they had been treated to a good show, so they weren't all that disappointed.

The auction continued, and the items were becoming more and more expensive, with many of the precious and exotic treasures being presented posing a great deal of temptation even to Han Li.

Unfortunately, none of the dao pill ingredients were among them, and as for the other treasures, he did have a decent wealth of Immortal Origin Stones, but he had to save up for his future pill refinement, so he could only let those treasures slip away right under his nose.

After close to two more hours, the final auction item was sold, and the auction reached its conclusion.

"Alright, that will be the end of the auction. It's now time for the free exchange event. Any fellow daoists wishing to sell or exchange any treasures can feel free to step onto the stage in turns," the short auctioneer declared, then made his way down from the auction platform the two taller figures accompanying him.

As soon as his voice trailed off, a streak of white light immediately flew onto the stage at an astonishing speed.

There were several other cultivators who wanted to go first, but they could only stop in their tracks upon seeing this.

In an exchange event like this, it was naturally best to go as early as possible. Otherwise, one risked having the treasures that they desired slipping away right before their eyes, and that was certainly not going to be a good feeling.

"Looks like I'll be going first, fellow daoists," the man on the stage chuckled as he cupped his fist in a salute toward the cultivators that he had beaten to the stage, and judging from the sound of his voice, he seemed to have been an elderly man.

The ones who were beaten to the stage could only return to their seats, but there was one thin and tall figure who remained on the spot as he chuckled, "With your Bright Yang Light Wave Arts, your speed is unmatched, Brother Qiu. Whenever I participate in any exchange events with you, you always beat me to the punch."

"Fancy meeting you here, Brother Fu. My sincerest apologies, but I truly am in urgent need of a certain treasure," the elderly man on the stage replied with a smile.

The thin and tall figure merely shook his head in response before returning to his seat as well.

"Fellow daoists, I've brought two things with me today," the elderly man said as he flipped a hand over to produce a pair of jade boxes, one large and one small.

With a sweep of his sleeve, the lids of the boxes were removed to reveal their contents.

Inside the larger jade box was a spirit plant that was around a foot in height and resembled a bamboo sapling with only 12 leaves, but what was remarkable was that every single leaf was a different color, and they were also all glowing slightly.

"This is a Heavenly Spirit Bamboo that grows a leaf once every 10,000 years, so this is a 120,000-year-old specimen. As for what it can be used for, I'm sure everyone already knows, so I won't waste everyone's time with an explanation."

Immediately thereafter, the elderly opened the other jade box to reveal some fine golden sand that was giving off such dazzling golden radiance that it was too bright to look directly at.

"This is Profound Golden Sand, an exceptional material for refining metal-attribute flying swords, and it can also be mixed into other immortal treasures to significantly enhance their resilience and sharpness," the elderly introduced.

These two items immediately created a stir among the auction-goers, and it was clear that they had generated much interest.

"For this Heavenly Spirit Bamboo, I would like a Meridian Opening Herb above 100,000 years of age. As for this box of Profound Golden Sand, I would like a spirit material that contains earth-attribute law powers in exchange," the elderly man declared.

Han Li was very much interested in the Heavenly Spirit Bamboo plant.

This was a type of spirit plant that contained a hint of poison law powers, and theoretically speaking, it could be used as an ingredient to refine pills that could cure all poisons. There were some antidotal spirit plants in his medicine garden, but none that could compare with this one.

Unfortunately, he hadn't even heard of this Meridian Opening Herb, and it was clear that the elderly man wouldn't have been willing to sell such a precious spirit plant for Immortal Origin Stones.

As for that box of Profound Golden Sand, that wasn't of any interest to him.

Right at this moment, a thin cultivator rose to his feet, then swept a hand through the air to release a burst of red light, enveloped within which was a rectangular jade box, which flew onto the auction platform.

"Will this Meridian Opening Herb suffice, Fellow Daoist?"

The elderly man picked up the jade box and opened it ever so slightly, then immediately shut the lid again as he replied in a concise manner, "Deal."

After that, he swept a sleeve through the air to release a burst of white light that carried the Heavenly Spirit Bamboo to the thin cultivator, and Han Li could only heave an internal sigh upon seeing this.

However, there were no takers for the box of Profound Golden Sand, and in the end, the elderly man could only step down from the stage.

As soon as he left, a streak of green light immediately flew onto the stage like lightning, and it was none other than the man with the Fu surname from before.

"I've brought with me a stick of Seven Spirit Incense that can assist True Immortal cultivators greatly when it comes to opening immortal acupoints. If you light this incense while attempting to open an immortal acupoint, your chances of success will be raised by about 10%."

The man pulled out a sandalwood box as he spoke, then opened it to reveal a stick of red and black incense, which was already giving off an indescribable aroma even though it hadn't been lit.

Almost all of the auction-goers immediately had their attention drawn to the stick of incense.

Treasures that could help one make breakthroughs were naturally the most welcome items in these exchange events.

The man with the Fu surname seemed to have been quite pleased with everyone's reactions, and he declared, "In exchange for this stick of incense, I would like a Heavenly Musk Fruit."

Unlike everyone else, Han Li wasn't very interested in this stick of incense. He was able to rely on the large number of pills he had refined to assist him in opening immortal acupoints, so this wasn't something that he was all that keen to get his hands on, and even if he did acquire it, he couldn't make more like he could with spirit medicines.

The stick of Seven Spirit Incense was indeed quite rare and precious, but Heavenly Musk Fruits weren't easy to come by, either, and in the end, no one was able to provide one.

Many of the auction-goers offered to exchange the stick of incense for other spirit items or to directly purchase it using Immortal Origin Stones, but all of them were turned down.

The exchange even continued, and one cultivator after another flew onto the stage to display their treasures. Some were fortunate enough to have been able to successfully find what they were looking for, but the vast majority of the items displayed weren't successfully exchanged.

This wasn't much of a surprise. After all, this wasn't a very large event, and most of the cultivators present weren't itinerant cultivators. Hence, they were generally all figures of rather lofty status, and the things that they were looking for definitely weren't easy to obtain. Otherwise, they wouldn't have come to participate in this exchange event.

Han Li merely sat in his chair rather than competing with others to fly onto the stage. He watched as a procession of treasures was presented, and it was quite an eye-opening opportunity, one that rarely presented itself.

As the exchange event neared its conclusion, there was gradually less and less competition between the people flying onto the stage, and there were even some instances of delays between one cultivator to the next.

It was during one of those delays that Han Li decided to fly onto the stage, but right as he was about to do so, a streak of black light flew onto the stage ahead of him.

Even though the blue and white light barrier, it could be seen that the figure was enshrouded in a cloud of black qi that was giving off a formidable baleful aura.

Han Li sat back down without saying anything, and just like everyone else, his gaze fell upon the figure on stage, wanting to see what it was that he was going to present.

Chapter 323: Those Who Know the True Value

The figure enshrouded in black qi remained silent as he pulled out a pair of stone boxes that he placed down onto the auction platform, and with a sweep of his sleeve, the lids of both of the boxes flew off at once to reveal a semi-transparent purple crystal and a rather strange-looking ball of black mud.

The crystal was around the size of a human fist, and its surface was riddled with pits and bumps, as well as overlapping purple lightning veins.

These lightning veins were constantly flashing with purple lightning, as if they were lightning captured in solid form, and they were giving off a violent lightning aura.

As for the ball of black mud, it appeared to have been rather unremarkable at first glance, but upon closer inspection, one would notice that it was giving off a layer of extremely faint black light that seemed to be able to devour all surrounding light, giving it a very mysterious appearance.

"I'm exchanging this Lightning Soul Crystal for a lightning-attribute immortal treasure or 300 Immortal Origin Stones, and this ball of High Zenith Yin Mud for a 100,000-year-old Yin Dragon Ginseng," the figure declared.

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

He had thought that he had become far more knowledgeable about the spirit materials of the Immortal Realm since joining the Blaze Dragon Dao, but it seemed that this was still very much a work in progress as he hadn't heard of either of those two types of materials.

His gaze settled on the ball of black mud for a moment before quickly moving onto the purple crystal.

The ball of black mud was clearly some type of yin-attribute material, so he didn't have any use for it at the moment, but the purple crystal was giving him a sense of familiarity.

The lightning power imbued within it was very similar to the purple lightning in the clam bead he had obtained from the Thunderstorm Sea, and he couldn't help but wonder if this crystal had come from the same place.

The purple crystal wasn't very large, but it contained a truly formidable amount of lightning power, far more so than even that purple clam bead.

There were also faint spiritual fluctuations emanating from the deepest part of the crystal, indicating that the lightning power contained within it was so dense and abundant that it had developed some sentience.

Han Li was carefully inspecting the crystal with a thoughtful look in his eyes when a voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

Daoist Xie had woken up, and he communicated to Han Li through their psychic connection, "Fellow Daoist Han, please purchase this Lightning Soul Crystal. It will be of great use to me."

Ever since fusing with the Golden Immortal puppet, Daoist Xie had been in a state of hibernation, and Han Li had attempted to contact it a few times to no avail.

"What is this Lightning Soul Crystal and how will it be useful to you, Fellow Daoist Xie?" Han Li asked.

"The Lightning Soul Crystal is a type of special crystal that will only arise in places with extremely abundant lightning power, and not only does it contain immense lightning power, there's a type of special spiritual power interspersed within it as well. Not only is it very beneficial to those using lightning-attribute cultivation arts, it can also be worn to nourish the soul and avoid the negative influence of inner demons.

"I've been striving to completely fuse with the Golden Immortal puppet this entire time, but progress has been very slow. With this crystal, I'll be able to gain complete control over the puppet in a very short time," Daoist Xie explained.

"I see," Han Li replied with a contemplative expression.

As their communication was taking place, the other cultivators present were also appraising the two items on display, but no one was saying anything, and it seemed like there weren't going to be any takers.

The black figure remained standing still on the stage in silence, seemingly unfazed by the lack of response.

A short while later, a slightly raspy voice rang out to break the silence. "Are you not going to introduce these two types of materials? Pardon my ignorance, but I've never heard of this Lightning Soul Crystal or this High Zenith Yin Mud before."

"I'm only offering these two things to those who know their true value," the black figure replied in an indifferent voice.

The one who had raised the question fell silent upon hearing this.

Right at this moment, a streak of light flew onto the stage, and it was none other than Han Li.

"I'll take the Lightning Soul Crystal, here are 300 Immortal Origin Stones."

He pulled out a storage pouch and tossed it at the black figure as he spoke.

Right at this moment, another portly cultivator also flew onto the stage, then pulled out a flying bident that was flashing with dazzling lightning as he declared, "Hold on, I have a lightning-attribute immortal treasure refined using Lightning Raise Steel that I'm willing to exchange for this Lightning Soul Crystal."

The black figure faltered slightly as he took a glance at Han Li's storage pouch and the flying bident, then accepted Han Li's storage pouch in silence before handing the Lightning Soul Crystal to him.

"Hold on a second. If I'm not mistaken, surely you want a lightning-attribute immortal treasure more than those Immortal Origin Stones," the portly cultivator hurriedly said.

"That's true, but you're a little too late," the black figure replied in an indifferent voice.

The portly cultivator faltered slightly upon hearing this, clearly not anticipating such a response. In the end, he could only stow his flying bident away again before flying back to his seat. "I hope you won't regret this!"

Han Li was also rather surprised by the black figure's decision, and his surprise was also tinged with a hint of admiration. It was very rare to see someone who could abide by their word so strictly, particularly in the often deceitful and immoral world of cultivators.

For a mid-True Immortal cultivator, it was only a matter of time and energy for them to accumulate 300 Immortal Origin Stones, but the same certainly didn't apply when it came to acquiring a suitable immortal treasure, particularly a lightning-attribute one.

Perhaps the portly cultivator was also aware of the value of the Lightning Soul Crystal, just like Daoist Xie, but he was slightly unwilling to part with his lightning-attribute immortal treasure, and that had allowed Han Li to seize the initiative.

With that in mind, he gave the black figure a nod, then returned to his chair.

"Give me the Lightning Soul Crystal!" Daoist Xie urged as soon as Han Li sat down.

Han Li duly obliged, sending the Lightning Soul Crystal in his storage bracelet to Daoist Xie.

The Lightning Soul Crystal instantly vanished into Daoist Xie's body amid a flash of golden lightning, and only then did Han Li notice that Shu Tiansheng's seat was vacant.

He took a glance at his surroundings, but failed to discover Shu Tiansheng anywhere in the venue, and it seemed that he really had left.

His brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, but he didn't think much of it.

On the auction platform, the black figure waited for a while longer, but there were no takers for his High Zenith Yin Mud, so he could only fly back down from the stage in the end.

Han Li rose to his feet upon seeing this, yet right as he was about to fly onto the stage, a female voice suddenly rang out from beside him. "You must be Fellow Daoist Li, right?"

Immediately thereafter, the female cultivator who had purchased the Profound Glacial Scenic Painting earlier appeared in Shu Tiansheng's seat.

"Who're you?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

The female cultivator dodged the question as she asked, "Would I be able to take up some of your time?"

Han Li hesitated momentarily, then sat back down as he nodded in response.

"Just now, I happened to notice you trading a Blush Cloud Fire Crystal with the fellow daoist that was sitting here before me. Do you have any more of these crystals in your possession, and if so, would you be willing to trade them? I'll be sure to offer you a satisfactory price. For a fist-sized crystal like the one from before, I'm willing to offer you 100 Immortal Origin Stones, and the more you have to sell, the better," the female cultivator said in an earnest voice.

"You seem to already be aware that I have more Blush Cloud Fire Crystals in my possession, and you also know my surname. I'm assuming Shu Tiansheng must've told you those things, right?" Han Li asked in a calm voice.

The female cultivator nodded in response. "I did indeed learn these things from the fellow daoist from before."

Han Li's expression remained unchanged, but he was contemplating how to proceed.

Blush Cloud Fire Crystals were extremely precious, but he had quite a few of them, and he didn't really need them at the moment, so he was certainly open to selling them for Immortal Origin Stones.

However, he wasn't sure if he was going to have a use for them in the future, and if he were to sell them now, he could be left regretting his decision at some later point.

"Agree to her offer, Fellow Daoist Han."

Daoist Xie's voice had suddenly rung out again.

"Why?" Han Li asked through their spiritual connection.

"I'll tell you why once I've completely fused with the Golden Immortal puppet. For now, just agree to her offer," Daoist Xie said, then fell silent again.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing Daoist Xie's ambiguous response, but after a brief hesitation, he nodded as he replied, "Alright, I can sell my crystals to you."

"You've definitely made a wise decision, Fellow Daoist. I can assure you that no one else would be willing to offer such a high price for these crystals."

The female cultivator's voice was a little cold, but there was an unmistakable hint of elation as she spoke.

Han Li offered no response as he swept a hand over his storage pouch, and a new storage pouch appeared in his grasp with a flash of azure light.

He handed the storage pouch to the female cultivator, who accepted it before inspecting its contents with her spiritual sense, then immediately flipped a hand over to produce a storage pouch of her own that she handed to Han Li.

Han Li accepted the storage pouch and merely took a glance at it before giving the female cultivator a nod.

The female cultivator cupped her fist in a salute, then returned to her original seat.

Han Li looked on at her departing figure, and his brows furrowed ever so slightly.

Thanks to his immense spiritual sense, he was able to see through the blue and white light barrier to make out a blurry outline of the woman's figure, and he felt as if he had seen her from somewhere before.

All of a sudden, he recalled who she was.

She's the woman in red staying at the same inn as me!

Not only that, but the woman had struck him with a sense of familiarity back when he first saw her in the inn, and during their second meeting here, that sense of familiarity had only grown more pronounced.

Right at this moment, another cultivator just so happened to have stepped down from the stage, and Han Li immediately flew onto the auction platform, then displayed some of the precious materials in his possession while laying out the dao pill ingredients that he wanted.

Unfortunately, none of the auction-goers had any of those materials, and he was ultimately disappointed once again.

Close to an hour later, the final cultivator stepped down from the stage, and the exchange event drew to a conclusion.

Han Li issued the Immortal Origin Stones required to purchase the Blood Crystal Lotus Root, then examined it briefly before carefully storing it into a jade box. After that, he adhered a few talismans to the box before stowing it away in his storage bracelet.

Chapter 324: Refinement

A short while later, Han Li appeared on a quiet street in White Jade City.

"Fellow Daoist Han, I require an array to help me refine this Lightning Soul Crystal," Daoist Xie requested.

"What do you need me to prepare?" Han Li asked as he continued to walk down the street without pause.

A stream of information was immediately transmitted into his mind, laying out the method and materials required to set up an array.

"Alright, I'll get everything prepared as soon as possible, then arrange a secret chamber for you back on the Crimson Dawn Peak," Han Li said.

There were quite a few materials on the list, some of which weren't that easy to find, and it would've most likely take him quite some time and effort to gather these materials under normal circumstances, but with all of these powers gathered in White Jade City and his membership in the Transient Guild, he was sure that it wouldn't have been very difficult to gather everything as long as he was willing to do some spending.

Furthermore, the array did appear to have been rather complex, but that wasn't an issue for him.

"There's no need for that, we can just get it done in the inn's secret chamber. With the help of the array, I should be able to completely fuse with the puppet in the next few days," Daoist Xie said.

Han Li nodded in response, then flew toward the nearest materials shop.

Only after night had fallen did he return to the inn where he was staying, and after entering the secret chamber, he flipped a hand over to produce a stack of array flags, then casually tossed them through the air, distributing them around the room in a rather peculiar array.

Immediately thereafter, he began to chant an incantation, and five light barriers of different thicknesses appeared to encompass the entire room.

After that, Han Li swept a hand through the air to release a burst of azure light, which carried all of the furniture into the room to one corner to vacate a large space, then summoned a bunch of different objects, including some lengths of Lightning Restraining Wood.

All of a sudden, Han Li's expression changed ever so slightly as he pulled a purple talisman that was riddled with silver patterns out of his storage bracelet. It was that Azure Wind Lock Immortal Talisman, and he had spotted it in a corner of his storage bracelet while summoning all of the other items required for the array.

All of a sudden, it occurred to him that the woman in red was none other than the woman who had given him this Azure Wind Lock Immortal Talisman, Gan Jiuzhen.

Her aura was slightly different from Gan Jiuzhen's, perhaps because she had intentionally altered it, and that was why he had only just made this realization.

"I didn't think that she would be here in White Jade City as well," Han Li murmured to himself, then shook his head to rid himself of that train of thought before stowing the Azure Wind Lock Immortal Talisman away again.

He wasn't particularly close with Gan Jiuzhen, and he didn't care to know the reason behind why she had come to the Blaze Dragon Dao. Presumably, it didn't have anything to do with him.

After taking a moment to settle his thoughts, he began to make some inscriptions on the ground.

After several hours of toil, day had transitioned into night, and a circular array that was around 100 feet in diameter had appeared on the ground in the room. The center of the array was riddled with spirit patterns that were surrounded by lengths of Lightning Restraining Wood, which were crackling with lightning.

Han Li exhaled as he patted his storage pouch, and a streak of golden light flew out before landing at the center of the array to reveal Daoist Xie.

Daoist Xie inspected its surroundings momentarily, then gave Han Li a nod before sitting down with its legs crossed.

"Do you need me to look out for you during the process, Brother Xie?" Han Li asked.

"There's no need for that, I'll be fine on my own," Daoist Xie replied.

"In that case, I'll leave you to it," Han Li replied with a nod.

There were still a few days left until the preaching ceremony, and he wanted to take advantage of this window of opportunity to search for some more dao pill ingredients, so he didn't want to waste any time here unless his presence was necessary.

Meanwhile, Daoist Xie quickly sprang into action, making a hand seal as it began to chant an incantation, and thick arcs of golden lightning emerged from its chest before spreading all over its entire body.

Arcs of golden lightning also emerged from the array on the ground before forming a series of profound lightning runes that resonated with the golden lightning flashing over Daoist Xie's body, quickly intertwining with one another before slowly revolving on the spot.

In the blink of an eye, a flashing ball of golden lightning had appeared around Daoist Xie, and arcs of lightning were surging over its surface, while the occasional bolt of stray lightning would spring forth in a random direction.

Thankfully, five layers of restrictions had already been set up in the room to contain the bolts of stray lightning.

Instead of immediately departing, Han Li remained in one corner of the room to observe the process.

A loud thunderclap rang out from Daoist Xie's head, and arcs of dazzling purple lightning emerged to envelop the entirety of its head.

A crystalline object could be seen within the purple lightning, and it was none other than that Lightning Soul Crystal.

Compared with the lightning released by the clam pearl, this purple lightning was brighter and more translucent.

The purple lightning continued to flash as it rapidly spread over Daoist Xie's body, and the light radiating from the puppet's body became even brighter, as if some important points had been opened up.

Han Li gave a slight nod upon seeing this, and he was just about to depart when the purple lightning erupting out of the Lightning Soul Crystal abruptly swelled.

At the same time, it began to spread over Daoist Xie's body faster than before, and it quickly fused with the golden ball of lightning around it.

The ball of golden lightning instantly began to ripple, and a huge bulge appeared on its surface.

A resounding boom rang out as the bulge exploded, and arcs of purple and golden lightning erupted in all directions to strike the first azure restriction in the room.

The restriction only lasted a second or two before being violently torn apart, and the remaining lightning continued onward to strike the second yellow restriction, which quickly dimmed and appeared to have been on the verge of breaking as well.

Not only that, but a second bulge had exploded on the ball of golden lightning, sending even thicker bolts of lightning erupting everywhere.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly upon seeing this, and four true spirit projections emerged around him, namely that of the Xuanwu, the Lightning Bird, the Giant Mountain Ape, and the Divine Dragon.

The four beast projections opened their mouths in unison to release bursts of black, silver, yellow, and red light, respectively into the remaining four restrictions.

As a result, the four restrictions were instantly significantly bolstered, becoming several times thicker than before, and the yellow light barrier abruptly brightened as a giant ape projection appeared on its surface.

Thick bolts of lightning struck the yellow light barrier, producing loud clangs that resembled the sound of metal striking against metal, and the light barrier began to flash erratically.

The giant ape projection on its surface quickly began to dim, and it was also rapidly thinning at a rate that was discernible even to the naked eye.

Han Li immediately began to chant an incantation while making a rapid string of hand seals, and a series of four-colored halos instantly swept out of the four light barriers before proliferating outward in all directions.

The four light barriers then fused into a single four-colored light barrier that was several feet thick and was giving off a metallic sheen.

As soon as it took shape, it was immediately struck by bolts of golden and purple lightning, only for the bolts of lightning to instantly vanish into the light barrier without a trace.

The four-colored light barrier shuddered a few times, but displayed no signs of breaking.

Han Li's expression eased slightly upon seeing this, but he still maintained his hand seal.

As time passed, the four true spirit projections around him became clearer and clearer, and they were continuously releasing pillars of light into the four-colored light barrier to bolster it.

This entire time, Daoist Xie's remained seated at the center of the array with its eyes tightly shut, and it seemed to have been completely oblivious to its surroundings.

Han Li was left feeling a little speechless upon seeing this. If he hadn't intervened in a timely fashion, all five of the light barriers would've been torn apart, and the entire inn would've been destroyed, thereby revealing the Golden Immortal puppet.

After a moment of hesitation, Han Li decided to ask Daoist Xie what was happening through voice transmission, yet he received no response, and it was as if Daoist Xie hadn't heard him at all.

Han Li didn't say anything further, but his plans to leave were naturally foiled, and he decided to stay and observe the unfolding situation.

Several hours quickly passed by, and not only had the purple lightning erupting out of Daoist Xie's head not abated in the slightest, it was only becoming brighter and more powerful.

The ball of golden lightning was becoming more and more unstable as it churned violently, while even thicker bolts of purple and golden lightning were erupting in all directions without displaying any signs of stopping.

Han Li continued to support the four-colored light barrier while standing in the corner of the room, and there was a slightly dark look on his face.

Given this current situation, it was clear that he wouldn't be able to leave anytime soon.

Three days later.

Han Li was seated on the ground with his legs crossed, continuing to maintain the four-colored light barrier.

At the center of the array, Daoist Xie's entire body was enveloped in purple lightning, making it appear as if it were wearing a suit of purple lightning armor.

The ball of golden lightning formed by the array had also swelled significantly in size, taking up close to half the entire room, and it didn't seem as if it were going to fade away anytime soon.

Han Li's expression had darkened even further.

The preaching ceremony was going to begin on this day, and he didn't know when this process was going to conclude. If he were delayed any longer, then he would have to miss the preaching ceremony altogether.

If he had known that this would happen, then he would've taken Daoist Xie back to the Crimson Dawn Peak. The restrictions in the cave abode there had been set up by him over the course of many years, and they were far more formidable than the ones here, so even without hsi support, they should've been able to contain the lightning that was constantly erupting in all directions.

However, it was too late to think about that now. At this point, there was no way that he could leave. Otherwise, it was very likely that all of the prior efforts that he had made would go to waste.

Right at this moment, the lightning array began to glow with dazzling radiance while countless lightning runes emerged everywhere.

Han Li hurriedly focused his attention on the array right as a string of crackling rang out.

The purple lightning around Daoist Xie's body swelled drastically before being absorbed into its body in a flash, while the surrounding ball of golden lightning also fluctuated violently before also surging into Daoist Xie's body in a frenzy.

Chapter 325: 10 Per Second

At the center of the array, Daoist Xie's entire body was radiating yellow, golden, and purple light. The three types of light weren't conflicting with one another in the slightest. Instead, they were fused together in a harmonious balance.

Countless three-colored spirit patterns were surging incessantly over the surface of its body, occasionally coming together to form a series of arrays, only to then split apart a moment later.

A Golden Immortal Stage aura was also emanating out of the puppet, and unlike in the past, this burst of spiritual pressure was completely smooth and uninhibited.

Han Li was ecstatic, and he bolstered the four-colored light barrier in the room even further to contain this burst of Golden Immortal Stage spiritual pressure.

All of a sudden, Daoist Xie opened its eyes, releasing two bursts of dazzling light out of its pupils.

The two bursts of light shot through the four-colored light barrier with ease to create a pair of large holes, then pierced through the walls of the inn as well before erupting into the heavens, where they disappeared without a trace.

Thankfully, the two bursts of light were traveling diagonally upward and didn't harm anyone.

Han Li was greatly startled by this, and he hurriedly made a hand seal to mend the two holes in the four-colored light barrier.

Meanwhile, the streaks of light flew into the sky above White Jade City before exploding violently, and all of the world's origin qi above the city was swept up into a violently frenzy as gusts of fierce yellow, golden, and purple wind surged through the heavens, releasing a burst of enormous spiritual pressure as they did so.

The three gusts of wind were howling through the air with extraordinary force, and all of the cultivators throughout White Jade City were stunned by what they were seeing.

"There's no way this amount of spiritual pressure can be released by a True Immortal!"

"Could it be that one of the dao lords has arrived in White Jade City?"

Many of the people on the streets outside had erupted into chatter, while Han Li was frantically making hand seals to isolate Daoist Xie's aura, preventing it from leaking any further.

At the same time, he had released his spiritual sense to encompass everything within a radius of several thousand kilometers of the inn so that he would be able to immediately detect any disturbance.

Those two streaks of light had flown out of the city in the blink of an eye, and on top of that, the preaching ceremony was scheduled for this very day, so many of the cultivators in the city had already left.

The small portion of cultivators that remained may not have been able to detect that the aura had come from the inn, and everyone was wary of Golden Immortal cultivators, so even if someone did make the connection, they most likely wouldn't have dared to approach the inn to confirm their suspicions.

The three-colored gale in the sky continued to swirl around for a while before quickly dissipating.

It had created quite a spectacular sight to behold, but it hadn't caused any damage, so the people in the city only discussed the fleeting phenomenon for a short while before quickly dispersing, much to Han Li's relief.

At the center of the array, Daoist Xie rose to its feet, and the light radiating from its body faded alongside the enormous spiritual pressure it was releasing.

"Finally, I've successfully fused with this puppet," Daoist Xie declared.

"Didn't you say that you were fine on your own and didn't require my presence? If I hadn't decided to stay for a moment longer, you would've attracted a great deal of trouble for us," Han Li said in a slightly accusatory manner.

He had spent the entirety of the past three days here, rendering him unable to participate in any of the auctions and exchange events in the city.

At times like this, it was often the case that the most precious treasures would emerge near the end, and if he had been free to shop around these past three days, perhaps he would've been able to gather a few dao pill ingredients.

Daoist Xie could hear the displeasure in Han Li's voice, and it explained, "I failed to anticipate how pure the Lightning Soul Crystal was and how much power it contained."

"So be it. In any case, it's fantastic news that you were able to successfully fuse with this puppet, and I should congratulate you for it," Han Li said as a smile appeared on his face.

"Thank you for acquiring this immortal puppet for me and for looking out for me these past few days. If it wasn't for your help, there's no way I would've been able to complete this process smoothly. I'll remember everything you've done for me," Daoist Xie said as it cupped its fist in a grateful salute.

Han Li merely waved a hand in response. "The power that you inadvertently released just now hasn't exposed us, but even so, we can't stay here any longer. On top of that, the preaching ceremony is about to begin, so let's get out of here."

Daoist Xie nodded in response, then flew into Han Li's storage bracelet as a streak of yellow light.

Han Li swept a hand through the to release a burst of yellow light to repair the two small holes on the wall, then emerged from his room.

Right as he was about to go downstairs, he suddenly stopped in his tracks, then cast his gaze toward the other direction down the corridor.

After releasing his spiritual sense just now, he had already detected that Gan Jiuzhen was no longer here.

A slightly peculiar look appeared on his face, and he quickly withdrew his gaze before making his way downstairs.

A thought occurred to him as he asked through voice transmission, "By the way, you told me that you were going to tell me the reason why you asked me to sell those Blush Cloud Fire Crystals after you fused with the puppet. Can you tell me the reason now?"

Instead of answering Han Li's question, Daoist Xie raised one of its own. "Fellow Daoist Han, what do you think is used as the power source for this Golden Immortal puppet?"

Han Li was rather taken aback by this question, while Daoist Xie continued, "All immortal puppets run on Immortal Origin Stones, and this one is no exception. On top of that, this puppet possesses Golden Immortal Stage power, and it's extremely costly to use. The number of Immortal Spirit Stones that you previously had on hand was nowhere near enough."

"How many Immortal Origin Stones are required for you to unleash this puppet's full power?" Han Li asked.

"If I were to go all-out, I would have to burn through 10 Immortal Origin Stones per second," Daoist Xie replied.

Han Li was already mentally prepared, but he was still caught off guard. "What? 10 per second!"

"That's not that much. Immortal puppets require an enormous amount of immortal spiritual power for support, and there are some that use up dozens, even hundreds of times as many Immortal Origin Stones per second," Daoist Xie said.

"Have you seen such puppets before, Brother Xie," Han Li asked.

"No, it's just that I've regained some memories as I was fusing with the Lightning Soul Crystal," Daoist Xie explained.

"Oh? Have you recalled anything about your former owner?" Han Li asked with an intrigued look in his eyes.

He was very interested in this person. Daoist Xie had told him in the past that its previous owner was dead, but it was still yet to be seen whether that was actually true.

"I've only recovered some bits and pieces of memories, most of which are related to immortal puppets. As for those Blush Cloud Fire Crystals that you sold, you manage to obtain over 3,000 Immortal Origin Stones for them, and that's enough to call upon my power several times," Daoist Xie said.

"I see. In any case, it's about time that we left," Han Li replied with a nod, then cast his gaze toward the White Jade Peak.

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It was a bright and sunny day on the White Jade Peak.

There were pristine white clouds drifting over the clear, blue sky, and a rainbow was also hanging in the heavens like a giant bridge that stood above the clouds.

High up in the sky were hundreds of golden chariots that were drawn by winged dragon horses, and upon those carriages stood teams of tall cultivators wielding silver halberds and clad in suits of golden armor, patrolling the sky in a radius of several hundred kilometers.

The entirety of the White Jade Peak was enshrouded under a golden light barrier that acted as a flight restriction, and it wasn't giving off any particularly powerful energy fluctuations.

As long as one was at or above the True Immortal Stage, they would be able to fly into it without being affected, but those who were at or below the Grand Ascension Stage would've been kept out by the light barrier.

Hence, upon reaching the foot of the White Jade Peak, the majority of the Blaze Dragon Dao's disciples were forced to climb the mountain on foot in order to attend the preaching ceremony.

At this moment, the white plaza on the mountain was extremely lively and bustling, with hundreds of thousands of Blaze Dragon Dao disciples and the core elders of many of the Blaze Dragon Dao's subsidiary sects present. Even after all of the cushions had been occupied, there were still more people constantly arriving, and the plaza was quickly becoming extremely packed.

In fact, some people had even begun resorting to sitting down with their legs crossed somewhere halfway up the mountain to await the commencement of the ceremony.

There were countless people gathered at the foot of the White Jade Peak as well, and it was no less crowded than on the plaza on the mountain summit.

However, there was a more diverse range of people gathered at the foot of the mountain, with many cultivators from some other small and medium-sized sects all over the Ancient Cloud Continent interspersed among the Blaze Dragon Dao disciples.

These people had set up a series of stalls along the paths leading up to the White Jade Peak, and these stalls were packed with treasures, pills, and materials that they were selling to passersby.

There were also Blaze Dragon Dao cultivators that were clad in suits of golden armor standing around the stalls at set intervals, patrolling the area to maintain order.

In contrast with the exchange events that Han Li had previously participated in, these stalls were mostly aimed at cultivators at or below the Deity Transformation Stage, and it was much like the Great South Meeting that he had attended back in the Mortal Realm. [1]

At the center of the preaching platform on the summit of the White Jade Peak was a large purple table that didn't have many engravings on its surface, nor did it appear all that beautiful or intricate, but it did have a more antiquated and natural appearance.

Behind the table was a copper cauldron that was around 10 feet tall, plunged into which were several hundred sticks of incense, all of which were lit and producing plumes of faint azure smoke.

On either side of the cauldron were close to 100 round gray cushions placed down in a symmetrical fashion, and at this moment, streaks of light were constantly approaching the scene before sitting down on the normal cushions on the stone staircase around the platform.

The only ones who were granted spots on the stone staircase were inner and outer sect True Immortal Stage elders of the Blaze Dragon Dao, as well as all of the dao lords' core disciples, and given their lofty

status, they were naturally far more restrained, so it was a lot less rowdy on the stone staircase than it was on the plaza.

Most of them were meditating with their eyes closed, silently waiting for the ceremony to commence, and only a small portion of them were greeting acquaintances or chatting quietly with one another.

Right at this moment, a streak of azure light flew in from the southwestern direction, then descended onto the preaching platform to reveal none other than Han Li.

He took a glance to find that all of the cushions near the top of the platform had already been taken, but there were still many vacant spots on the lower parts of the staircase.

Han Li made his way up the staircase, and after ascending for around 100 steps, he spotted a familiar figure waving at him to his left.

It was none other than Qi Liang, and Han Li gave him a smile before approaching him and sitting down onto the empty cushion next to him.

Chapter 326: Gradual Arrivals

"You're a little late, Brother Li! All of the good spots up there have already been taken," Qi Liang said with a smile.

"It's fine. All I need to do is listen and absorb Dao Lord Baili's teachings, why fret over whether I'm close or far away from the platform?" Han Li replied with a nonchalant shake of his head.

"Such a mindset is certainly true to your character, Brother Li. No wonder you've been able to make such rapid progress in your cultivation! If you ask me, once you reach the late-True Immortal Stage in the next 10,000 years, you'll be able to claim a spot among one of the 36 deputy dao lords. Make sure not to forget about me when that happens," Qi Liang chuckled.

"You're far too kind, Brother Qi. Unless I can attain the Great Dao during this very preaching ceremony, there's no way I could make another breakthrough in the next 10,000 years," Han Li replied with a wry smile.

Qi Liang burst into laughter upon hearing this, then changed the subject. "By the way, I haven't seen you at all these past few days. Could it be that you've already obtained the treasures that you're looking for."

"If it were so easy to find what I'm looking for, then I wouldn't have been struggling with the task for so long. There were some unforeseen matters that I had to take care of the past few days, and that's why I came here so late," Han Li replied in an ambiguous manner.

"Indeed. I had thought that I would be able to secure some prized treasures during such an auspicious event, but I still wasn't able to find any of the things that I've been searching for," Qi Liang sighed in response.

While Han Li and Qi Liang were chatting with one another, a deafening boom suddenly rang out in the sky, and the two of them hurriedly looked up to see a massive bolt of purple lightning crashing down from the heavens, aimed at a certain spot on the white jade platform.

After the bolt of lightning faded, around a dozen figures emerged, one of which was the purple-robed Ouyang Kuishan, the current managing dao lord of the Blaze Dragon Dao.

As for the dozen or so figures accompanying him, all of them had restrained their own auras, but many of the Blaze Dragon Dao's members had already identified them to have been deputy dao lords of the sect.

Ouyang Kuishan sat on one of the cushions in the first row situated to the left of the cauldron, and only after that did all of the deputy dao lords accompanying him sit down as well.

As soon as this collection of important figures appeared on the platform, all of the Blaze Dragon Dao elders and disciples seated on the surrounding stone staircase instantly sat up straighter, while the chatter around the platform also gradually died down. Even the exchange events taking place at the foot of the mountain had been put on pause, and everyone was looking up at the mountain summit.

In the blink of an eye, the entire area within a radius of hundreds of kilometers of the white jade platform had fallen completely silent.

A few minutes later, a gust of golden wind swept forth from the distant sky, then faded as it neared the platform to reveal seven or eight figures.

The two figures that were leading the way were quite peculiar in appearance.

One of them appeared to have been no different from a normal woman, except she had silver skin and a pair of thin and pointy ears. Standing next to her was a burly man with his face covered in golden fur and scales growing on his eyelids.

The five or six figures behind them clearly also weren't human.

The silver-skinned woman and the golden-furred man each gave a nod to Ouyang Kuishan, then sat down onto the cushions next to him before their entourage sat down as well.

Han Li had never seen these two people before, but it was clear that they were most likely also Golden Immortal Stage dao lords, while those accompanying them had to have been deputy dao lords as well.

Not long after their arrival, a woman in a black dress with a black veil concealing her face arrived atop a giant black crow steed.

In contrast with the previous dao lords to have arrived, she was doing so on her own without an entourage, and she gave Ouyang Kuishan a brief greeting before sitting down on a cushion not far away from him.

Immediately after her came a handsome man with a head of long golden hair, and he was accompanied by 15 or 16 deputy dao lords.

Over the course of the next hour, more and more dao lords and deputy dao lords arrived, and Daoist Hu Yan and Yun Ni only arrived when there were only two vacant cushions left in the front row to the left of the cauldron.

On this day, not only had Daoist Hu Yan changed into a pristine white robe, his hair was also immaculately groomed, and he was clean shaven as well, indicating that he was taking this event quite seriously.

Yun Ni was walking along beside him with a faint smile on her face, and she was still just as seductive as ever, with many of the dao lords and deputy dao lords unconsciously lowering their heads, not daring to look at her.

Ouyang Kuishan was rather taken aback to see Daoist Hu Yan and Yun Ni arriving together, and he rose to his feet for the first time after sitting down as he smiled and said, "Welcome, Fellow Daoist Hu Yan, Fellow Daoist Yun. Now that you're here, everyone has arrived."

"Surely we're not late, Dao Lord Baili isn't even here yet," Daoist Hu Yan said as he took a glance at Ouyang Kuishan.

"Indeed, but it's about time for the ceremony to begin, so please take your seats," Ouyang Kuishan said as he took a glance at Yun Ni.

Daoist Hu Yan gave an indifferent nod in response before making his way toward the two vacant cushions with Yun Ni.

Han Li remained seated with his legs crossed as his gaze roamed over all of these figures that he had never seen before. He discovered that aside from the silver-skinned woman and the golden-furred man, there was another demonic man among the 12 dao lords, while the rest were all human. As for the 36 deputy dao lords, the only ones who weren't human were the ones that had accompanied those two demonic dao lords here.

Out of all of these people, he only recognized a few, including Xiong Shan.

These people formed the core of the entire Blaze Dragon Dao, and at this moment, they were all gathered on the summit of the White Jade Peak. Even though they were all restraining their auras, everyone around the platform was still struck by a sense of asphyxiation.

The entire mountain summit had become even more quiet, while the atmosphere was also a little tense.

Around 15 minutes later, a burst of five-colored light suddenly appeared in the distant sky, enveloped within which was a huge five-colored camel, and it was rapidly approaching the scene.

The camel was around 1,000 feet in size with circles of five-colored runes inscribed all over its body, and the two humps on its back resembled a pair of small mountains. Seated atop one of the humps was an elderly man in a colorful robe.

"Yu Yangzi of the Five Light Temple has come to observe the ceremony," the elderly man declared as he approached the platform.

"Long time no see, Fellow Daoist Yu Yangzi. You're still looking as fine as ever! Would you happen to have any surplus Five Light Pills? I've been wanting to get some for a very long time, but they've proved very elusive to find," Ouyang Kuishan greeted with a smile.

"Of course I always have some to spare for you, Fellow Daoist Ouyang! As long as it's not too much, I can certainly spare two or three vials," Yu Yangzi replied with a smile as he descended onto the white jade platform.

"Fantastic! I also have some Dense Summer Earth here. Are you interested, Fellow Daoist?" Ouyang Kuishan asked.

An elated look appeared on Yu Yangzi's face upon hearing this, and he hurriedly replied, "Really? I'm happy to take all of it off your hands, just state your price!"

"There's no hurry, Fellow Daoist Yu Yangzi. Once the ceremony is over, you can come to my cave abode, and we'll discuss the matter over some tea," Ouyang Kuishan said.

"Alright, I'll be sure to come," Yu Yangzi replied with a nod.

The Five Light Temple wasn't quite on the same level as the Blaze Dragon Dao, but it was still a vastly renowned sect in the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, and that was why he had been arranged a seat in the first row to the right of the cauldron.

Shortly thereafter, a vast expanse of black light swept in from the distant sky, containing a massive black inkstone with intricate floral designs engraved upon it, giving it a gorgeous appearance.

"Layman Mo of the Fleeting Palace has come to attend the preaching ceremony," a low and raspy voice declared from the inkstone.

After that, the inkstone abruptly vanished to reveal a black-skinned elderly man who was no more than five feet tall and was stroking his own thick beard.

"Welcome, Layman Mo," Ouyang Kuishan said as he rose to his feet and cupped his fist in a salute.

Layman Mo merely returned his salute in a half-hearted fashion before walking past him, and Ouyang Kuishan's expression stiffened ever so slightly, but he quickly recovered his composure and sat back down.

Meanwhile, Layman Mo approached Daoist Hu Yan with a wide smile as he asked, "Why haven't you come to my Fleeting Palace these past 10,000 years, you old drunk? Could it be that you've already forgotten this drinking buddy of yours?"

"You're one to talk! You went into seclusion for tens of thousands of years without coming out even once! I visited you so many times, only to be kept out like some unwelcome guest! Having said that, you really did come at the right time, I've saved up quite a bit of fine wine that's not inferior to your Ink Cloud Spirit Wine," Daoist Hu Yan declared with a proud expression.

A furious look immediately appeared on Layman Mo's face upon hearing this. "There's no wine in this world that's more delectable than the Ink Cloud Spirit Wine I've personally brewed! You haven't even had a drink yet, and you're already spouting drunk nonsense! When have you ever been able to acquire a wine that's superior to mine?"

"You can find out if my claims are true or not after the ceremony," Daoist Hu Yan replied, taking a glance at Yun Ni out of the corner of his eye as he spoke.

"Alright, you better not disappoint me."

A wide smile appeared on Layman Mo's face as he made his way over to the right side of the cauldron before taking a seat next to Yu Yangzi.

Before long, around a dozen of the cushions to the right of the cauldron had been occupied, while roughly half of them remained vacant.

This wasn't because there weren't that many people from other sects who wanted to attend the ceremony. On the contrary, the number of sects that wanted to be in attendance far surpassed this, but most of them were rather small and weak, so they had been arranged seats in other parts of the plaza.

The spots on the platform itself were limited, and it would've been rather unsightly for too many people to be crammed onto it.

Chapter 327: Five Decays

All of a sudden, a burst of laughter rang out in the distant sky, and a streak of blue light shot forth from afar, flying into the golden light barrier before hovering in the air outside of the white jade platform.

"Luo Qinghai of the Vast Flow Palace has come to attend the ceremony!"

An enormous blue flower that was around 1,000 feet in size bloomed within the burst of blue light with this declaration, and there were around a dozen figures standing atop the giant flower, all of whom were wearing the same blue robes and giving off formidable auras.

Everyone from the Blaze Dragon Dao instantly erupted into chatter upon seeing this.

Luo Qinghai was the current palace master of the Vast Flow Place, which ranked alongside the Blaze Dragon Dao as one of the three leading powers of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region.

Han Li quickly recalled all of the information that he had read about the Vast Flow Palace as he also cast his gaze upward, just like everyone else.

Within the giant blue flower was a large golden throne, upon which sat a tall and thin middle-aged man with hair that was as white as snow.

He had a set of benevolent facial features, and his eyes were as blue as the sea, while his aura was as vast as the ocean, and even from this far away, Han Li still couldn't help but be alarmed by the man's formidable aura.

The dozen or so figures behind Luo Qinghai all appeared to have been very formidable as well.

One of them appeared to have been in his early twenties, and he had a very effeminate appearance with skin that was even fairer than that of a young maiden. If it weren't for the fact that his chest was completely flat, he could've easily been mistaken for a woman.

Even though he was also wearing a blue robe, unlike everyone else in the ground, there were golden waves embroidered onto his collar and sleeves, making his attire more similar in appearance to Luo Qinghai's.

"Welcome, Palace Master Luo. Forgive me for not coming out to welcome you sooner," Ouyang Kuishan said as he rose to his feet and cupped his fist in a salute, while all of the other dao lords and deputy dao lords stood up as well.

"It's a very rare occasion that Fellow Daoist Baili comes out of seclusion, and he always has very unique insights on the five decays. All of his preaching ceremonies are extremely prestigious events in our Northern Glacial Immortal Realm, so I certainly couldn't miss it," Luo Qinghai replied with a smile.

Luo Qinghai and Ouyang Kuishan made some small talk, and instead of descending onto the preaching platform like everyone else, Luo Qinghai remained in the air atop his giant blue flower, hovering at the same height as the preaching platform.

Not long after the arrival of the Vast Flow Palace, a silver chariot that was drawn by eight silver-scaled dragon horses came flying in from afar. There were around seven or eight people on the carriage, and it remained hovering in mid-air on the other side of the platform.

"The Northern Glacial Immortal Region has come to attend the ceremony," a beautiful woman on the carriage declared.

"This is truly an honor, Deputy Palace Master Xue Ying," Ouyang Kuishan greeted as he rose to his feet, but it was clear that he wasn't particularly fond of the new arrivals.

The other Golden Immortal dao lords also seemed to have been rather disdainful of everyone from the Immortal Palace, merely taking a glance at them before looking away.

The cultivators of the Immortal Palace didn't appear to have been bothered by this, and they extended a greeting toward Luo Qinghai before hovering in the air on the other side of the preaching platform.

Following the arrival of the other two leading powers of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, there were no further new arrivals.

Another 15 minutes or so passed by, and Ouyang Kuishan spoke to several of the dao lords beside him briefly, then rose his feet and swept his gaze across the vast crowds of people gathered around the plaza as he declared, "It's time. Welcome, Dao Lord Baili!"

His voice wasn't very loud, but it was extremely clear, as if he were speaking right beside everyone on the plaza.

In the next instant, everyone rose to their feet, including those on the platform.

"Welcome, Dao Lord Baili!" all of the elders and disciples of the Blaze Dragon Dao yelled in unison, causing the entire plaza to buzz and tremble.

In the next instant, layers of strange ripples suddenly began to appear in the sky, and a crimson fireball slowly emerged, then turned from red to golden in color, glowing as radiantly as the sun.

At the same time, a burst of enormous spiritual pressure erupted out of the ball of fire, and the entirety of the White Jade Peak instantly fell completely silent.

Immediately thereafter, a humanoid figure stepped out of the ball of fire and onto the tall platform.

The man appeared to have been no more than 30 to 40 years of age, and his skin was slightly red in coloration and glowing brightly like a piece of flawless crimson jade.

He stood tall and proud with an authoritative look on his face, and he had a head of long crimson hair that was arranged inside a gold mesh crown. He was also dressed in a fiery red robe that was riddled with draconic embroidery, and it was none other than the number one dao lords of the Blaze Dragon Dao, the man who was said to have only been one step away from the High Zenith Stage, Baili Yan!

"Brother Luo, if I recall correctly, it's been over 100,000 years since we last met in the battle in the Hidden Azure Sea," Baili Yan said with a smile as he cast his gaze toward the Vast Flow Palace camp.

"If you hadn't gone into seclusion so quickly, the two of us could've had plenty of time to meet and chat," Luo Qinghai jibed.

"You're here as well, Deputy Palace Master Xue Ying!" Baili Yan greeted as he turned to the Immortal Palace camp.

"You're looking as handsome as ever, Dao Lord Baili. Now that you've come out of seclusion, I'm sure you're even closer to the High Zenith Stage. Allow me to offer you my congratulations in advance," the woman by the name of Xue Ying replied with a nod.

"I'm afraid your congratulations may be premature, Fellow Daoist Xue Ying. If the High Zenith Stage were that easy to reach, then I wouldn't have gone to the trouble of going into seclusion so many times," Baili Yan chuckled, while Xue Ying merely smiled in response.

"I'm very honored to be hosting all of you here today. During this ceremony, I'm going to be sharing my cultivation experiences and insights in the hope that I can help you all further your own cultivation."

He swept his gaze calmly across the crowd gathered all over the White Jade Peak as he spoke, much like an emperor inspecting his own empire, giving off an unmatched sense of majesty and regal authority.

After that, he turned around and flew onto the platform, taking a seat with his legs crossed behind the purple table at its center.

The dozens of Blaze Dragon Dao dao lords and deputy lords and the cultivators from the Blaze Dragon Dao's allied sects were seated on either side of him, making him resemble a bright moon surrounded by stars.

The sound of a loud gong being struck three times in succession rang out, and a peculiar burst of fluctuations instantly spread over the entire mountain range.

Han Li was immediately instilled with a sense of calmness upon hearing this sound, and what little remained of the background noise quickly died down to result in complete silence.

Baili Yan cast his gaze directly forward as he began to speak, and his voice was surprisingly smooth and mellow.

His voice didn't appear to have been remarkable in any way, and those who were further away from him were initially struggling to hear him, but it didn't take long before his voice began to reverberate around the entire mountain.

His words were echoing incessantly, striking deep into the hearts of the listeners like the tolls of a giant bell, or like the mantric chantings of the Buddha.

Everyone was immersed in this unique sound, and as for exactly what Baili Yan was saying, it was becoming a little indistinct.

However, this immersive atmosphere struck everyone with a sense of comfort both in the body and the soul, and many people could feel their magic power circulation becoming a lot smoother, while certain bottlenecks were beginning to loosen.

However, most of the people experiencing this were at or below the Grand Ascension Stage, while everyone at the True Immortal Stage and above weren't benefitting anywhere near as much.

As for Han Li, he was able to roughly understand what was being preached, but he was not experiencing any profound sensation like everyone else.

The reason for this was his enormous spiritual sense, which was even more formidable than that of the average Golden Immortal. As a result of this, the preaching of a late-Golden Immortal Stage dao lord wasn't enough to place him into an entranced state of immersion.

Furthermore, the preaching of the portly monk on the wall of light manifested by the Eye of Truth and the Heaven Controlling Vial was far more profound, and in comparison, Han Li was left feeling a little disappointed.

However, he didn't outwardly express his disappointment, merely sitting on his cushion with his legs crossed and meditating with his eyes closed.

After all, this was still the preaching of someone on the verge of reaching the High Zenith Stage, so it was still going to be somewhat beneficial to him.

As time passed, noon quickly arrived, and Baili Yan's voice was still reverberating across the entire mountain.

In fact, it was audible even in White Jade City, and everyone in the city had stopped to listen, making the usually lively and bustling city uncharacteristically quiet.

"...Among the five decays, True Immortals must face three without fail, and those trials will either lead to one's demise or rebirth. Only by cultivating arduously can one hope to..."

At this point in Baili Yan's preaching, all of the True Immortals on the platform were leaning forward slightly, listening intently with focused looks on their faces.

Even the Golden Immortals present had sat up a little straighter to listen to what he had to say.

Han Li's brows furrowed slightly, and a hint of befuddlement appeared in his eyes.

He turned to look at Qi Liang to find that he was just focusing just as intently as all of the other True Immortals, seemingly latching onto Baili Yan's every word.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Han Li took advantage of a pause in Baili Yan's preaching to raise a question to Qi Liang through voice transmission, "Fellow Daoist Qi, may I ask what these three decays and five decays are?"

Qi Liang immediately turned to him with an incredulous expression. "You're unaware of the three decays of the True Immortal Stage?"

"Please enlighten me, Brother Qi," Han Li said.

Chapter 328: Kept in the Dark

"In the eyes of cultivators at or below the Grand Ascension Stage, True Immortals have already reached the end point of cultivation and have ascended to the highest of heights, but as we all know, the True Immortal Stage is only the first step through the door of immortality, and in reality, there are still far loftier heights to be conquered.

"While it's true that we possess limitless lifespans, we are not actually truly immortal, and the reason for that is precisely the tribulation of the three decays," Qi Liang explained to Han Li through voice transmission while also listening to Baili Yan's preaching.

"Oh? Are the three decays similar in nature to the ascension tribulation that Grand Ascension cultivators must transcend? And how do we transcend them?" Han Li asked as his brows furrowed slightly.

"The three decays are referred to as tribulations, but they have nothing to do with the ascension tribulation. Instead, they describe the three crises that all True Immortal cultivators will face during the course of their cultivation. The first of those is immortal decay, which results in one's immortal spiritual power seeping away for no discernible reason, thereby damaging one's cultivation base until they fall out of the True Immortal Stage altogether.

"The second decay is bodily decay, which results in the gradual weakening of one's body until it's no longer able to hold immortal spiritual power, thereby resulting in the body's detonation. The third decay is acupoint decay, and it's related to one's immortal acupoints. There are many ways to contend against these three tribulations, but their effects vary from person to person.

"However, one universal way to ward off the decays that works for everyone is to make significant progress in a certain law," Qi Liang explained.

"I see. No wonder all True Immortal cultivators are so desperate to master law powers. Aside from enhancing their own powers, I presume the more urgent priority is actually to combat the three decays. When will the three decays happen? Or do certain conditions need to be met for them to arise?" Han Li asked.

His expression remained unchanged, but internally, he was feeling quite shocked. Perhaps it was due to his prior bout of amnesia, but he wasn't aware of this at all, and only after hearing this explanation from Qi Liang did he come to realize that even True Immortal cultivators couldn't just be content and rest on their laurels.

"The timing of the first two decay tribulations is completely down to the will of the heavens. Some are fortunate enough to avoid them for millions of years, while others could encounter them in less than 100,000 years. I'm sure you still recall Elder Fang Zhuan of the Merit Conveyance Palace, right?

"He was once a mid-True Immortal cultivator and was only one step away from opening up 24 immortal acupoints, but he was blighted by immortal decay and forced all the way back down to the Grand Ascension Stage," Qi Liang revealed.

"Does that mean that if one progresses sufficiently quickly in their cultivation and reaches the Golden Immortal Stage in a very short time, then they'll be able to avoid those two decays?" Han Li asked.

"That is indeed true. If someone can reach the Golden Immortal Stage within 10,000 years, then the chances of them being struck by those two types of decay are naturally extremely slim, but how many people in the Immortal Realm are capable of accomplishing such a feat?"

"It's already extremely remarkable for someone to reach the mid-True Immortal Stage in just 10,000 years. On top of that, even if a True Immortal manages to avoid the first two decays, if they want to reach the Golden Immortal Stage, then they'll have no choice but to face the third decay," Qi Liang said with a wry smile.

"Why is that?" Han Li asked.

"All I know is that all those attempting breakthroughs to the Golden Immortal Stage will inevitably have to undergo the third decay, and that it's no less damning than the first two decays. That's why there are so few Golden Immortal cultivators. As for exactly why this is, that's beyond my knowledge," Qi Liang replied.

"I heard Dao Lord Baili mention just now that there are five decays. What are the other two?" Han Li asked.

"It's said that after becoming a Golden Immortal, one will face two more decays to amount to a total of five. As for exactly what those two decays are, I'm not sure. In any case, the path of cultivation is truly one that is fraught with..."

Before Qi Liang had a chance to finish his sentence, eight of the 12 Blaze Dragon Dao dao lords suddenly sprang up from their cushions before sweeping their sleeves through the air.

The sound of clanging chains interrupted the peace and quiet as the eight dao lords, led by Ouyang Kuishan, released eight golden chains out of their sleeves.

Each chain was around the same thickness as a child's arm, and they were riddled with shimmering golden runes as they flashed through the air like a nest of spirit snakes.

The chains were aimed directly at Baili Yan, whose expression remained unchanged, but his preaching had drawn to an abrupt halt.

All of a sudden, a burst of crimson light rose up from the ground all around him, enveloping his body from all directions like a fiery red light barrier.

The chains scraped against the exterior of the light barrier, raising trails of sparks as they did so, but they were unable to get any closer to Baili Yan's body.

At the same time, Baili Yan stomped a foot down onto the ground, and a burst of crimson light erupted beneath his foot. The entire white jade platform also shuddered violently, yet right as he was about to launch himself up into the heavens, the eight dao lords hurriedly each made a hand seal, upon which the golden chains began to glow brightly while constricting tightly to keep Baili Yan and the crimson light barrier firmly in place.

As a result, Baili Yan was forced back down onto the platform.

A burst of crimson light emerged on his hands as he grabbed toward the surrounding golden chains, only for countless arcs of golden lightning to erupt out of the chains before surging along his arms.

Baili Yan felt a numbing sensation shoot through his arms, and he temporarily lost all feeling in them.

At the same time, the arcs of lightning that were springing out of the golden chains had intertwined to form a square golden cage that trapped him within.

Even though Baili Yan was able to immediately regain use of his arms, due to that split second of delay, it had become far more difficult for him to try and break free.

At this moment, every single golden pillar in the golden cage around him was flashing with lightning, and layers of scale patterns and antiquated runes had appeared on their surface, giving off clear law fluctuations.

These eight golden chains were clearly a set of high-grade immortal treasures that had been prepared specifically to deal with Baili Yan.

All of this had happened in the blink of an eye, unfolding so quickly and abruptly that none of the tens of thousands of cultivators around the plaza had even registered what had just happened.

The 36 deputy dao lords were greatly alarmed to see this, and all of them began to exchange bewildered glances. It was clear that they hadn't been tipped off in advance at all.

On the other side, Yu Yangzi and the others were also very much taken aback by this turn of events, and all of them rose to their feet.

Some of them wanted to ask what was happening, but the atmosphere in the air was rather peculiar, so they ultimately decided to hold their tongues.

Just like everyone else, Han Li was watching the unfolding situation with a perplexed look on his face.

"What's going on?" Qi Liang asked with tightly furrowed brows.

On the white jade platform, Daoist Hu Yan stepped forward with a furious expression, only for two other dao lords to immediately get in his way.

"What are you all doing? Are you betraying the sect?" Daoist Hu Yan asked in a furious voice.

A hint of guilt flashed through the faces of all of the dao lords who had taken action, but none of them said anything, and the two dao lords standing in Daoist Hu Yan's way displayed no intention of backing down.

An alarmed and furious look had also appeared on Yun Ni's face, and she had distanced herself slightly from the dao lords beside her, unsure of who she could trust.

Given the current situation, it appeared that she and Daoist Hu Yan were the only ones who had been kept in the dark.

Inside the cage, Baili Yan slowly swept his gaze across everyone around him, and a burst of crimson light began to emerge on his arms.

A burst of scorching flames then erupted out of his arms to envelop the surrounding golden chains, and under the illumination of the flames, his already smooth and pristine skin was made to appear like crimson jade.

"This Golden Scale Dragon Locking Array won't be able to trap me for long, so if you have anything else to throw at me, you better do it now," Baili Yan said in a cold voice.

However, none of the dao lords remained silent, and it was as if they had agreed in advance not to respond to anything that Baili Yan said.

Up to this point, all of the Blaze Dragon Dao disciples outside the plaza still had no idea what was happening, and they could only watch as the situation unfolded.

As for the elders from other sects who had come to attend the ceremony, they were also oblivious to what had happened, but they could sense that this was no laughing matter, and all of them remained seated, not daring to make any sudden moves.

Atop the giant blue flower that was hovering in the sky next to the white jade platform, Luo Qinghai had already risen to his feet from his golden throne, and he was watching the scenes unfolding on the platform with his brows tightly furrowed.

The effeminate young man behind him approached him, then said, "Palace Master, should we..."

"There's no hurry, let's watch the situation unfold first. If this is an internal affair of the Blaze Dragon Dao, then it would be best for us not to get involved," Luo Qinghai said with a shake of his head.

Right at this moment, his expression suddenly changed slightly as he cast his gaze upward.

As it turned out, a golden line that was several thousand feet in length had suddenly appeared high up in the sky, and it swelled rapidly into a vast expanse of blinding golden light, from within which a group of 20 to 30 figures emerged.

They were led by a tall man with a square face and a thin and long silver mustache. The man was wearing a pristine white robe with golden cloud patterns embroidered upon it, and those patterns were giving off dazzling spiritual light, indicating that this was no ordinary robe.

Hovering in the air behind him were 20 to 30 men and women, most of whom were also wearing white robes, with only very few of them dressed in different attire. However, one thing that was common to all of them was their auras were extremely formidable, and their collective spiritual pressure struck one with a crushing sense of asphyxiation.

All of the cultivators of the Blaze Dragon Dao were already bewildered by everything that they were seeing, and this certainly didn't help to settle their nerves.

Chapter 329: Wanted Fugitive of the Reincarnation Palace

As soon as the man with the silver mustache appeared, the expressions of everyone on the white jade platform instantly changed drastically, with the exception of the 10 dao lords.

As for all of the elders and disciples situated on the plaza and the surrounding stone steps, all of them were rather dazed and confused, clearly having no idea of what this group of white-robed figures were going to do.

Han Li's expression darkened slightly upon seeing this, and his mind was racing.

He didn't know who these people were, but he could tell that the man with the silver mustache was definitely no ordinary cultivator, and his powers most likely weren't inferior to Baili Yan's.

As for why the 10 dao lords had suddenly decided to betray Baili Yan, that most likely had everything to do with this man, but he couldn't figure out what the motive of Ouyang Kuishan and the others was.

Even though Baili Yan was the Blaze Dragon Dao's first dao lord and its most powerful cultivator, he was constantly in seclusion and barely oversaw any matters in the Blaze Dragon Dao at all, so those who actually controlled the sect and benefited most from its resources were the other dao lords. There was no conflict of interest between the parties, and in fact, the dao lords benefited from the protection that Baili Yan provided to the sect.

While it appeared that he had been trapped for now, he hadn't been injured at all, so given sufficient time, there was a very good chance that he would be able to break free from his bindings, and once that happened, even the 10 dao lords combined definitely wouldn't have been a match for him.

However, the situation had taken a complete turn with the arrival of these white-robed figures, and Han Li could detect the minute changes in the expressions of Ouyang Kuishan and the others.

However, ultimately, none of this had anything to do with him, and he certainly didn't want to be swept up in this mess.

Having said that, he couldn't afford to act reckless given the current circumstances, so he would have to wait and see.

As these thoughts were flashing through his mind, he was sweeping his gaze across the people in the sky, trying to see if he could gather any more visual information about them.

However, right as his gaze fell upon a young man holding a folding fan standing among the people behind the man with the silver mustache, his mind was suddenly struck by a burst of sharp pain.

He couldn't help lower his head while massaging his own temples to try and alleviate the pain.

The young man was very handsome and was wearing a tight-fitting silver robe with intricate designs of flora and fauna embroidered upon it.

He was holding a white jade folding fan with an amicable smile on his face. He casually looked down from above, sweeping his gaze over the crowd down below before directing his gaze to the white jade platform.

After massaging his own temples for a while, Han Li seemed to have regained his composure somewhat, but there was a look of bewilderment in his eyes.

Right at this moment, Xue Ying suddenly extended a respectful curtsy toward the man with the silver mustache as she greeted, "Xue Ying pays her respects to the palace master."

Everyone erupted into chatter upon hearing this.

Xue Ying was the deputy palace master of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, so the man that she was referring to as palace master naturally had to have been Xiao Jinhan, the current palace master of the Northern Glacial Immortal Region.

Xiao Jinhan gave her a slight nod, then turned his attention to the golden cage down below, where his gaze just so happened to Baili Yan's.

A mocking sneer appeared on his face, while a cold look flashed through Baili Yan's eyes.

On the platform, Yu Yangzi and Layman Mo exchanged a glance, and both of them could see their own apprehension mirrored in one another's eyes. Both of them slowly began to move away from the center of the platform for fear of getting swept up in whatever was about to come.

Everyone else at the center of the platform also followed suit to vacate the entire area.

"Prior to this, I saw it as inappropriate for me to get involved in this matter as I thought it was an internal affair of the Blaze Dragon Dao, but it seems like the Northern Glacial Immortal Region is now getting involved. I believe you owe everyone an explanation for this, Palace Master Xiao," Luo Qinghai declared.

"Baili Yan is a wanted fugitive of the Reincarnation Palace being hunted by the Heavenly Court, and I've been ordered to apprehend him. Is that enough of an explanation for you, Fellow Daoist Luo?" Xiao Jinhan replied in a cold voice.

He swept a hand through the air as he spoke, and a streak of golden light that contained a golden scroll flew through the air.

The scroll then unfurled itself in a flash to reveal a passage of golden text, and sure enough, it was a wanted notice directed at Baili Yan.

All of the True Immortals of the Blaze Dragon Dao were rather befuddled by the mention of the Reincarnation Palace, clearly having no idea of what that was supposed to have been. Eevn Yu Yangzi was rather puzzled by what he was hearing, while only Layman Mo and Luo Qinghai seemed to have been aware of what was being discussed.

The former apologized to Daoist Hu Yan through voice transmission, then flew out of the white jade platform.

At the same time, he swept a sleeve through the air to summon that giant inkstone before flying away atop the treasure, unwilling to stay for even a moment longer.

As for Luo Qinghai, his brows furrowed even tighter upon seeing this, and he took a long glance at Baili Yan as he fell completely silent, but didn't appear to have had any plans of leaving right away.

Yu Yangzi and the others certainly weren't fools, either, and they immediately fled into the distance, knowing that this wasn't something that was wise for them to get involved in.

Only a few of them were unable to suppress their curiosity and only flew several hundred kilometers before stopping and turning around again to observe the unfolding situation from afar, and none of the cultivators from the Northern Glacial Immortal Region raised any objections to this.

Baili Yan withdrew his gaze, then turned to the dao lords who had trapped him as he asked, "Are all of you going to betray me?"

Crimson flames were surging over his body, releasing waves of astonishing heat that were constantly scorching the golden chains, but the chains remained completely still and weren't showing any signs of melting.

However, it was clearly not an easy task for Ouyang Kuishan and the others to keep the chains in place, as evidenced by the sheens of sweat that had appeared on their foreheads. None of them dared to relax in the slightest as they maintained their hand seals, doing everything in their power to stabilize the golden chains.

"Fellow Daoist Baili, our Blaze Dragon Dao is indeed quite a formidable sect, but we can't contend against the Immortal Palace. They have the backing of the Heavenly Court! What do we have? We can't just stand by and watch as the entire Blaze Dragon Dao is destroyed with you," Ouyang Kuishan sighed.

"What about all of you? Do you share the same opinion?" Baili Yan asked as he turned to the 36 deputy dao lords behind him, all of which immediately lowered their heads, unwilling to meet his gaze.

Meanwhile, all of the people on the stone staircase around the platform had been placed in a very awkward situation.

No matter how oblivious they were to the nature of the situation, at this point, it was clear that something was very wrong here.

Many of the people present were considering leaving the White Jade Peak. After all, they certainly didn't want to get swept up in a battle between Golden Immortals. As for the cultivators of the Immortal Palace, they appeared to have been quite calm and collected, but they were constantly watching the people down below with alert looks in their eyes.

Han Li was looking up at the cultivators of the Immortal Palace, just like many of the people around him, and it was unclear what he was thinking.

At this point, Qi Liang had also fallen silent. It was clear that this was not a situation that a True Immortal Stage elder like him could play any meaningful role in.

All of a sudden, the entire platform had become completely silent, and the atmosphere had become extremely tense.

"Ouyang Kuishan, what are you waiting for?" Xiao Jinhan suddenly urged in an authoritative voice.

Ouyang Kuishan and the others offered no response, but all of them immediately sprang into action, making a string of hand seals with one hand while holding onto golden chains with the other.

A burst of formidable energy fluctuations erupted out of their bodies, spreading through the entire surrounding space in a radius of dozens of kilometers. All of the space within this area was visibly rippling, causing the scenery to become rather blurry and unclear.

Within the rippling space, the surface of the golden cage was flashing incessantly with golden light. At the same time, thin golden threads were emerging from the cage, piercing toward Baili Yan like a mass of countless feelers.

Right at this moment, a huge snow lotus flower projection abruptly appeared amid a flash of white light behind one of the chain-wielding dao lords.

Ouyang Kuishan spotted this out of the corner of his eye, and he immediately yelled out in alarm, "Yun Ni, stop!"

As soon as his voice trailed off, a pristine white hand that was as translucent as jade abruptly extended out of the lotus flower projection before striking the dao lord on the back.

There was a translucent bead situated at the center of the palm, and in the instant that it came into contact with the dao lord's back, it abruptly exploded, releasing a burst of dazzling white light alongside gusts of ferocious wind.

The dao lord in question was focusing most of his attention on the chain in his hand, and everyone else was primarily keeping an eye on Daoist Hu Yan, so no one had anticipated that Yun Ni would suddenly strike.

Thus, the dao lord was caught completely off guard, and he didn't have time to summon any treasures, so he could only release a layer of protective spiritual light before the palm struck him on the back.

A loud thump rang out as the spiritual light around the dao lord's body was dispelled, and he immediately threw up a mouthful of blood as he was launched forward like a kite with a snapped string, crashing into the golden cage around Baili Yan.

He was still gripping tightly onto the golden chain with one hand, but the hand seal he was making with his other hand had already unraveled.

In the next instant, the surface of the golden cage shuddered, and Baili Yan erupted into raucous laughter as two beams of crimson light erupted out of his eyes.

At the same time, his aura also swelled drastically.

High up in the sky, Xiao Jinhan gave a cold harrumph upon seeing this, then swept a sleeve through the air to release a shimmering golden rune, which flew directly toward the golden cage like an arrow while giving off bursts of law fluctuations.

Daoist Hu Yan immediately sprang into action as well upon seeing this, raising a hand to release an azure ball that was riddled with runes. At the same time, he bit through the tip of his own tongue before spitting out a mouthful of blood essence.

Almost at the exact same moment, the dao lord standing in his way raised both hands up into the air, releasing a golden wheel that erupted into the heavens, hurtling directly toward the azure ball, while other dao lord outside of the eight that were maintaining the golden cage flew toward Yun Ni.

Daoist Hu Yan quickly made a hand seal, and fuelled by his blood essence, a series of golden veins instantly lit up on the azure ball.

Immediately thereafter, it vanished into thin air in a flash, leaving the golden wheel far behind.

In the next instant, the azure ball reappeared near the golden rune, and at the same time, the golden veins on its surface reached the peak of their brightness, following which the azure ball exploded, releasing a vast cloud of azure mist that swept through the air in all directions with tremendous force.

Before the cloud of azure mist had a chance to disperse, a streak of golden light suddenly flashed past beneath it, and the golden rune continued to fly toward the cave, completely unscathed.

Right as it was about to land upon the golden cage, a streak of transparent swordlight that was invisible to the naked eye struck the golden rune with unerring accuracy like a stream of water.

The streak of swordlight dissipated upon making contact with the golden rune, but it was able to knock the rune off its original path.

It was still descending from above, but its trajectory was no longer one that could allow it to land on the cage.

All of this sounded like a long process, but in reality, it had all taken place in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 330: Chaos

The entire scene was completely silent.

Not only were the low-grade cultivators on the plaza stunned beyond belief, all of the Blaze Dragon Dao cultivators situated on the stone steps were also astonished by what they were seeing.

A hint of blue light flashed through Han Li's eyes, and he was able to see everything that had just taken place.

The golden rune released by Xiao Jinhan was very elusive, able to completely ignore that attack from Daoist Hu Yan, but it was nullified by the streak of transparent swordlight released by Luo Qinghai.

Officially speaking, the Immortal Palace was the dominant power in the Northern Glacial Immortal Region, but it clearly had some differences with the Vast Flow Palace. At the very least, Luo Qinghai didn't seem to have been a fan of Xiao Jinhan.

High up in the sky, Xiao Jinhan took a cold glance at Luo Qinghai, and his expression remained unchanged as he swooped down directly toward the white jade platform from above.

Meanwhile, Luo Qinghai slowly withdrew his right hand, which was concealed up his sleeve, then turned around and sat back down onto his golden throne.

The giant blue flower that he was situated on remained hovering in the sky, and he still wasn't displaying any intention of departing. The dozen or so blue-robed cultivators standing on the giant flower with him also appeared to have been just as calm and collected as he was.

Before Xiao Jinhan was able to descend upon the white jade platform, a draconic roar abruptly rang out, and scorching flames erupted out of Baili Yan's eyes as he curled his fingers up into the claws, then abruptly lashed out at the golden cage before him.

Crimson flames rose up from his claws, then rose up to form a peculiar draconic head, which blasted a pillar of fire out of its mouth to strike a certain part of the golden cage.

An earth-shattering boom rang out as one of the pillars of the golden cage was swallowed up by the draconic head's cavernous mouth.

Golden runes were constantly flying out of the scorching flames, while the pillar was warping and twisting until it finally snapped.

The destruction of that one pillar caused a chain reaction, and all of the other golden pillars quickly shattered one after another, causing the entire golden cage to collapse.

A burst of dazzling golden light erupted forth on the white jade platform, following which several dozen draconic head projections flew in all directions, releasing a tremendously powerful aura as they did so.

Specks of golden light arose in the air, and immediately thereafter, the light barrier that enshrouded the entire mountain was completely destroyed amid a resounding boom.

Half of the white jade platform down below was also destroyed, and the eight dao lords who were previously holding the golden cage together hurriedly summoned protective treasures as a defensive measure, but they were still sent flying back involuntarily.

Several of them were struck by the draconic head projections, and the light barriers formed by their protective treasures were instantly destroyed, causing them to tumble down from the platform while throwing up large mouthfuls of blood.

Meanwhile, Daoist Hu Yan arrived by Yun Ni's side in a flash, warding off several oncoming draconic head projections while sweeping her down from the white jade platform with him.

Even though there were around a dozen dao lords acting as a buffer, the 36 deputy dao lords were still sent flying in all directions from the shockwaves of the explosion that had just taken place, but they took advantage of this to fly further away.

All of the cultivators on the stone steps also dispersed in a panic, flying away in all directions as quickly as they could. No one wanted to be the first person to try and flee for fear of being struck down by the Immortal Palace's cultivators, but now that the entire scene had erupted into complete pandemonium, an opportunity had arisen for everyone to get away.

Han Li and Qi Liang also fled the scene in a certain direction with the crowd.

Countless loose rocks were exploding in all directions, much to the alarm of the hundreds of thousands of low-grade cultivators gathered around the plaza, and they also hurriedly summoned their protective treasures while fleeing as quickly as they could.

All of a sudden, countless streaks of light of different colors were flying in all directions from the White Jade Peak, presenting a marvelous spectacle to behold.

In the sky above, Luo Qinghai made a hand seal to conjure up a blue water barrier that encompassed the entire giant blue flower, and the water barrier merely shuddered momentarily in the face of the shockwaves before settling down again.

On the other side, Deputy Palace Master Xue Ying of the Immortal Palace swept a sleeve through the air to conjure up a semi-transparent protective barrier around the silver chariot, then cast her gaze toward Luo Qinghai.

However, Luo Qinghai appeared to have been completely oblivious to her scrutiny, looking as calm and collected as ever.

As for Xiao Jinhan, he paid no heed to the oncoming shockwaves at all, and he wasn't slowing down in the slightest as he continued to swoop down from above.

Another loud explosion rang out as a vast expanse of glacial qi erupted out of Xiao Jinhan's body, and a giant white mountain of ice appeared in the sky amid a cloud of white mist, then crashed down onto the white jade platform with devastating might.

Half of the platform had already collapsed, and under the tremendous weight and momentum of the mountain of ice, the rest of the platform also fell away without being able to offer much resistance.

Meanwhile, Han Li had already flown out of the White Jade Peak and was observing the unfolding scene from afar.

Loose rocks and chunks of ice had already piled up into a huge mountain in that direction, presenting a chaotic sight to behold.

Right at this moment, burst of crimson light suddenly appeared beneath the rubble, and immediately thereafter, a sharp clang rang out as a pillar of crimson flames that was around as thick as an adult human arm erupted directly upward from the wreckage before sweeping vertically over the area to slice the mountain of ice and rocks in half down the middle.

A loud roar then rang out as Baili Yan flew out of the mountain of ice with crimson flames surging all of his body, and he was flying directly toward Daoist Hu Yan and Yun Ni.

With a flick of his wrist, Xiao Jinhan summoned a translucent longsword, around which was a band of white mist that resembled a coiled snake, and he slashed the sword in Baili Yan's direction.

The cloud up above churned violently as hundreds of giant white pythons formed by glacial qi twisted and writhed, descending upon Baili Yan like a flight of formidable dragons.

Baili Yan let loose another thunderous roar, and he lashed out with a longsword that was enveloped in crimson flames, slashing it horizontally through the air.

A scorching aura swept through the air as hundreds of giant pillars of flames emerged out of thin air to combat the glacial pythons.

A burst of rumbling akin to a dull thunderclap rang out in the sky as snow and ice clashed with devastating force, and each side was taking up half of the sky.

Meanwhile, the plaza had already erupted into complete chaos.

High up in the sky, Xue Ying suddenly asked in an accusatory voice, "Are you trying to stand against our Immortal Palace, Palace Master Mo?"

Only then did Luo Qinghai finally turn to Xue Ying as he replied in a casual voice, "What are you talking about, Celestial Maiden Xue? I'm only spectating with a few of my disciples, and I don't wish to play any part in the conflict between your Immortal Palace and the Blaze Dragon Dao."

Xue Ying offered no response to this, instead turning to a pair of cultivators beside her as she instructed, "Lu Yue, Dong Jie, take everyone and go and keep an eye on Daoist Hu Yan."

The two cultivators immediately heeded the order, setting off with all of the other cultivators situated on the chariot.

"I'll be going ahead, Palace Master Luo," Xue Ying said as she stowed the silver chariot away before flying off in pursuit of Xiao Jinhan and Baili Yan as a streak of white light.

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At this point, the plaza around the White Jade Peak was already severely ravaged and littered with lifeless bodies.

Daoist Hu Yan was hovering in mid-air with Yun Ni beside him, and both of them were watching the battle taking place between Baili Yan and Xiao Jinhan.

Right at this moment, a huge black ax projection descended out of the sky, releasing a burst of tremendous suction force that caused the surrounding space to twist and warp.

Daoist Hu Yan seemed to have already anticipated this as he took a step forward and dragged Yun Ni closer to his side, evading the attack with ease.

After missing its target, the giant ax projection crashed down onto the ground with an earth-shattering boom, slicing a massive, bottomless trench that was over 10,000 feet in length into the ground on the plaza.

Many of the low-grade cultivators who hadn't been able to get away yet were swept up by the attack, perishing on the spot before they even had a chance to cry out.

Immediately thereafter, the man by the name of Dong Jie raised his enormous mountain-splitting ax with both hands before swinging it down once again.

At the same time, the seven Immortal Palace cultivators, led by Dong Jie, suddenly appeared around the plaza to surround Daoist Hu Yan and Yun Ni.

Earlier, they had somehow managed to conceal their cultivation bases, and at this moment, all of them were giving off Golden Immortal Stage spiritual pressure. In particular, Lu Yue and Dong Jie's aura's indicated that they were at the mid-Golden Immortal Stage.

They held no regard for the safety of the people who still hadn't yet managed to escape from the plaza, and they summoned a whole host of formidable treasures to rain down a ferocious barrage of attacks.

The entire space was trembling violently as countless anguished cries rang out from all directions, with deaths and casualties piling up by the second.

A complex look appeared on Ouyang Kuishan's face as he took a glance at the chaotic scene unfolding on the plaza, and he turned to the dao lords beside him as he instructed, "Evacuate our sect's disciples and try to save as many of them as possible."

Even though they had been struck by the shockwaves from when Baili Yan broke free from the cage, they remained largely unscathed, and they immediately dispersed, calling upon some of the deputy dao lords and True Immortal Stage elders who were still on the scene, and together, they began evacuating the Blaze Dragon Dao's low-grade disciples from around the plaza in batches.

At the center of the plaza, Yun Ni conjured up her snow lotus flower projection to encompass both herself and Daoist Hu Yan.

Countless attacks were raining down incessantly upon the snow lotus flower projection, and its petals were constantly trembling, looking as if they weren't going to be able to hold up for much longer.

Meanwhile, Daoist Hu Yan summoned a black pagoda treasure, then tapped a finger against it, instantly conjuring up a black pagoda projection that encompassed the snow lotus flower projection around them.

A string of loud clangs rang out as the oncoming attacks struck the pagoda projection, while Daoist Hu Yan turned to Yun Ni with a pained look in his eyes. "I have my reasons for why I must follow Dao Lord Baili, and that's why I helped him, but you don't know anything about that, and you could've easily chosen to save yourself, so why have you gotten yourself involved in this mess?"